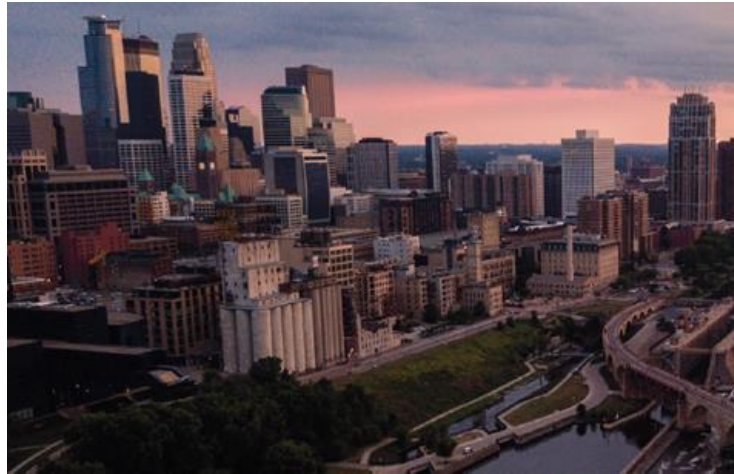


General Conference 2020

Minneapolis, Minnesota



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What is General Conference?



[Video link](#)



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What is General Conference?

- **The top legislative assembly of The United Methodist Church**
- **Meets every 4 years or when special sessions are called**
- **Only body that speaks on behalf of the entire denomination**



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What does General Conference do?

- **Reviews and revises The Book of Discipline and The Book of Resolutions**
- **Votes on changes to the church constitution, which require a 2/3 majority to pass. Amendments must be ratified by 3/4 of the total annual conference members voting.**
- **Sets the denomination's budget and determines ministry priorities for the next 4 years**
- **Elects bishops to serve on boards and agencies and persons to serve on various General Conference bodies**
- **Elects Judicial Council members**



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Who are the delegates?

- **The election of delegates occurs at annual conference sessions in the two years preceding a given General Conference**
- **Each annual conference elects an equal number of clergy and lay delegates based on the number of clergy and lay members to the annual conference and a formula determined by the General Conference secretary**
- **Clergy and lay delegates are each elected by their peer groups at the session. All elected delegates must be chosen by a majority of those voting. Multiple ballots are taken until a majority is reached.**



What role do the bishops play?

- **Bishops attend General Conference and preside over each session**
- **However, bishops DO NOT vote at General Conference, nor can they address the body unless given permission by the General Conference**



What is Judicial Council's role?

Judicial Council is the highest judicial body of the denomination

- **Made up of 9 members reflecting the diversity of the denomination**
- **Meets twice a year and can accept requests from annual conferences, church-related groups or bishops to rule on matters of church law**
- **Rules on the constitutionality, meaning and application/effect of any act or legislation by General Conference**



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How do petitions reach General Conference?

- **Petitions are submitted digitally to the petition secretary at least 180 days prior to General Conference**
- **All petitions must be signed by the person submitting them with personal information (address, email, phone number and any UM affiliations) provided**
- **Each petition that is properly submitted is given a number and printed in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate mailed to all General Conference delegates prior to the conference**



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What are the legislative committees?

- **Legislative committees are the bodies that will consider individual petitions before they are presented at the floor of General Conference**
- **Each delegate is assigned to a committee. General Conference 2020 will have 14 legislative committees.**
- **Each committee can recommend a petition be adopted, rejected or revised by the General Conference**
- **A committee may also submit majority and minority recommendations to allow dissenting committee members the opportunity to share their opinion with the General Conference**



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How can I track legislation?

- **The General Conference website, GC2020.umc.org, will have a link where you can track the progress of specific petitions during General Conference**
- **Petitions can be searched based on their number, keywords in the legislation, the name of the person/organization who submitted them or the legislative committees they were assigned to**
- **Petitions are also printed in the Advanced Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate available on the General Conference website**



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Important legislation coming before General Conference 2020

- **Proposals for reorganization of The UMC**
- **Proposal for a new U.S. Regional Conference**
- **Proposal to create a new central conference in Africa and increase the number of African bishops from 13 to 18**
- **Proposed revisions of the Social Principles by Church and Society to better reflect the public and global witness of the denomination**
- **Proposed church budget of \$493.8 million from GCFA with cuts ranging from 15.5% to 35% among general agencies**



Important legislation coming before General Conference 2020

- **The Council of Bishops has called for full communion with The Episcopal Church. The Council also proposes changes to the full communion process.**
- **The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women calls for an “Apology from the General Conference to Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct with The United Methodist Church” and an update to existing resolution on “Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships.”**



Legislation: Treatment of Girls and Women

- **The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women proposes adding “gender” to the list of traits for which people cannot be barred from membership within The UMC.**
- **United Methodist Men proposes updating a resolution supporting clergywomen urging UMM organizations to welcome women to the pulpit and participate in studies and activities of local UM Men organizations.**
- **“The Girl Child” legislation from United Methodist Women (UMW) calls the church to engage in advocacy to rectify conditions that limit girls from reaching their fullest potential.**
- **UMW supports legislation calling on the church to work for women’s global equality.**



Proposed Reorganization Plans

- **New Denominations (Indianapolis Plan)**
- **New Expressions Worldwide (N.E.W.)**
- **Next Generation UMC (UMCNext)**
- **Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation**



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Indianapolis Plan

- **Proposes the establishment of 2-3 new denominations (1 traditionalist and 1 or more centrist/progressive)**
- **The UMC would continue as the centrist denomination**
- **Annual and central conferences vote to join any new denomination by a simple majority. Central conferences may also vote to become autonomous**
- **Local churches may choose to ~~be a~~ join a different denomination from their annual conference by a simple majority vote and retain their property, assets and liabilities**
- **Other potential denominations may be formed by 50+ local churches or an annual conference**
- **Sets interim suspension of complaints and disciplinary actions related to LGBTQ bans within centrist-affiliated conferences**
- **Mandatory retirement of U.S. bishops waived until 2022. New elections of bishops postponed until 2021 or 2022**
- **Continuity of pensions through each new denomination**



New Expressions Worldwide

- **Proposes dissolving The United Methodist Church to form 4 new denominations: traditionalist, centrist, progressive and liberationist**
- **Plan of separation would be developed by a transitional council, nominated and elected by General Conference 2020**
- **Immediate moratorium on all charges, complaints and trials related to LGBTQ prohibitions until after separation**
- **Annual conferences, bishops, central conferences and clergy would choose to join one of the new denominations**
- **General agencies would become independent 501(c)3 organizations**
- **Local churches wishing to join a different denomination from their annual conference could do so with a 2/3 vote and keep all property, assets and liabilities**
- **Each new denomination would set its own policies, structures and processes**

Next Generation UMC

- **The United Methodist Church would remain, but with the current prohibitions against LGBTQ ordination and marriage removed**
- **A moratorium on new and pending complaints and trials related to LGBTQ prohibitions would take effect in 2020**
- **Local churches could vote by a 2/3 majority to leave the denomination and form new affiliations while retaining their property, assets and liabilities**
- **A special commission would be established to propose a new constitution and government structures to be voted on at another special called General Conference**
- **Calls for the creation of a U.S. regional conference and U.S. Regional Committee of the General Conference (*consistent with the proposed U.S. Regional Conference plan coming from the Connectional Table*).**



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The Protocol

- **Proposes the development of a new traditionalist denomination**
- **The United Methodist Church would continue to exist**
- **Churches could vote to join new denomination by either a simple or 2/3 majority.**
- **Churches leaving The UMC would retain all property, assets and liabilities.**
- **Annual conference could vote by a 57% majority to join new denomination**
- **Central conferences could vote by 2/3 majority to join new denomination**
- **Churches and conferences that do not take vote would remain in The UMC**
- **Requests holding in abeyance all administrative and judicial processes related to LGBTQ prohibitions along with pending church closures**
- **The new traditionalist denomination would receive \$25 million over 4 years**
- **An additional \$2 million would be escrowed for possible future new denominations**
- **\$39 million would be allocated over 8 years to support ethnic ministries and Africa University**
- **Pension plans for all clergy and lay employees remain in place**



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U.S. Regional Conference

- **The Connectional Table has proposed the creation of a new U.S. regional conference**
- **U.S. Regional Conference would compromise the five U.S. jurisdictional conferences, which would retain the same powers and geographic boundaries within the new regional conference**
- **Stage 1: Creates an interim U.S. regional committee of the General Conference to handle U.S. matters**
- **Stage 2: The U.S. regional committee would present plan for U.S. regional conference at General Conference 2024 for approval**
- **The U.S. Regional Conference would hold its first meeting in 2024**



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Other recommended resources

- **General Conference 2020 website –**
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>
- **Comparison of Restructuring Plans -** <https://cdnsc.umd.org/-/media/umc-media/2020/01/09/19/07/General-Conference-UMC-Plans-Chart-V6>
- **Welcome Guide to General Conference 2020 -**
https://cdnsc.umd.org/-/media/umc-media/2020/01/30/20/57/GC_ConferenceGuide19_digital.aspx
- **What is General Conference? Video -**
<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/what-is-the-general-conference>

