



North Carolina Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

April 2, 2024

Mr. Dusty Pilcher, President
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Congregation Council
612 S. College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403

Dear Mr. Pilcher, Pastor Zumwalt and Siblings at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church,

I greet you as vice president of the North Carolina Synod and in the name of the risen Lord!

We received your request for disaffiliation. On March 15-16, 2024, the North Carolina Synod Council met at a regularly scheduled meeting. The agenda for the meeting included discussion of your congregation's request to disaffiliate from the NC Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).


After consideration of your request, the Synod Council voted to deny your request to disaffiliate. St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wilmington, NC therefore remains a congregation of the NC Synod of the ELCA.

In July, 2023 we denied your request and proposed changes that would have led to a complete and absolute disaffiliation, both policy-wise and financially and would have allowed you to righteously and fully align your vision, beliefs and funding with the theological and practical stances of a different church body. Your leadership rejected that solution.

While your request was again denied, the North Carolina Synod Council members recognize that we are at an impasse and recommend mediation. We understand this to be a process which includes a mediator or third-party facilitator and negotiation from both parties.

I pray your congregation members and leadership are aware that we are clearly seeking a path forward and are not "holding you hostage in the ELCA". Your people have always had the absolute freedom to leave individually at any time and join the denomination of their choice. Questions regarding this letter and next steps should be sent to me. On behalf of the NC Synod Council, I extend peace and prayers to you as you make decisions.

Sincerely,
The Synod Council—NC Synod, ELCA


Diana Haywood

Vice President

CC: Reverend Dr. Samuel Zumwalt, Senior Pastor, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
Bishop Timothy Smith, NC Synod, ELCA
Reverend Christina Auch, Chair, Disaffiliation Committee, NC Synod Council

Vice President, Synod Council

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