Called General Conference Session

FEBRUARY 23-26, 2019
ST. LOUIS, MO
Holy One, in whom we live and move and have our being, draw us closer to you that we may better see others. Draw us closer to others that we may better see you. Amen.

A Prayer for Our Time Together
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control.... 26 Let’s not become arrogant, make each other angry, or be jealous of each other. (Galatians 5:22-26, CEB)
Second Question to Get Us Started

How divided is your family, your church, perhaps even yourself about LGBTQ+ inclusion in the church?
What Connects Us Now: Our Common Core

Jesus is the Vine. We are the Branches.

- The Apostle’s and Nicene Creeds
- Articles of Religion/Confession of Faith
- The General Rules
- The Wesley Hymns
- Disciplined Engagement with Scripture
- Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist
- Small Group Accountability and Support (Class and Band Meetings)
- A Connectional Way of Life that includes Superintendency, Itineracy and Conferencing

Commission on a Way Forward
Council of Bishops
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2016 General Conference

864 Total Delegates
- 504 from the USA (58%)
- 260 from Africa (30%)
- 50 from the Philippines (6%)
- 40 from Europe and Eurasia (5%)
- 10 from “concordat” churches with which The UMC has special partnerships (1%)
Therefore GO
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GENERAL CONFERENCE 2016

Welcome
Kalibuni
Mabuhay
Bienvenidos
Bienvenue
Herzliche Willkommen
Bem-vindo
Добро Пожаловать
환영합니다
LGBTQIA or LGBT+

Lesbian – a woman attracted to other women
Gay – a person attracted to some members of the same gender
Bisexual – attracted to people of more than one sex/gender identity (sometimes “Pansexual”)
Transgender – gender assigned at birth does not match gender identity and/or expression
Queer – identify with a flexible, inclusive view of gender/sexuality (sometimes “Questioning”)
Intersex – reproductive anatomy does not fit with only one gender, previously called “hermaphrodite”
Asexual – lacks sexual attraction for other people
Across Our Global Connection
LGBTQ+ Rights Vary Greatly
Conference Pleads with Bishops for Leadership

The Rev. Mark Holland, a delegate from Great Plains, said the May 17 call for unity did not provide a path forward. He asked the Council of Bishops to meet today and bring back a report tomorrow. His motion passed 428-364.
Wednesday, May 18

Delegates voted 428-405 to accept the recommendation of the Council of Bishops which created the...

Commission on a Way Forward
Council of Bishops

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
The Council of Bishops (COB) voted by an overwhelming majority to share the work done by the Commission on a Way Forward on three plans and to recommend the **One Church Plan**. The recommendation reflects the wide diversity of theological perspectives and the global nature of The UMC as the best way forward for our future as a denomination.
One Church Plan
ONE CHURCH PLAN

- Recognizes the diverse theological and scriptural understandings of our global church;

- Provides generous unity for conferences, churches, and pastors;
ONE CHURCH PLAN

- Removes the restrictive language from our current *Book of Discipline*.

- Maintains the current structure of the denomination.
ONE CHURCH PLAN

Uses does not require any annual conference, bishop, congregation, or pastor to act contrary to their convictions.

- Allows congregations and pastors greater freedom to reach new people.
Connectional Conference Plan
Connectional Conference Plan

Creates three values-based connectional conferences:

- **Traditional** (Accountability) – no one can
- **Unity** (Contextualization) – all can, no one must; some will, some won’t
- **Progressive** (Justice) – all shall
Connectional Conference Plan

- Allows for a *Book of Discipline* within each connectional conference

- Current central conferences have the choice of becoming their own connectional conference
Connectional Conference Plan

Council of Bishops focused on shared learning and ecumenical relationships.

Episcopal oversight, accountability, elections, assignments, and funding occur within the College of Bishops of each connectional conference.
Annual conferences choose their connectional conference.

Local churches who desire to join a branch that is different from their annual conference could vote to join another annual conference.
Traditionalist
Church
Plan
Traditionalist Church Plan

Strengthen's the current language of the *Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality for greater clarity
Traditionalist Church Plan

Streamlines the process to enforce penalties for violations of the *Book of Discipline* related to marriage and ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexual persons.
Traditionalist Church Plan

- Maintains the current structure of the church

- Continues the current relationships between the church and all general agencies and commissions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One Church Plan</th>
<th>Connectional Conference Plan</th>
<th>Traditionalist Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># of petitions</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique changes to the <em>Book of Discipline (BoD)</em></strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># of words changed in the <em>BoD</em></strong></td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>6,586</td>
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<td><strong>Constitutional amendments</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Any significant unfinished business</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3 new <em>BoDs</em> with new rulemaking; new business model for general agencies</td>
<td>1 or more new denominations</td>
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“Families” of Plans
Other Options Submitted

IT'S TIME.
The Simple Plan
Other Options Submitted

WESLEYAN COVENANT ASSOCIATION

Plan of Dissolution
TIMELINE

Summer/Fall 2018
Delegates prepare for General Conference

July 8, 2018
Legislative petitions deadline

Nov. 25, 2018
ACDA in hands of delegates

February 23-26, 2019
Special Session of General Conference

General Conferences
2020 and 2024
1968
Uniting Conference

1970
Organizing Conference

1972
General Conference
What needs to happen now?

Must enter into conversation so that with any decision that comes in 2019 our local churches can say, “Okay, we’re moving forward.”
PRAYING OUR WAY FORWARD

We are One in Christ

UMCprays.org - A UMC Prayer Community