



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

*Reverend Blake Bradford
District Superintendent/Chief Mission Strategist*

November 3, 2022

To the Members of Greenwood United Methodist Church:

On October 21, 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 November 16 at Greenwood United Methodist Church. **In order to help maintain an open, safe, and protected environment for all to speak freely, no recordings or live-streaming will be allowed at this or any of the other listening sessions during this discernment process, so it is important that you make every effort to be present.**

As your district superintendent, I will be leading this first session. I 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 three 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blake Bradford".

Rev. Dr. Blake Bradford, Northwest District Superintendent

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