

May 15, 2023

Dear Church Family,

Previously we had shared with you that the Administrative Board had voted to join a litigation block of 187 North Georgia churches in a lawsuit against the North Georgia Conference seeking permission for our congregation to make a decision about our future affiliation with the United Methodist Church. The decision on affiliation is allowable under our Book of Discipline. However, our previous Bishop along with the North Georgia Conference trustees placed a pause on the disaffiliation process.

Prior to the lawsuit, our group of 187 churches through our legal representatives, National Center for Life and Liberty, made every effort to negotiate a settlement. The conference failed to act in a timely manner and therefore a lawsuit was filed to lift the pause.

We have received notice that a hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, at 9:30 a.m. in the Cobb County Superior Court to rule on a motion to remove the “pause”. If approved by the judge, the North Georgia Conference would be required to schedule a called Church Conference for all participating churches so that those churches (including Madsion First United Church) could decide our future.

First and foremost, we are asking you to pray. Both prayer rooms in the Epworth Building will be open on Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. We hope you can stop by the church during the day and pray for our congregation. We ask you to pray for a solution so that we can all focus on the ministries to which God has called us whether remaining in the UMC or moving on. You can pray from home, on your way to work, or any chosen location. We just want to cover this day in prayer.

Our attorneys have shared that we all are invited to the hearing. If you should plan to attend, we are asked to bring our best selves to the courtroom. The hearing is scheduled in the Cobb County Superior Court, 70 Haynes Street, Marietta and the courtroom is tentatively set for Courtroom 4200.

Blessings,

Tommy Richardson, Administrative Board Chair

Melissa Martin, Lay Leader

