



As we all know, the United Methodist Church finds itself less than united currently. Over the past few years, it has become apparent that the church was headed for an amicable split at best, an acrimonious divorce at worst.

While there was aspiration for a grace filled and loving separation, it appears that all hope of that outcome has disappeared.

On July 14th, 106 UMC churches in Florida sued the Florida Annual Conference seeking to immediately disaffiliate from the denomination. They allege the requirements for disaffiliation approved by a special session of the United Methodist Church's General Conference are "onerous, and in many cases, prohibitive."

That disaffiliation plan allows churches wishing to leave the denomination to take their properties with them through 2023 after paying apportionments and pension liabilities. It was added to the Book of Discipline by General Conference delegates in 2019 alongside legislation called the Traditional Plan that strengthened the denomination's language barring the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ United Methodists.

The legislation that was passed in 2019 eased restrictions on leaving the UMC, while still making sure that pensions of current and past UMC pastors were funded, as well as establishing a baseline for the missions and ministries that the church is already committed to. Abrupt disaffiliations without funding these two areas could cause pain to many who have given their life to the service of the church, as well as many who rely on the church ministries in areas such as emergency response, education, and much more.

It's also worth noting that those who wish to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church are the same ones who pushed for the revised language in the Book of Discipline ([¶ 2553](#)) that they now wish to have the court throw out. The 2019 General Conference also overwhelmingly passed another measure, [¶ 1504.23](#), that requires departing churches to pay a fair share of pension obligations no matter what mechanism they use to exit the denomination

If you wish to read more about the lawsuit or the Florida Annual Conference response, please click on the following links

[Florida Disaffiliation Lawsuit](#)

[FAQ from Florida Conference on Disaffiliation Lawsuit](#)

So, what does this mean for Cason? Currently, nothing. It is sad to see the denomination we love fighting amongst itself, but the truth is that while we are committed to the connectional and missional

nature of the “mother church,” Cason is a local church, a family. Our commitment is to the people in our mission field. We have never shied away from our responsibility to our local community. We continue to serve those in need, be them young old, homeless, well off, lost or found. That will not change.

Leadership will continue to monitor the situation, and I will report to you any information we get. In the meantime, we will continue the job Jesus gave us, making disciples for the transformation of the world.

Pastor David