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A Letter From Arkansas United Methodist Editor Caleb Hennington

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By Caleb Hennington

Digital Content Editor



Dear faithful readers of the Arkansas United Methodist,

Almost two years ago, I was hired by the Arkansas Conference to take over as the editor of the Arkansas United Methodist newspaper. At the time, the newspaper, and the entire Center for Communication team, was going through a major change in strategy.

When I was hired in June 2018, I was asked to reimagine the role and the idea behind the Arkansas United Methodist. Through that reimagining, the newspaper transitioned from a monthly print publication to a digital-first, online magazine, full of links, videos and interactive elements that brought the publication into the 21st century for the first time in its 138 years of publication.

Although we continued to print a small number — a little more than 200 copies — of the Arkansas United Methodist magazine, our focus at the time was making sure the magazine was more accessible for wherever you happen to be reading it and from whatever device you chose to read the news of the Arkansas Conference.

With the shift to digital, we saw a significant increase in the number of readers who preferred to get their news online.

But we also noticed something else; a huge increase in the amount of traffic our ARUMC website was getting each month.

The numbers don't lie; a greater number of you choose to read our stories when they post on the website rather than when they are first published in the digital magazine.

In a recent survey, we asked you if you would like to receive the AUM in an email format rather than its current layout, and 63.8% of you said you would.

We also asked which format you prefer to receive information from, and an overwhelming majority of responders selected an email newsletter, followed by social media, and then our website.

With that being said, starting in April, we will no longer be printing or publishing a monthly magazine; the Arkansas United Methodist will be a fully online, digital product.

Originally, we were going to make this announcement at the end of April, just before the beginning of the General Conference gathering in May. But as with everything else that's happened in the last few weeks, those plans were modified and a new reality quickly took its place.

With the fight against COVID-19 now becoming the sole focus of our everyday lives, we decided this was the best time to make this move.

I know many of you will be disappointed to hear this news, but with the hard decision to end the magazine also comes greater opportunities for further growth in storytelling by the ARUMC.

Rest assured, you can still expect to receive the same amazing and inspiring stories from around the Arkansas Conference. Our commitment to quality will not change with this new format.

More details will be shared with you at a later date, but for right now, expect to see the AUM newsletter in your inbox more frequently.

If you're a current subscriber, you will not need to change your subscription in any way. If you haven't yet subscribed to the AUM, I encourage you to do so now. We have some exciting stories planned for the future, and we would hate for you to miss out.

Thank you for supporting the AUM and please keep sharing your stories with us! We love hearing from you and helping to tell the amazing work you all are doing through Jesus Christ in your communities.

Blessings,

Caleb Hennington
Digital Content Editor, Center for Communication

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