

Pastoral Announcement regarding Disaffiliation News (the Straw Vote)

Our 30 days of discerning prayer regarding the question of whether Burnt Factory should disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church was complete on May 16. We will, as part of our process of discernment & exploration of disaffiliation, carry on with the next stage of the requirements as laid out in Paragraph 2553 of the UMC Book of Discipline. This stage requires a straw vote of the professing membership of the church. You must be a member to vote. A straw vote does not count as the final vote.

The sole purpose, the only purpose, of this unofficial vote, is to establish if there is a 2/3 majority consensus that this faith community desires to disaffiliate, leave, or disconnect from the UMC and, thus, decide its own future. The sole criteria for this vote, as laid out by paragraph 2553, is based upon a matter of conscience regarding the aforesaid and previously stated issues in our denomination, over the status of homosexual persons regarding marriage and ordination.

There has been an abundance of information shared in many different formats about this process and there will be more information coming. This week, the servant team made available their financial analysis, based upon current information and assessments. This will reveal the financial challenge the church will face if it decides to disaffiliate. Again, the vote is based on your conscience, but the congregation, in all fairness and ethical truth, needs to know this financial challenge if the church decides to disaffiliate. If the straw vote supports disaffiliation, details will be provided as to how Burnt Factory can meet this financial challenge.

I want to share once again, the many avenues open to you to receive information. You have FAQ's available on our website or in hard copy at the church. You go to burntfactory.org and click on the top bar that says, "disaffiliation." There you will find FAQ's and the financial analysis. You can still access the "Town Hall" meeting and go back and watch it. We encourage you to go to the VAUMC web site (vaumc.org) where there are also FAQ's available to you. The VAUMC website also has shared some possible next steps to consider for those who do not wish to disaffiliate, if that, indeed, becomes a reality. I have also shared many times, that I would be glad to meet with anyone to help answers some "nuts and bolts" questions.

With all that said, it is mandated that we share information that affects the entire church at least 10 days prior to the straw vote; this includes the dates, times and the process for the straw vote.

The servant team will welcome members to the sitting room down stairs where their membership will be verified and where they will receive a ballot. The member will then enter into the library where they will cast their vote in private. The dates and times are as follows and you will receive this information by all our other means.

- **Saturday, May 27** **10:00am to 3:00pm**
- **Sunday, May 28** **7:30am to 2:00pm**
- **Saturday, June 3** **10:00am to 3:00pm**
- **Sunday, June 4** **7:30am to 2:00pm**

***If you are a member of BFUMC who is unable to attend church, physically, because of health issues, you can contact Angela Hart at Ang.Leigh.Hart@gmail.com or 540-842-5848 and request a ballot so that your vote can be collected.**

There will be no absentee, mail-in or proxy votes.