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Suggested Title: Expedited Exit

Discipline Paragraphs: New ¶2548 and ¶361.3

Financial Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

Add new ¶ 2548 as follows:

**¶ 2548.** *Surrender of Charter of Local Church and Disaffiliation For Reasons Of Conscience* – Because of the current deep conflict over the church’s position on the practice of homosexuality and the blessing of homosexual unions, a local church may surrender its charter from The United Methodist Church and disaffiliate based upon the local church's declaration that for reasons of conscience, witness, or mission it can better serve Christ and his kingdom by not being affiliated with The United Methodist Church and its annual conference. Such disaffiliation shall require:

1. A minimum of ninety (90) days of study and discernment by the congregation
2. The affirmative vote of two-thirds (66.7%) of the church's professing members present and voting at a duly called church conference
3. Repayment to the annual conference any money invested by the conference in that local church through grants or loans during the previous five (5) years. The amount to be repaid shall include any payments made to the local church’s clergy by the annual conference, such as salary support, but shall not include subsidies to provide health insurance.
4. Payment to the annual conference of its current year’s apportionments in full and an additional sum equal to two times the current year’s apportionments
5. Other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* shall not be a bar to such disaffiliation.

Upon such surrender and disaffiliation, the local church shall be released from the provisions of ¶ 2501 and shall retain full rights to its property and funds, provided that any debts upon such property and any other debts payable by that local church are assumed by that local church. In the event of such proposed disaffiliation, the bishop, the cabinet, annual conference board of trustees, and other appropriate individuals of The United Methodist Church shall facilitate the orderly and timely administration of this process.

Renumber following paragraphs from existing ¶¶ 2548-2551.

RATIONALE:

Despite efforts to preserve unity in the Church, irreconcilable differences persist regarding the practice of homosexuality. The Church needs to value the consciences of our people and provide an honorable way for those whose consciences are violated to disaffiliate without the loss of property and in a ministry-affirming way. For forty years the General Conference has consistently maintained that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. In spite of this, there are local churches and ordained ministers for whom the position taken violates their conscience. Irreconcilable differences persist, diverting time and energy from our central mission of making disciples.