

(<https://andersonhills.online.church>) SUNDAY SERVICES ONLINE: 9:30 AM & 11 AM
(<https://andersonhills.online.church>)

Search...



(<https://andersonhills.org/>)

Anderson Hills Church



Denomination Frequently Asked Questions

Denomination Home Page (<https://andersonhills.org/denomination/>)

Recommendations (<https://andersonhills.org/discernment-team-recommendation-letter/>) Vote Results (<https://andersonhills.org/disaffiliation-vote-results/>) Why we voted to disaffiliate (<https://andersonhills.org/denomination-why-voted-to-disaffiliate/>)

Vote Procedure (<https://andersonhills.org/disaffiliation-vote/>) FAQs

(<https://andersonhills.org/disaffiliation-frequently-asked-questions>)
Comparison Chart (<https://andersonhills.org/comparison-of-the-denominational-options-considered-by-the-discernment-team/>)

Pros & Cons (<https://andersonhills.org/denominational-discernment-analysis-pros-cons/>) Update Videos (<https://andersonhills.org/video-updates/>) Pastor
Jon's Initial Letter (<https://andersonhills.org/letter-from-pastor-jon-july-11-2022/>)

What is “disaffiliation” from The United Methodist Church (UMC)?

“Disaffiliation” is a process by which an individual United Methodist Church can separate from the denomination while keeping its property and assets. Since Anderson Hills is a United Methodist church, if we wish to separate from the denomination, this process is required.

Here is what is required by the UMC to disaffiliate, and the action steps that Anderson Hills is taking as we consider this option.

1. A church must have a period of discernment to properly determine the best option for their congregation.

Pastors and members of the Discernment Team at AH have been meeting since May 2022 for discussion, study, and discernment in order to make a recommendation to the congregation.

2. A church must host an informational meeting conducted by a congregation’s District Superintendent, to inform members about the UMC and the disaffiliation process.

*Anderson Hills’ informational meeting was held on **September 27 at 7:00 pm** in the Sanctuary with our District Superintendent, Rev. Jenn Lucas.*

3. The District Superintendent must call a Church Conference where a vote of at least 2/3 of the members who are present is required to disaffiliate.

*Our date to vote on these two recommendations at a Church Conference is **Sunday, October 23 at 5:00 pm (new time) in the Sanctuary. Please check-in at 4:30 pm.***

Each individual member gets to vote (not each family unit). Youth who have completed Confirmation are considered members.

4. Disaffiliation is complete after an affirmative vote from a church’s Conference.

Anderson Hills is part of the West Ohio Conference. Our Bishop has scheduled a meeting for this purpose on November 19, 2022.

5. Payments associated with disaffiliation must be made in order to the church’s Conference.

If the Church Conference votes to disaffiliate, payment of required disaffiliation costs will be made from Anderson Hills to the West Ohio Conference.

Why disaffiliate?

Anderson Hills exists to glorify God and produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who transform the world. Today, there are serious concerns that remaining a part of the United Methodist Church will hinder our ability to fulfill our mission. Our desire to separate is based primarily on four areas:

- **Core beliefs.** We believe the United Methodist Church has drifted slowly and steadily from its historic Christian theological foundation. Some of our core beliefs (for example, that Jesus is God) have been denied by some UMC Bishops and pastors without accountability. While both the Apostle Paul and John Wesley, separated by nearly two thousand years, would have agreed to the statement of beliefs (<https://andersonhills.org/our-beliefs/>) of our church, the same cannot be said of many in today's UMC. Our denomination's leadership accepts an unsettling range of views on the authority of scripture, the unique claims of Jesus as the Son of God, and His literal resurrection from the dead. We believe Jesus made it clear in His teaching that Christians are called to be salt and light so as to influence the culture, rather than to be influenced by the culture. Too many within the UMC denomination and its leadership are evidencing a desire to be accepted by the world, rather than a commitment to be acceptable to a Holy God.
- **Decline.** The division within the UMC denomination has become a distraction from our mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Evidence of our failure with that mission is the decline in UMC membership in the United States every year since the denomination was formed in 1968. Historically, this decline was slow (around 3% per decade). From 2005-2015, the decline grew to 18%, and it has accelerated even more since then (around 3% per year before COVID). This is unsustainable. In 2015, our leading economic expert (<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/economist-united-methodist-church-in-crisis>) reported that the UMC must stop this decline by 2030, or it will be impossible to do so. Unfortunately, the decline has significantly increased and no meaningful action has been taken by the General Conference to address it. There seems no discernable way of getting the denomination refocused on the calling to make disciples that was

central to the founding of the Church two thousand years ago.

- **Governance.** Through continued postponements and inaction, the UMC has rejected processes by which disagreements on such fundamental issues might be resolved. Proper denominational governance has eroded, with United States bishops and other leaders regularly disregarding the Book of Discipline. We found it telling that at the last General Conference in 2019, fully 60% supported a proposal to provide term limits for the office of bishop – a clear vote of no confidence in the current lifetime appointments, but not enough support to reach the percentage required to make a change.
- **Stewardship.** Member churches of the UMC are expected to pay yearly contributions to the UMC, and for Anderson Hills that can be close to \$250,000. In the face of denominational division and decline as well as repeated failures to stand up for core beliefs, we no longer see this as money well spent.

For these major reasons, we do not believe that the UMC is a good fit for Anderson Hills anymore. Pre-COVID, the average size of a UMC church was 70 people. We were around 1000. Many of the benefits the UMC provides to smaller churches don't really apply to us. In many ways, we are already operating as an independent church.

Why are we considering disaffiliation now?

The West Ohio Conference has laid out a process for each church seeking to disaffiliate from the UMC. This process will sunset in mid 2023, and no other viable path for separation exists. It is essential that we act now if we wish to disaffiliate. Hundreds of UMC churches across the country – with beliefs similar to those of our own – are moving now to disaffiliate. With their voices gone from the debate within the denomination, we cannot assume circumstances will improve in the future. We believe it is in our best interest to separate now.

What do we get from our UMC affiliation?

In theory, we receive a shared set of mission, vision, and values. We receive a ready supply of pastors to serve our churches. We receive the benefit of being part of a connection that combines resources to support camps, seminaries, missions, and other important work.

In practice, the UMC does not have a shared set of mission, vision, and values any longer; we may on paper, but not in practice. In practice, most UMC's have little say in who will be appointed to serve as their pastor. There is often little consultation from the Bishop and the Cabinet. Each of our current pastors are reappointed by the Bishop on an annual basis and can be reassigned at any time. A pastor may also be appointed who is not best suited to a congregation's needs. Additionally, one of our pastors may be reappointed to another church without significant warning and input from our leadership. We are concerned that this system has become more focused on the needs of the pastor than the needs of the church, as salary is often one of the biggest factors in the appointment process.

Anderson Hills also has a strong history of supporting missions on its own; we do not typically use UMC camps, and we have pastors from both UMC and non-UMC seminaries currently serving. We believe that we could better steward our apportionment dollars of \$250,000 to invest in missions that align with Anderson Hills' mission.

In many ways, Anderson Hills already operates as an independent church. We hire our own lay staff, and believe we could hire clergy who would be best suited for our church. We use a variety of non-UMC camps, mission trips, and conferences to learn and grow. We already fund important missions in both the UMC, as well as those that are non-UMC.

Who decides whether or not Anderson Hills will leave the United Methodist Church?

The members of our church will decide whether or not to disaffiliate, based on a ⅔ majority vote. In order to vote, you must be a member of Anderson Hills and present at the Church Conference on **October 23 at 5 pm (new time) , check in at 4:30 pm in the Sanctuary** when the vote is held. These rules are set by the UMC and we are unable to change them. If you're not sure if you are a member, please email Brenda Sellmeyer (mailto:bsellmeyer@andersonhills.org) to confirm.

What will change if Anderson Hills leaves the UMC?

Very little. Worship, children and student ministries, small groups and missions would remain the same. Our pastors and staff would remain in their current positions and our property and assets would be under the control of Anderson Hills.

As a church, we have been around for just over 200 years. We started as the Asbury Society, then became a Methodist Episcopal church, then a Methodist church, and in 1968 a United Methodist church. Regardless of denominational affiliation or name, Anderson Hills will continue to show God's love to the communities we serve and make more disciples of Jesus Christ. Our clergy, our Church Council, our leadership, and our staff will continue working to ensure the ministry and mission of the church advance without interruption or redirection.

One of the strengths of this church is its substantial financial commitment to missions both locally and around the world – including our work to help bring water and sanitation to those in east Africa and relief to Ukrainian war refugees in Romania. Some of our mission dollars today flow through our apportionments to the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. We expect that we would continue supporting missions at perhaps a higher level made available from what does not go toward our apportionments.

What do we lose if we leave the UMC?

We will no longer receive pastors appointed by the Bishop, we will no longer pay apportionments, and we will be responsible for clearly defining and upholding our structure and core beliefs since they will no longer be determined by the UMC.

How would disaffiliation impact our lay staff and pastors?

There would be no direct impact on our lay staff because they are hired by our church, not sent through the UMC.

All of our pastors are supportive of the Council's process of discernment. Regardless of what Anderson Hills chooses to do, each pastor must make her/his own decision about whether or not to remain in the UMC. However, all the pastors have expressed their love for Anderson Hills and their sincere desire to continue to serve here.

Our pastors will keep their UMC ordination credentials until our Church Conference on October 23. If Anderson Hills votes to disaffiliate, they will each be able to surrender their UMC ordination and be ordained by Anderson Hills Church. Their pensions will be converted to defined contribution accounts - the nonprofit version of a 401(k). Many companies who used to offer pensions have taken similar steps. Anderson Hills will continue to fund their retirement accounts at the same level we do now, and their health insurance will be identical to our lay staff plan.

How will we find pastors if they aren't appointed by

a Bishop anymore?

We will hire pastors in the same way we hire lay staff. The Church Council and Pastor Parish Relations Committee will oversee this work, and we will have many tools at our disposal: consulting with other network churches, nation-wide advertising, and consulting firms that help churches find pastors. Even when our Bishop appointed Pastor Jon, we utilized one of these firms to ensure the succession plan was effective, so this is not new for us. We will also be able to hire from the same seminaries where our current and former pastors have been educated.

Did Anderson Hills consider affiliation with another denomination?

Yes. Anderson Hills will continue in our core beliefs and our rich Wesleyan heritage, and we considered other denominations that would be a good match for us. The two main options were the Global Methodist Church (<https://globalmethodist.org>), started earlier this year by a group of churches who have recently left the United Methodist Church, and the Free Methodist Church USA (<https://fmcusa.org>). We have also researched several other similar denominations, but they were not given serious consideration because they also place trust clauses on church property, which means they own our property, not us. We do not believe that is in Anderson Hills' best interest.

The Global Methodist Church has a streamlined structure that addresses some of the UMC challenges, and its theology is aligned with our historic beliefs. However, it was just started in May 2022, so it is in "draft form" that won't be solidified until its Convening Conference (potentially in late 2024, but the date is not set yet). Thus, it is difficult to evaluate with much certainty. Additionally, the GMC was built to address the problems of the UMC, but that does not ensure that it will be effective in today's world when mainline denominations are losing membership at triple the rate of the rest of the church.

The Free Methodist Church was founded in 1860 and has very similar beliefs to the UMC, and it does a much better job of holding itself to those beliefs. However, we

found that most of the churches affiliated with the FMC are very different from Anderson Hills in both size and demographic. A small percentage of FMC churches are in the USA, and those that are are typically located in smaller towns near the east and west coast. We imagine that we may have a difficult time finding new clergy within the FMC that would be accustomed to a church like Anderson Hills, larger in membership and located in a Midwestern city.

The media has made a big deal out of the Methodist view on human sexuality. Where will we stand with LGBTQ+ persons?

As you have seen, the conversation around disaffiliation is much larger than human sexuality. Not surprisingly, the media has told the story in a very different and polarizing way.

We understand that this is an issue where not all people at Anderson Hills see eye-to-eye. In fact, what we do know is that there is great diversity of thought within our congregation and much passion that surrounds our beliefs and opinions. It is imperative that each one of us approach these conversations with love and compassion, every time.

Our core beliefs as a church come from the Bible. Jesus expressly says that Christian marriage is between a man and a woman, and the Bible teaches that sex is a gift from God exclusively for married relationships. For that reason, we will continue to uphold the same practices that we have throughout our history. We cannot ordain LGBTQ+ persons or host same-sex weddings.

That being said, every person is welcome at Anderson Hills. Jesus said that the greatest commandments are to love God and to love others, and thus we are called to express our Biblical views with love and compassion, seeking unity in our love for God and all of God's people.

What is the trust clause and how does it affect our church?

United Methodist Churches do not own their property (including real estate, equipment, and all financial assets). Instead, it is held “in trust” for the denomination. Historically, this was created to ensure that UMC churches could be held accountable if they were not remaining faithful to the UMC doctrines, because the denomination could take the property if the church was not faithful. However, it is not being used in that way any longer. Instead, it has been used by the denomination as leverage against a church when there is disagreement over a change of pastor. We do not believe this is in Anderson Hills’ best interest, and we would be released from this claim upon a final vote for disaffiliation by the West Ohio Conference. Thus, we would permanently own all our property.

How much will it cost us to leave?

There are four potential costs: property, pension, apportionments, and grant repayment. Our Bishop is being very generous by not charging anything for the value of the property. This is significant, because our combined property could be valued between 20-30 million dollars. Some Bishops are requiring churches to pay up to 50% of that value. The pension cost is non-negotiable, calculated by the company that services the pension. It ensures that the pension will remain viable for our retired pastors even though we will not be actively funding it anymore if we leave. For apportionments, we have to pay one year’s worth (\$250,000). We will pay this every year if we stay in the UMC. Finally, we must repay the Conference grants that helped start Fresh Expressions.

\$0	Property
\$623,423	Pension Buyout
\$250,000	2023 Apportionments
\$122,000	Grant Repayment
\$995,423	Total

As a church with no debt, we believe payment of that sum can be accomplished within our current financial resources and without incurring debt.

We are able to do this because of the wise investment of a generous gift by the Withrow family several years ago. We have used this gift to pay off our mortgage and fund significant capital improvements needed to enhance online worship during COVID. We believe that one of the reasons God provided this gift is to help us through this important transition.

If you would like to help with the cost of this important work of disaffiliation, you can contribute directly to it through our online giving options, or by writing a check and putting "UMC Disaffiliation Expenses" in the subject line. We are thankful for your generosity!

What will happen to our endowment funds?

We have been blessed with many generous families who have left gifts that are designated for specific purposes (missions, facility upkeep, support of a particular ministry, scholarships, and such). There will be no change to these funds. They will continue to be invested wisely and the proceeds will be spent on the exact purposes that the donor(s) named when they generously gave the funds.

How will the church be financed in the future?

Anderson Hills has always been and will continue to be financed by our members' contributions to the general operating budget and our missions budget. We pay annual "apportionments" to the West Ohio Conference. In the last several years, those have amounted to \$250,000 per year. These apportionments fund administrative costs of the Conference and the denomination, Methodist seminaries and other educational programs, and mission work selected by the denomination. As an

independent church who is in a network with others, the denominational cost would be \$0.

We have a faithful expectation that our work in Cincinnati and around the world will continue to expand as it has for many decades, all supported by our generous members.

What other churches are considering leaving the UMC?

There are hundreds of other churches across the United States that are considering their options for disaffiliation from the UMC. Some have already done so; others are in the process as we are. Some will choose another denomination. Some will choose to be independent churches. Many of the largest UMC churches across the country are choosing to be independent.

What if Anderson Hills membership determines to leave, but I don't want to leave the United Methodist Church?

If we determine to leave the UMC, but you wish to remain a part of the United Methodist Church, Anderson Hills will help you connect with a local UMC church in our area, so you can transfer your membership to that church. Please let us know (<mailto:denomination@andersonhills.org>) if you would like help with this.

Is it possible that the members of Anderson Hills vote to disaffiliate on October 23, but the West Ohio Annual Conference of the UMC votes on November 19 to force us to stay?

There is no precedent for this, and many churches have already disaffiliated. The Conference vote makes the church's vote official. We have no reason for concern that the Conference would vote against it. Many other West Ohio churches will be disaffiliating with us.

What will our church name be if we become independent?

If we become an independent church, our name would be Anderson Hills Church. This is consistent with the way we currently identify ourselves. We will need to update our brand and logo in the future. We want to take our time and complete the branding process with excellence, so the branding change will not be immediate.

If we become independent, what happens next? Do we start with a blank slate and define ourselves?

No. If the vote to disaffiliate is affirmative, the Council will officially adopt governing

bylaws that are based on our current Methodist beliefs and practices. As soon as we finalize these documents (this will happen sometime before the vote), we will share them with the congregation. In the coming year, we will devote time to refining specific areas where greater focus is needed (for example, the educational requirements that we will expect for pastors). We will continue to communicate clearly with the congregation about this work and publish any changes that are being made.

What will the experience be like in a church that is a member of an independent network? How do we know that the core beliefs of the network will be aligned with ours?

We are applying to a network called The Foundry Network which we have vetted to ensure that they align with our Methodist beliefs. It is a new network of large churches who have disaffiliated from the UMC. We also remain open to other networks if that does not seem to be the right fit.

Networks work well because they ensure that their churches are congruent with each other in their core beliefs. Most importantly, our beliefs have always been based on Scripture, and that will never change.

The network will give us the opportunity to learn from other successful churches, provide opportunities for our church staff to interact with others in similar roles, hold each other accountable, discuss potential staffing solutions, and share ministry ideas.

The Disaffiliation Team started meeting in May and the vote is October 23. Why are we moving quickly?

While we are moving quickly, the process is not being rushed. The team has been meeting weekly and doing significant work in between meetings to make it possible for us to vote this fall. The UMC sets the dates of the meetings, and we set the goal of being ready for the first voting opportunity because we appreciate our local West Ohio Conference's even-handed approach to the process. Additionally, since our UMC apportionments are over \$20,000 per month, we wanted to be good stewards of eliminating that expense sooner rather than later.

What can I, as a member of Anderson Hills, be doing?

- Pray for wisdom for all who are working with these issues and that we as a church are acting in accordance with the will of God.
- Treat each other with kindness and charity.
- Get informed about the issues. Contact a Discernment Team member or one of our pastors if you have questions that you would like us to research.
- Prayerfully decide how you feel about the issues, so that you can vote on **Sunday, October 23, 5 pm in the Sanctuary, arrive by 4:30 pm for check-in.**

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Plan Your Visit (<https://andersonhills.org/plan-your-visit/>)

Anderson Campus (<https://andersonhills.org/anderson-campus/>)

Salem Campus (<https://andersonhills.org/salem-campus/>)

Fresh Expressions (<https://andersonhills.org/fresh-expressions/>)

FAMILY

[Family \(https://andersonhills.org/family/\)](https://andersonhills.org/family/)

[Preschool \(https://andersonhills.org/preschool/\)](https://andersonhills.org/preschool/)

[Kids \(https://andersonhills.org/kids/\)](https://andersonhills.org/kids/)

[Students \(https://andersonhills.org/students/\)](https://andersonhills.org/students/)

[Adults \(https://andersonhills.org/adults/\)](https://andersonhills.org/adults/)

CARE

[Care \(https://andersonhills.org/care/\)](https://andersonhills.org/care/)

[Spiritual \(https://andersonhills.org/spiritual/\)](https://andersonhills.org/spiritual/)

[Emotional \(https://andersonhills.org/emotional/\)](https://andersonhills.org/emotional/)

[Physical \(https://andersonhills.org/physical/\)](https://andersonhills.org/physical/)

[Life Events \(https://andersonhills.org/life-events/\)](https://andersonhills.org/life-events/)

CONNECT & SERVE

[Next Steps \(https://andersonhills.org/connect-serve/\)](https://andersonhills.org/connect-serve/)

[Events \(https://andersonhills.org/events/\)](https://andersonhills.org/events/)

[Classes \(https://andersonhills.org/classes/\)](https://andersonhills.org/classes/)

[Groups \(https://andersonhills.org/groups/\)](https://andersonhills.org/groups/)

[Serve \(https://andersonhills.org/serve/\)](https://andersonhills.org/serve/)

LEARN MORE

[Learn More \(https://andersonhills.org/learn-more/\)](https://andersonhills.org/learn-more/)

[Our Beliefs \(https://andersonhills.org/our-beliefs/\)](https://andersonhills.org/our-beliefs/)

[6 Habits \(https://andersonhills.org/6-habits/\)](https://andersonhills.org/6-habits/)

[Baptism \(https://andersonhills.org/baptism/\)](https://andersonhills.org/baptism/)

[Bible Reading Plan \(https://andersonhills.org/bible-reading-plan/\)](https://andersonhills.org/bible-reading-plan/)

[Staff \(https://andersonhills.org/staff/\)](https://andersonhills.org/staff/)

[ENews \(https://andersonhills.org/enews/\)](https://andersonhills.org/enews/)

ADDITIONAL LINKS

[CCB Login \(https://andersonhillsumc.ccbchurch.com/goto/login\)](https://andersonhillsumc.ccbchurch.com/goto/login)

[Calendar \(https://andersonhillsumc.ccbchurch.com/w_calendar.php\)](https://andersonhillsumc.ccbchurch.com/w_calendar.php)

[Events \(https://andersonhills.org/events/\)](https://andersonhills.org/events/)

[Download Our App \(https://subsplash.com/andersonhillsunitedmethodistchurch/app\)](https://subsplash.com/andersonhillsunitedmethodistchurch/app)

[Podcast \(https://soundcloud.com/andersonhillsumc\)](https://soundcloud.com/andersonhillsumc)

[Jobs \(https://andersonhills.org/jobs/\)](https://andersonhills.org/jobs/)

[Watch on Demand \(https://andersonhills.org/watch-on-demand/\)](https://andersonhills.org/watch-on-demand/)



Anderson Hills Church

Online Campus
andersonhills.online.church
(<https://andersonhills.online.church>)

Anderson Hills Campus
7515 Forest Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45255
513-231-4172 (tel:+513-231-4172)

Salem Campus
6137 Salem Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45230
513-231-4172 (tel:+513-231-4172)

Copyright 2022 Anderson Hills Church

(<https://facebook.com/AndersonHillsChurch>)



(<https://www.instagram.com/andersonhillscincy/>)



(<https://twitter.com/AndersonHills>)



(<https://youtube.com/@AndersonHillsChurch>)

