

# Moving forward with The United Methodist Church: What's Changed and What's Not

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# Major Changes

**1. The denominational budget for the upcoming quadrennium was reduced by 43% over the previous eight years**

a) In real dollar terms, annual conference budgets are reduced because of this reduction plus the loss of revenue from disaffiliated churches.

b) This also means that reduced services will be available at every level, as conferences and general agencies are cutting staff and programming, worldwide, to function under reduced budgets. For most general agencies the budget cut is 52.8%.

# Major Changes (continued)

2. The *disaffiliation* process was discontinued. The Judicial Council has also nullified all annual conference “separation” plans.

3. All *denomination-wide policies* treating homosexual people differently from heterosexual people were ended.

4. The Social Principles revision process, begun in 2012, was concluded with the adoption of Revised Social Principles

a) No mention of the words homosexual or homosexuality

b) Marriage is redescribed to allow it to work under the marriage laws of all countries in The UMC

c) For the first time, the Social Principles include clear language against child marriage and polygamy, with guidance on how to deal with each where it has occurred.

# Human Sexuality (Rewritten)

We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift and acknowledge that sexual intimacy contributes to fostering the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of individuals and to nurturing healthy sexual relationships that are grounded in love, care and respect.

Human sexuality is a healthy and natural part of life that is expressed in wonderfully diverse ways from birth to death. It is shaped by a combination of nature and nurture: heredity and genetic factors on the one hand and childhood development and environment on the other. We further honor the diversity of choices and vocations in relation to sexuality such as celibacy, marriage and singleness.

We support the rights of all people to exercise personal consent in sexual relationships, to make decisions about their own bodies and be supported in those decisions, to receive comprehensive sexual education, to be free from sexual exploitation and violence, and to have access to adequate sexual health care.

# New Statement on Marriage

Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith, an adult man and woman of consenting age, or two adult persons of consenting age into union with one another.

While The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple's faith, grounded in their relationship with God and one another. Marriage thus reflects a continued willingness to grow together in Christ and a commitment to cultivate a covenantal bond that encompasses intimacy, grace and love.

As members of the larger society, we also affirm the importance of civil marriage, the legal recognition of domestic unions by the state. Such legal recognition is vital for guaranteeing family stability and the orderly regulation of inheritances, and for providing assurance that spouses and children are afforded all the rights, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled.



# Child Marriage (Brand New)

We reject marital relationships with children and youth under the age of 18, even in places where such relationships are culturally or legally permissible. Child marriages and premature sexual activities disrupt the normal course of emotional, biological, and social development of minor children. For underage girls, in particular, premature sexual activities—and the pregnancies resulting from such activities—can permanently damage internal organs, lead to lifelong medical problems, and preclude other opportunities in their lives. Waiting until a more appropriate age to wed offers better opportunities for children and youth to grow into healthy adulthood and become full, contributing members of society. We therefore believe that young people should be of legal age to give their consent before entering into marriage.

# Polygamy (Brand New)

We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy, which entails living in relationship with multiple spouses. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the forced dissolution of such relationships presents significant problems. All too often, the women and children forced out of polygamous relationships find themselves cast into abject poverty with no means of support.

We, therefore, urge church leaders, when dealing with the dissolution of polygamous relationships, to exercise the utmost care and to prioritize considerations related to the continued health and well-being of dependent women and children.

We reject attempts to ostracize families who are or have been in polygamous relationships, especially women and children, or deny them access to the ministries of the church, including participation in the sacraments. Instead, we urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need.



# Qualifications for Ordination (revised)

¶304.2 as revised:

2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained minister on the lives of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end, they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, ~~fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness~~, social responsibility, **and faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent**, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.





# Not Changed

- 1. The doctrinal standards of The United Methodist Church: Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith.**  
The *only proposed* change was to add the Nicene Creed to the doctrinal standards of the denomination. Three different items proposed this. All were overwhelmingly defeated.
- 2. Discernment of which marriages to conduct remains with pastors. Determination of building use (including for weddings) remains with the local church.**
- 3. The mission statement of The United Methodist Church: “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”**
- 4. Adultery by clergy is a chargeable offense under the charge of immorality (as always).**
- 5. The life-centered, not choice-centered, approach to abortion in the Social Principles.**
- 6. Anything that *fundamentally* affects the life or ministry of the local congregation.**

# Where your apportionment dollars go– and don't go

## 1. Fewer bishops (32 in the US instead of 39)

This is why several more conferences will share bishops.

## 2. More of what you pay supports ministries within your conference and for your churches

## 3. The General Church budget does not support:

Planned Parenthood, March of Dimes, World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, Black Lives Matter, United Methodist Publishing House, Wespath, Upper Room Ministries, or UM Hospitals, children's homes or eldercare in the US.



Contact Ask The UMC

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