

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



September 20, 2022

To all Members of Siloam Springs First United Methodist Church:

This past Sunday your church held a church conference following the provisions of ¶246.8 and ¶248, for the sole purpose of considering the following motion:

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, we, the Siloam Springs First United Methodist Church, under the authority of ¶2553 of The 2016 Book of Discipline, choose to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church, and in accordance with ¶2529 of The 2016 Book of Discipline we authorize the church's Board of Trustees to act on the church's behalf to complete and implement the disaffiliation agreement with the Arkansas Conference Board of Trustees.

The motion to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church passed by a vote of 83 to 23, thus reaching the two-thirds threshold required by ¶2553.3 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline* and Judicial Council Decision 1379.

It is important to note that this vote was not the end of the process. There are two more required steps that must be completed before the church can disaffiliate. First, the congregation's Trustees must complete a [standard disaffiliation agreement](#) with the Arkansas Conference Board of Trustees. Once completed, the Conference Trustees will then present the agreement at the next scheduled session of the Arkansas Annual Conference. This means that if completed in time, the church's agreement could be presented at the November 19 Special Session of the Arkansas Annual Conference. Second, a simple majority of Annual Conference members present and voting at that special session must ratify the agreement. If that occurs, then once the church has fulfilled all the stipulations in the Agreement, the trust clause will be released and the church will be disaffiliated from the United Methodist Church.

Concerning your personal church membership, it is important to note that no one's membership in the United Methodist Church can be removed without their permission. The default position of the Arkansas Conference is that all current members will remain United Methodist unless they specifically request for their membership to follow the church when it disaffiliates. Therefore, if you agree with your church's decision to disaffiliate, you will need to contact your local church office or membership secretary within the three weeks to inform them that you wish to have your church membership located in the newly disaffiliated congregation. Otherwise you will remain United Methodist.

Please know that Bishop Mueller and the Appointive Cabinet have made it our priority to support those of you who will remain United Methodist even though your congregation is moving toward disaffiliation. As part of this work, we recently appointed Rev. Dr. Michael Roberts as the director of the Arkansas Conference ReStart

Initiative to provide support and pastoral care, connect those who wish to join another United Methodist congregation in the area, and work with remaining United Methodists to determine the most appropriate ReStart Initiative for their congregation, all for the purpose of helping those remaining United Methodists to chart their futures and to find appropriate places to locate their membership.

There are more steps in the disaffiliation process ahead for your congregation. In the meantime, the United Methodist Church is ready to immediately support you if you wish to connect with the ReStart Initiative. Notify the conference and district office by filling out an online form that can be found at <https://fs28.formsite.com/ARUMC/RetainUMC/index.html>, use the QR code found below or contact the district office directly at either 479-783-0385 or northwestds@arumc.org

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford
Northwest District Superintendent

