

Dear Friends,

This is a follow-up to my previous letter and proposed resolution on the Celebrate UMC Clergy Zoom about the “pause.” I want to thank all of you for the discussion around it that helped move our conversation forward, especially Michael Precht. The main objective of the pause was to halt the harmful “discernment” process and to end the harm to our churches, its members and clergy, and our mission to make disciples. I believe that the June 5 update to the AWF Trustee policy effectively gets us to that point. Providing accountability to the eligibility requirements of the BOD for instance means that likely few if any churches in our conference are truly eligible. The good faith requirements mean that coercion, threats, and slander against the UMC will no longer be tolerated. Finally, the more clearly structured discernment process means that no church will be bullied or forced into leaving, especially over lies about doctrine or promises of property.

While it is still possible for churches to leave, these clarifications are as good or better at reaching a “pause” than the original resolution, and all the Trustees have done is to follow the intent and letter of the BOD, church law, and civic law. I believe our best course of action is to support and defend the work of the trustees. We owe a debt of gratitude to our trustees and Olivia Poole, their chair, for the work they have done in refining our policy. The days of mass and easy disaffiliation, under false pretenses, are over. I hope and pray that this year’s Annual Conference will be a fresh new start for our connection, where we can focus on our mission of making new disciples of Jesus Christ by growing our churches and planting new communities of faith.

Also, please make plans to join us Monday at noon at St. John’s UMC for a special Celebrate UMC event (information below)! I look forward to seeing you next week!

Practice Resurrection,
Geoffrey

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The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey D. Lentz
Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church of Pensacola, FL
Office Phone 850-432-1434