



The Oklahoma Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, Inc  
1501 NW 24th Street, Oklahoma City OK 73106-3635

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**Statement on the appeal — Aug. 28, 2023**  
**Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church**

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The Oklahoma Annual Conference is grateful that the Supreme Court of Oklahoma granted an emergency stay today, stopping the district court-ordered interference in our disaffiliation process.

We believe the lower court's decision on Aug. 21 took away the rights of the Church of the Servant members who have twice voted to remain a part of the United Methodist Church, representing an unconstitutional intrusion into religious self-governance in violation of the First Amendment.

The Oklahoma Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is committed to adhering to church law, following the disaffiliation process and representing the conference. We have consistently honored the documented and approved disaffiliation process for every church that has expressed interest in disaffiliating, and Church of the Servant is no exception.

The courts have no role to play in the management of church affairs including local church disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. The interpretation of the Book of Discipline, which is the basis for the disaffiliation process, and the documented disaffiliation agreement that is authorized by the Book of Discipline, should be left to the internal processes of The United Methodist Church as intended.

The Oklahoma Annual Conference will continue to fight to defend the First Amendment rights of all religious institutions and the rights of its members and local churches to the free exercise of their faith. We will continue to vigorously resist the entanglement of secular courts in matters of internal church governance.