

The following is the announcement made at both services on Sunday, August 27, regarding the latest development regarding discernment and disaffiliation:

I received a letter from our District Superintendent on Tuesday regarding the procedure for discernment and possible disaffiliation that requires a Church Conference. He stated: "Be informed that such a Church Conference will happen at my discretion, but not before January 1, 2024. One aspect of the Church Conference setting wherein a vote to close and separate may be taken is that the projected cost of leaving must be shared with the group prior to the call to vote. For churches exploring the possibility of leaving the UMC in 2024, such costs will not be available until after the close of 2023. It is my intent to provide you with a date and time for a Church Conference session sometime in the latter half of January or first half of February."

Pastor Ricky and I have discussed this and met with the DS on Thursday. When asked regarding whether this timing of the Church Conference was included in the original process for disaffiliation and whether churches who disaffiliated last year had these Conferences after the first of the 2023 year, he replied yes. I was not aware of this stipulation and expressed my concern regarding the perceived change in process.

We will still have the Council of Stewards vote regarding discernment on Tuesday, September 5, but have to wait for the Church Conference regarding disaffiliation until the DS sets the date. However, we will continue with the progress we have made regarding preparation for the Church Conference and meeting all of the currently identified requirements, including comparisons of different Wesleyan denominations, should we vote to disaffiliate.

Yours in Christ, Arlene Privette (Chair of Council of Stewards)