



# Lake Country District

Oklahoma United Methodist Church

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February 15, 2023

Stigler UMC  
Rev. Jim Hill  
PO Box 249  
Stigler, OK 74462

RE: A special session of the Stigler United Methodist Church Conference on **Sunday, March 5, 2023**, for the purpose voting on disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church under Par. 2553 of The Book of Discipline, 2016.

Greetings in the name and power of Jesus Christ!

The leadership of Stigler UMC has communicated a desire take a vote on whether your church should or should not disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church under Par. 2553 of The Book of Discipline. Therefore, I am calling for a special session of the Church Conference on **Sunday, March 5, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.** Church Conferences are called to have broad participation of the members of the congregation. All professing members and clergy relating to the charge conference in attendance will have the privilege of participating in the vote. I pray that you will make this gathering a priority and will pray earnestly that your church will do God's will.

Such a serious decision requires prayerful and careful preparation. The Oklahoma Conference Board of Trustees has approved a "Disaffiliation Agreement" based on Par. 2553 with important requirements for this vote. The "Disaffiliation Agreement" and Par. 2553 are available for you at [www.okumc.org/disaffiliation](http://www.okumc.org/disaffiliation).

As part of your discernment in preparation for this vote, I highly recommend that you read both documents thoroughly. Should you have questions for clarification, Rev. Tish Malloy, Director of Transitional Ministries for the Oklahoma Annual Conference is available to assist you at [tmalloy@okumc.org](mailto:tmalloy@okumc.org) and 1.405.530.2027.

This vote must be taken with great attention to detail. Please be aware of several requirements and be prepared to fulfill them.

1. As presented to the church conference, the motion must be phrased that it is for the Local Church to proceed with disaffiliation from the denomination under Par. 2553 "based on one or more of the following grounds:

- (1) for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality;
- (2) for reasons of conscience regarding the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or
- (3) for reasons of conscience regarding the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline and related to the practice of homosexuality, or related to the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference."

The leadership of Stigler United Methodist Church indicated that they are seeking disaffiliation under ¶ 2553 based on the following grounds:

... (3) for reasons of conscience regarding the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline and related to the practice of homosexuality, or related to the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference.

2. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members and clergy relating to the charge conference of the local church present at the church conference.
3. "Ballots shall reflect three choices: "Yes" if in favor of Disaffiliation, "No" if against Disaffiliation, and "Abstain" if the voter does not wish to take a position on the motion. Abstentions will be counted in order for the district superintendent to ascertain whether the required approval is obtained.
4. Only professing members of the Local Church on the membership roll provided by the Local Church in advance to the District Superintendent and clergy members of the charge conference shall be allowed to vote. Professing members and authorized clergy must be present at the conference of the local church in order to be allowed to vote; no proxy voting shall be allowed; and professing members and authorized clergy are only allowed one vote each and cannot vote for any family member or other person. All voting shall be by secret written ballot, and a bar shall be established between those eligible to vote and others. No voter shall be allowed to leave the room or cross the bar while in possession of a ballot.
5. Voters must supply identification that will be cross checked with church membership and charge conference records to enter the bar of the conference.
6. A Local Church vote to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church does not complete the process of disaffiliation. Disaffiliating congregations must fulfill all the requirements of the "Disaffiliation Agreement" approved by the Conference Board of Trustees. Additionally, a simple majority vote to ratify the request for disaffiliation must be approved by the Oklahoma Annual Conference.
7. A maximum of two votes, including a vote after a successful motion to reconsider, shall be allowed.

I encourage you to learn all you can about the reasons for this decision and the implications of disaffiliation for you and your congregation. Please receive this blessing as you prepare:

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Grace and peace,



John Breon  
Lake Country District Superintendent