January 3, 2023

Reverend Dr. Jessica Terrell
District Superintendent
Central West District of the North Georgia Conference of The UMC
PO Box 2058 Hiram, GA 30141

Via Certified Mail, return receipt requested.

Dear Reverend Dr. Terrell,

    This the formal request of the Leadership Board of the Douglasville First United Methodist Church for a timely called church conference for the sole purpose of voting whether or not to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church under the provisions of Paragraph 2553 of the 2016 Book of Discipline as amended by General Conference 2019.

    The vote of our Leadership Board to make this request was a unanimous “Yes” taken at our October 16th, 2022 meeting to allow our entire congregation to vote.

    It is our intention to continue communication with our congregation including town hall meetings to inform our church of this decision and the options before us.

    We are aware of the statement issued on December 28, 2022 from then Bishop Sue Haupert-Johnson, the Appointive Cabinet, and the Conference Board of Trustees relating to the "pause" of the disaffiliation process in North Georgia.

    Respectfully, we believe this action to be a direct violation of the Book of Discipline, contrary to the language of Paragraph 2553, and beyond the authority of the bishop, cabinet, and trustees.  Further, our church has relied on the adoption of Paragraph 2553 in its continued operation and relationship with the United Methodist Church and the North Georgia Conference.

    It should be noted that Douglasville First United Methodist Church has done nothing to violate the Book of Discipline and is in good standing as defined by the Conference Board of Trustees at the 2022 Annual Conference Session. Additionally, this church has done nothing to engage in any negative conduct as outlined in the December 28, 2022 statement.

    Moreover, Bishop Haupert-Johnson, spoke to the churches in our community, on presenting the conference positions and perspectives on disaffiliation.

    Therefore, it is inequitable and unjust to prohibit United Methodist Churches from continuing through the revised agreement and disaffiliation process found on page 77 of the 2022 Annual Conference Handbook, as presented to and accepted by the 2022 Annual Conference Session Two on June 3, 2022 (Conference Journal page 268) after 70 local church disaffiliations were approved by the conference during Session One on June 2, 2022 as documented on page 266 of the 2022 Conference Journal.

    Therefore, we request that you set the date for the church conference as provided for by the 2019 General Conference actions in Paragraph 2553. We expect to receive a reply to this letter no later than ten (10) days from the date of this letter.  We are not expecting you to set a date for a vote within ten days, but that you merely reply to this letter.  If we do not receive a reply by that date, we will assume you do not intend to reply.

                            Yours in Christ

                            David Emerson
                            Board Chair on behalf of the
                            Leadership Board of the Douglasville First United Church

CC:     Reverend Roger Vest, Pastor-in-Charge
    DFUMC Leadership Board members