
Rio Texas Conference Asserts Fiduciary Responsibility in Legal Suit





SAN ANTONIO – The Board of Trustees of the Rio Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (UMC) [filed a petition in District Court of Bexar County, Texas against numerous United Methodist churches](#) seeking to disaffiliate from the Conference and UMC because they refused to engage the approved separation process.

When it became apparent that the churches named in the lawsuit attained counsel and were attempting to circumvent the Conference’s exit plan and shift the costs of leaving onto the remaining churches, the Rio Texas Board of Trustees made the reluctant decision to pursue litigation.

“We always try to avoid litigation, but we intend to take whatever actions are necessary to make sure a church’s decision to disaffiliate does not have an adverse impact on the financial health of our remaining congregations, clergy or their spouses,” said Kevin Reed, Rio Texas Conference trustee.

When a church exits the denomination, it impacts every other church in the Conference connection. The Rio Texas Conference's exit plan includes a disaffiliation payment that is intended to safeguard the Conference's promises to clergy and their spouses, as well as to provide support to the remaining congregations. Not following the process would be fundamentally unfair to those who have done so.

"While I am sorry to see any church depart, I also note that more than 30 churches have met their moral obligations to the Conference by following the approved process," said Kendall Waller, Director, Finance & Administrative Ministries.

To read details of the approved exit plan, see the [Discerning Pathways document](#).

"We remain prayerful that these churches will return to the table and meet their moral obligations to the Conference and its member churches," said Bishop Robert Schnase of the Rio Texas and New Mexico Conferences. "This disagreement is with a minority of churches. There are far more United Methodists staying who are invested in The United Methodist Church moving forward."

The division in The United Methodist Church is driven by conflicting views on the issue of gay marriage and the ordination of gay pastors. Those remaining United Methodists include conservative congregations who believe those decisions should be left up to local congregations and moderate and progressive congregations who desire to remove current prohibitions on gay marriage and the ordination of gay pastors.

###

About Rio Texas Conference

The Mission of United Methodists of The Rio Texas Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation about the world. We seek to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to reach out, in the name of God, to the people of

Texas and beyond. Some of our churches are in some of the fastest-growing areas of the country, others are in areas where people struggle with poverty, lack of affordable housing, and a loss of hope. We are committed to providing vital missions, vital congregations, and strong leaders to connect our churches to all people.

The Rio Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is made up of 310+ worshipping communities in South, Central, and West Texas. There are roughly 750 clergy under appointment by the bishop.

CONTACT:

Rev. Dr. Robert Lopez
Assistant to The Bishop
Director of Clergy Excellence
210-408-4500

lopeza2b@riotexas.org

[Petition Filed](#)

[FAQ's on Litigation](#)