



McEachern Memorial

A United Methodist Church

ANNOUNCEMENT

This is an official announcement for the McEachern Memorial United Methodist Church to hold a called Church Conference on Sunday, August 27, 2023, at 1:00 PM. Dr. Jessica Terrell, Central West District Superintendent, has set this conference to provide the opportunity for McEachern Memorial UMC to vote on disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. Dr. Terrell will preside over this conference. All professing members whose names are on the submitted membership roll (please see FAQ #5-7) are invited and encouraged to attend this conference for this significant vote.

To accommodate the Church Conference process, we will adjust our Sunday morning worship schedule for this day. On August 27, we will have only ONE worship service at 9:30 AM in the Sanctuary; we will also have Children's Sunday School and Nursery Care. After the 9:30 AM worship service is concluded the Sanctuary doors will be closed until 12:00 NOON.

At 11:45 AM the McEachern's Kids Center will reopen to provide childcare during the Church Conference. Please use this link to register your child(ren):

<https://mceachernumc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/758/responses/new>

At 12:00 NOON the Sanctuary doors will be reopened for those wishing to check in for the Church Conference (PLEASE NOTE: You will need to enter the Sanctuary from the main entryway ONLY to register attendance for the Church Conference; please follow outside directional signs). **You must be a professing member of McEachern Memorial UMC whose name is on the submitted membership roll (please see FAQ #5-7), and you must be present to be eligible to vote.** You will need to present a picture ID (Driver's License, Passport, School ID, etc.) to the District Tellers to receive a ballot. **You are strongly encouraged to NOT BE LATE to this conference; once the District Superintendent has called for the vote, the check in process will end and no additional members can receive ballots.**

The District Superintendent, Dr. Jessica Terrell, will open the Church Conference and call for the election of a Recording Secretary and Election Tellers. Dr. Terrell will then open the voting (see FAQ #9 for the wording of the ballot). When the voting is completed and the ballots are collected, a team of McEachern UMC Tellers and District Tellers will count the ballots and report the results to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent will announce the results of the vote

before closing the Church Conference. The vote can only pass by a supermajority (at least two-thirds or 66.67% of the total number of ballots issued).

Should the disaffiliation vote pass, McEachern Memorial UMC will go on a list of churches to be approved by the North Georgia Annual Conference. A special session has been called by Bishop Dease for November 18, 2023. If the Annual Conference approves the disaffiliation vote, the process for disaffiliation must be completed by December 31, 2023 (payment of apportionments and pension liability, submittal of historical documents, etc.). McEachern would complete the changes needed for the disaffiliation process such as changes to signs, collecting historical documents, etc. McEachern Memorial would also begin a discernment process after August 27 to decide whether to become independent or to align with another denomination. This discernment would also include decisions to be made about church staffing, church leadership, church theology, church polity, etc. Another Church Conference would likely be called by the Church Council after November 30 to allow the congregation to vote on the proposed changes.

Should the disaffiliation vote fail, McEachern Memorial UMC will remain a United Methodist congregation.

PREPARATION

You are encouraged to continue **PRAYING** for discernment for the McEachern Memorial UMC. Each day in August, you are asked to set aside a few moments twice a day at 8:27 AM and at 8:27 PM (the date of the Church Conference) to pray.

There will also be one more CHURCH-WIDE MEETING on **Sunday, August 13, at 6:30 PM**, in the Sanctuary. This meeting will give details for the Church Conference process and vote. It will also be an opportunity to hear answers to submitted questions. **If you have a question about the Church Conference process, please send your question to chutto@mceachernumc.org no later than Wednesday, August 9; you may also use the link (Submit Questions) as found on the church webpage: www.mceachernumc.org/path-forward/.** There will be no questions received at the meeting; this process gives time for ensuring the accuracy of answers.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What if I can't be present on August 27 at 1:00 PM? Can I vote earlier or later? Can someone else (a family member) vote for me?** *The Book of Discipline states that only those professing UMC members who are PRESENT can vote. The vote also must occur during the Church Conference session; no votes are allowed either before or after the conference. No one else can vote for you, nor can you vote for anyone else.*

2. **Will the vote be taken by hand, voice, or ballot?** *The vote will be taken by written ballot. The procedure is anonymous. The ballots will then be counted and preserved until after the Annual Conference vote in November. Please keep in mind that any abstention or ballot that is not marked or not turned in will be considered a NO vote. The two-thirds threshold will be based on the total number of ballots issued on August 27. There must be at least two-thirds of the ballots marked YES out of the total number of ballots issued for the disaffiliation vote to pass.*
3. **Will we still have the 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM worship services on August 27?** *We will have ONLY the 9:30 AM worship service on August 27. We will NOT have an 11:00 AM worship service on August 27. This will give our staff, volunteers, and District personnel time to reset for the Church Conference at 1:00 PM.*
4. **How can I confirm that my name is on the submitted membership roll?** *You are strongly encouraged to call the Church Office (770-943-3008) to confirm that your name is on the submitted membership roll. A membership roll was submitted to the District Superintendent before the May 26 deadline. We have discovered that there are some inaccuracies with the submitted membership roll because of the computer system. This means that there are some church members who should have been listed on this submitted membership roll BUT ARE NOT. Unfortunately, the submitted membership roll cannot be amended. Again, you are strongly encouraged to call the church office to confirm that your name is on this submitted membership roll.*
5. **What if my name is not on the submitted membership roll? Can I still vote?** *If your name is not on the submitted membership roll, you will not be able to vote. The membership roll cannot be amended past the May 26 deadline.*
6. **If I am not on the submitted membership roll, can I still attend as a guest?** *If you are not on the submitted membership roll, you are asked NOT to attend this Church Conference. The Sanctuary may reach its capacity for this Church Conference; it is important to reserve space for those who are able to vote.*
7. **Will there be speeches made during the Church Conference?** *No. The conference will simply be called to order, prayer offered, instructions given, and a vote taken. There will be no opportunities for speeches.*
8. **Will we be able to see the ballot before August 27?** *Yes. Here is the wording on the ballot: Do you want the McEachern Memorial United Methodist Church to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow as provided in Paragraph 2553 of The Book of Discipline?*

9. **Who will count the votes?** *The submitted ballots will be counted by a team of McEachern Memorial UMC members (elected as tellers at the beginning of the church conference) and District tellers (selected by the District Superintendent).*
10. **How many votes does it take for the disaffiliation to pass?** *The vote can only pass with a supermajority (at least two-thirds or 66.67% of the total number of ballots issued). This means that any ballots turned in with no markings or any ballots not turned in to the tellers will count as a NO vote. If you are present for the Church Conference and receive a ballot, you are encouraged to use that opportunity to vote and turn in your ballot.*
11. **When and how will the vote results be announced?** *The results of the disaffiliation vote will be announced in the Church Conference session by the District Superintendent. In addition, communication will go out on Monday, August 28 (and succeeding dates) to announce the results.*
12. **If McEachern Memorial UMC votes to disaffiliate, will there be any staffing changes?** *If McEachern Memorial UMC votes to disaffiliate, your appointed clergy staff (Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor) will be reappointed to another United Methodist Church after November 30, 2023. Lay staff are eligible to remain or leave. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee will discern the future staffing needs for the church, both clergy and lay.*
13. **What will be the status of McEachern Memorial UMC if the disaffiliation vote passes? Is the church no longer United Methodist if the disaffiliation vote passes?** *If the disaffiliation vote passes, the process must continue until the completion of the disaffiliation process; McEachern Memorial would remain a United Methodist Church until the completion of the process. The disaffiliation vote must also be approved by North Georgia Annual Conference action (which is scheduled on November 18). Once the Annual Conference approves McEachern's vote, the church can finalize the apportionment and pension liability payments and submit any historical documents and items. The process must be completed before December 31, 2023.*
14. **Where can I find more information to help me in making my decision on how I should vote on August 27?** *The Path Forward page is still on the church website. This page has information about the process McEachern Memorial has followed: www.mceachernumc.org/path-forward/. You may also find additional information on the North Georgia Conference website: <https://www.ngumc.org/disaffiliation-process-and-information> and <https://www.ngumc.org/archived-disaffiliation-information>.*