

“We Are Encouraged”

A Message from Our Bishops

February 13, 2023

Bishops: “We are encouraged”

As we navigate the waters of church disaffiliations, we are encouraged. We are encouraged that many people are learning and relearning United Methodist theology and falling in love with it for the first time or once again. Many are discovering and rediscovering how United Methodist theology is consistent with their understanding of scripture. If you are interested in rediscovering who we are as United Methodists, check out this [group discussion guide](#).

We are also encouraged that congregations whose theology is not consistent with the theology of The United Methodist Church are finding their way to either be independent churches or to be part of other denominations that are more consistent with their theology.

We remain hopeful that as we make these discoveries we will be able to do so without discrediting, demonizing, making accusations about or denigrating persons who have made decisions different than our own. It is beneath our Christian witness to use intimidation, exaggeration, fear or misinformation to bolster our argument and convince others to join “our side”.

We are encouraged that there are a number of churches in our annual conference that identify their theology as traditional and are choosing to remain United Methodist. These churches recognize that United Methodist theology embraces diversity of perspective and interpretation on a number of matters. They have found that, even though most of their members may have more traditional perspectives, they have always had active members with diverse perspectives with whom they have been able to do vital ministry. They view this diversity as a blessing.

There are some churches that have gone through the process of taking a vote to disaffiliate and while a majority did vote to disaffiliate, they were not able to reach the 2/3 majority required by The Book of Discipline. For some of these churches, the process of taking such a vote has been challenging. We are encouraged that some of these congregations have requested help to move forward so that they might emerge even stronger than before they voted.

In some cases, churches have reached the 2/3 majority needed to disaffiliate but a significant minority of members want to remain United Methodist. We are encouraged that in those cases the cabinet is working to find United Methodist churches for those members who want to remain United Methodist. In addition, we are developing plans to start some new United Methodist communities for those who want to remain. If you would like to be a part of one of those new communities, please email our team at beumc@susumc.org.

We are encouraged by the hope and joy that is ours through Jesus Christ in the midst of disaffiliation. We are not perfect, but we are encouraged that as a church we are striving to be perfected in love of God and one another. We are encouraged by all of you who are on this journey with us as we work out our souls’

salvation, fulfilling our membership covenant of being loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and doing all that we can to strengthen its ministries.

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi & Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball

Resident Bishop

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