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Notice of Called Church Conference for the Sale of Church Facilities

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul United Methodist Church,

Over the past several months, St. Paul United Methodist Church has been prayerfully considering the future of our church property and the ways our facilities can best support the mission and ministry of this congregation in the years ahead. Following extended discussion, negotiation, legal review, and preliminary approvals, the time has come for the professing membership of St. Paul UMC to make a decision regarding the proposed sale of our church property to Abilene Classical Academy.

By authorization of our District Superintendent, a **Called Church Conference will be held on Sunday, September 27, 2026, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.** The conference is being convened in accordance with The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, ¶¶ 2540 and 2541, for the purpose of considering and voting upon a resolution regarding the proposed sale of the St. Paul United Methodist Church property to Abilene Classical Academy.

Before the Called Church Conference, **two informational meetings will be held on Sunday, September 20th, at 09:00am and 05:00pm.** These meetings will be facilitated by the Strategic Planning Committee. They will provide an opportunity to review the proposed Purchase and Sale Agreement, the anticipated lease-back arrangement, financial considerations, and other important information concerning what the sale would mean for the congregation. Church members, constituents, and other interested persons are welcome to attend these informational meetings. Questions will be encouraged and discussed as time allows. If you have questions before then, you may contact me or the church office.

All professing members of St. Paul United Methodist Church who are present at the Called Church Conference are eligible to vote on September 27th. Because this decision concerns the current, rising, and future generations of St. Paul UMC members, I strongly encourage every professing member who is able to attend to be present and participate in this important act of discernment.

A professing member must sign-in to receive their ballot, and must be present to vote. The District Superintendent will not allow mail-in ballots, stand-in voters, nor any other means of substitution. If you need a ride to the church conference, we will have volunteers who are willing to come pick you up! Please call the church office before 01:00pm Monday, September 21st, so that we can add your name to the contact list.

There are meaningful opportunities associated with the sale, and there are significant costs and risks. Faithful members of our congregation may weigh those considerations differently. For that reason, I have included a "pros and cons" overview in the church's September Newsletter. I do not believe this decision

should be approached primarily as a contest between two sides. It is an act of communal Christian discernment. As Proverbs 16 reminds us: *“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”*

Between now and September 27, I ask every member of St. Paul to do three things: **Pray** sincerely for wisdom and for the future of this congregation. **Attend** one of the informational meetings, and ask questions and learn as much as possible about the proposed agreement and its implications. Lastly I urge you to **Trust** that the future of St. Paul United Methodist Church ultimately rests not in a building, a contract, or a vote, but in the faithfulness of God and in our willingness to follow where God leads us together.

Whatever the outcome of the vote, we will still have important work ahead of us. If the sale is approved, we will begin preparing intentionally for a new chapter of ministry and eventual relocation. If the sale is not approved, we will continue developing a plan for the stewardship, renovation, and missional use of our present facilities. Either way, our purpose and mission to *“Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,”* has not changed, and we will continue the important work of strategic planning and redevelopment.

Remember this: buildings are important tools for ministry, but they are not the church itself. **Together, we are St Paul UMC**—one body, rooted in Christ, growing by grace, and making a difference!

With Reverence and Sincerity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BV Fleet', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. Benji Van Fleet
SENIOR PASTOR