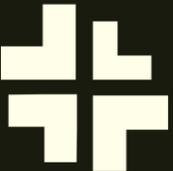


IOWA  
**WESLEYAN**  
**COVENANT**  
ASSOCIATION

**DISAFFILIATION PRESENTATION 2023**

# ALL IS NOT LOST.

- From its inception over 300 years ago, the Methodist movement has birthed many denominations, most of which are thriving movements within the 80,000,000-member World Methodist Council.
- Many of these arose when the leaders of Methodism were not holding fast to the doctrine, spirit, or discipline of the Church.
- Today is a day for great hope...You have a voice, and you have a vote, you make a difference, God is not done yet.



I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

- John Wesley -

We choose to be a part of a denomination that holds fast to the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of the Christian tradition. For a time, such as this we are entrusted to defend the Gospel of the Good News. The moment to be born as congregations and a movement is now.



WE DID NOT LEAVE THE  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH, IT LEFT US.

Bishop Mike Lowry, recently retired UMC Bishop

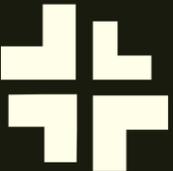
# WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia.

In the Middle of the 20th Century, seminary culture and instruction became progressive at most of our Methodist/United Methodist seminaries.

The graduates of these seminaries became the leaders of our denominational agencies, churches and some were elected bishops.

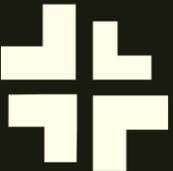


## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (cont.)

Though the United Methodist Church contributes nearly \$14,000,000 annually to UM seminaries through apportioned funds there is no accountability to the church regarding instruction.

By the 1980's progressive theology became the mainstream thought among pastors – though our laity (to this day) continue to hold more moderate/conservative theological positions.

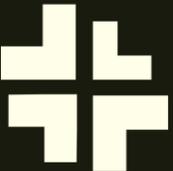


## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (cont.)

In a straw poll taken by the Iowa Conference Board of Ministry, 80% of the pastors ordained the past 2 years identify themselves as progressive.

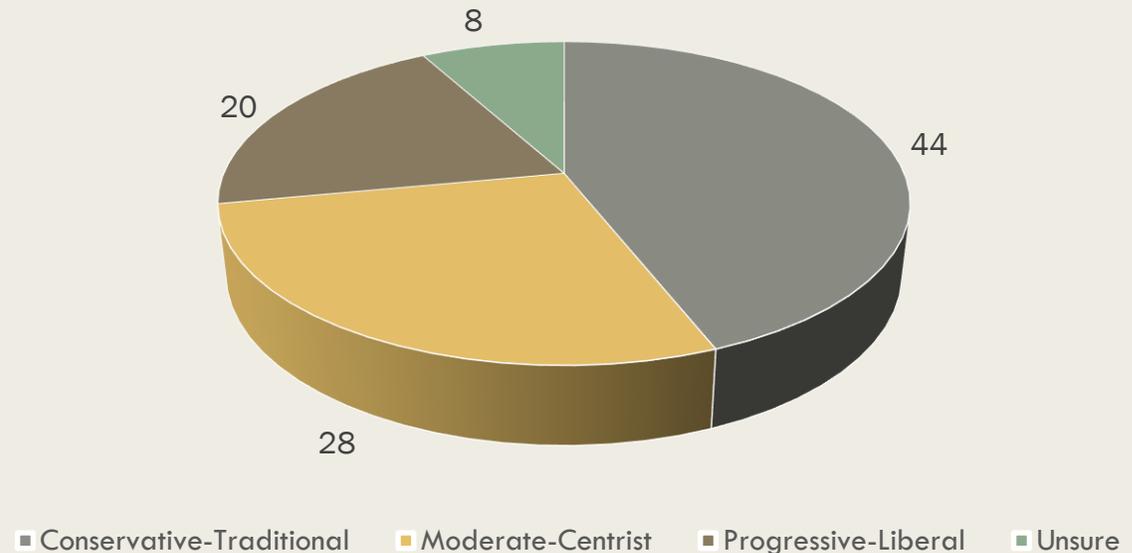
The question on every lay person's mind might be: Who or what kind of person will the bishop appoint to my church in 5 years?



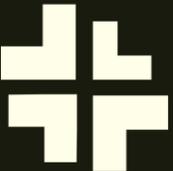
# The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (cont.)

United Methodist Communications surveyed United Methodists in the U.S. on their theological beliefs, and the largest group identified themselves as "conservative/traditional." Graphic by United Methodist Communications.

Theological Orientation: Self Identified



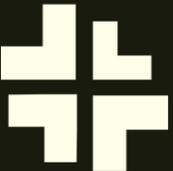
## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?



The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (cont.)

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

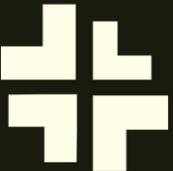
Adam Hamilton has written many books and studies United Methodist Churches have used as curriculum for decades. Recently, he published a book (*Making Sense of the Bible*) widely read in United Methodist circles. Rev. Hamilton encourages us to let the day speak to the Scripture rather than the Scripture be the Divine Word of God to the day (or age). Which is to say that the meaning of scripture can change according to what is going on in the culture at the moment rather than being timeless and timely.



The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (*cont.*)

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

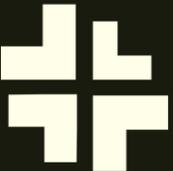
Officially the United Methodist Church clung to orthodox doctrine but the lack of accountability to its practice is significant. The drift has grown into various acts of disobedience.



## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (*cont.*)

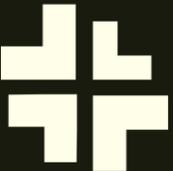
Boards of Ordained Ministry (including Iowa's) began to approve for ordination persons they knew through anecdotal and documented evidence to be in violation of our doctrinal covenant. (In fact, this was announced at the clergy session of the IAUMC by the Executive Council of the Iowa B.O.M., then later approved by the entire Board.)



## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Drift away from the doctrine, spirit, and discipline of two millennia of Christian tradition in Methodist Academia. (*cont.*)

A few clergy in the Iowa Conference performed or are in same sex unions\* and though in disobedience to the doctrine, spirit and discipline of the church were not removed from ministry or sternly disciplined, in fact, those who had filed the complaints were treated as the guilty parties or the complaints simply dismissed.

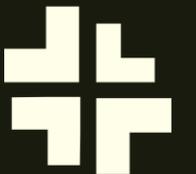


Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Bishop Karen Oliveto today is living in a same sex union.  
(elected Bishop by the Western Jurisdiction as Bishop in 2016 and leads the United Methodists in the Mountain Sky Conference)

November 4, 2022 the UMC elected Cedrick Bridgeforth as our second Bishop living in a same sex union. He will serve the greater northwest.

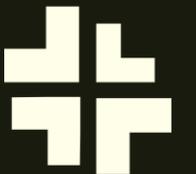
**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Bishop Joseph Sprague claimed the virgin birth of Christ as equivalent to mythology and suggested that Jesus was not the Messiah, he just said he was. Further he rejected as unlikely the Bodily Resurrection of Christ – none of which were formally objected to by their Episcopal colleagues.

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Recently elected Bishop Tom Berlin, on the floor at the 2019 General Conference of the United Methodist Church called traditionalist (those who passionately seek to hold to the Scripture, doctrine, spirit and discipline of the church “a virus in the church.

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Recently elected Kennetha Bingham-Tsai in her interviews with Jurisdictional Conference delegates repeated what she had said previously in an interview:

“It is NOT important that we agree who Jesus is...”

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

New Bishop Kennetha Bingham-Tsai in the same interview questioned the doctrine of the incarnation of God becoming flesh in a particular body (Jesus) in a particular time (1<sup>st</sup> century) and particular place (Israel).

Her statement: *“God became flesh, but not particular flesh. There’s no particularity around that. God became incarnate in culture, but not one culture.”*

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by our Bishops, and some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Bishop Kennetha Bingham-Tsai is the Bishop of the Iowa Conference.

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by some of our Bishops, some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Egregiously, The Cabinet of the Iowa Conference (November 2021) released “Leading Now” which called for disregarding our Discipline and circumvented the appropriate Disciplinary process. As the dean of the cabinet wrote “Yes, we have violated the Discipline, but sometimes rules must be broken to affect change.”

[Iowa Conference: Leading Now - FAQs Vision for the Future](https://iaumc.org)  
[iaumc.org](https://iaumc.org)

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by some of our Bishops, some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

Further in their FAQ's directly defying the teachings of the Discipline in a specific matter was encouraged while affirming the necessity of gripping tightly in others. This is the height of hypocrisy.

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



Disobedience has now grown to a directed defiance of our Scripture, doctrine, spirit, and discipline by some of our Bishops, some of our Pastors and laity that they shepherd.

In a letter the Bishop and her Cabinet responding to the Iowa Wesleyan Covenant Association's request to rescind "Leading Now" wrote: "This statement is a matter of conscience for each of us, akin to non-violent resistance to unfair civil laws. We realize that taking this stand may have consequences, whatever they may be, openly and freely." (12/7/21)

These leaders who openly defy the Discipline are financially supported by our apportionments.

**WHAT IS THE  
PROBLEM?**



**WHY MUST WE DISAFFILIATE  
FROM THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH?**

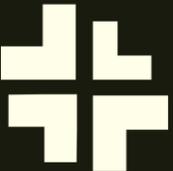
**AND**

**WHY WE MUST DO SO NOW**

**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

The opportunity is upon us to build a new denomination where once again we will invite and experience God's blessings in His Church through the integrity of Biblical doctrine, spirit, discipline and **accountability**.

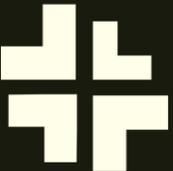


**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

We must disaffiliate so a new expression of Methodism can make new disciples. In numbers, United Methodism has sadly shrunk numerically every year of its existence.

Let's Look at the Numbers:



WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?

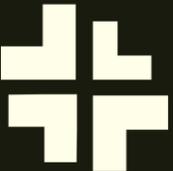
WHY NOW?

## United Methodist Church Membership in Iowa

- 1971 - 303,000
- 2021 - 140,000

[www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org)

- This is a **LOSS of 163,000** United Methodists, even though Iowa's population increased.

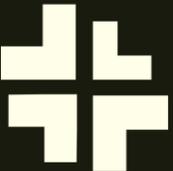


WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?

WHY NOW?

## Worship attendance in Iowa United Methodist Churches

- 1987 – 82,928
- 2020 – 36,607
- This is a decrease of 46,321



WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?

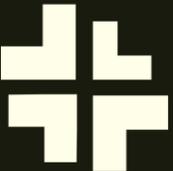
WHY NOW?

## Number of Iowa United Methodist Churches

- 1987 – 868
- 2021 – 732

[www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org)

- 136 congregations have **ceased to exist** in the last 24 years!

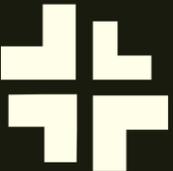


WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?

WHY NOW?

Has all this loss been caused by distress in the denomination? **No**, of course not. There is new work to be done, and we feel it will be best accomplished in a new branch of the Methodist tree.

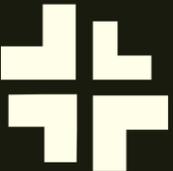
Every Engineer will tell us that **doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results** is the definition of “*something that doesn’t work.*” The opportunity to do something dramatically different in Methodism is here. The time is now.



**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

The leaders of our denomination and Jurisdiction (North Central Jurisdiction document “*Building Beloved Community*” 11/11-12/2022) state that marriage and ordination of LGBTQIA+ persons are a civil rights issue. If that is true, the United Methodist Church cannot be the theological “Big Tent” it advertises itself to be. If this is a civil right, then acceptance of it must be forced and those unwilling to comply must be dismissed. (These are the people who choose our Bishops.)

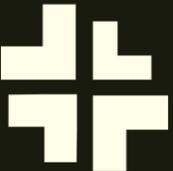


**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

Six of the “*Seven Sisters of Protestantism*”  
Presbyterian Church, Episcopal Church, Disciples of  
Christ, United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutherans,  
and American Baptist Church has discerned that  
there need be no language in their doctrine  
regarding holy sexuality in marriage or ordination. In  
the 10 or 12 years since those votes, each has at  
minimum lost 50% of their members.

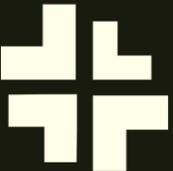
While these things have not been changed in the  
UMC discipline, it and the same result are our de  
facto policy.



**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

Several of the recently concluded Jurisdictional Conferences in the USA passed resolutions – though aspirational – that moderate and conservative pastors actively encouraging their church to disaffiliate from the denomination should immediately recuse themselves from any official committees and resign from their local church.

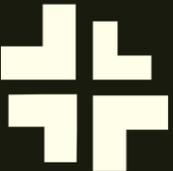


**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

For years, we have been told we are a “big tent” where everyone had a place at the table, that is simply not true.

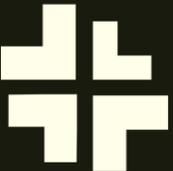
As of January 1 there no longer is a moderate or conservative Bishop in the UMC. In simplest terms the United Methodist Church in the United States is a progressive or extremely progressive denomination.



**WHY  
DISAFFILIATE?**

**WHY NOW?**

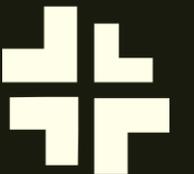
If current events and past performance is our guide, the United Methodist Church will continue to move away from our agreed upon covenant and now, we must faithfully and courageously step into a new expression of Methodism.



# WHO WILL BE DISAFFILIATING?

One of the most important things to be made clear is that this is all about **United Methodists leaving with United Methodists**. There are no buses of persons from other evangelical denominations coming in – it's just us – and the possibility of growing new churches in the years to come.

**WHO  
WILL BE  
DISAFFILIATING?**



Those who care about the legacy of the historic church in your community. We must remember that the most rapid growth of the church (in the ancient church, in Europe and America's Great Awakening) the doctrine, spirit and the discipline of the church inaugurated at Pentecost was held high regardless of the name on our signs or cornerstone.

**WHO  
WILL BE  
DISAFFILIATING?**



**Those who vote to “go” will be voting to “stay.”** That is, if you vote to disaffiliate, you are in fact voting to hold the doctrine, spirit and discipline of the church that has been central to your faith development.

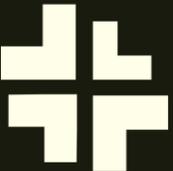
**WHO  
WILL BE  
DISAFFILIATING?**



# HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

# HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

1. Following ¶2553 The Conference's Preferred means.
2. Individual congregations may seek other legal remedies by themselves or join together in a group.
3. Closing your church under ¶2549.
4. Do nothing and hope the *Protocol* passes at General Conference 2024 (which is unlikely).



# WHAT TO DO

## HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

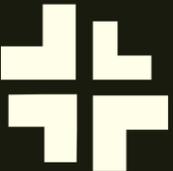
- Become Very Informed.
- Encourage everyone to investigate the Wesleyan Covenant Association <https://www.iowawca.org/>



# WHAT TO DO

- Follow the directions and ONE of the two timelines to “disaffiliate” at [www.IAUMC.org](http://www.IAUMC.org) **EXACTLY**
  - Request for Church Conference vote
  - Financials due the date of disaffiliation
    - 2 years apportionments.
    - Unfunded pension liabilities.

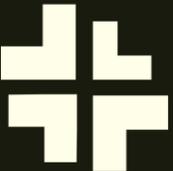
HOW DOES A  
CHURCH  
DISAFFILIATE?



# WHAT TO DO

## HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

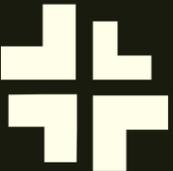
- Update Membership rolls now.\*
- Inform everyone regarding what disaffiliating really means. Seek to bring everyone along.



## HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

# WHAT TO DO

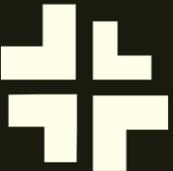
- Share that if you disaffiliate, many United Methodists have already affiliated with a new and growing denomination known as the Global Methodist Church.
  - <https://globalmethodist.org/>
  - Or see the talk entitled “Four Reasons to Join the Global Methodist Church” at <https://youtu.be/79PuIWZWIBI>



# WHAT TO DO

## HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

- Move thoughtfully, faithfully and peacefully towards a vote – knowing – the door to disaffiliate closes hard on 12/31/23.
- Don't leave it to your pastor(s)! All of us need to be involved.



# HOW TO VOTE

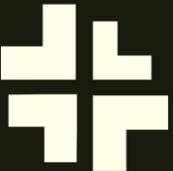
## HOW DOES A CHURCH DISAFFILIATE?

Ballots will be directed by the District Superintendent. Currently some are being recommended to have three choices:

Yes – No – Abstain

Disaffiliation requires a 2/3 "yes" vote of the members present.

That is, in Districts where the above is true, an abstain counts as a "no" vote.



# SOME QUESTIONS MOST CHURCHES ARE ASKING

# Can we join the Global Methodist Church at the same time we disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church?

Yes, but it will take two votes if this is the preference of the congregation.

The District Superintendent (or a representative he appoints) will lead the Church Conference which will be called for the purpose of voting on Disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church.

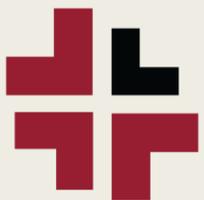
IF the congregation desires to vote on a new affiliation at that meeting, correct protocol would be to thank the Superintendent for their work and excuse him. THEN as a congregation, the Church Council Chair could entertain the motion to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church.

Or – the congregation could engage in a period of discernment regarding further affiliation of any kind.

# **If the Church Conference votes to disaffiliate, are we out of the United Methodist Church right then?**

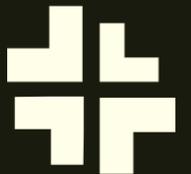
No, disaffiliation has two remaining steps.

1. The Iowa Annual Conference needs to vote on your disaffiliation at their June 2023 meeting or the specially called ZOOM Annual Conference to be held November 18, 2023.
2. Your Church would need to meet all of your financial obligations to the Iowa Conference by the official date of your disaffiliation (either June 30 or December 31, 2023)\*



## How much will it cost for our church to Disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church?

1. Payment of two full years of apportionments, the one we are in at the time of a vote and the next one.
2. Any required unfunded pension liabilities (request from the Iowa Conference your actual #)

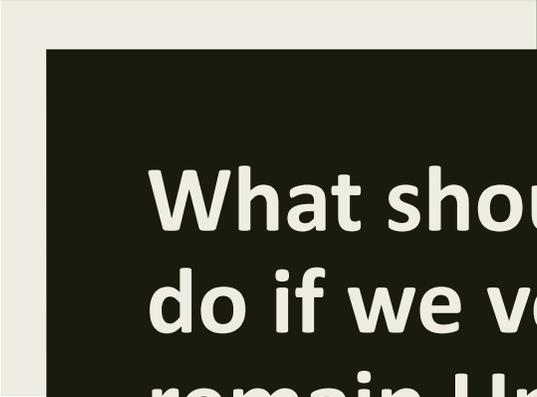


**What if the Iowa Conference does not vote to allow us to leave?**

This has never happened, so this answer is unknown.

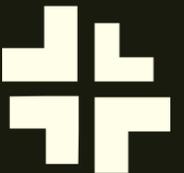
*However, 3 churches in the Arkansas Conference who had met all of the requirements of Par. 2553 did not receive enough votes from their Annual Conference to disaffiliate. Together they hold/have over \$25,000,000 in assets and sadly, it is all lawyers from here.*





**What should we  
do if we vote to  
remain United  
Methodist?**

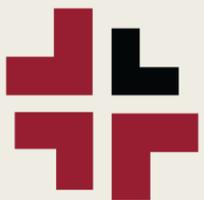
**Become the best United  
Methodist Church we can  
become.**

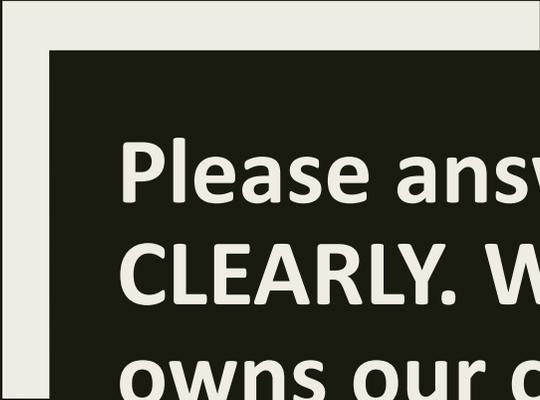


# Who owns or will own our buildings?

Paragraph 2501 in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* is the “Requirement of the Trust Clause for all Property.” The Trust requirement has been an essential element of the Discipline since 1797. Mr. Wesley instituted the trust clause so that the buildings related to Methodism would always be used for purposes that upheld the doctrine, spirit and discipline of the church.

The trust is and always has been irrevocable except as provided in the Discipline. The outcome has been that Methodist denominations rarely have new branches grow.





**Please answer  
CLEARLY. Who  
owns our church  
Buildings?**

The Iowa Conference of the  
United Methodist Church.

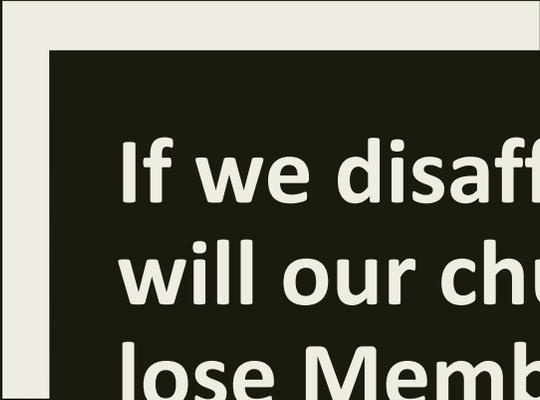
Disaffiliation would place  
ownership in the hands of the  
congregation.



**If we affiliate  
with another  
denomination,  
do they have  
trust  
requirements/  
clauses?**

Many do not - such as the Global  
Methodist Church - Others may.





**If we disaffiliate  
will our church  
lose Members?**

It is likely some members will leave the church because, though our doctrine in fact will not change from what it is today, they may interpret our choice as harmful.

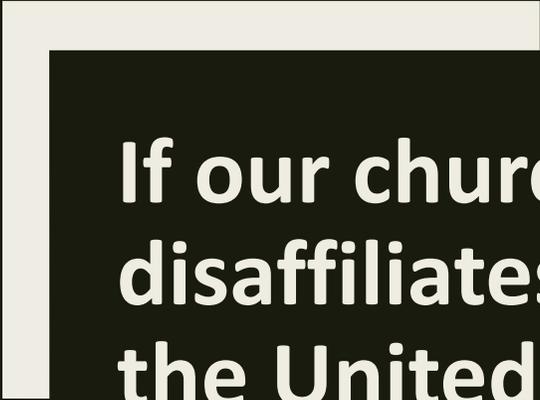


**If we lose  
members, can  
we afford to  
grow the church  
forward?**

Your church has likely survived many crises in its history.

Further, other churches in Iowa who have proclaimed clarity in affiliation with historic doctrine, spirit and discipline have grown.



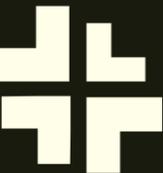


**If our church  
disaffiliates from  
the United  
Methodist  
Church, how  
would we get a  
new pastor?**

If you affiliate with another denomination, obviously you would follow their procedures.

If you did not, you could either hire a consulting firm to recruit for you or find the pastor(s) you desire on your own.

(Pensions, health insurance, etc. would be negotiated)



# QUESTION & ANSWER TIME