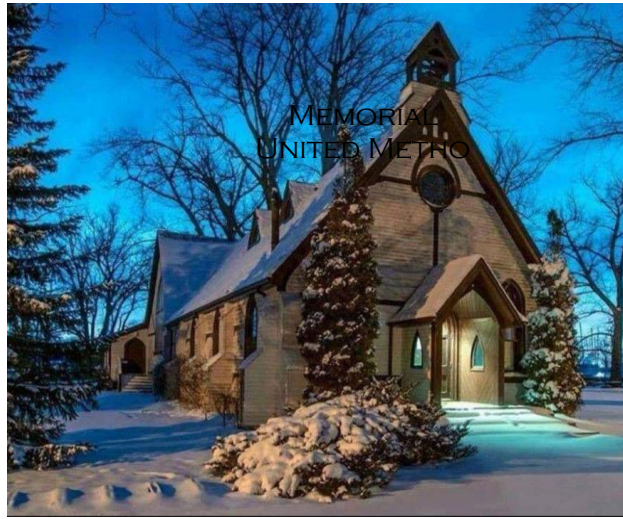


The Kresge Kourier January 2023



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From our Pastor's Heart

December 29, 2022

Please read the Letter "North Georgia Conference to Pause Disaffiliation Process" printed in this month's newsletter.

Understand it contains disinformation the very thing our Conference Leadership claims they are attempting to overcome.

The 2016 Book of Discipline with Addendum approved by the action of the 2019 General Conference is the current approved law and rule of the church. Following, upholding, and enforcing the rules is part of our historical Wesleyan accountability process. Episcopal Leaders and the Superintendency are falling miserably short in this regard, in our Annual Conference as well as throughout the General Conference.

I take these questions and responses very seriously:

"In covenant with other elders, will you be loyal to The United Methodist Church, accepting its order, liturgy, doctrines, and discipline, defending it against all doctrines contrary to God's Holy Word, and accepting the authority of those who are appointed to supervise your ministry?
I will, with the help of God." (UM BoW, Ordination of Elders, pg 676, Examination of Elders, pg 695)

"Will you guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church against all that is contrary to God's Word?
I will, for the love of God." (UM Bow, Consecration of Bishops, pg 703)

As well as the questions asked in the ordination process: Have you read, studied, do you agree with, will you teach and uphold the doctrine, discipline, and polity of our Denomination? Which if ever the response is no, one is stopped in the process.

The past few years there have been far too many instances explained away, if explained at all, by claiming the Book of Discipline is being followed while it was not being upheld, nor enforced. And too many instances of blatant contradictory comments and actions made by those in senior leadership positions contradicting the work of The General Conference and the approved UM Book of Discipline. I cannot continue to serve with those who demonstrate little to no regard for covenantal vows made between God, self, and the Connection. This is what led me to seek early retirement at the end of this conference year.

This action (continuation of the pause) will cause unnecessary harm to individuals and congregations throughout the North Georgia Annual Conference. Our immediate response should be prayer and fasting. Seek to forgive those who do harm without just cause. Pray for light over darkness. Pray for missional opportunities to share Christ with another, with many others. Pray that we be disciples who make disciples of Jesus Christ and not the world. Pray for peace, pray for patience. Pray for God's will to be done.

"Therefore be imitators of God - copy Him *and* follow His example - as well-beloved children [imitate their father]. And walk in love - esteeming and delighting in one another - as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a slain offering and sacrifice to God [for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance. [Ezek.20:41.] (Ephesians 5:1-2, The Amplified Bible)



North Georgia Conference to Pause Disaffiliation Process

Dear North Georgia United Methodists,

As we approach the window set by the appointive cabinet to receive disaffiliation requests using Book of Discipline paragraph 2553, it has become clear that there is a need for a pause in this process for our conference.

It is the responsibility of conference leaders to ensure that the disaffiliation process, put into place by the conference board of trustees, is carried out with integrity and grace.

In its report to the North Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church in June 2021, and again in June 2022, the conference board of trustees affirmed its commitment to the concept of the gracious exit. In particular, the trustees affirmed a desire for disaffiliations to be handled in a fair, transparent, uniform, and good faith manner that affirms the one universal church in service to Christ and honors the mission and ministry of all Christians.

The board of trustees, in consultation with the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor, worked diligently to develop, update, and implement a disaffiliation process that would fulfill the requirements of the Book of Discipline and the stated aspirations of the conference board of trustees and the Annual Conference.

However, the cabinet has discovered and observed that many local churches have been misled about the disaffiliation process and have been presented with information about the process, and about The United Methodist Church and its leadership, that is factually incorrect and defamatory. We have significant concerns about this misinformation and are well aware that it has the potential to do irreparable harm.

This information presented to members of local churches about disaffiliation has been outside the bounds of normal and acceptable civil discourse. It has not only been false and misleading but has been antithetical to the concept of a gracious exit or a commitment to honoring the mission and ministry of all Christians.

As a result of the misleading, defamatory, and false statements and materials shared with local church members by certain organizations as well as clergy and lay members of various churches and outside groups, we do not have confidence in the validity of upcoming church conference disaffiliation votes. After lengthy periods of discussion and consultation involving the cabinet, the board of trustees, and appropriate conference leadership, we have agreed that our Annual Conference cannot rely upon such votes for purposes of negotiating a gracious exit.

The ultimate step in the disaffiliation process is the ratification of disaffiliation agreements by the Annual Conference. However, because of the issues observed, the conference board of trustees is no longer confident it could recommend in good faith disaffiliation agreements to the Annual Conference at this time.

The appointive cabinet is therefore amending its previously presented policy and will not accept disaffiliation requests at this time nor will the conference board of trustees negotiate disaffiliation agreements.

The appointive cabinet, board of trustees, and bishop recognize the significance of this action.

We reaffirm our commitment to honor and uphold the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

We commit to walking alongside the clergy and laity of the North Georgia Conference as we together take this opportunity to re-set our focus on the mission of the church, to commit to deepening our focus on discipleship, and to get to know our incoming episcopal leader.

With just 15 months until the next session of the United Methodist General Conference, which will be held April 23 to May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina, this pause will allow churches to gain more information about the real, rather than the false or hypothetical, future of our church.

We give thanks for all North Georgia United Methodists in all our varied contexts. We stand beside you knowing that pause and uncertainty are hard. We pray for you and your ministry daily as together we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson
The Appointive Cabinet
The Conference Board of Trustees

Q&A

Why take this action now?

In recent months, District Superintendents holding informational meetings have encountered an astounding proliferation of misinformation in local churches. This misinformation is being intentionally deployed, is present in every district, and has the potential to cause irreparable harm. As we approach the time to take the next step in the disaffiliation process, it is clear to the district superintendents, bishop, and the board of trustees that the process cannot go forward with integrity at this time. We are ethically obligated to pause the process.

What is the misinformation?

The misinformation has come in the form of printed materials, PowerPoint presentations, websites, videos, emails, and social media posts. Some of the most pervasive misinformation and examples of a breach of integrity include:

- Clergy suggesting that members of one church would be willing to join another church to help push them over the threshold to disaffiliate.
- Clergy making presentations to congregations that are not their own, without the appointed pastor's permission, and in many cases without their knowledge, therefore, undermining their ministry.
- Church leaders communicating to members that "The UMC's theological impasse is rooted in our differing beliefs regarding the authority of the Bible, the interpretation of the Bible, its impact on how we live out our faith, and the Lordship of Jesus." This is untrue and is among the most widespread misinformation we've seen.
- Church leaders sharing that The United Methodist Church no longer believes in the resurrection of Christ. This is untrue.
- Churches holding secret meetings on this matter to which not all members are invited or equally informed.
- Presentations saying that in the future the UMC will force all churches to receive appointments of gay pastors, will force all clergy to officiate same-sex weddings, and that all churches must host same-sex weddings. This is untrue.
- Church leaders presenting disaffiliation as an opportunity to "own" church property. This is not the purpose of paragraph 2553 and it is an inappropriate use of this process.
- Church leaders communicating that North Georgia Conference leadership is not following the Book of Discipline. In fact, the North Georgia Annual Conference and its leaders have taken no actions in conflict with the Book of Discipline.
- Church leaders claiming that The Apostles Creed has been changed. This is untrue.
- Church leaders claiming that United Methodists no longer believe in the divinity of Christ. This is untrue.
- Church leaders claiming United Methodist seminaries are teaching a variety of unchristian material by non-Christian professors. This is untrue.

- ... and so on

How has the North Georgia Conference addressed the misinformation?

The North Georgia Conference has offered steady online and in-person access to accurate information.

- District Superintendents have held more than 200 information sessions over the past year.
- The website ngumc.org and, specifically www.ngumc.org/BeUMC, are updated regularly.
- The Conference has provided [printable, sharable Q&As](#).
- The Conference has empowered informed laity to speak on the topic to local churches.
- Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson has held six recent regional gatherings with opportunities for questions and answers. She met with pastors for conversation. She has met with lay members of Annual Conference in every district. And she has met with individual United Methodist congregations.
- Clergy and laity of the North Georgia Conference shared their commitment to the church, directly countering the misinformation, through an Open Letter at www.ngumc.org/OpenLetter.

Didn't the bishop say North Georgia wouldn't question a church's conscience?

Since adopting the Disaffiliation Agreement in 2021, the bishop, cabinet, and board of trustees agreed that they assumed good faith and would not question the conscience of a church seeking disaffiliation. Their interest and commitment was to the integrity of the process. This path was affirmed by the United Methodist Judicial Council ([read that decision](#)).

This gracious approach was an invitation to proceed with integrity.

Misinformation is present everywhere in our country. If we couldn't move forward because of the presence of misinformation could we ever accomplish anything?

Misinformation is not passively present in our churches, it is being intentionally deployed. There is no place for this behavior in United Methodist churches.

The bishop has said, "We are not trying to hold any church captive." Is this pause counter to her statement?

Reaching the point of pausing this process was not the intention or the desire of the cabinet, the bishop, or the board of trustees. This pause is a direct response to deceptive behavior and manipulative misinformation deployed in local churches.

What does this pause offer?

This pause offers churches an opportunity to re-set focus on the mission of the church, to commit to deepening our focus on discipleship, and to get to know our incoming episcopal leader, Bishop Robin Dease.

Is Bishop Dease aware of the pause?

Yes. Bishop Robin Dease, who will begin her assignment as bishop of the North Georgia Annual Conference January 1, 2023, is aware of this pause and why it is necessary.

What is next?

The next United Methodist General Conference has been announced for April 23 to May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Following that meeting, the process will be revisited.

Foremost, however, is the continued vital and missional work of the church. There are hungry and hurting neighbors who need us and there is a world that needs to know the love of Jesus Christ. That work must never pause.

Read Through the Bible in a Year - 2023

January

1 - Genesis 1-3
2 - Genesis 4-6
3 - Genesis 7-9
4 - Genesis 10-12
5 - Genesis 13-15
6 - Genesis 16-18
7 - Genesis 19-21
8 - Genesis 22-24
9 - Genesis 25-27
10 - Genesis 28-30
11 - Genesis 31-33 12 -
Genesis 34-36
13 - Genesis 37-39
14 - Genesis 40-42
15 - Genesis 43-45
16 - Genesis 46-48
17 - Genesis 49-50
Exodus 1 18 - Exodus 2-4
19 - Exodus 5-7 20 -
Exodus 8-10 21 - Exodus
11-13 22 - Exodus 14-16
23 - Exodus 17-19 24 -
Exodus 20-22 25 -
Exodus 23-25 26 -
Exodus 26-28 27 -
Exodus 29-31 28 -
Exodus 32-34 29 -
Exodus 35-37 30 -
Exodus 38-39 31 -
Exodus 40

February

1 - Leviticus 1-3
2 - Leviticus 4-6
3 - Leviticus 7-8
4 - Leviticus 9-10
5 - Leviticus 11-13
6 - Leviticus 14-15
7 - Leviticus 16-18
8 - Leviticus 19-21
9 - Leviticus 22-23
10 - Leviticus 24-25
11 - Leviticus 26-27
12 - Numbers 1-2
13 - Numbers 3-4
14 - Numbers 5-6
15 - Numbers 7
16 - Numbers 8-9
17 - Numbers 10-11
18 - Numbers 12-13
19 - Numbers 14-15
20 - Numbers 16-18 21 -
Numbers 19-20
22 - Numbers 21-22
23 - Numbers 23-25
24 - Numbers 26-27
25 - Numbers 28-29
26 - Numbers 30-31
27 - Numbers 32-33
28 - Numbers 34-36

March

1 - Deuteronomy 1-2
2 - Deuteronomy 3-4
3 - Deuteronomy 5-7
4 - Deuteronomy 8-10
5 - Deuteronomy 11-13
6 - Deuteronomy 14-16
7 - Deuteronomy 17-20
8 - Deuteronomy 21-23
9 - Deuteronomy 24-27
10 - Deuteronomy 28
11 - Deuteronomy 29-31
12 - Deuteronomy 32-34
13 - Joshua 1-3
14 - Joshua 4-6
15 - Joshua 7-8
16 - Joshua 9-10
17 - Joshua 11-13
18 - Joshua 14-16
19 - Joshua 17-19
20 - Joshua 20-21
21 - Judges 22-24
22 - Judges 1-2
23 - Judges 3-5
24 - Judges 6-7
25 - Judges 8-9
26 - Judges 10-11
27 - Judges 12-14
28 - Judges 15-17
29 - Judges 18-19
30 - Judges 20-21
31 - Ruth 1-4

April

1 - 1 Samuel 1-3
2 - 1 Samuel 4-7
3 - 1 Samuel 8-11
4 - 1 Samuel 12-14:23
5 - 1 Samuel 14:24-16
6 - 1 Samuel 17-18
7 - 1 Samuel 19-21
8 - 1 Samuel 22-24
9 - 1 Samuel 25-27
10 - 1 Samuel 28-31
11 - 2 Samuel 1-2
12 - 2 Samuel 3-5
13 - 2 Samuel 6-9
14 - 2 Samuel 10-12
15 - 2 Samuel 13-14
16 - 2 Samuel 15-16
17 - 2 Samuel 17-18
18 - 2 Samuel 19-20
19 - 2 Samuel 21-22
20 - 2 Samuel 23-24
21 - 1 Kings 1-2:25
22 - 1 Kings 2:26-4
23 - 1 Kings 5-7
24 - 1 Kings 8
25 - 1 Kings 9-11
26 - 1 Kings 12-13
27 - 1 Kings 14-15
28 - 1 Kings 16-18
29 - 1 Kings 19-20
30 - 1 Kings 21-22

May

1 - 2 Kings 1-3
2 - 2 Kings 4-5
3 - 2 Kings 6-8
4 - 2 Kings 9-10
5 - 2 Kings 11-13
6 - 2 Kings 14-15
7 - 2 Kings 16-17
8 - 2 Kings 18-20
9 - 2 Kings 21-23:20
10 - 2 Kings 23:21-25
11 - 1 Chronicles 1-2
12 - 1 Chronicles 3-5
13 - 1 Chronicles 6-7
14 - 1 Chronicles 8-10
15 - 1 Chronicles 11-13
16 - 1 Chronicles 14-16
17 - 1 Chronicles 17-20
18 - 1 Chronicles 21-23
19 - 1 Chronicles 24-26
20 - 1 Chronicles 27-29
21 - 2 Chronicles 1-3
22 - 2 Chronicles 4-6
23 - 2 Chronicles 7-9
24 - 2 Chronicles 10-13
25 - 2 Chronicles 14-17
26 - 2 Chronicles 18-20
27 - 2 Chronicles 21-24
28 - 2 Chronicles 25-27
29 - 2 Chronicles 28-30
30 - 2 Chronicles 31-33
31 - 2 Chronicles 34-36

June

1 - Ezra 1-2
2 - Ezra 3-5
3 - Ezra 6-7
4 - Ezra 8-9
5 - Ezra 10
6 - Nehemiah 1-3
7 - Nehemiah 4-6
8 - Nehemiah 7-8
9 - Nehemiah 9-10
10 - Nehemiah 11-12
11 - Nehemiah 13
12 - Esther 1-3
13 - Esther 4-7
14 - Esther 8-10
15 - Job 1-4
16 - Job 5-8
17 - Job 9-12
18 - Job 13-16
19 - Job 17-20
20 - Job 21-24
21 - Job 25-29
22 - Job 30-33
23 - Job 34-37
24 - Job 38-40
25 - Job 41-42
26 - Psalms 1-9
27 - Psalms 10-17
28 - Psalms 18-22
29 - Psalms 23-30
30 - Psalms 31-35

July

1 - Psalms 36-39
2 - Psalms 40-45
3 - Psalms 46-51
4 - Psalms 52-59
5 - Psalms 60-66
6 - Psalms 67-71
7 - Psalms 72-77
8 - Psalms 78-80
9 - Psalms 81-87
10 - Psalms 88-91
11 - Psalms 92-100
12 - Psalms 101-105
13 - Psalms 106-107
14 - Psalms 108-118
15 - Psalms 119
16 - Psalms 120-131
17 - Psalms 132-138
18 - Psalms 139-143
19 - Psalms 144-150
20 - Proverbs 1-3
21 - Proverbs 4-7
22 - Proverbs 8-11
23 - Proverbs 12-15
24 - Proverbs 16-19
25 - Proverbs 20-22
26 - Proverbs 23-26
27 - Proverbs 27-31
28 - Ecclesiastes 1-4
29 - Ecclesiastes 5-8
30 - Ecclesiastes 9-12
31 - Song of Solomon 1-8

August

1 - Isaiah 1-4
2 - Isaiah 5-9
3 - Isaiah 10-14
4 - Isaiah 15-21
5 - Isaiah 22-26
6 - Isaiah 27-31
7 - Isaiah 32-37
8 - Isaiah 38-42
9 - Isaiah 43-46
10 - Isaiah 47-51
11 - Isaiah 52-57
12 - Isaiah 58-63
13 - Isaiah 64-66
14 - Jeremiah 1-3
15 - Jeremiah 4-6
16 - Jeremiah 7-10
17 - Jeremiah 11-14
18 - Jeremiah 15-18
19 - Jeremiah 19-22
20 - Jeremiah 23-25
21 - Jeremiah 26-28
22 - Jeremiah 29-31
23 - Jeremiah 32-33
24 - Jeremiah 34-36
25 - Jeremiah 37-40
26 - Jeremiah 41-44
27 - Jeremiah 45-48
28 - Jeremiah 49-50
29 - Jeremiah 51-52
30 - Lamentations 1-2
31 - Lamentations 3-5

September

1 - Ezekiel 1-4
2 - Ezekiel 5-9
3 - Ezekiel 10-13
4 - Ezekiel 14-16
5 - Ezekiel 17-19
6 - Ezekiel 20-21
7 - Ezekiel 22-24
8 - Ezekiel 25-28
9 - Ezekiel 29-32
10 - Ezekiel 33-36
11 - Ezekiel 37-39
12 - Ezekiel 40-42
13 - Ezekiel 43-45
14 - Ezekiel 46-48
15 - Daniel 1-3
16 - Daniel 4-6
17 - Daniel 7-9
18 - Daniel 10-12
19 - Hosea 1-6
20 - Hosea 7-14
21 - Joel 1-3
22 - Amos 1-5
23 - Amos 6-9;
Obadiah 1
24 - Jonah 1-4
25 - Micah 1-7
26 - Nahum 1-3;
Habakkuk 1-3
27 - Zephaniah 1-3;
Haggai 1-2
28 - Zechariah 1-7
29 - Zechariah 8-14
30 - Malachi 1-4

October

1 - Matthew 1-4
2 - Matthew 5-6
3 - Matthew 7-9
4 - Matthew 10-11
5 - Matthew 12
6 - Matthew 13-14
7 - Matthew 15-17
8 - Matthew 18-20
9 - Matthew 21-22
10 - Matthew 23-24
11 - Matthew 25-26
12 - Matthew 27-28
13 - Mark 1-3
14 - Mark 4-5
15 - Mark 6-7
16 - Mark 8-9
17 - Mark 10-11
18 - Mark 12-13
19 - Mark 14-16
20 - Luke 1
21 - Luke 2-3
22 - Luke 4-5
23 - Luke 6-7
24 - Luke 8-9
25 - Luke 10-11
26 - Luke 12-13
27 - Luke 14-16
28 - Luke 17-18
29 - Luke 19-20
30 - Luke 21-22

November

1 - John 1-3
2 - John 4-5
3 - John 6-8
4 - John 9-10
5 - John 11-12
6 - John 13-16
7 - John 17-18
8 - John 19-21
9 - Acts 1-3
10 - Acts 4-6
11 - Acts 7-8
12 - Acts 9-10
13 - Acts 11-13
14 - Acts 14-16
15 - Acts 17-19
16 - Acts 20-22
17 - Acts 23-25
18 - Acts 26-28
19 - Romans 1-3
20 - Romans 4-7
21 - Romans 8-10
22 - Romans 11-13
23 - Romans 14-16
24 - 1 Corinthians 1-4
25 - 1 Corinthians 5-9
26 - 1 Corinthians 10-13
27 - 1 Corinthians 14-16
28 - 2 Corinthians 1-4
29 - 2 Corinthians 5-8
30 - 2 Corinthians 9-13

December

1 - Galatians 1-3
2 - Galatians 4-6
3 - Ephesians 1-3
4 - Ephesians 4-6
5 - Philippians 1-4
6 - Colossians 1-4
7 - Thessalonians 1-5
8 - 2 Thessalonians 1-3
9 - 1 Timothy 1-6
10 - 2 Timothy 1-4
11 - Titus 1-3; Philemon 1
12 - Hebrews 1-4
13 - Hebrews 5-7
14 - Hebrews 8-10
15 - Hebrews 11-13
16 - James 1-5
17 - 1 Peter 1-2
18 - 1 Peter 3-5
19 - 2 Peter 1-3
20 - 1 John 1-3
21 - 1 John 4-5
22 - 2 & 3 John, Jude
23 - Revelation 1-2
24 - Revelation 3-5
25 - Revelation 6-8
26 - Revelation 9-11
27 - Revelation 12-13
28 - Revelation 14-16
29 - Revelation 17-18
30 - Revelation 19-20
31 - Revelation 21-22

January

2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
1 Worship @ 10:55 Masks Optional Danny O'Neal Genesis 1-3	2 Small Group 12:00 Genesis 4-6	3 Tues. Mom Prayer Group 10:30 am Genesis 7-9	4 Genesis 10-12	5 Genesis 13-15	6 Genesis 16-18	7 Genesis 19-21	
8 Worship @ 10:55 Masks Optional Genesis 22-24	9 Small Group 12:00 Genesis 25-27	10 Tues. Mom Prayer Group 10:30 am Diane Lockridge Genesis 28-30	11 Devan Pinson Genesis 31-33	12 Small Group 11:30 am Genesis 34-36	13 Ronnie Haynes Genesis 37-39	14 Genesis 40-42	
15 Worship @ 10:55 Masks Optional Genesis 43-45	16 Small Group 12:00 Genesis 46-48	17 Tues. Mom Prayer Group 10:30 am Joan Billingsley Genesis 49-50 Exodus 1	18 Exodus 2-4	19 Small Group 11:30 am Beth Haynes Exodus 5-7	20 Exodus 8-10	21 Exodus 11-13	
22 Worship @ 10:55 Masks Optional Vandy & Brenda Cobb Exodus 14-16	23 Small Group 12:00 Jane Lumpkin Betty Sue Kelly Exodus 17-19	24 Tues. Mom Prayer Group 10:30 am Anna Parker Exodus 20-22	25 Exodus 23-25	26 Small Group 11:30 am Exodus 26-28	27 Betty Timms Exodus 29-31	28 Paul Coley Exodus 32-34	
29 Worship @ 10:55 Masks Optional Exodus 35-37	30 Small Group 12:00 Exodus 38-39	31 Tues. Mom Prayer Group 10:30 am Exodus Exodus 40	We Greatly Appreciate Gifts Given in Memory Of; CE David Carmine Himes Wayne Andrews			Anniversaries and Birthdays are on the calendar.	