

September 6, 2022

Clergy of the Alabama-West Florida Conference,

Many clergy find themselves in a time of discernment. In an effort to be transparent and share good information efficiently, we want to clarify the current position of our Cabinet and Bishop in the AWF.

If the church you are serving or where your charge conference is held chooses to disaffiliate, we hope that you will choose to remain United Methodist. If you choose to remain UM you do not need to fill out any forms. Indicate to your district superintendent that you wish to remain, even as your church disaffiliates, and he/she will keep the cabinet informed during the appointment-making process. Clergy do not have to leave simply because their church chooses to disaffiliate. However, if you chose to leave The United Methodist Church you must withdraw (ordained clergy) or discontinue (licensed clergy) your membership.

The only paragraph that can be used for ordained clergy to become independent clergy or clergy moving towards membership in the Global Methodist Church is paragraph 360.2. You must surrender your membership certificate and your certificate of ordination to your district superintendent in order to withdraw in good standing. This applies to ordained clergy who are active and retired. If you do not withdraw or move your charge conference membership before the church's disaffiliation date, you will automatically be withdrawn.

Licensed clergy (local pastors and associate members) choosing to sever their relationship with The United Methodist Church must use paragraph 320.1. They will also surrender their license to their district superintendent. Any licensed clergy who have not moved their charge conference membership prior to a church's disaffiliation date will be automatically discontinued.

Forms for withdrawal or discontinuance can be found on the conference website at www.awfumc.org/disaffiliation. Withdrawing or discontinuing clergy are encouraged to speak with their district superintendent before completing the appropriate forms. Completed forms are to be submitting to your district superintendent.

The Cabinet of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, the Bishop, the Council of Bishops and their legal counsel have said that a United Methodist Clergy cannot remain United Methodist and serve a disaffiliated church.

Blessings,

Rev. Jenni Hendrix
Director of Ministerial Services