

Creating vital congregations that make disciples of Jesus Christ, who make disciples equipped and sent to transform lives, communities, and the world.



To the Members of Central United Methodist Church of Fayetteville:

On September 19, 2022, I received notice from the appropriate leadership body that your church desires to explore the possibility of disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church *“for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church related to these issues that follow,”* using the process approved by the 2021 Arkansas Annual Conference and following the stipulations of ¶12553 in *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. I have worked with your church leaders as they have developed a three-month discernment process designed to ensure that your congregation has the information needed to make an informed decision, that there is opportunity for all voices to be heard, that all options available to the congregation are properly presented and that all members understand the details of any agreement that may be made with the Arkansas Conference before any disaffiliation vote is taken.

I am writing to inform you that as part of this discernment process, the first of three listening sessions will be held at **6:30pm on Thursday, October 13, 2022 in the Activities Center at Central UMC**. Attendance will be taken, and I hope you will make every effort to be present. Bishop Gary Mueller will be leading this first session. He will strive to make sure you have access to the information you need to properly understand the issues and implications of disaffiliation, and also give you the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. To help you understand the details and our expectations of the upcoming discernment process, I encourage you to go to <https://arumc.org/current-landscape> where you will find a number of documents related to this process. In preparation for the first listening session, I particularly encourage you to watch Bishop Mueller’s video and to read the documents found in “The Disaffiliation Process” section.

This is a momentous time in the life of your church and it is important for you to participate fully in this process. After all, it is the professing members of your church who will make the final decision whether or not to move forward with disaffiliation. I encourage you to stay in conversation with your pastor and local church leaders. However, please contact me if you feel you cannot share your thoughts or beliefs freely or if you feel you are not receiving the information you need to make an informed decision.

I look forward to meeting with you at the upcoming listening session.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Blake R. Bradford
Northwest District Superintendent