



June 19, 2018

Dear Rev. Boykin and Rev. Wines,

We, the undersigned laity and clergy of the United Methodist Church, issue a formal complaint against fellow United Methodist layperson Jefferson Beauregard Sessions, by our understanding a lay member of Ashland Place United Methodist Church, in Mobile, AL, and an active participant in Clarendon United Methodist Church, Arlington, VA. While we are reticent to bring a formal complaint against a layperson, Mr. Sessions' unique combination of tremendous social/political power, his leading role as a Sunday School teacher and former delegate to General Conference, and the severe and ongoing impact of several of his public, professional actions demand that we, as his siblings in the United Methodist denomination, call for some degree of accountability.

We write to you, Mr. Sessions' pastors, copying his District Superintendents and Bishops, in the hopes that you will, as members of our connectional system, dig deeply into Mr. Sessions' advocacy and actions that have led to harm against thousands of vulnerable humans. As members of the United Methodist Church, we deeply hope for a reconciling process that will help this long-time member of our connection step back from his harmful actions and work to repair the damage he is currently causing to immigrants, particularly children and families.

Pursuant to Paragraph 2702.3 of the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline, we hereby charge Jefferson Beauregard Sessions, Attorney General of the United States, a professing member and/or active participant of Ashland Place United Methodist Church (Mobile, Alabama) and Clarendon United Methodist Church (Alexandria, Virginia), with the chargeable offenses of:

- Child Abuse (examples: advocacy for and implementation of documented practices that indefinitely separate thousands of young children from their parents; holding thousands of children in mass incarceration facilities with little to no structured educational or socio-emotional support)
- Immorality (examples: the use of violence against children to deter immigration; advocating and supporting the separation of children from their families; refusal of refugee/asylee status to those fleeing gang or sexual violence; oppression of those seeking asylum or attempting to enter the United States with refugee status; directing employees and staff members to kidnap children from their parents)
- Racial discrimination (examples: stopping investigations of police departments charged with racial discrimination; attempting to criminalize Black Lives Matter and other racial justice activist groups; targeting incarceration for those engaged in undocumented border crossings as well as those who present with requests for asylum, with a particular focus on those perceived as Muslim or LatinX)
- Dissemination of doctrines contrary to the standards of doctrine of the United Methodist Church (examples: the misuse of Romans 13 to indicate the necessity of obedience to secular law, which is in stark contrast to Disciplinary commitments to supporting freedom of conscience and resistance to unjust laws)

While other individuals and areas of the federal government are implicated in each of these examples, Mr. Sessions - as a long-term United Methodist in a tremendously powerful, public position - is particularly accountable to us, his church. He is ours, and we are his. As his denomination, we have an ethical obligation to speak boldly when one of our members is engaged in causing significant harm in matters contrary to the Discipline on the global stage. Several Bishops and other denominational leaders have spoken out about this matter, urging Methodists to contact Mr. Sessions and for these policies to change, but we believe that the severity of his actions and the harm he is causing to immigrants, migrants, refugees, and asylees calls for his church to step into a process to directly engage with him as a part of our community.

We look forward to entering into the just resolution process with Mr. Sessions as we seek to journey with him towards reconciliation and faithful living into the gospel.

In the community of Jesus, the Liberator and Redeemer,

(Multiple Signatures)