

Statement on Post General Conference Meeting in 2024 Local Church Departures

The North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees empathizes with congregations who feel rushed to make a decision to remain United Methodist or disaffiliate under *Book of Discipline* ¶2553 prior to its expiration date of December 31, 2023.

At the time the 2019 called General Conference enacted ¶2553, the 2020 General Conference was scheduled to meet approximately a year later. However, the 2020 General Conference was postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is now scheduled to meet April 23 – May 3, 2024, several months after the provisions of ¶2553 have expired. If the 2020 General Conference had been held in 2020 or in 2022, on the dates to which it was first postponed, all congregations would have had ample time after the 2020 General Conference to fully understand any disciplinary changes regarding human sexuality and to discern their future based on legislation adopted by the 2020 General Conference.

The North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees is committed to use their authority within the parameters of the *Book of Discipline* to seek a gracious, fair and non-punitive separation process for local churches for the period following the General Conference meeting in 2024 through December 31, 2024, if the General Conference meeting in 2024 adopts legislation related to human sexuality that causes a local church to believe it is untenable to continue as a United Methodist church.

This statement was approved by the North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees at its meeting on March 1, 2023.



Harlan I. Prater IV, President
North Alabama Conference Board of Trustees