



# Centenary United Methodist Church and Disaffiliation

At a Special Session of the General Conference in 2019, The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church was amended to allow churches to “disaffiliate” or leave the denomination over issues related to sexuality. Since then, the Church’s official position has not changed; same-sex marriages are still prohibited, and LGBTQ persons may not be ordained.

The North Carolina Conference Board of Trustees adopted the disaffiliation agreement this past May. Almost immediately, there began a campaign to discredit the United Methodist Church. For example, videos have been posted online claiming that the General Conference in 2024 will change the Discipline and require all churches and pastors to perform same-sex weddings, and force churches to accept LGBTQ clergy. While the actions of the next General Conference concerning sexuality are both unknown and unpredictable, there has never been a credible proposal to force any church or pastor to do something against their conscience.

Another accusation is that United Methodist doctrine will change; we will abandon the divinity of Jesus or deny the Resurrection, etc. The evidence for this is videos of people espousing fringe theological positions held by only a few. In reality, the doctrine of the Church has not and will not change and is being taught and preached in nearly every United Methodist congregation.

The confusion caused by this disinformation has created a wave of rushed disaffiliations involving a third of the congregations in the North Carolina Conference. Pastors and members who wish to remain United Methodist have been displaced from their churches. Friendships have ended and, in some instances, families have become estranged. In almost every case where a church has voted on disaffiliation, the process has been divisive and disruptive to normal church life.

Since nothing other than the disaffiliation agreement itself has been added to or changed in our Discipline or doctrine, this disunity is unnecessary, tragic, and damages the Church’s witness in our community.

Centenary’s commitment to the United Methodist Church has not wavered, nor has our outreach in our community. While we may never agree on every issue, we remain united in our mission to experience, grow in, and share Christ’s love.

**Therefore, as faithful United Methodists, Centenary will continue to abide by The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, including the 2019 Addendum. The Church Council will neither investigate nor pursue disaffiliation at this time.** Should the situation warrant further discernment after the next General Conference, the Church Council has the authority to revisit this decision.

We will continue to follow John Wesley’s rules to “Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God.” Above all, we will strive to follow Paul’s command in Ephesians 4:

“...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”