



# NEWS TO KNOW

## GENERAL CONFERENCE 2019

The purpose of the Special Session of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, to be held **February 23-26, 2019**, is to receive and vote on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward along with other legislation. The Commission on a Way Forward was formed by the 2016 General Conference and asked to find a way forward for the church that would move us beyond the current impasse related to human sexuality.

Currently, the United Methodist Church's Book of Discipline (BOD), the denomination's governing text, states that all United Methodist churches are open to anyone, all people are welcome at the communion table and baptism font, and all are persons of sacred worth and included in the ministry of Jesus. At the same time, the BOD considers homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching and does not allow our clergy to perform same-sex weddings, our churches to host same-sex weddings, or for LGBTQ persons to be ordained.

### THE COMMISSION'S REPORT INCLUDES THREE PLANS:

#### 1 THE ONE CHURCH PLAN

- Maintains the denomination's unity while offering autonomy for local churches based on biblical interpretation, theological conviction, and community context
- Removes BOD restrictions related to same-sex weddings and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy
- Adds protective language to ensure no one has to act against their convictions

The church would only vote on whether to hold same sex weddings on church property. Bishops would work with churches to appoint pastors who align with each congregation's context and convictions.

#### 3 THE TRADITIONAL PLAN

- Keeps current language around homosexuality found in the BOD
- Increases accountability by streamlining the process to enforce penalties for violations of the BOD

Those who cannot live within the current Discipline requirements could create their own self-governing church connected in some way to the United Methodist Church.

#### 2 THE CONNECTIONAL CONFERENCE PLAN

- Restructures the denomination by creating three smaller bodies known as Connectional Conferences in place of Jurisdictional (geographical) Conferences as well as current general agencies and the Council of Bishops. Each connectional conference would have its own unique name and logo.
- Allows each Connectional Conference to adopt their own BOD and have their own set of rules around same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy
- Suggests the creation of three distinct Connectional Conferences: one that would restrict, one that would allow, and one that would require clergy and churches to officiate/host same-sex weddings

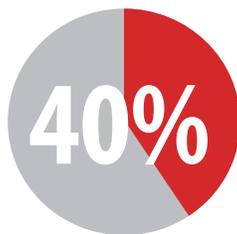
If a church disagrees with their Annual Conference's choice of Connectional Conference, they could vote to join one of the other Connectional Conferences. This plan would take multiple years of constitutional amendments to implement.

*Each of these plans would need a majority approval by the General Conference and the Connectional Conference Plan would require a 2/3 majority vote. It is possible that none of the plans will be passed, in which case the current Book of Discipline would remain. If a plan is passed, it would not become official church law until January 1, 2020.*

THE **GENERAL CONFERENCE** IS THE **HIGHEST LEGISLATIVE BODY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** AND THE ONLY BODY THAT CAN SPEAK OFFICIALLY FOR THE DENOMINATION.



THE **GENERAL CONFERENCE** IS MADE UP OF **864 DELEGATES** (half lay and half clergy) from **around the world**



OF DELEGATES ARE FROM **OUTSIDE** THE UNITED STATES



THE **FLORIDA CONFERENCE** IS REPRESENTED BY

**9** CLERGY & **9** LAY DELEGATES



Bishop Carter will host a webcast with Florida delegation leaders on **Friday, March 1 at 11:00 a.m. EST** to report on the results of this General Conference (link to join the webcast will be available at [www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org).)



### LEARN MORE

- For more information and to see a list of our Florida delegation go to [www.flumc.org/wayforward](http://www.flumc.org/wayforward)
- You can follow the General Conference live stream at [www.umc.org/gc2019](http://www.umc.org/gc2019)
- Florida Conference Bishop Ken Carter will be preaching the opening service at **8:30 a.m. CST on Sunday, February 24**
- St. Luke's will be showing the live stream on **Monday, February 25** and **Tuesday, February 26** in Founder's Hall.



### GET INVOLVED

- Pray daily from **2:23 - 2:26 a.m. or p.m.** in your own time zone.
- St. Luke's prayer chapel will be open **Friday, February 22 through Tuesday, February 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.** with resources for guided prayer. Communion with St. Luke's pastors will be offered at **9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.** each day.
- Join us in St. Luke's Prayer Chapel, **Saturday, February 23 from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.** as we join with the delegates to General Conference and United Methodists around the world for a time of intentional prayer and communion
- Email your perspective to Florida delegates at: [fldelegation@flumc.org](mailto:fldelegation@flumc.org)

If you have questions or concerns about the upcoming General Conference, please contact one of the St. Luke's pastors or a lay leader.



**Commission on a Way Forward**  
Council of Bishops



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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