

June 15, 2022

Dr. John Beyers, Senior Minister
Ms. Nancy Stevens, Church Council Chair
Dr. John Jackson, Lay Leader
Mrs. Martha Pirkle, Lay Leader

LaGrange First United Methodist Church
401 Broad Street
LaGrange, GA 30240

Dear Dr. Beyers, Ms. Stevens, Dr. Jackson, and Mrs. Pirkle:

We, LaGrange First United Methodist Lay Members to Annual Conference of the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church, are writing to you, the leaders of our church, requesting information on behalf of our congregation regarding issues that we consider crucial to the future of our church.

With the announcement of the delay of General Conference until 2024, reports of The Protocol support being withdrawn, and the pending expiration of Paragraph 2553 concerning denominational disaffiliation, we believe now is an opportune time for more information be given to our congregation.

Having recently attended Annual Conference in Athens, Georgia, we witnessed the ratification of the disaffiliation of seventy churches in the conference pertaining to paragraph 2553 in the Book of Discipline. This was a somber event for all as we experienced the separation of these congregations from the Conference. The event raised questions as to how these churches came to this point.

We love our church and our denomination, and we are proud of being part of both. We have a very effective ministry to our members, to our local community, and to the world. We respect the Book of Discipline and the commitment to biblical principles as laid out in the authoritative Word of God. These are the tenets that bind us together as United Methodists worldwide.

However, we know that there are conflicting views and interpretations within the United Methodist Church worldwide concerning the Book of Discipline and The Bible. It is our desire to understand more fully these differing views and interpretations in the denomination.

We write this letter to request our congregation have an opportunity to be further educated on the circumstances surrounding the impending split in the United Methodist Church as a whole and what, if any, effect it could have on our local church in LaGrange.

Therefore, we are requesting that you initiate a program of education to inform our congregation of the various aspects of these issues. At some point, we believe a "Town Hall" type event with representatives of various viewpoints giving presentations followed by a question and answer period would be very helpful to our members in understanding all sides.

We thank you in advance for your response to this request. Please feel free to reach out to either of us for further clarification of this request as needed.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Emery, Lay Member to Annual Conference



Libba Bowling, Lay Member to Annual Conference