



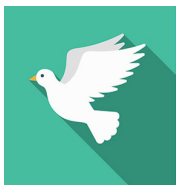
# The United Methodist Church

## Our Beliefs

The United Methodist Church finds itself in a season of splintering. The following document is prepared by the cabinet and conference staff following district gatherings to clarify the denomination's core doctrines and to answer key questions arising around church disaffiliations.

### God

We believe there is one living and true God who is eternal, holy, all powerful, all knowing, and ever present. God is the maker and preserver of all things — both what is seen and what is not seen. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons in one — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



### Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. The Spirit is at work in the world and the lives of individuals. It transforms, empowers, and guides believers. Through the Holy Spirit, we experience the fruit of the spirit and spiritual gifts.

### Mission

We believe the mission of the Christian life is summed up in the two great commandments of loving God and loving our neighbors. Scripture informs us that this is lived out as we love mercy, seek justice, walk humbly with God and “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

### The Bible

The Bible is the inspired word of God and is the primary source for Christian doctrine. It contains all things needed for salvation and living a life unto God.



### Jesus

We believe Jesus was born of a virgin. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human. Jesus is the very Word of God and the savior of all humankind who came to earth to live, to teach us how to love, and to restore us to God. Jesus willingly endured the suffering, shame, and death on the cross in order to pay the debt for humanity's sin. He then rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus is acknowledged as the way to salvation.

### The Creeds

Core UM beliefs are summed up in various creeds. One is the Apostle's Creed (UM Hymnal #881). Another is the Nicene Creed (UM Hymnal #880), which is printed below:

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one, holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### Resurrection

We believe that Jesus physically rose from the dead, walked the earth, ascended to heaven, and will come again to judge all humanity and establish his reign over the earth.



### Doctrine of Grace

We believe grace is the unearned and undeserved favor of God extended toward all humanity. United Methodists believe in three forms of grace:

- Prevenient grace that is at work in our lives drawing us to God prior to salvation.
- Justifying grace that brings us into right relationship with God through faith in Christ.
- Sanctifying grace that continues to work in us to transform us into the image of Christ.





Much information is being shared regarding disaffiliation and the disaffiliation process. Below are some of the most common questions.

### Will We Change Our Articles of Religion?

While it's true that there are some United Methodists who don't share all of the beliefs in our Articles of Religion (Book of Discipline ¶1104, Section 3), the vast majority of United Methodists hold dear to the teachings about the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, scripture and many other aspects that are central to our faith. It is nearly impossible to change our Articles of Religion under church law, so no, these important doctrines will not change.



### Where Should Our Attention Be Focused?

Jesus gave us an important directive in Matthew 28:18-20. We are to make disciples of all people. That is the mission. That is what The United Methodist Church stands for in the 21st century. And that is where all local churches are asked to place their focus.

### Will Every Church Need to Vote?



No vote is necessary. The only churches that need to vote are those with a large part of the congregation desiring to leave. In these cases, it may be wise to conduct a straw poll of the membership before a Charge Conference for an official vote is requested from the District Superintendent.

### Why Should We Stay UMC?

Start by asking what you love about your church now.

And then here are some strengths of The United Methodist Church:

- **Your church is already part of your community** — For decades, in fact more than 100 years in many cases, your church has been part of the community. It's helped in times of need. It has welcomed people who are hurting. It has been part of weddings and funerals. And it is known by people who have not even set foot inside your doors.
- **Together, we make a huge impact on the world** — The UMC has more than 350 missionaries around the world and mission partnerships on most continents around the world. And when disaster strikes, the United Methodist Committee on Relief is there to serve as the hands and feet of Christ.
- **Our appointive system ensures a pastor for each congregation** — Our system works to ensure a pastor for each congregation. Those outside the connection may have to recruit their own pastors and then focus efforts on retention.
- **The annual conference provides expertise and resources** — Some examples include training, consultations, grants, and Zoom licenses.

### Why are traditionalists being forced to leave?

No one is being forced to leave the UMC. ¶ 2553 was added during the 2019 General Conference as part of the Traditional Plan as a means for progressive congregations, who so desired, to leave the denomination. When General Conference continued to be postponed some traditionalist leaders decided they could no longer remain in the UMC. This has resulted in some traditional-leaning congregations using ¶ 2553 to disaffiliate from the UMC.

### What If ...

#### The margin isn't enough to leave?

If a Church Conference vote does not reach 67% then a congregation will remain in the UMC. Congregations are encouraged to conduct a straw poll to see if there is adequate support of disaffiliation from the church membership prior to voting to limit further fracturing of a congregation.

#### We don't have the money?

The required payments were passed as part of the Traditional Plan. Churches that desire to leave must meet those requirements to disaffiliate.

#### A congregation disaffiliates but some members want to remain UMC?

Congregations that vote to disaffiliate should notify all members of the decision and provide options for those who want to remain UMC members. This would include assisting them to connect with another UMC either in person or online. Their membership can be transferred to any UMC where they desire to be active.