



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
THE FORT WORTH AREA

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RUBEN SAENZ, JR.
RESIDENT BISHOP

BETTY ALEXANDER
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Dear [Pastor],

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ! I am thankful for the time we have been able to share, brief as it has been to date, in relationship within the Central Texas Conference.

Though my time in episcopal leadership with the Central Texas Conference has been relatively brief, I appreciate the work in ministry that you have and are accomplishing. I am confident that you will continue to work to make disciples of Jesus Christ moving forward - whether that is within The United Methodist Church or otherwise. However, it is now the time to clearly declare your intentions about your clergy membership.

I recognize that the tone of this letter may seem extreme. However, the primary intent is to make certain that those who wish to remain United Methodist clergy are able to enter an appointment or leave of absence status on November 1, 2022. In addition, I want to make clear the process and date of withdrawal for those who have discerned that their calling as a clergy person is with another denomination but who have not provided written verification of this intent.

With the decision of your church{es} to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, there is also the personal decision of whether you will remain United Methodist or withdraw.

Your District Superintendent has sent at least two letters communicating {1} the need for, {2} the steps to follow, and {3} the timeline/deadline for you to indicate your ongoing relationship or lack thereof with The United Methodist Church. Your response {Letter of Intent} has not yet been received.

You have until September 30, 2022, to submit your Letter of Intent to clarify your actions as you move forward.

Your choices, as indicated in the Letter of Intent form {attached} include :

- (1) Confirm your desire to retain your United Methodist credentialing and either
 - a. Request a new appointment {to begin Nov. 1, 2022} or
 - b. Request personal or family leave of absence {to begin Nov. 1, 2022} or
 - c. (For local pastors only), indicate a desire to remain approved for license but to wait until a future date for another appointment.

(2) Confirm your desire to disaffiliate/withdraw from The United Methodist Church and follow the established procedure to submit your United Methodist membership credentials and/or license for pastoral ministry before October 31, 2022.

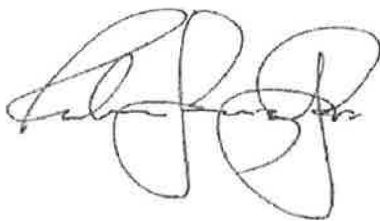
The Letter of Intent also asks, for those disaffiliating/withdrawing who are eligible for retirement under 411357, to confirm if they plan to enter a retired status on or before October 31, 2022.

This rest of this letter is intended to (1) clarify my actions as your Bishop if you do not respond by the September 30, 2022 deadline, and (2) provide the rationale for this action.

The 2016 *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* and related Judicial Council decisions indicate that a United Methodist clergy person may not hold clergy membership in another denomination . [Judicial Council Decision 696](#) makes it clear that when a United Methodist clergy person takes on a clergy role in another denomination, outside of an approved extension ministry appointment, the clergy person, by their action, withdraws from and no longer holds clergy credentials in The United Methodist Church. There is no requirement for due process in this situation. The separation from The United Methodist Church is immediate and automatic.

If the requested Letter of Intent is not received by September 30, 2022, I will presume that you are intending to withdraw from your current clergy relationship with The United Methodist Church. On October 1, 2022, you will be sent a certified letter from the Central Texas Conference documenting the lack of response, the presumed withdrawal from The United Methodist Church, the ending of your appointment effective November 1, 2022, and notification that you are no longer a clergy member of The United Methodist Church as of November 1, 2022. A copy of the letter will be placed in your permanent file. A record of your withdrawal will be included in the 2023 Business of the Annual Conference report. Notice of your withdrawal will also be immediately communicated with Wespeth.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruben Saenz, Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr.