

TWK Task Force on Use of ¶2549

November 2024 Update

Why this team was formed

During the report of the Conference Trustees at the 2024 TWK Annual Conference, the membership was provided with information about new revisions to ¶2549 of the Book of Discipline and about questions that had been raised regarding whether ¶2549 could be used as a method for churches to exit the denomination.

At the time of our 2024 Annual Conference, questions had already been presented to the Judicial Council (the highest court of the United Methodist Church) about whether a path to exit still remained after the expiration and nonrenewal of ¶2553, commonly known as the “disaffiliation provision.”

In anticipation that this might be possible once the new provisions to ¶2549 became effective (in January 2025), a task team was formed consisting of 2 representatives from each of the following groups: District Superintendents, Administrative Strategy Team, ,

Conference Trustees and Connectional Table who began working on a potential process.

Judicial Council rulings bring an end to the team’s work

That task team did convene and began its work toward making a recommendation to the Conference for a departure process for local churches. However, the Judicial Council has now ruled definitively for the entire denomination and has held that ¶2549 cannot be used as a method for a church to exit the denomination.

In addition, in a separate opinion, the Judicial Council held that the revisions to ¶2549 that were slated to become effective on January 1, 2025, are unconstitutional under Church law and, therefore, will not take effect.

As a result of this action by the Judicial Council for the UMC, individual conferences are not permitted to develop processes for churches to exit the denomination since doing so would conflict with UMC church law.

Accordingly, our task team has discontinued its work.

We continue to believe there is a place for everyone in the UMC. While we cannot provide the process that was anticipated when we met at the Annual Conference, we remain committed to moving forward in a way that honors our shared heritage.

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