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Update from Bishop Carter about churches withdrawing from the lawsuit

1 message

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Mon, Dec 5, 2022 at 2:07 PM



The Florida Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 5, 2022

Dear Florida Conference Laity and Clergy:

Greetings in this season of Advent!

We are committed to providing you regular communications on the life of our Conference as it relates to our ministries as well as the greater health and wholeness of the body of Christ called The Florida Conference.

To this end, we would like to share an update on the [lawsuit](#) that has been brought against The Florida Conference, our conference treasurer, members of our Board of Trustees, the district superintendents, and me. Earlier this year, upon behalf of numerous United Methodist Churches, attorneys filed suit to avoid the established process to disaffiliate under our *Book of Discipline* using Paragraph 2553.

Now after several months have passed, a number of those churches who originally filed suit have reconsidered, and they no longer wish to be part of that lawsuit. Instead, they have notified us that they wish to pursue the previously established process of disaffiliation through [Paragraph 2553](#) of our *Book of Discipline*.

As we have communicated consistently over many months, Paragraph 2553 is the only path that the Judicial Council has [affirmed](#) for leaving The United Methodist Church due to matters of conscience related to human sexuality. For this reason, our district superintendents have been walking faithfully with churches through this process. Fourteen congregations disaffiliated using Paragraph 2553 in June 2022. Six churches have voted this fall to disaffiliate using this paragraph. Six others will hold votes later this month.

We are grateful that these United Methodist Churches in Florida are trusting the process set before them, trusting their superintendents, and trusting one another to enter a fair and transparent process of discernment around a significant decision for their future identity and the important matters facing our denomination. We are grateful for the way the Spirit is at work among us and for the graciousness being shown to one another in The Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church.

As has been stated previously and consistently, I want you to remain United Methodist and part of The Florida Conference. I believe we are better together. We can continue to be one church, living as a reflection of the body of Christ even in the midst of our differences. What unifies us is much greater, and at its core this is our shared profession that Jesus is Lord. Yet, for those wishing to leave, we will walk with you fairly in the process set before us by *The Book of Discipline*.

Grace and peace to you in this season.

The Peace of the Lord,
+Ken Carter
Resident Bishop, Florida Conference
The United Methodist Church

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