

Read to the Congregation on Sunday, January 22, 2023

Recently the Admin Council voted to begin the disaffiliation process by allowing the congregation to vote. At the end of December, the North Georgia Conference announced that it has paused all requests from local churches wanting to vote on disaffiliation. The reasoning given is the cabinet discovered and observed that some lay people and clergy have shared information at the local church level that is factually incorrect and defamatory. As a result, our governing North Georgia Conference does not have confidence in the validity of upcoming local church conference disaffiliation votes.

The NGC also points out that the United Methodist church set up an opportunity for a gracious exit, through the disaffiliation process, when it became apparent that there was controversy over the language regarding human sexuality. After lengthy discussion among the NGC leadership, the North Georgia conference feels they cannot rely upon such votes for the purposes of negotiating a gracious exit. Their concern is that the distribution of misinformation has potential to do irreparable harm and has been outside the bounds of normal acceptable civil discourse and is directly opposed to the concept of a gracious exit.

The North Georgia Conference affirms its commitment to honor and uphold the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Their recommendation is that together we reset our focus on the mission of the church and commit to deepening our focus on discipleship.

The next session of the UMC General Conference will be held in Charlotte, NC on April 23-May 3, 2024. It is hoped that this pause will allow churches to gain more information about the real, rather than false or hypothetical future of our church.

In following what our administrative council voted, Bascomb UMC has submitted our letter requesting a called charge conference for the purpose in voting on the disaffiliation process. We feel this letter serves as a matter of record and shows a commitment to following through with our Admin Council's direction. It was our agreed upon desire that members of Bascomb UMC be allowed to vote in this process. As a result of this pause, that vote will not be taken and we will be waiting to see what happens in the 2024 General Conference.

We, the leadership team, were united in our decision to send the letter. We have faith that Bascomb will continue to be a loving church to our community and will stand strong together. We ask for your prayers and will continue to welcome any questions you may have.

Thank you