



IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF OKLAHOMA COUNTY  
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
OF OKLAHOMA CITY, an incorporated  
religious association acting by and through its duly  
Elected Trustees,

Plaintiff,

v.

THE OKLAHOMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, INC.,  
a domestic not for profit corporation, THE BOARD  
OF TRUSTEES OF THE OKLAHOMA ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH, INC., a domestic not for profit  
corporation, JIMMY NUNN, Bishop of the  
Oklahoma Annual Conference, VICTOR  
MCCULLOUGH, District Superintendent of the  
Heartland District of the Oklahoma Annual  
Conference

Defendants.

FILED IN DISTRICT COURT  
OKLAHOMA COUNTY

JUL - 6 2023

RICK WARREN  
COURT CLERK

112 \_\_\_\_\_

C5

Case No. 2023-3075

STIPULATIONS FOR HEARING ON PLAINTIFF'S  
MOTION FOR TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT INJUNCTION

COME NOW Plaintiff and Defendants and submit the following stipulations of fact in order to allow for a more efficient and streamlined hearing on Plaintiff's Motion for Temporary and Permanent Injunction scheduled on July 7, 2023. The parties stipulate as follows:

1. Plaintiff First Church is a local church of the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church. First Church is an incorporated religious association worshipping in Oklahoma County since the Land Run in 1889 at property located in downtown Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
2. The Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church has two meanings. Defendant Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. ("Conference") is a legal entity organized under the laws of the State of Oklahoma. The

Conference claims ownership of the First Church property pursuant to the Discipline of the United Methodist Church (the “*Discipline*”). The current provision related to the trust clause states in part: “*All properties of United Methodist local churches ... are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the Discipline.*” The secondary meaning of Annual Conference is an annual meeting of delegates from United Methodist local churches and ministries throughout Oklahoma who vote on all constitutional amendments, budget, election of clergy and lay delegates to General and Jurisdictional conferences, ordination of clergy, and other matters delegated to the Annual Conference by the General and Jurisdictional Conferences of the worldwide United Methodist Church.

3. The Board of Trustees of the Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) is a separate legal entity formed under the laws of the State of Oklahoma.

4. Defendant Bishop Jimmy Nunn is the currently serving Bishop of the territory covering the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church.

5. Defendant Rev. Dr. Victor McCullough was the District Superintendent for the Heartland District of the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church from at least 2021 thru June 30, 2023.

6. First Church was first organized in the year 1889 with 17 charter members who became known as First Methodist Episcopal Church North.

7. The First Church property at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Robinson in Oklahoma City was purchased in August 1889. The congregation’s first church building was dedicated on October 27, 1889.

8. Fourteen years later, the cornerstone was laid for the brick structure that still stands today despite the massive damage inflicted during the April 19, 1995, bombing that destroyed the neighboring Murrah Federal Building.

9. First Methodist Episcopal Church North became The First Methodist Church of Oklahoma City in 1939 following a union of three branches of Methodism. In 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church joined to become the United Methodist Church.

10. The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a worldwide Protestant denomination. According to the church's constitution, the Annual Conference is "the basic body in the Church" and "shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine." Division II of the Constitution outlines the organization of the denomination, which is comprised of five different levels of conferences: General, Jurisdictional, Central, Annual, and Charge Conferences. According to the church's constitution, the Annual Conference is "the basic body in the Church" and "shall discharge such duties and exercise such powers as the General Conference under the Constitution may determine." Annual Conferences are organized into districts, each led by a district superintendent who administers and supervises member clergy and local charge conferences and churches within that district.

11. The Conference is an annual conference of the UMC. Its district encompasses the State of Oklahoma and includes the territory in which First Church is located. Each annual conference has an incorporated board of trustees, of which the Board is one.

12. The relationship between First Church and the UMC is stated and controlled by the Book of Discipline (*Discipline*) of the UMC, which can be amended only by the General Conference subject to the Restrictive Rules in the Constitution (*Discipline*, 2016, Par. 17-22).

13. INTENTIONALLY BLANK
14. The UMC *Discipline* is the constitution and governing document of the UMC.
15. The *Discipline* is the connectional covenant to which all persons or entities within the UMC agree to be bound. “Each General Conference amends, perfects, clarifies, and adds its own contribution to the Discipline” (Discipline, 2016, page v).
16. At the last meeting of the General Conference of the UMC, which was held in 2019, the General Conference adopted a provision for the *Discipline*, now included therein as paragraph 2553, which is the most recent enactment by the UMC General Conference regarding the trust clause and ownership of local church property.
17. Paragraph 2553 has been utilized in Oklahoma by UMC churches to disaffiliate from the UMC.
18. The UMC Judicial Council has affirmed the constitutionality of paragraph 2553 and affirmed it as a viable process for UMC local churches to disaffiliate from the UMC.
19. The Board developed and approved, and has from time to time revised, a form of disaffiliation agreement for local churches seeking to disaffiliate and presented a “*Disaffiliation Agreement Pursuant to ¶2553.*” As affirmed in Judicial Council Decision 1422, the Oklahoma Conference policy for disaffiliation does not question the “reasons of conscience” of a local church requesting disaffiliation, thus allowing congregations with a “traditional” perspective to access the process under ¶2553, even if they agree with the current provisions of the Discipline.
20. The regional annual conferences of the UMC normally meet only once a year. In accordance with ¶ 603.5 of the Discipline, Bishop Nunn scheduled three special-called annual conferences to consider disaffiliations from the United Methodist Church: 1) October 21-22, 2022, 2) April 22, 2023, and 3) October 13-14, 2023. Paragraph 2553 has a sunset date of December 31,

2023. Furthermore, Defendant Nunn has the *Disciplinary* authority to call a special session at any time deemed necessary.

21. In order for a local church and the Board to complete the requirements for a local church to be considered for ratification at the October 13, 2023, Special Session of the Oklahoma Annual Conference, Defendants require that the local church conduct a *Church Conference* to vote on disaffiliation do so on or before September 6, 2023.

22. In Oklahoma, Defendant Board has entered into 84 disaffiliation agreements with local churches. Twenty-nine churches were approved at a Special Called Annual Conference on October 21, 2022, and 55 churches were approved at a Special Called Annual Conference on April 22, 2023.

23. On November 23, 2022, First Church notified Rev. Dr. McCullough, in accordance with ¶2553, of its request for a *Church Conference* for the purpose of voting on whether First Church wishes to disaffiliate from the UMC. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated November 23, 2022, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**.

24. By email dated December 2, 2022, Rev. Dr. McCullough acknowledged receipt of First Church's request for a *Church Conference* and offered to conduct the *Church Conference* on January 22, 2023. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated December 2, 2022, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**.

25. On December 6, 2022, First Church notified its congregation of the January 22, 2023, *Church Conference*. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated December 6, 2022, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**.

26. By letter dated December 23, 2022, Rev. Dr. McCullough sent a letter to First Church and formalized his call "for a special session of the Church Conference on January 22,

2023, 2:30 pm” for the purpose of voting on disaffiliation from the UMC pursuant to ¶2553. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated December 23, 2022, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 4.**

27. Membership of a United Methodist local church consists of all members shown on the membership rolls of the local church. A church conference is a meeting at which all members of the local church, are invited to attend, participate, and vote. In its annual report that was required to have been submitted by January 31, 2022 through the EZRA system utilized by the Annual Conference, First Church reported to the Annual Conference that it had 2649 members as of December 31, 2021. In conjunction with the special session of the Church Conference to be held on January 22, 2023, on January 12, 2023, First Church submitted a membership roll to Defendants reflecting that it had 473 members.

28. By email dated January 17, 2023, Rev. Dr. McCullough notified First Church that the scheduled *Church Conference* would “be postponed and rescheduled at a date and time to be determined” in order for “the congregation to engage, with Annual Conference leadership, in a deliberation process of analysis, according to Paragraph 212 [sic] of [the *Discipline*].” A true and accurate copy of the correspondence between Rev. Dr. McCullough and First Church dated January 17, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 5.**

29. At the Special Called Annual Conference on April 22, 2023, 55 local churches were voted on and disaffiliation of all 55 local churches was ratified by the annual conference.

30. First Church’s Chair of Administrative Council (“Ad Chair”) sent an email dated January 20, 2023 to Rev. Dr. McCullough, a true and accurate copy of which, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 6.**

31. Rev. Dr. McCullough sent an email dated January 24, 2023, a true and accurate copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit 7**.

32. On February 15, 2023, First Church's Ad Chair sent a letter to Defendant Bishop Nunn requesting a meeting with him. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated February 15, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 8**.

33. By email dated February 21, 2023, Rev. Dr. McCullough responded to First Church on behalf of Bishop Nunn and the Oklahoma Conference Cabinet. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated February 21, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 9**.

34. By email dated February 26, 2023, Rev. Dr. McCullough notified First Church of the "Process for the Conversation on Church Viability" ("*CCV process and procedures*"). A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated February 26, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 10**.

35. Rev. Dr. McCullough requested First Church provide certain information about the church's mission and answer financial questions by March 2, 2023, and scheduled a meeting with Rev. Craig Stinson, the designated leader of the process, to take place on March 8, 2023.

36. On March 2, 2023, First Church provided the information requested by Rev. Dr. McCullough through an online questionnaire.

37. On March 8, 2023, Conference officials met with representatives of First Church regarding the *viability study*. During the meeting, First Church was informed the reason for the delay in setting up this first meeting was due to the Conference's need to find an individual to lead the CCV assessment. A Timeline for the CVV process was provided to First Church representatives, a true and correct copy of which is attached as **Exhibit 11**.

38. During the March 8, 2023, meeting, Rev. Stinson asked First Church to provide additional information and explained the *viability study* would not be completed in time for First Church to complete the disaffiliation process in order to be included in the group of churches requesting disaffiliation at a Special Called Annual Conference scheduled on April 22, 2023.

39. The Conference representatives informed First Church that the next meeting would be scheduled on March 20, 2023, to address First Church's outreach ministry efforts to the community.

40. On March 10, 2023, Rev. Stinson informed First Church that the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting was too ambitious and would not happen. He advised a new date would be provided soon. A true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated March 10, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 12.**

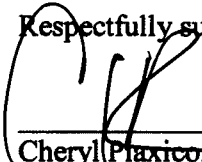
41. On March 20, 2023, First Church's Administrative Council Chair and Rev. Stinson exchanged emails regarding a new meeting date for CCV #2. A true and correct copy of the email exchange dated March 20, 2023, is attached as **Exhibit 13.**

42. On March 22, 2023, Bishop Nunn held an all-church meeting with the congregation and reiterated the requirement that First Church participate in a viability study before being permitted to conduct a church conference to vote on disaffiliation pursuant to ¶2553.

43. On May 5 and 6, 2023, First Church's Ad Chair and Rev. Stinson, exchanged emails regarding the CCV process for First Church, a true and accurate copy of the correspondence dated May 5-6, 2023, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 14.**

44. On May 16, 2023, First Church sent a letter to Rev. Dr. McCullough, a true and accurate copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit 15.**

Respectfully submitted,



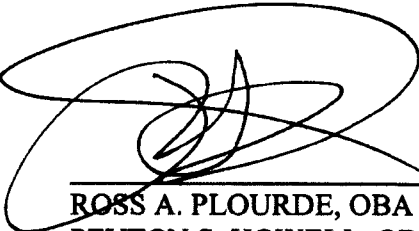
---

Cheryl Plaxico, OBA No. 4499  
PLAXICO LAW FIRM, PLLC  
923 North Robinson Ave., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
(405) 400-9609  
[cplaxico@plaxicolaw.com](mailto:cplaxico@plaxicolaw.com)

and

Cara S. Nicklas, OBA No. 14180  
MCALISTER, MCALISTER & NICKLAS PLLC  
15 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 1569  
Edmond, OK 73083  
(405) 359-0701  
[cnicklas@mcalistlaw.com](mailto:cnicklas@mcalistlaw.com)

*Attorneys for Plaintiffs*



---

ROSS A. PLOURDE, OBA #7193  
PEYTON S. HOWELL, OBA #33917  
MCAFEЕ & TAFT A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION  
Eighth Floor, Two Leadership Square  
211 North Robinson  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-7103  
405/235-9621  
405/235-0439 (FAX)  
[ross.plourde@mcafeetaft.com](mailto:ross.plourde@mcafeetaft.com)  
[peyton.howell@mcafeetaft.com](mailto:peyton.howell@mcafeetaft.com)

*Counsel For Defendants*

On Wed, Nov 23, 2022 at 1:54 PM David Hancock < davidhancock30@gmail.com > wrote:  
Dear RevDr. McCullough,

I pray this email finds you and your family well in anticipation of the holiday season. I wanted to let you know that on 21 Nov during the First Church OKC Administrative Council meeting, it was decided by the council to move forward with a church vote on disaffiliation.

As you may be aware, First Church has diligently been seeking the Holy Spirits guidance throughout this discernment process to include multiple congregational meetings, the church conference with you and Rev. Malloy as well as two separate and dedicated evenings of praying, seeking and listening to God. One in October and one in November. We now believe we are ready to move forward with a vote of the membership on whether to disaffiliate from or remain in the UMC.

EXHIBIT

If your schedule permits, we are requesting a vote be held at First Church on Sunday, 8 Jan 2023 at 2pm. If the 8th is unavailable, we would request the 15th of Jan 2023 at 2pm.

While we anticipate additional instructions and information will be provided on the details and procedures of the vote, we have a few questions as well.

1. Will accommodations be made for members who are unable to attend in person due to health or mobility reasons? We have concern that we would not want to violate any possible ADA requirements by not having a process available for those folks.
2. Some of our folks have to leave town due to work requirements, is there a way to accommodate those who may be out of town and unable to vote in person?
3. How will validation of the vote count occur? Will a First Church member be involved in the counting/validating of the votes?

Thank you for your assistance on this very difficult issue. First Church has remained focused on doing Gods work during this discernment process and are looking forward to moving past this issue sooner rather than later so we can continue His work here at 4th and Robinson regardless of which way the church decides.

Blessings to you and yours during the holiday season!

David Hancock  
First Church OKC Administrative Council Chair  
Pastor

Chris Dodson  
First Church OKC Senior

From: Victor McCullough  
To: David Hancock  
Cc: Tim Malloy; Chris Dodson; Derrek Belase  
Subject: Re: First Church OKC Disaffiliation Vote request  
Date: Friday, December 2, 2022 3:21:57 PM

---

Hello David and Pastor Chris,

This news is disappointing. The Annual Conference is very committed to supporting First Church's mission, in growth and revitalization, under Pastor Chris Dodson's leadership. However, the Cabinet and Conference leadership are committed to following the Disaffiliation Process as outlined by the Oklahoma Conference Board of Trustees. I am unavailable for either date you offered in your email. However, I want to offer two dates in January:

First, before the Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate, the Oklahoma Conference Director of Connectional Ministries, Derrek Belase, and I would like to meet with the First Church OKC Administrative Council on Wednesday, January 11 or Thursday, January 12, 2023. Second, January 22, 2:30pm is available as a date to set a First Church OKC Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate.

As soon as possible, let me know what works best for First Church OKC. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

God's Shalom!

Victor McCullough  
*The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min*  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)

[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)

\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Wed, Nov 23, 2022 at 1:54 PM David Hancock <[davidhancock30@gmail.com](mailto:davidhancock30@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear RevDr. McCullough,

I pray this email finds you and your family well in anticipation of the holiday season. I wanted to let you know that on 21 Nov during the First Church OKC Administrative Council meeting, it was decided by the council to move forward with a church vote on disaffiliation.

As you may be aware, First Church has diligently been seeking the Holy Spirits guidance throughout this discernment process to include multiple congregational meetings, the church conference with you and Rev. Malloy as well as two separate and dedicated evenings of praying, seeking and listening to God. One in October and one in November. We now believe we are ready to move forward with a vote of the membership on whether to disaffiliate from or remain in the UMC.

EXHIBIT

2

**If your schedule permits, we are requesting a vote be held at First Church on Sunday, 8 Jan 2023 at 2pm. If the 8th is unavailable, we would request the 15th of Jan 2023 at 2pm.**

**While we anticipate additional instructions and information will be provided on the details and procedures of the vote, we have a few questions as well.**

- 1. Will accommodations be made for members who are unable to attend in person due to health or mobility reasons? We have concern that we would not want to violate any possible ADA requirements by not having a process available for those folks.**
- 2. Some of our folks have to leave town due to work requirements, is there a way to accommodate those who may be out of town and unable to vote in person?**
- 3. How will validation of the vote count occur? Will a First Church member be involved in the counting/validating of the votes?**

**Thank you for your assistance on this very difficult issue. First Church has remained focused on doing Gods work during this discernment process and are looking forward to moving past this issue sooner rather than later so we can continue His work here at 4th and Robinson regardless of which way the church decides.**

**Blessings to you and yours during the holiday season!**

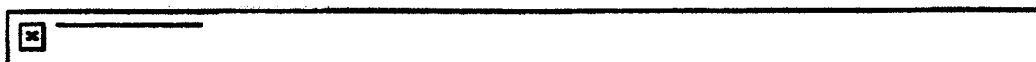
**David Hancock  
First Church OKC Administrative Council Chair  
Pastor**

**Chris Dodson  
First Church OKC Senior**

**From:**  
**Sent:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:**

First Church OKC <sbaumann@firstchurchokc.com>  
Tuesday, December 6, 2022 7:25 AM  
daveandkelli1@cox.net  
Voting Date Set

[View this email in your browser](#)



## **Church Conference & Voting**

Mark your calendars for **Sunday January 22, 2023** as we will gather for a Church Conference to vote on whether to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church or not.

Please make sure you have read the materials and watched the videos on our website under About, and Discernment Information.

Thank You!



*Copyright © 2022 First United Methodist Church OKC, All rights reserved.*  
You are receiving this email because you are a member or friend of First Church OKC.

Our mailing address is:  
First United Methodist Church OKC  
131 NW 4th St.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

[Add us to your address book](#)



Good morning, David!

Below are the responses to recent questions regarding First Church vote:

All our decisions and procedures regarding what and what will not be allowed during the Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate is determined by The United Methodist Book of Discipline and the *Oklahoma Annual Conference Disaffiliation Agreement*. The answers to your recent questions are addressed in these documents.

The second "Whereas" (page 1 of the Disaffiliation Agreement) specifically says, "approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the professing members and clergy "present" at the church conference. And paragraph 1.c of the Disaffiliation Agreement says "professing members and active or retired 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 active or retired clergy are only allowed one vote each and cannot vote for any family or other professing member or active or retired clergy... no voter shall be allowed to leave the room or cross the bar while in possession of a ballot."

So, the provisions of the Disaffiliation Agreement that the congregation must sign and follow, specifies those conditions. They are the guidelines established by Conference Board of Trustees, which has the authority to set the conditions.

Moreover, The United Methodist Book of Discipline paragraph 248 states that participants in the Church Conference must be in person. Hence, voting via Zoom (virtual), mail-in, or shut-in ballots won't be allowed. Since voters must bring an ID and sign the official list of eligible voters, they need to be present to vote.

Additionally, the votes are counted by district and local church representatives immediately after the vote and the results announced as part of the Church Conference. So, it is only the ballots gathered from those present, that are counted. Therefore, the decision was made not to open the process for mail-in ballots. Any provisions or modifications to the Disaffiliation Agreement would have to be discussed and approved by the Oklahoma Conference Board of Trustees.

Also, the First Church OKC Church Conference for the Vote to the Disaffiliation will be held on only one weekend. And yes, in the event of severe inclement weather, the Church Conference will be rescheduled and held at another time.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely in Christ's Mission,

Rev. Victor T. McCullough, D. Min.  
Heartland District Superintendent



From: Victor McCullough  
To: David Hancock  
Cc: Chris Dufresne, Josh Miller  
Subject: Re: Please Respond - Questions regarding First Church Vote  
Date: Friday, December 23, 2022 1:55:25 PM  
Attachments: Responses to Questions for First Church CMC - David Hancock.docx  
First Church CMC Church Conference for Disaffiliation Vote - Letter.docx

---

Hello David and Chris,  
Attached below are two documents regarding the First United Methodist Church-OKC Church Conference to Vote for Disaffiliation. One of the documents specifically responds to your recent inquiry about the voting provisions.  
Let me know if you have additional concerns.

Merry Christmas to you and your families!

**The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min**  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)

\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Tue, Dec 20, 2022 at 5:20 PM David Hancock <[davidhancock30@gmail.com](mailto:davidhancock30@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Good evening Dr. McCullough,

I haven't heard back from you on my previous questions, but am requesting you respond as soon as possible. We have members that have questions regarding the vote and I need to get an answer for them.

1. What accommodations can be made for our shut-ins who are unable to get out to vote?
2. Is there a possibility for Early voting (mail in ballots) for folks who will be out of town or unavailable? We have folks that have booked vacation rentals well in advance and unfortunately the vote falls during the time they are away.
3. If not early or mail in ballots, would voting on two separate weekends be an option?
4. Is it possible for folks to vote via Zoom?
5. In the event of severe winter weather, will the vote be rescheduled?

Respectfully,

David Hancock  
First Church Admin Council Chair  
405 326-6985

December 23, 2022

First United Methodist Church – Oklahoma City  
Rev. Chris Dodson  
Mr. David Hancock  
131 NW 4<sup>th</sup> St.,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

RE: A special session of the First Church Conference on January 22, 2023, 2:30p.m. 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 First UMC – OKC 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 January 22, 2023, 2:30p.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 [okumc.org/disaffiliation](http://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."
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 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 admonish 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.

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance toward you, and give you peace." ... Numbers 6:24-26 NKJV*

Grace and peace,

Rev. Victor T. McCullough, D. Min  
Heartland District Superintendent  
Oklahoma Annual Conference -- The United Methodist Church

From: Victor McCullough  
To: Chris Dodson  
Cc: David Hancock; Tish Malloy; MEL RAMSEY; Jimmy Nunn  
Subject: Re: First Church Vote for Disaffiliation  
Date: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 10:57:15 PM

---

To be clear, the information in the second email was inadvertently left out of the first email.  
My apologies.

**The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min**  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)  
\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Tue, Jan 17, 2023 at 10:52 PM Chris Dodson <[tnemidun@hotmail.com](mailto:tnemidun@hotmail.com)> wrote:  
Ok so which email are we having to deal with?

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device  
Get Outlook for Android

---

From: Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)>  
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 10:50:23 PM  
To: Chris Dodson <[tnemidun@hotmail.com](mailto:tnemidun@hotmail.com)>; David Hancock <[davidhancock30@gmail.com](mailto:davidhancock30@gmail.com)>  
Cc: Tish Malloy <[tmalloy@okumc.org](mailto:tmalloy@okumc.org)>; MEL RAMSEY <[mramsey-thompson@okumc.org](mailto:mramsey-thompson@okumc.org)>; Jimmy Nunn <[jimmy.nunn@okumc.org](mailto:jimmy.nunn@okumc.org)>  
Subject: Re: First Church Vote for Disaffiliation

The First Church Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate had been set and scheduled for Sunday, January 22, 2023, 2:30 PM.

**The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min**  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)  
\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Tue, Jan 17, 2023 at 10:30 PM Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)> wrote:

EXHIBIT

5

**Dear Chris and David!**

In thorough conversation with Bishop Nunn and the Cabinet, we are respectfully requesting that the First United Methodist Church, in Oklahoma City, Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate be postponed and rescheduled at a date and time to be determined. This decision to delay the church conference is inconvenient, yet necessary. It shall allow the time needed for the congregation to engage, with Annual Conference leadership, in a deliberation process of analysis, according to Paragraph 212 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

As you both are obviously aware, the request of the First Church Administrative Board and church leadership to enter in the process of disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church is an extremely significant decision for not only First Church, but also our entire Oklahoma Annual Conference. Therefore, Bishop Nunn, and members of his Cabinet, intend to identify if a local church serving in a place vital to our United Methodist mission and evangelistic witness is effective and viable. Moreover, it is essential that the congregation is making the effort to respond to the needs, changes, and new cultural patterns occurring in the surrounding community.

Please pardon the lateness and any inconvenience this necessary request to postpone and reschedule the meeting will cause. However, we are all committed to treating this critical moment in the life of First United Methodist Church, in Oklahoma City, and our Oklahoma Annual Conference with sensitivity, integrity, and care. Thank you, and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

**God's Grace and Peace!**

**Victor**

***The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min***

**Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist**

**Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church**

**1501 NW 24th Street**

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106**

**(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)**

**[vmccullough@okuma.org](mailto:vmccullough@okuma.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okuma.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okuma.org)**

**\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications**

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

From: Victor McCullough  
To: Chris Dodson  
Cc: David Hancock; Tish Malloy; MEL RAMSEY; Jimmy Nunn  
Subject: Re: First Church Vote for Disaffiliation  
Date: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 11:26:12 PM

---

Pastor Chris,  
No! There will not be a Church Conference to Vote held on Sunday, January 22nd. The previous email is specifying that the vote has been postponed. The word request is used above. But actually, I am requiring, on behalf of Bishop Nunn and the Oklahoma Cabinet, that the Paragraph 212 process be fulfilled first. After that process is completed, a Church Conference to Vote for Disaffiliation may occur.

We will meet soon with the key leaders of First Church, and yourself, to detail the deliberation process of analysis, according to Paragraph 212 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. I trust that this is clear. However, if you have further questions or concerns, feel free to contact me, first thing in the morning.

Thank you.

**The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min**  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)  
\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

On Tue, Jan 17, 2023 at 10:57 PM Chris Dodson <[memidur@hotmail.com](mailto:memidur@hotmail.com)> wrote:  
Is the church still having their vote or not? I'm confused. We're telling about people paying to travel back to vote....please clarify tonight what's happening so we can plan going forward.

Thanks

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device  
Get Outlook for Android

---

From: Chris Dodson <[memidur@hotmail.com](mailto:memidur@hotmail.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 10:52:09 PM  
To: Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)>; David Hancock <[davidhancock30@gmail.com](mailto:davidhancock30@gmail.com)>  
Cc: Tish Malloy <[tmalloy@okumc.org](mailto:tmalloy@okumc.org)>; MEL RAMSEY <[mramsey-thompson@okumc.org](mailto:mramsey-thompson@okumc.org)>; Jimmy Nunn <[jimmy.nunn@okumc.org](mailto:jimmy.nunn@okumc.org)>  
Subject: Re: First Church Vote for Disaffiliation

Ok so which email are we having to deal with?

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

**Get Outlook for Android**

---

**From:** Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2023 10:50:23 PM  
**To:** Chris Dodson <[cnamdur@hotmail.com](mailto:cnamdur@hotmail.com)>; David Hancock <[davidhancock30@gmail.com](mailto:davidhancock30@gmail.com)>  
**Cc:** Tish Malloy <[tmalloy@okumc.org](mailto:tmalloy@okumc.org)>; MEL RAMSEY <[mramesy-thompson@okumc.org](mailto:mramesy-thompson@okumc.org)>; Jimmy Nunn <[jimmy.nunn@okumc.org](mailto:jimmy.nunn@okumc.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: First Church Vote for Disaffiliation

The First Church Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate had been set and scheduled for Sunday, January 22, 2023, 2:30 PM.

**The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min**  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)  
\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

On Tue, Jan 17, 2023 at 10:30 PM Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)> wrote:

Dear Chris and David!

In thorough conversation with Bishop Nunn and the Cabinet, we are respectfully requesting that the First United Methodist Church, in Oklahoma City, Church Conference for the Vote to Disaffiliate be postponed and rescheduled at a date and time to be determined. This decision to delay the church conference is inconvenient, yet necessary. It shall allow the time needed for the congregation to engage, with Annual Conference leadership, in a deliberation process of analysis, according to Paragraph 212 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

As you both are obviously aware, the request of the First Church Administrative Board and church leadership to enter in the process of disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church is an extremely significant decision for not only First Church, but also our entire Oklahoma Annual Conference. Therefore, Bishop Nunn, and members of his Cabinet, intend to identify if a local church serving in a place vital to our United Methodist mission and evangelistic witness is effective and viable. Moreover, it is essential that the congregation is making the effort to respond to the needs, changes, and new cultural patterns occurring in the surrounding community.

Please pardon the lateness and any inconvenience this necessary request to postpone and reschedule the meeting will cause. However, we are all committed to treating this critical moment in the life of First United Methodist Church, in Oklahoma City, and our Oklahoma Annual Conference with sensitivity, integrity, and care. Thank you, and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

God's Grace and Peace!  
Victor

***The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min***

**Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist**

**Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church**

**1501 NW 24th Street**

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106**

**(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)**

**[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)**

**\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications**

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

On Fri, Jan 20, 2023 at 1:55 PM David Hancock <davidhancock30@gmail.com> wrote:  
Good afternoon Rev McCullough and Conference Leadership,

During the First Church OKC Administrative Council meeting last night, we had two items we were asked to bring to your attention for a response.

1. Our church has participated in multiple studies on church vitality that the Conference has initiated. Do any of the results of these Conference studies serve the same purpose or serve to fulfill the Conversations on Church Potential study/discussion? As a follow-up, when can we expect to hear a start date for that engagement and who will be responsible for the cost of this study?

2. If we are being asked to delay our vote because paragraphs 212/213 give the option for an assessment to be done, and that this is a part of the Conference "Disaffiliation Agreement Pursuant to Paragraph 2553", then please explain why the Conference office and the District Superintendent does not have to abide by the same agreement? According to the bottom of page 2 of the "Disaffiliation Agreement" it states that any assessment would be done prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. This did not happen in that manner. Our Church Conference was scheduled by email received on 23 Dec 2022. So this assessment request was sent after and not prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. In fact, your notification was received even after First Church OKC met its obligation to submit its Membership Roster 10 days prior to the actual vote. Excerpt from the Agreement is below...

"Conditions Precedent. Local Church and Annual Conference acknowledge and agree: a. A Process for Assessment of Local Potential under ¶213 of the Discipline or a formal assessment initiated by the Annual Conference Legacy Team may be required to be completed *prior to the scheduling of the church conference* in order to assess whether the Local Church is a viable congregation. Such a requirement may be imposed upon the Local Church by the District

**Superintendent with jurisdiction over the Local Church, and the Local Church shall be notified of such a requirement *prior to the District Superintendent scheduling the conference of the Local Church contemplated by paragraph 1(e) below.***

**We believe that by having this vote, the Conference is then aware of where the church stands, which is a part of understanding the churches future vitality. It also will allow our Administrative Council to best represent the church body, whichever way they decide to vote.**

**Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your quick response.**

**Grace and Peace to you,**

**David Hancock  
First Church OKC  
Admin Council Chair  
405 326-6965**

From: Victor McCullough  
To: David Hancock  
Cc: jimmy.gunn@okumc.org; Mel Ramsey-Thompson; Tish Malik; Chris Dodson; Derrek Belase; Chris Tiger; Chris Tiger  
Subject: Re: First Church OKC Disaffiliation Vote - Follow Up Questions  
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 3:21:31 PM

---

*On January 20th, David Hancock sent the email below for my response. Would you take a look at my responses and kindly tell me if you have further questions or concerns?*

Good afternoon Rev McCullough and Conference Leadership.

During the First Church OKC Administrative Council meeting last night, we had two items we were asked to bring to your attention for a response.

1. Our church has participated in multiple studies on church vitality that the Conference has initiated. Do any of the results of these Conference studies serve the same purpose or serve to fulfill the Conversations on Church Potential study/discussion? As a follow-up, when can we expect to hear a start date for that engagement and who will be responsible for the cost of this study?

In this case, the deliberate process of analysis according to paragraph 212-213 will serve a different purpose than any church vitality study that has taken place prior to 2018. The paragraph 212-213 process will be adapted and designed in view of the current realities of the First Church congregation, along with the needs and cultural patterns of the surrounding community, during the last three to five years. The two paragraphs from the Book of Discipline and the deliberate analysis process will specifically focus on the local church's responsibility to fruitfully reach, engage, and serve the people and mission field surrounding First Church OKC.

As you have been informed, Rev. Chris Tiger, a Retired Elder of The United Methodist Church and coach, has been selected and contracted to lead the new deliberate analysis process according to paragraph 212-213. Chris is already at work with his research and development of the process. Next week you will be given the start date for the "engagement". The Heartland District and Oklahoma Conference will be responsible for all ensuing costs related to Rev. Tiger's services and the ministry and mission analysis.

2. If we are being asked to delay our vote because paragraphs 212/213 give the option for an assessment to be done, and that this is a part of the Conferences "Disaffiliation Agreement Pursuant to Paragraph 2553", then please explain why the Conference office and the District Superintendent does not have to abide by the same agreement? According to the bottom of page 2 of the "Disaffiliation Agreement" it states that any assessment would be done prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. This did not happen in that manner. Our Church Conference was scheduled by email received on 23 Dec 2022. So this assessment request was sent after and not prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. In fact, your notification was received even after First Church OKC met its obligation to submit its Membership Roster 10 days prior to the actual vote. Excerpt from the Agreement is below...

"Conditions Precedent. Local Church and Annual Conference acknowledge and agree:  
a. A Process for Assessment of Local Potential under ¶213 of the Discipline or a formal assessment initiated by the Annual Conference Legacy Team may be required to be completed prior to the scheduling of the church conference in order to assess whether the Local Church is a viable congregation. Such a requirement may be imposed upon the Local Church by the District Superintendent with jurisdiction over the Local

EXHIBIT

7

Church, and the Local Church shall be notified of such a requirement ~~prior to the District Superintendent scheduling the conference~~ of the Local Church contemplated by paragraph 1(c) below."

1. Ideally, the Conference Office and District Superintendent would absolutely abide by the same agreement down to dotting every "i" and crossing every "t". However, our stewardship of the mission and ministry of this Oklahoma Annual Conference and, in this case, the United Methodist presence and witness within the Heartland District, and most importantly our faithfulness to God's will for the Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, particularly in Downtown OKC, calls us to make a necessary shift in interpreting how we proceed, in this case with the Agreement, and in the process. Simply, we inadvertently missed an opportunity to do a paragraph 212-213 deliberation analysis prior to scheduling the Church Conference for January 22nd. It is unfortunate but it happened. Still, it was a necessary decision to postpone the Church Conference, adjust course, and proceed with the disciplinary process.

2. The Book of Discipline (paragraph 248) gives the District Superintendent the authority to set, postpone, or cancel a Church Conference, if that decision is needed. In view of the huge matters to weigh regarding the viability of First United Methodist Church OKC and the vote to disaffiliate, the decision to postpone was not only necessary but wise and responsible stewardship.

3. On January 11, 2023 Derrek Belase, David Belase, and I met with the First Church OKC Administrative Council. Concerns came forth from that gathering that grasped the attention of our conference leadership. The deep emotions and insights were revealing and taken very seriously. The meeting, along with other concerns related to First Church, the overall disaffiliation process in the Oklahoma Conference, and the shape of our ongoing mission and ministry in Oklahoma City, were factors that led to thorough discussions about postponing the process at First Church.

4. There was a sense of unreadiness, on the part of the Bishop, Oklahoma Conference Cabinet, and Conference leadership to proceed with the First UMC Oklahoma City Church Conference to Vote to Disaffiliate without pursuing the paragraph 212-213 deliberation analysis process. Therefore, David, we appreciate you and Pastor Chris Dodson, and members of your First Church leadership team for understanding and, I pray, graciously receiving the decision to postpone the Church Conference.  
Thank you.

*The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min*

Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)  
[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)

\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Fri, Jan 20, 2023 at 1:55 PM David Hancock <davidhancock30@gmail.com> wrote:  
Good afternoon Rev McCullough and Conference Leadership,

During the First Church OKC Administrative Council meeting last night, we had two items we were asked to bring to your attention for a response.

1. Our church has participated in multiple studies on church vitality that the Conference has initiated. Do any of the results of these Conference studies serve the same purpose or serve to fulfill the Conversations on Church Potential study/discussion? As a follow-up, when can we expect to hear a start date for that engagement and who will be responsible for the cost of this study?

2. If we are being asked to delay our vote because paragraphs 212/213 give the option for an assessment to be done, and that this is a part of the Conference "Disaffiliation Agreement Pursuant to Paragraph 2553", then please explain why the Conference office and the District Superintendent does not have to abide by the same agreement? According to the bottom of page 2 of the "Disaffiliation Agreement" it states that any assessment would be done prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. This did not happen in that manner. Our Church Conference was scheduled by email received on 23 Dec 2022. So this assessment request was sent after and not prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. In fact, your notification was received even after First Church OKC met its obligation to submit its Membership Roster 10 days prior to the actual vote. Excerpt from the Agreement is below...

"Conditions Precedent. Local Church and Annual Conference acknowledge and agree: a. A Process for Assessment of Local Potential under ¶213 of the Discipline or a formal assessment initiated by the Annual Conference Legacy Team may be required to be completed ~~and the Local Church shall be notified of such a requirement~~ in order to assess whether the Local Church is a viable congregation. Such a requirement may be imposed upon the Local Church by the District Superintendent with jurisdiction over the Local Church, and the Local Church shall be notified of such a requirement ~~and the Local Church shall be notified of such a requirement~~ of the Local Church contemplated by paragraph 1(c) below."

We believe that by having this vote, the Conference is then aware of where the church stands, which is a part of understanding the churches future vitality. It also will allow our Administrative Council to best represent the church body, whichever way they decide to vote.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your quick response.

Grace and Peace to you,

David Hancock  
First Church OKC  
Admin Council Chair  
405 326-6985

51 NW 4th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

## FIRST CHURCH

Phone Number:  
(405) 239-6493



Email Address:  
firstchurch@firstchurchokc.com

15 February 2023

Dear Bishop Nunn,

Blessings of grace and peace to you.

While I know you have been courtesy copied on recent email communications regarding First Church OKC and its disaffiliation vote, I wanted to take this time to communicate with you directly so that you are fully aware of where First Church currently stands and what we believe the direction that the Lord is leading us.

As you are aware, First Church has gone through a very diligent and focused discernment process with regard to disaffiliation over the past 8 to 10 months. During that time, we have earnestly prayed, we've fervently worshipped, we've shed many tears and have been heartbroken over the division that is occurring in God's church as well as the impact it is having directly on the First Church family. Our congregation earnestly sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit through this discernment time. We educated ourselves on the primary issues and held multiple meetings to include what we called nights of listening to God. Not one time had there been presented any bias or slant one way or the other. Rather, as Administrative Council chair it was my goal and the goal of our council to present as much relevant information on both sides of this issue to our congregation. While at the same time encouraging them to research these issues individually so they could become more educated and help maintain a prayerful focus.

On Dec 23, 2022, I notified our District Superintendent, Rev Dr. Victor McCullough of First Church's desire to hold a vote regarding disaffiliation. Dr. McCullough responded by offering a date of 22 Jan 2023 for an official Church Conference for voting on disaffiliation. In addition, Dr. McCullough requested a meeting with the Administrative Council along with the Director of Connectional Ministries, Rev Derrek Belase. This meeting essentially was to inform First Church that the conference had been looking at the local demographics and believed that First Church is vital to the downtown area and the desire on behalf of the conference to "partner" with First Church in outreach efforts. At no time during this meeting were there any discussion on the disaffiliation issues on human sexuality. Instead, Dr. McCullough asked that First Church not leave the UMC, but with not so much as addressing our theological concerns.

Subsequently one week later, 5 days prior to our scheduled vote, Dr. McCullough emailed me and Pastor Chris Dodson that he was postponing our Church Conference until a time to be determined later. As I'm sure you are aware, according to the Disaffiliation Agreement, the time to call for a viability study must occur prior to the scheduling of the Church Conference. The Church Conference to vote on disaffiliation for First Church had been scheduled for several weeks at this point. As you can imagine this came as a complete shock to us as our congregation had prayed for months and months and was ready to vote on what path they believed God wanted First Church to go. We were looking forward to getting this behind us and focusing on whichever path God leads us and most importantly continuing the work God had called us to do here at 4<sup>th</sup> and Robinson. However, because of this postponement, many

EXHIBIT

8


were distraught, disappointed and quite honestly angry with what is perceived as a stall tactic by the conference leadership. If I were to venture a guess, I would say that anyone who was on the fence about which way to go, this action sufficiently swayed many to vote to leave.

Furthermore, while the Book of Discipline paragraphs 212/213 were cited as the reason for the postponement. First Church understands no other church in the conference was subjected to this viability study and in fact, new churches that disaffiliated in the first round of October 2022, were required to adhere to this study.

In a subsequent Zoom meeting with Dr. McCullough and Rev Dr Tish Malloy, I requested that this viability study be accomplished as quickly as possible and not to slow roll the process. I believe this is vitally important for many reasons, to include ensuring First Church is allowed its right to vote and to do so in a manner that avoids the appearance of delay on behalf of conference leadership. Dr. McCullough sent an email citing 4 Feb 2023 as the date in which we would receive an overview and timeline of the viability process. As of the date of this letter we have not yet received that overview and timeline.

As you can imagine, there is now a great amount of distrust of our conference leaders. One would believe that disaffiliation should be a priority for all conference leaders, and they would want to do everything they can to address the concerns of First Church as soon as possible. However, I rarely receive timely responses to my email requests. If the leadership of the UMC to include your office and those of your cabinet truly wishes to be gracious and extend an olive branch, I think it in your best interest to start communicating directly to our congregation and start answering the hard questions. As such, I am formally requesting a meeting with you at First Church as soon as possible. We believe this to be of vital importance that it should warrant your immediate attention.

May God's blessing truly be upon you and your team,

  
David Hancock, Chair  
Administrative Council  
First United Methodist Church  
Oklahoma City, OK  
405 326-6985

cc: Rev Dr Victor McCullough  
Rev Dr Tish Malloy  
Rev Chris Dodson

From: Victor McCullough  
To: David Hancock; Chris Dodson  
Cc: Tish Miller; Libby; Victor McCullough  
Subject: First Church Disaffiliation Concerns  
Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 10:52:51 AM

---

Dear David,

Grace and Peace to you and the leadership team at First Church OKC!

On behalf of Bishop Nunn and our Oklahoma Conference Cabinet, thank you for your letter dated 15 February 2023. Your words were honest and heartfelt. We are very saddened to hear that you all have been disappointed, and even angered, by how the process has been handled since you notified me of the First Church Administrative Council's desire to hold a vote regarding disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. I can empathize with your frustration. Moreover, it is a disappointment for me/us to lose your trust in our Oklahoma Conference leadership. We appreciate your identity as a traditional, conservative, Christian community of faith and witness, respect your theological concerns within our denomination, and are grateful for the diligent and focused attention you have given to the discernment process regarding disaffiliation. Likewise, we value a positive and mutually affirming relationship with the leaders and congregation of First United Methodist Church (First Church), Oklahoma City.

Certainly, it may appear as though some things have been slow or delayed. However, I can assure you that nothing that has transpired, thus far, has been done as an intentional "stall tactic" by the conference leadership. Quite honestly, I am a bit disheartened that some of your leaders would perceive our efforts to lift up the principle of partnership, focus on our collective vital mission to engage the community, and make disciples of Jesus Christ in Downtown OKC and the surrounding regions, as "insulting" and somehow worthy of distrust. We still strive to keep improving this process, pray fervently, make thorough decisions, and facilitate needed adjustments, in the disaffiliation process. These matters are quite fluid, yet as Christ-worthy and fair as possible.

Indeed, I did indicate in an earlier communication that an overview and timeline of the viability process would be provided earlier this month. Unfortunately, I was not able to make that happen and I'm sorry. We needed to confirm that facilitation of the Conversation on Church Viability (CCV), based on Paragraph 212/213 in The United Methodist Book of Discipline, would be done effectively, and with excellence. I am grateful to say that competent leadership for the CCV has finally been secured. We now can move forward with arranging a meeting with the facilitator, along with members of your leadership team, to outline the process as early as Tuesday or Wednesday of next week in person or via Zoom. I'll contact you and we can confirm a date and method as soon as possible.

Also, you requested a meeting with Bishop Nunn at First Church as soon as possible. Bishop Nunn's next available time to meet with the First Church Administrative Council is Wednesday, 22 March 2023, 7-8:30PM. Hence, our Bishop cares enough to take the time to graciously hear the concerns of First Church, answer the hard questions your leaders may have, and pray with you as First Church as you continue the path God prepares for you going forward. Obviously, it is a very important time for us all. I pray for Pastor Chris Dodson, you, and the faithful people of faith and prayer at First Church OKC. May God bless you with great wisdom, guidance, and peace.

EXHIBIT

9

I am looking forward to connecting with you soon. Let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours in Christ!

***The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min***

Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)

[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)

\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

From: Victor McCullough  
To: David Hancock; Chris Dodson  
Cc: Tim Miller; J. Shum; Victor McCullough; Chris Stinson  
Subject: Re: First Church Constitution Concerns  
Date: Sunday, February 26, 2023 10:00:45 PM  
Attachments: Process for the Conversation on Church Viability -OKC First United Methodist Church.docx

---

Dear Chris and David,

This comes to confirm that Rev. Craig Stinson, a retired elder of the Oklahoma Conference, has been confirmed to serve as CCV Leader/facilitator for the 212/213 Church Viability Assessment Process. In checking with Craig, he is delighted to help with this and looks forward to meeting with the First Church leaders as soon as possible. First, there is an assignment that both of you are asked to complete.

Attached you will find the Process for Conversation on Church Viability(CCV) document. The document will give you an overview of the CCV process and procedures. Also, you will see questions that are to be answered by you (we would ask that you have a clergy perspective and a laity perspective on the Second Step of the Five Steps Process), and three to seven persons from First Church. Your team will need to provide the requested information about the church's mission, and answer the financial questions by Thursday, March 2. You can send your responses to Craig Stinson <castinson8150@gmail.com>, and copy me.

Rev. Stinson and I will meet with your First Church CCV Team on Wednesday, March 8, 7 p.m. We understand that getting all of this together will be a tedious task. However, we are mindful of your request that this CCV process would not be long and drawn out. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to let us know.

Thank you, both, and the congregation for your leadership at First United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. Moreover, many thanks for your commitment in being a part of this holy work!

*The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min*

Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)

[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org) or [heartlanddistrict@okumc.org](mailto:heartlanddistrict@okumc.org)

\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications

*"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus*

On Tue, Feb 21, 2023 at 10:52 AM Victor McCullough <[vmccullough@okumc.org](mailto:vmccullough@okumc.org)> wrote:  
Dear David,

Grace and Peace to you and the leadership team at First Church OKC!

On behalf of Bishop Nunn and our Oklahoma Conference Cabinet, thank you for your letter dated 15 February 2023. Your words were honest and heartfelt. We are very saddened to hear that you all have been disappointed, and even angered, by how the process has been

EXHIBIT

10

handled since you notified me of the First Church Administrative Council's desire to hold a vote regarding disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. I can empathize with your frustration. Moreover, it is a disappointment for me/us to lose your trust in our Oklahoma Conference leadership. We appreciate your identity as a traditional, conservative, Christian community of faith and witness, respect your theological concerns within our denomination, and are grateful for the diligent and focused attention you have given to the discernment process regarding disaffiliation. Likewise, we value a positive and mutually affirming relationship with the leaders and congregation of First United Methodist Church (First Church), Oklahoma City.

Certainly, it may appear as though some things have been slow or delayed. However, I can assure you that nothing that has transpired, thus far, has been done as an intentional "stall tactic" by the conference leadership. Quite honestly, I am a bit disheartened that some of your leaders would perceive our efforts to lift up the principle of partnership, focus on our collective vital mission to engage the community, and make disciples of Jesus Christ in Downtown OKC and the surrounding regions, as "insulting" and somehow worthy of distrust. We still strive to keep improving this process, pray fervently, make thorough decisions, and facilitate needed adjustments, in the disaffiliation process. These matters are quite fluid, yet as Christ-worthy and fair as possible.

Indeed, I did indicate in an earlier communication that an overview and timeline of the viability process would be provided earlier this month. Unfortunately, I was not able to make that happen and I'm sorry. We needed to confirm that facilitation of the Conversation on Church Viability (CCV), based on Paragraph 212/213 in The United Methodist Book of Discipline, would be done effectively, and with excellence. I am grateful to say that competent leadership for the CCV has finally been secured. We now can move forward with arranging a meeting with the facilitator, along with members of your leadership team, to outline the process as early as Tuesday or Wednesday of next week in person or via Zoom. I'll contact you and we can confirm a date and method as soon as possible.

Also, you requested a meeting with Bishop Nunn at First Church as soon as possible. Bishop Nunn's next available time to meet with the First Church Administrative Council is Wednesday, 22 March 2023, 7-8:30PM. Hence, our Bishop cares enough to take the time to graciously hear the concerns of First Church, answer the hard questions your leaders may have, and pray with you as First Church as you continue the path God prepares for you going forward. Obviously, it is a very important time for us all. I pray for Pastor Chris Dodson, you, and the faithful people of faith and prayer at First Church OKC. May God bless you with great wisdom, guidance, and peace.

I am looking forward to connecting with you soon. Let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours in Christ!

*The Rev. Victor T. McCullough, D.Min.*  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106  
(405)530-2029(o) (405)921-3129(m)

**ymccullough@okuma.org or heartlanddistrict@okuma.org**

**\*Thank you for using the above email addresses for DS/work-related communications**

***"The glory of God is a human being fully alive...beholding God" -Saint Irenaeus***

## **Process for Conversation on Church Viability**

### **Introduction**

The Disaffiliation Agreement specifies that an assessment of local church potential under Paragraph 213 of the Discipline or a formal assessment initiated by the Annual Conference Legacy Team may need to be completed to assess whether the local church is a viable congregation. This assessment can be imposed by the District Superintendent who has jurisdiction over the local church. This assessment may also be considered when a church sends a written request of its desire to vote on the church disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church. This document outlines the process developed by the Oklahoma Conference.

### **Initiating the Process**

As a church discerns whether the church will disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the District Superintendent also discerns whether or not an assessment should be done for the local church to determine its viability. If the local church later requests that a Church Conference be held to take a vote to disaffiliate, then the District Superintendent has 120 days in which to hold the Church Conference. The District Superintendent can determine that Conversations on Church Viability (CCV) be held in a timely manner. The District Superintendent contacts the Coordinator for CCVs to request someone to lead these conversations. The District Superintendent may ask at least one clergy and one lay person from the district to participate in this conversation(s.) The pastor of the church will identify and invite three to seven lay persons from the church to be a part of these conversations. If possible, a church member well acquainted with the finances of the local church should be a part of these conversations. The person could be the treasurer, financial secretary, or finance chairperson. The leader of the CCV will contact the pastor or one of the lay people from the church as well as the district representatives to schedule a time for the first conversation to occur.

### **Information Needed**

Statistics from the year end reports for the previous four years will be provided by the district office. The church will provide a budget for the church and the latest financial statement. The church and District Superintendent will provide contact information for the people participating in these conversations. A document, "Financial Health Questions" will be sent to the church to be filled out prior to the first conversation.

## **The Five Steps Process**

**The Conversation on Church Viability has 5 steps centered around a Critical Conversation:**

- 1. First, the current viability of the local church setting. It is preferred that this meeting be held at the church, although in some circumstances the meeting may be held elsewhere or online. The church participants and pastor are guided through the latest financial information as contained in the year end reports, financial statements, and Financial Health Questions. The district participants listen to the church participants and asking clarifying questions. It may be determined that additional information is needed. If so, the church will provide that information as soon as possible. The notes taken by the district participants are forwarded to the team leader.**
- 2. Second, the CCV Leader and district participants discuss any concerns that are lifted about the viability of the local church. While the current financial health of the church is important, other factors for the future viability of the church must also be considered. These factors include how many total participants are in the church, what is the average age of the participants, are they reaching their community and mission field for Christ, and are they being good stewards of the resources they have. These concerns are summarized by the CCV Leader.**
- 3. Third, the CCV Leader shares with the church participants the following items: a summary of what was heard at the first conversation; an analysis of the viability of the church; and the options and/or recommendation they are ready to share with the church. Church participants may ask clarifying questions.**
- 4. Fourth, the church participants meet to discuss the options and/or recommendation presented by the CCV Leader. No decision regarding a church's options should be made until the CCV process is complete.**
- 5. Fifth, the church council and/or congregation hears the recommendation of this group.**

### **Conclusion**

If desired, the Team Leader and/or District Superintendent will meet with the church when the recommendation is being considered by the church.

If this process results in a determination that the local church is no longer a viable congregation, then the District Superintendent will advise the church, and a written report will be made for the Conference Journal of the Oklahoma Annual Conference. The local church can elect to:

1. Discontinue the disaffiliation process and continue in its covenant relationship with the United Methodist Church; or
2. Discontinue the disaffiliation process and proceed under the paragraph 249 to close the church; or
3. Continue with the disaffiliation process under Paragraph 2553 with the understanding that in seeking approval of the Oklahoma Annual Conference for the disaffiliation, the annual conference will have received the report of non-viability in the Preconference Journal.

Any dispute as to viability of the local church shall be resolved in the exclusive and final judgment of the Oklahoma Annual Conference when it considers and votes on the local church's disaffiliation request under Paragraph 2553.



**Oklahoma Conference**  
of The United Methodist Church

## **Financial Questions**

### **A. General Fund**

- A. Are the General Fund expenses greater than the offerings received for the General Fund?
- B. If so, how much was this amount, and how did the church make up the shortfall?
- C. Has the church had to make up any shortfall over the last 4 years?

### **B. Staff Compensation**

- A. Does the church anticipate that it can sustain the current compensation for the pastor and staff of the church?
- B. If not, how much does the compensation need to be adjusted?
- C. Has the church experienced reductions in staff or compensation over the last 4 years?

### **C. Capital Expenses**

- A. Has the church experienced any capital expenses over the last 4 years?
- B. If so, how has the church managed to pay for these capital expenses?
- C. Does the church have funds set aside for capital expenses?

### **D. Apportionments**

- A. Were the apportionments paid in full for the last 4 years?
- B. If the apportionments were not paid in full, at what percentage were they paid?
- C. Did the church have any special fundraisers to raise money for the apportionments?

### **E. Reserves**

- A. Has the church drawn from its reserves (savings) over the last 4 years?
- B. If so, how much was drawn from the reserves?
- C. Does the church have dedicated accounts for emergencies, and if so, how much are in these accounts?

### **F. Income Beyond Offerings**

- A. Does the church receive income from endowments, investments, oil and gas royalties, rental property, etc.?
- B. If so, is the income restricted or unrestricted; and how much does the church receive from these sources?
- C. Is the principle available for church use on endowments? Please submit on a separate page any information on these items.

### **G. Debt**

- A. Is the church in debt, and if so, how much is the debt?
- B. What is the payment schedule?
- C. How long until the debt is to be paid off?

### **H. Payment for Disaffiliation**

- A. How much is the amount needed for this church to disaffiliate?
- B. What plans does the church have to pay this cost?
- C. If you must borrow money, what plans do you have to do this?
- D. If you have a significant part of your church not continue to give after the vote to disaffiliate, how would your congregation sustain the operation of the church's ministry?

**E. After the vote to disaffiliate, what does the church intend to do with the building?  
For example, does the church plan to sell the building and move to another facility? Would  
the congregation partner with, and share the space with another church or ministry?**

**Conversation on Church Viability Timeline and Dates of Note  
First United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City**

**January 17, 2023**

District Superintendent communicates with FUMC leadership to let them know that, prior to any congregational vote relating to disaffiliation, they must first complete a process described in Paragraphs 212/213 of the Book of Discipline, and outlined by the Oklahoma Conference as "Conversations on Church Viability" (CCV).

**February 22, 2023**

District Superintendent procures agreement from person to lead CCV process.

**February 26, 2023**

District Superintendent notifies church leadership of CCV conversation #1 set for March 8, 2023. Notification includes introduction of CCV process leader and requests data the church will need to provide for CCV conversation #1.

**March 2, 2023**

FUMC submits statistics from the Financial Health Questions document.  
FUMC provides additional data as requested.

**March 8, 2023**

CCV conversation #1 between CCV Team and FUMC leaders.

Content of this conversation:

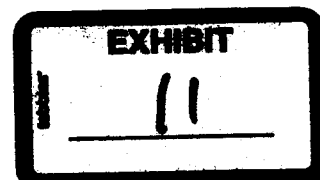
- a) Explain the purpose and process of CCV, including the needs of the local church the Annual Conference, and the mission field.
- b) Examine the data from the 2022 year-end financial report, the 2022 balance sheet, the financial health questions document, the 212/213 conversation (online form), and other documents as needed.
- c) Seek clarification and determine further information needed in order to complete the assessment.
- d) Go over the timeline; describe information needed for CCV#2; clarify and answer questions.
- e) Set dates for upcoming meetings as necessary.

**March 22, 2023**

*Bishop Nunn meets with FUMC leaders; 7:00pm-8:30pm.*

[Date]

CCV conversation #2 between CCV Team and FUMC leaders.  
Content of this conversation:



Explore in greater detail the mission field known as downtown Oklahoma City, with special attention to the area surrounding First UMC; More detailed look at the current missional outreach of FUMC.

[Date]

CCV Team completes assessment, issues initial draft of report.

[Date]

CCV conversation #3 between CCV Team and FUMC leaders.

- a) Brief summary by CCV Team of what was heard in Conversations #1 and #2.
- b) Report of analysis as determined by CCV team, including the perspective of the local church and the perspective of the Annual Conference.
- c) Clarifying questions by FUMC leaders.
- d) CCV Team provides options (or recommendation) for FUMC's next steps (\*see below).

[Date]

The CCV Team forwards their assessment and a summary of Conversation #3 to the District Superintendent, Director of Transitional Ministries, Director of Connectional Ministries, and the Oklahoma Conference Trustees.

[Date]

FUMC leaders meet to pray and discern God's will for FUMC going forward.

Options include (but are not limited to):

- a) Continue the disaffiliation process under Paragraph 2553.
  - i) Request that the District Superintendent set a date for a Church Conference at which time a vote on disaffiliation will be taken. Prior to the vote, FUMC leaders share with the congregation the result of the assessment, the CCV's recommendation(s) (if any), and the church's options going forward.
  - ii) Help the congregation understand the timeline and the next steps that various groups in the Conference will be taking.
- b) Discontinue the disaffiliation process and remain a United Methodist Church.
- c) Discontinue the disaffiliation process and proceed under Paragraph 249 in order to close the church.

*September 6, 2023*

*Last date for District Superintendent to hold a Church Conference to vote on disaffiliation in Fall 2023. More detail and helpful information is available at [okaznc.org/transitionalministry](http://okaznc.org/transitionalministry).*

*late September 2023*

*Conference Trustees publish an official report to the Annual Conference ahead of the Special Called Session (October 13).*

*October 13, 2023*

*Special Called Session of Oklahoma Annual Conference to vote on disaffiliations (by Zoom).*

Chris Dodson

Pastor, First Church OKC

<D7477DEE31524835AE47F90CFF900031[16729878].png>

From: Craig Stinson

Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 1:26 PM

To: Chris Dodson; David Hancock; Victor McCullough

Subject: CCV #2 meeting date

Hi Chris and David,

I was too ambitious trying to set the date for CCV #2. I know we had tentatively looked at March 20, depending on Victor's schedule and others.

We are going to need the help of several people from the Conference office in gathering material and in presenting at the CCV #2 meeting, and I am in the process of coordinating calendars with them.

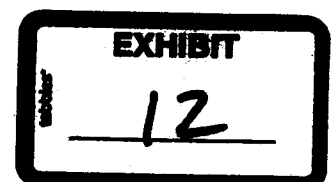
I do know that we will not be able to hold the CCV #2 on March 20, so I wanted to give you a heads up now, so your team will not try to protect that date.

I'll let you know our preference of a date (or dates, hopefully!) as soon as I can get agreement from the key parties; hopefully we can match your team's schedules then.

My apologies; I knew I was being pretty hopeful about others' schedules, but I was trying to move the process forward as quickly as makes sense.

More later,

Craig



I pray you are doing well!

I'm following up on the CCV process for First Church.

As of this email it has now been 8 weeks since we met with you and the CCV Team regarding the viability study for First Church. It's been 6 weeks since your last communication regarding the next CCV meeting with First Church. As you may recall I had requested an expedited process in order to allow our members to vote on disaffiliation no later than late May/early June timeframe. At that time you stated you would do everything you could to help accommodate our timeline, however, we have had no communications from you regarding this process.

As you may imagine, our congregation is anxious to get past this issue and move on so we can put all of our focus back on the work God has placed us here at 4th and Robinson to do.

Respectfully request status on a date for our next CCV meeting. If you need anything from us, please let me know as quickly as possible. I've cc'ed the First Church CCV representatives on this email as well.

Grace and peace to you,

David Hancock, Chair  
Administrative Council  
First United Methodist Church, OKC  
405 326-6985

On Mar 20, 2023, at 3:36 PM, Craig Stinson <[cstinson8150@gmail.com](mailto:cstinson8150@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thank you for your question, Chris. Unfortunately, I do not yet have a date for the CCV #2 meeting. I met with some of the Conference leaders this past Wednesday to go over what we will need by way of their research and presentation. They will get back to me when they have a date.

In the meantime, take care!  
Craig

On Mon, Mar 20, 2023 at 3:27 PM Chris Dodson <[tnemidur@hotmail.com](mailto:tnemidur@hotmail.com)> wrote:

Craig,

Just following up to see if you have been able to nail down some dates for our next meeting. I just wanted everyone to get it on their calendars as soon as they can.

Thanks



----- Forwarded message -----

From: David Hancock <davidhancock30@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, May 6, 2023 at 11:35 AM

Subject: Fwd: CCV #2 meeting date

To: Chris Janka <chris.c.janka@gmail.com>, Chris Dodson <tnemidur@hotmail.com>, Tim Basham <tbhasham@gmail.com>, Tony DeCicco <tony.decicco@faa.gov>, Sean Walker <spwalker@cox.net>, Ruth Schwab <ruthschwab21@gmail.com>, Nina Lipe <ninalipeokc@gmail.com>, Mary Nethercutt <mnethercutt@firstchurchokc.com>, Marty Anderson <marty4osu@cox.net>, Becca Janka <bec.janka@gmail.com>, David Mullins <mulda04@hotmail.com>, Michael Davis <FirstSergeant0811@yahoo.com>, Gayle Clark <gclark76@yahoo.com>, Morgan Kennedy <mkennedy@firstchurchokc.com>, Jackson Witt <jwitt@firstchurchokc.com>, Jana Simpson <jsimpson@firstchurchokc.com>, Hardy Patton <hardy.patton@gmail.com>

Dear Admin Council:

For your awareness, below is the correspondence between us and the CCV leadership. I don't recall if you've seen the earlier emails from March but those are represented in this chain as well. The most recent is what I want to call your attention to for your awareness starting yesterday, May 5 and with our latest response this morning.

Thank you!  
David

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Hancock <davidhancock30@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: CCV #2 meeting date

Date: May 6, 2023 at 9:48:18 AM CDT

To: Craig Stinson <csstinson8150@gmail.com>

Cc: Chris Dodson <tnemidur@hotmail.com>, Victor McCullough <vmccullough@okumc.org>, Tish Malloy <tmalloy@okumc.org>, J Nunn <jimmy.nunn@okumc.org>, Tim Basham <tbhasham@gmail.com>, Mary Nethercutt <mnethercutt@firstchurchokc.com>, Tony DeCicco <tony.decicco@faa.gov>, Ruth Schwab <ruthschwab21@gmail.com>

Craig,

EXHIBIT

14

Thank you for your quick response. It is much appreciated.

I certainly can appreciate the busy-ness of the conference leadership as well as the congregations around the conference at this time of year. I realize these days are even moreso with the addition of the disaffiliation issues having to be addressed.

However, please remember that it was not First Church that requested the viability study. District and Conference leadership required we go through this study and we have been faithful and diligent to do everything we've been asked to do; not just with the CCV but with the entire discernment process.

I'm sure you and conference leadership can imagine the angst and concern our congregation has over this. The longer it goes on, the harder it is for folks to stay focused on ministry. We want to get past this issue as I stated yesterday so we can put all of our focus on serving the Lord here.

Yes, the pancake breakfast was a wonderful success! I'm sure as well that you saw our involvement not only with the pancake breakfast, but with the memorial service. First Church was front and center in partnership with the Memorial Commission and civic leaders to accommodate such an important and meaningful remembrance ceremony within our sanctuary. Not only that, but with the Saturday evening Worship and Blessing of the Shoes and Gloves. This year it was held outside under our Heartland Chapel and the response was tremendous! Additionally we held a Sunrise Service held under the Survivor Tree the morning of the race. Praise God!!! He was definitely at work in our church and community through each of these events. These ministries are not doable without a committed congregation and staff working hard to serve the Lord by loving and serving His children. These serve as just a few examples of the viability of our congregation and staff and our partnership with our downtown community and friends at the memorial.

Additionally, as you are aware with time being of the essence due to the expiration of para 2553, we need to get to an official vote sooner rather than later in order for us to have everything ready for the specially called Annual Conference in October, if First Church votes to disaffiliate. We are intent on continuing ministry here and are wanting to get back to full efforts focused on that.

Unfortunately, it is clear by your email that First Church is not a priority among all the other busy things on conference leaderships calendar, even though it was that leadership that has required us to go through the viability study. It is disheartening as I'm sure you can understand, that while we appear to be the only church having to go through this process, we have to sit by and watch our nearby sister churches be allowed to finish the disaffiliation process and move on.

Therefore, since other things are demanding district and conference leaderships attention ahead of the good and gracious folks at First Church, I would urge the

cancellation of the viability study and allow us to vote on disaffiliation as soon as possible. I understand that may not be your decision which is why I've included the DS and Bishop Nunn on this email.

Respectfully request leaderships quick response to either cancelling the study or setting the date for the second CCV study.

Graciously and respectfully,  
David  
405 326-6985

On May 6, 2023, at 8:22 AM, Craig Stinson <cstinson8150@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you for the note, David. I hope the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon was another big success.

I appreciate your eagerness for us to complete the viability process. I am eager, too. Right now we're just having to wait our turn in a larger agenda that involves the leaders in our Conference. It's a bit like I felt on a plane the other day—I was seated and eager to take off, but because of a weather delay the night before there was a long line of planes in front of us. We did eventually get into the air.

I'm sure you have seen the announcement that our District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Victor McCullough is being appointed to a church in Wichita. His schedule right now must be more challenging even than it was earlier this spring. So he is one key.

Also, as promised, I did request the help of Rev. Derrek Belese and our Conference staff in examining the larger missional needs of downtown OKC, which we will examine in detail at our next meeting. But they are swamped right now in preparing for our regular Annual Conference session a couple of weeks from now. I know from personal experience how much work takes place in a normal year, let alone a year in which they have just completed a special called session of the Conference.

And, at the end of the Special Called Session, Bishop Nunn asked for prayers and patience with the appointment process, which is also experiencing unusual challenges related to the disaffiliation of some churches and the relinquishing of ministerial credentials from some of our Elders. Having experienced that work, I can say that each appointment

takes hours of discernment and prayer from the Bishop and the Superintendent, and then hours more working with pastors and their families, SPRC committees, and others. With some 350 United Methodist Churches in our Conference, this is a large process!

All this is to say that we have not been forgotten. Our District Superintendent will set a date for the CCV #2, which will also be tied to the availability of Rev. Belase. As soon as I learn that date, I will let you know.

Again, thank you for your note.  
Craig

On Fri, May 5, 2023 at 9:43 AM David Hancock  
<davidhancock30@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning Craig,

I pray you are doing well!

I'm following up on the CCV process for First Church.

As of this email it has now been 8 weeks since we met with you and the CCV Team regarding the viability study for First Church. It's been 6 weeks since your last communication regarding the next CCV meeting with First Church. As you may recall I had requested an expedited process in order to allow our members to vote on disaffiliation no later than late May/early June timeframe. At that time you stated you would do everything you could to help accommodate our timeline, however, we have had no communications from you regarding this process.

As you may imagine, our congregation is anxious to get past this issue and move on so we can put all of our focus back on the work God has placed us here at 4th and Robinson to do.

Respectfully request status on a date for our next CCV meeting. If you need anything from us, please let me know as quickly as possible. I've cc'ed the First Church CCV representatives on this email as well.

Grace and peace to you,

David Hancock, Chair  
Administrative Council  
First United Methodist Church, OKC  
405 326-6985

On Mar 20, 2023, at 3:36 PM, Craig Stinson  
<rstinson8150@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you for your question, Chris. Unfortunately, I do not yet have a date for the CCV #2 meeting. I met with some of the Conference leaders this past Wednesday to go over what we will need by way of their research and presentation. They will get back to me when they have a date.

In the meantime, take care!  
Craig

On Mon, Mar 20, 2023 at 3:27 PM Chris Dodson  
<tnemidur@hotmail.com> wrote:

Craig,

Just following up to see if you have been able to nail down some dates for our next meeting. I just wanted everyone to get it on their calendars as soon as they can.

Thanks

Chris Dodson  
Pastor, First Church OKC

<D7477DEE31524835AE47F90CFF900031[16729878].png>

From: Craig Stinson  
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 1:26 PM  
To: Chris Dodson; David Hancock; Victor McCullough  
Subject: CCV #2 meeting date

Hi Chris and David,

I was too ambitious trying to set the date for CCV #2. I know we had tentatively looked at March 20, depending on Victor's schedule and others.

We are going to need the help of several people from the Conference office in gathering material and in presenting at the CCV #2 meeting, and I am in the process of coordinating calendars with them.

I do know that we will not be able to hold the CCV #2 on March 20, so I wanted to give you a heads up now, so your team will not try to protect that date.

I'll let you know our preference of a date (or dates, hopefully!) as soon as I can get agreement from the key parties; hopefully we can match your team's schedules then.

My apologies; I knew I was being pretty hopeful about others' schedules, but I was trying to move the process forward as quickly as makes sense.

More later,  
Craig

151 NW 4th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

## FIRST CHURCH

Phone Number:  
(405) 239-6493



Email Address:  
firstchurch@firstchurchokc.com

May 16, 2023

The Rev. Victor T McCullough, D.Min  
Via Email: vmcCullough@okumc.org  
Heartland District Superintendent / Mission Strategist  
Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church  
1501 NW 24th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

Hello Rev. McCullough,

Pursuant to ¶248 of the BOD, the church council for First Church demands its requested church conference be scheduled no later than June 11, 2023 for the purpose of voting to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church pursuant to the provisions of ¶ 2553 of the 2016 BOD as amended by General Conference 2019. We previously notified you by email dated November 23, 2022, of our request for a church council to vote on disaffiliation.

Please note that paragraph 248 contains language that is in the disjunctive, such that a church conference may be called by the district superintendent in his discretion, or must be called by the district superintendent when requested by the church council. Also note that paragraph 2553 mandates that a church conference be held within 120 days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. You called a church conference on January 12, 2023, which was scheduled for January 22, 2023, and subsequently postponed. The deadline for you to preside over our church conference was May 11, 2023. Therefore, it is imperative you quickly comply with the Book of Discipline and remedy the violation.

Accordingly, we ask that you notify us within three (3) days or no later than May 19, 2023, that a church conference will be called and that you will attend and lead our church through the disaffiliation process established by the Conference Board of Trustees. You and the Conference Board of Trustees have a duty under ¶2553 to assist us in our pursuit of disaffiliation if it is the will of our church members.

We know the conference is very aware of how involved First Church has been and continues to be as a partner with the Oklahoma City community. In recent years, the church has assisted the local homeless community, provided outreach to the Exodus House and is best known for its volunteer efforts with the annual Memorial Marathon. These efforts include the annual pancake breakfast, the marathon expo, the Saturday evening worship service titled the Blessing of the Shoes and Gloves, and the annual Sunrise Service held under the Survivor Tree the morning of the race. Additionally, First Church has a close partnership with the Memorial Commission and other civic leaders and is often asked to assist with meaningful services such as the annual remembrance ceremony. Finally, First Church currently maintains numerous local relationships including a partnership with the OKC Chamber Symphony for rehearsals and concerts, St. Luke's with our First Kids Daycare program which provides a prime downtown location for working families, OU Medical School for graduation programs, and an ongoing partnership with the YMCA for their annual summer programming. These are all clear markers of a vibrant and Spirit filled church.

EXHIBIT

15

As a reminder, 84 churches across the state of Oklahoma have already requested and been granted the opportunity to have a church conference and subsequently disaffiliate via the ratification process. We simply want to be treated fairly and allowed to move forward just as these churches have been allowed to do so. To treat us otherwise is unfair and unjust. We look forward to your prompt response and the scheduling of our church conference.

Sincerely,

**s/ David Hancock**

David Hancock, Chair Administrative Council Chair

**s/ Chris Janke**

Chris Janke, Vice-Chair Administrative Council Vice Chair

**s/ Tony DeCicco**

Tony DeCicco- Finance Committee Chair

**s/ Sean Walker**

Sean Walker- Trustees Chair

**s/ Tim Basham**

Tim Basham- SPRC Chair

CC:

Tish Malloy

Bishop James G. Nunn

Rev. Chris Dodson- Senior Pastor