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April 25, 2023

Dear Covenant Family:

As many of you already know, Covenant United Methodist Church held a Church Conference on Sunday, April 23rd to decide whether to remain a United Methodist Church or disaffiliate.

The result of the Church Conference was Covenant will disaffiliate from the UMC. The disaffiliation will be effective May 31, 2023.

Some may be celebrating, while others are mourning. To everyone, Covenant is still Covenant. It is the same today as it was yesterday or last year or 10 years ago. More importantly, we will be Covenant next Sunday, the Sunday after that, and into the future. We will sing Hymns and worship the Lord. *We are the Church.*

We have much healing to do. We may have friends and acquaintances that leave Covenant. To those who think they need to consider leaving, Covenant is no different today in its approach to the Gospel and its center on Christ! Covenant will continue to welcome all, as we always have, without judgment of their background or lifestyle. We will profess the gospels that are demonstrated by Jesus Christ.

For most attendees of the Church Conference, the vote was not primarily centered on the LGBTQ issue that the media is promoting, but rather it was the abandonment by the UMC governing council of the Book of Discipline's principles that the Methodist faith was founded.

Covenant will continue to be a Methodist congregation, worship on Sundays, have choir practices, Sunday School classes, put on productions, have coffee and donuts at and after services - just not affiliated with the United Methodist Church or the Louisiana Annual Conference.

The Church Council met with the District Superintendent and completed the required disaffiliation documents. Next, the Louisiana Annual Conference will hold a special-called session on Saturday May 27th. A majority vote of the Annual Conference is required for Covenant to officially disaffiliate from the UMC. Once approved, the property and assets will be transferred to our new church, "**Covenant Methodist Church**". (Yes, we will keep Methodist in our name as that is who we are.)

Upon completion of the disaffiliation process, the Church Council will take a cautious and deliberate approach to review possible association with another denomination. We may decide to remain independent, if our membership and leadership indicates that would be the best fit for the new Covenant Methodist Church. The Council will be in communication with the congregation throughout this process and will be asking our membership for input on our steps forward. We will be operating, conducting business, and worshiping under our current Book of Discipline upon completion of the disaffiliation process.

Since Covenant is without a pastor at this time, the Church Council has asked Pastor Chris Blanchard to assist in fulfilling those needs. Many of you know Chris from his years of service here at Covenant. The Council feels that with his history and years of service to our church, he is the best fit for us to be able to build a bridge to a new future with Covenant and our Community.

There will be old faces that we will all miss but there will also new ones that will want to be part of Covenant as we face a bright future focused on Christian principles.

While this is a sad day for our Church, we will overcome this time of change. With the commitment of each of you as part of Covenant's Church family, we will rekindle the Spirit and passion that has led Covenant to stand for the last 60 years. Please pray for our church and the denomination!

David Lee

David Lee, Church Council Chair