

Disaffiliation Discernment Meetings

What are the advantages of becoming an independent church?

E1

What would be next if our church decides to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church? We would have a choice of becoming an independent church or joining a different denomination. Most churches that disaffiliate are choosing to become part of the Global Methodist Church, but some are choosing to be independent. Why?

Not Pigeonholed

Sometimes people won't even try a church because of its denominational affiliation. For example, some people refuse to try a Methodist church because that person has a Baptist background. Independent churches don't have that problem. People are more likely to explore a church not pigeonholed by its denominational label.

Create the Structure and Beliefs that Work for Us

Every church is different. An independent church can create rules, policies, reports, and practices tailored to the community's unique needs.

Synergy

While it takes time and effort to create your by-laws, membership requirements, and other church policies, it helps the church to define itself. The work done can create unity and a deeper sense of ownership. This creates people who are more passionate about their church. People are more likely to serve and to invite if they feel deep ownership of their church.

Freedom to Hire Our Own Pastors

Independent churches recruit, interview, and choose their own pastors. They can set their criteria for the kind of pastor they prefer. They can hire pastors that hold the same theology and affirm the same mission emphasis as the church. They get to set the salary and benefits to attract new pastors or suit the church's finances.

No Denominational Fees

All denominations require apportionment fees from their churches. These dues can be a considerable burden on the church's finances.

Find the Resources that Fit Our Church

Instead of using denominational resources (policies, curriculum, camps, educational events, etc.) that are limited, subpar, or theologically questionable, independent churches can choose their resources from the variety of options made available by parachurch organizations.

No Denominational Embarrassment

Independent churches avoid the problem of embarrassment when a denominational leader makes national news for something bad. For this reason, some people think our denominational connection is more of a liability than an asset.

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What are the advantages of joining a denomination?

E2

Our church has been affiliated with several denominations throughout our history. Our church was formed in 1966 when College Street Methodist Church and Trinity Methodist Church merged to form Christ United Methodist Church (built in 1968-1969). College Street had been started as a Methodist Protestant Church and Trinity as a Methodist Episcopal Church. Here are some reasons why churches choose to be affiliated with a denomination.

Connections

It's good to be part of a group of churches and clergy who hold similar beliefs and values. Denominational friendships provide fellowship and support. We can learn from each other. We coordinate efforts and resources to do more significant projects. It's especially important for clergy to have a network of like-minded pastors to discuss common ministry issues.

Guidance

There are many decisions that a church must make. Denominational resources help the church make good decisions about insurance, benefits packages, legal issues, etc. Denominations require churches to follow important legal policies and encourage churches to stay on mission.

Book of Discipline

Every organization must have by-laws, core beliefs, and other rules. Denominations have experts create these documents to be legal, theologically orthodox, and consistent. Independent churches make these documents in-house and sometimes the results are subpar.

Clergy Pool

Denominations help provide pastors for churches and churches for pastors. When it's time for a pastoral change, the denomination has a group of qualified ministerial candidates to fill the position. This reduces the time churches go without a pastor and pastors go without a job.

Clergy Accountability

Clergy must be qualified. Denominations provide stringent guidelines to safeguard churches from pastors that don't meet high standards. The denomination ensures pastors have passed background checks, psychological assessments, and receive a proper theological education. Denominations remove pastors who have moral failures or fall into theological heresies.

Help in Times of Trouble

Every church will face problems. It's good to have denominational help when the church has legal issues, troubles with its pastor, or complex financial decisions.