

November 28, 2022

Dear Canton First family and friends,

Your Governing Board wishes to provide an update concerning the future affiliation of Canton First United Methodist Church. All our previous correspondence concerning this issue can be found on our church website [here](#).

As you will remember, our church is currently “on hold” because the North Georgia Conference Board of Trustees and Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson have suspended all called Church Conferences and votes on disaffiliation until after March 1, 2023. The North Georgia UMC District Superintendents were directed to decline any requests for church conferences after February 15, 2022. In June of 2022, Bishop Hauptert-Johnson announced that new requests for church conferences would only be accepted again between January 1, 2023, and February 28, 2023. The respective District Superintendents will then schedule church conferences as requested between March 1, 2023, and April 30, 2023.

While United Methodist Annual Conferences around the country (i.e., Texas, South Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Arkansas, Florida, and others) are allowing local churches to vote and make decisions about their future affiliation, the churches of the North Georgia Conference must wait. There is clearly no parity between Conferences, and there is no avenue for appeal of our Bishop’s decision.

As we mentioned in our last email, we are working hard and remaining focused on our mission at Canton First! We recently celebrated the 30th Anniversary of our Preschool, and in November, we held a church-wide celebration of the church’s 180 years of ministry in Canton, complete with an amazing worship service and a covered-dish meal together. We look forward to celebrating Advent and the Christmas season together, and we are welcoming new visitors and members to our congregation every week. You have probably noticed updates to our children’s areas, as well as our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, and renovation of our youth ministry areas will begin next month! These are exciting times at Canton First UMC, and we are all committed to focusing on what is truly important:

Sharing Life • Sharing Christ • For Others

We continue to pray for wisdom, and we covet the prayers of our congregation as we move forward. Please contact any one of us if you have questions or concerns.

Blessings,

Dr. Kenny Ott, Lead Pastor
Rev. Kelly Beckley, Executive Pastor
Dave Sullivan, Lay Leader
Susan Dreschel, Governing Board Chair