

## Connectional Table approves recommendation to reduce 2017-2020 General Church budget

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On Monday, April 4, the Connectional Table (CT) approved a recommendation to propose a \$599 million budget to General Conference in May, a reduction from the \$611 million approved in 2015. The board of directors of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) approved the same recommendation on March 28.

The CT and GCFA revisited the budget proposal after receiving recent input from the General Secretaries' Table, annual conferences, the Economic Advisory Committee and others within the denomination regarding more recent financial forecasts. They also considered the needs to sustain and strengthen the growing worldwide United Methodist movement.

“Our goal is to build capacity within the global United Methodist connection to serve and expand Christ’s mission,” Bishop Bruce Ough, the chair of CT, said. “This budget recommendation recognizes the balance we seek to maintain for strong funding of our mission initiatives at all levels of the Church, and in all places that God has led us to bear witness. We will not save our way into vitality; nor will we spend our way into vitality. Vitality and strong stewardship will always be the result of God’s abundance and our faithful and effective fulfillment of Christ’s mission.”

The new proposal to be presented to the General Conference in May is in line with the Economic Advisory Committee’s acceptable range for a quadrennial budget and reflects the careful consideration of several factors.

"GCFA and CT have the joint responsibility of preparing a budget for the next quadrennium and bringing that proposal to General Conference. GCFA and CT have worked collaboratively on this task for the past three years, and we have used the expertise of the Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) which includes several economists and other experts to help us predict the US economy and the strength of stewardship in our churches," explained Bishop Michael Coyner, president of GCFA. "Together GCFA and CT initially approved a proposed budget of \$611 million, a modest increase over the current \$604 million. However, the EAC has recently revised their projections down from previous ones, and in response the general agency leaders, and now both GCFA and CT have approved reducing the proposed budget to \$599 million. We believe this new proposal is more realistic, given the economic realities than many of our churches and conferences are facing. I continue to appreciate the collaborative way these decisions have been made, and now it is up the General Conference to make the final decisions about the budget for 2017-2020."

The proposed budget would roll back the general church apportionments to the lowest level since the current apportionment formula was introduced in 2001 and represents a \$4.1 million reduction from the budget General Conference adopted for the current quadrennium. The

\$599 million proposed budget would also be the lowest apportioned general Church budget in 16 years.