



WELCOME TO LUMC'S TOWN HALL MEETING

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023

**This Town Hall meeting will be
divided into two parts today.**



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Part One: Presentation of Questions and answers based on information from the Book of Discipline, UMC information, Zoom Meetings, and other resources



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Part Two:

Members who have signed in with their question, comment, or concern will have the floor for three minutes after they are called upon to share



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Let us pray...



The questions submitted will be listed at the top of the slide.

The responses will be listed in the blue box.

What are the current issues facing churches within the UMC denomination?

1. LGBTQIA+ and the non-enforcement of the Book of Discipline
2. Violations of the Articles of Religion and Confessions of Faith
3. Control of Apportionment spending
4. UMC Trust Clause

Why don't we wait to see what happens at General Conference 2024, before making a decision?

The 2019 called General Conference was supposed to have resolved the major issues in the UMC. However, since then the church has become even more polarized.

What changes could be made to the BOD at the next general conference that could go against our current beliefs?

Three resolutions were passed at all 5 jurisdictional meetings in November 2022.

- “Leading with Integrity” – Any member of a church that has voted to disaffiliate from the UMC should recuse themselves from leadership roles in the UMC.
- “Justice and Empowerment of LGBTQ People” - The resolution urges the SEJ to support LGBTQ people, affirm a moratorium on lawsuits and complaints surrounding sexual orientation, and not pursue (or resolve complaints in a non-punitive and just manner) against bishops around their sexual orientation or who officiate LGBTQ weddings, and support elections of bishops who uphold this.
- “A US Regional Conference” – Expedite the process to separate the US Jurisdictions from Central Conferences.

Could there be a peaceful reconciliation between LUMC and the UMC?

Unlike individuals, churches have strict limitations. The discernment process is a peaceful way for churches to separate from the UMC without resorting to litigation.

Will LUMC be able to disaffiliate by December 31, 2023's deadline as set forth in paragraph 2553 of the Discipline?

SC's Bishop Holston will not allow SC churches to disaffiliate using paragraph 2553.

This deadline is only for disaffiliation, so it does not apply to churches in SC.

If LUMC **can't disaffiliate**, what could be our path should we choose to leave the UMC?

Bishop Holston has set a process of **separation** using the Book of Discipline's Paragraph 2549.

Is there a timeline for the separation process?

1. A timeline was updated by the SCUMC Trustees on September 15, 2023 and is available to you today.
2. A portion of the requirements must be completed by December 1, 2023
3. The 30 days of discernment and vote must take place before March 1st 2024.

What is Phase One of the process to determine if separation is right for LUMC?

The Way Forward Committee was tasked with:

1. Educating our members
2. Providing a means to receive questions and answers from members
3. Reporting back to Church Council

What is Phase Two of the process?

1. Church Council was given a report from the Way Forward Committee on October 19, 2023.
2. They were provided a copy of the SCUMC Separation Agreement for review as required by the SCUMC.

Continued...Phase Two of the process

1. Church Council voted to allow LUMC Members to enter into a period of discernment and be allowed to vote with regard to separation.
2. A letter has been sent to the District Superintendent requesting a 30 day period of discernment.

If Church Council votes to allow LUMC's membership to vote, what will be the next phase of the process?
(Phase Three)

1. Church Council has secured attorney representation with the National Center for Life and Liberty and has begun the separation process following the updated timeline.
2. A 30 day period of discernment has been set for November 15, 2023-December 15, 2023.

What is Phase Four of the process?

The District Superintendent has said our vote will take place the first part of February.

What is Phase Five of the process?

1. If the membership vote is for separation, information will be given to the membership about affiliation options.
2. A new entity will be established.

What if there is not a 2/3 majority to leave the UMC?

The church will remain in the UMC. Each member will have to decide whether to stay with LUMC or leave.

What is the purpose of the 30 Days of Discernment?

The purpose of this period of discernment is to provide an opportunity for church members to engage in dialogue with one another, allow every voice of the congregation to be heard, to hear reasons for separation, the cost of separation and to discern the congregations' sentiment regarding separation. This is a SCUMC led process.

After the 30 Days of Discernment, what will be the process for voting?

1. The District Superintendent will call a Church-wide Charge Conference.
2. A member must vote in person on the day of the vote only.
3. Members will sign in and provide a valid ID that matches the name on our membership roll.

What is the process for auditing our membership rolls before the vote?

1. A letter from Church Council was sent on September 25, 2023 to members who have been inactive in order to update our rolls.
2. They could choose to stay with LUMC, move their membership, or leave LUMC.

What about those for whom we have no address?

1. An attempt will be made to secure an address and send a membership update request.
2. If there is no response, their names must be placed on our Annual Charge Conference List to be read each year for three years before being removed.

Will attending members need to update their information?

1. Attending members will need to make sure the name on our membership roll is their legal name.
2. Updates to their address and contact information need to be made as well.
3. An opportunity will be provided in the near future and further information is forthcoming.

Will I be allowed to vote by email or other means if I can't attend in person?

Only those voting in person on the day of the vote may cast a ballot.

What will be the choices on the ballot?

1. You may choose for our church to stay with the UMC.
2. You may choose for our church to separate from the UMC

Who will count the votes?

When will we know the outcome?

1. For churches that voted last spring, there was not a uniform process. However:

2. The District Superintendent or representative will count the votes along with a representative of Leesville UMC.

2. The results will be announced that day.

What percentage is needed to be able to leave the UMC?

2/3 of the number of voting members present at the Church Conference will be required for LUMC to leave the UMC.

If a person abstains from voting, it is not counted.

If there is a 2/3 majority that day, is the process over?

1. No, church council will have to fulfill the requirements of separation, but we will cease paying apportionments as of March 10, 2024.

2. The Annual Conference of 2024 must vote to allow our separation.

If we vote to separate and Annual Conference allows it, what things will happen?

1. Our pastor will make a choice about affiliation with the UMC.
2. We will have to decide about our future affiliation, if any.

What will it cost to separate?

Using the SCUMC's chart, our cost to separate should be about \$268,000. The final amount will be determined by the SCUMC.

\$	Cost
Cost to incorporate	\$1000
10% of Property Equity	\$140,700
10% of Liquid Assets	\$47,423
Next yr's. apportionments	\$38,564
Unfunded Pension	\$4000
Clergy Salary until Closure	Already budgeted
3-years insurance	\$36,000
Total	\$267, 687

Will LUMC have access to the funds necessary to separate?

1. Yes, LUMC will have the funds to separate.
2. The Finance Committee along with Church Council will be in charge of this portion of the process.

Will we be able to retain our property?

Once the Annual Conference votes to allow LUMC to separate, we will be able to retain our property.

If the LUMC membership votes to stay with the UMC, how will this impact us financially?

LUMC would be required to continue paying apportionments as determined by the SCUMC.

Our property will remain in trust with the UMC.

What will be the changes regarding our affiliation with the UMC, if we separate?

1. We will rebrand and have a new logo as we will not be able to use the Cross and Flame.
2. We will establish a new entity and discontinue to use the title United Methodist.

What are our options if we separate?

1. We could become independent.
2. We could join another affiliation.

Will we get to vote on our new affiliation?

1. Yes, the members would be presented options regarding affiliation.
2. They would be allowed to vote.

Will the UMCSC Trustee's adjusted timeline affect our separation timeline?

1. The adjustments affect the deadlines of documentation and action items.
2. Many items have a deadline of December 1, 2023.
2. The Adjusted timeline is available to you today.

Part Two: Floor is open to members who've signed in.

1. Members who've signed in will be called to the microphone to share the question, comment, or concern listed on the card submitted.
2. Three minutes will be allotted to each participant and taken under advisement by the committee.



Town Hall Membership Participation

