

Overview of Proposals for General Conference

Points included in this document are provided as a summary of the recommendations to the special 2019 General Conference. For more information, please read the entire report from the Commission on a Way Forward.

| | <p style="text-align: center;">One Church Plan</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Connectional Conference Plan</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Traditional Plan</p> |
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| <p>Local Churches</p> | <p>Summary: This plan, preferred by a majority of the Council of Bishops, would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-gender weddings in UMC properties and ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." It would add language to protect churches and pastors who choose not to allow same-gender marriages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Most likely would make no changes in practice at the local level. <input type="checkbox"/> May rewrite wedding policies to explicitly allow or forbid same-gender weddings. <input type="checkbox"/> Will covenant with bishop on whether congregation will accept LGBTQ pastor. | <p>Summary: This plan would replace the current jurisdictional conferences with three connectional conferences based on affinity: Progressive, Traditional and Unity. All three would use a general Book of Discipline (Articles of Religion, General Rules, Confessions of Faith) with the ability to adapt other portions to their context for ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can choose affiliation. <input type="checkbox"/> Still will set wedding policies with churches in the "unity" connectional conferences able to set parameters for building use and/or wedding policies in either direction. | <p>Summary: This plan, developed more fully toward the end of the Commission on a Way Forward process, broadens the definition of "self-avowed practicing homosexual"; puts penalties in place for disobedience to the Discipline; and requires bishops, pastors and annual conferences to certify adherence to the Discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No vote unless the church disagrees with annual conference's decision to stay or leave the UMC. <input type="checkbox"/> Churches can leave if they disagree with annual conference's decision to adhere to Discipline. |
| <p>Clergy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can exercise individual conscience. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishop & cabinet would take theological convictions into account for appointments. <input type="checkbox"/> Ends potential for church trials. <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ candidates can be ordained and appointed to local churches that approve and can request transfer of candidacy if conference Board of Ordained Ministry or clergy session chooses not to ordain LGBTQ persons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Will choose a connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Transfers subject to approval by Board of Ordained Ministry. <input type="checkbox"/> Ordination would be recognized across all three connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Security of appointment determined by connectional conferences, with emphasis on protecting women and minorities. <input type="checkbox"/> Deacons and full-time local licensed pastors may see fewer opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must maintain Discipline or leave for "autonomous, affiliated or concordat church." <input type="checkbox"/> Just resolutions from complaints must include commitment not to repeat offense. <input type="checkbox"/> First offense results in one-year unpaid suspension. <input type="checkbox"/> Second offenses result in surrendering credentials. |
| <p>Annual Conferences</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No vote is needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Boards of Ordained Ministry and/or clergy session can discern whether to ordain LGBTQ persons. <input type="checkbox"/> General Conference can craft a way for churches to exit with grace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdictional and central conferences will vote to join a connectional conference on simple majority vote. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences who want to join a different connectional conference than their jurisdiction chooses may do so on a simple majority vote. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences could revoke every years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must certify that it will uphold the Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences that won't certify are urged to form "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church, and churches that leave can't use United Methodist name or logo past 2020. |

Overview continued
from other side

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| <p>Council of Bishops</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Council continues as one body providing spiritual leadership. <input type="checkbox"/> Assignments will reflect convictions of bishops and annual conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops will be protected if their consciences will not allow him or her to ordain LGBTQ persons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Funded by U.S.-based conn. conf. at comparable levels, with shared funding, as needed, for bishops outside the U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight and accountability falls to bishops of each connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Each bishop, active and retired, chooses a connectional conference <input type="checkbox"/> All episcopal elections would take place by 2022. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Active and retired bishops must certify they will adhere to Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops who will not certify adherence no longer receive compensation of expenses as of 2021 and will be encouraged to leave for "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church. |
| <p>General Agencies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to operate as they do now. <input type="checkbox"/> If funding declines, boards and agencies would need to consider a strategic restructuring. Sustainability issues, however, are separate from the Commission on a Way Forward's task. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Jointly funded boards include Wespath, GCFA, UMCOR, Archives, parts of GBGM and the Publishing House. <input type="checkbox"/> Task force would evaluate each general agency and propose new model for UMC by 2025. <input type="checkbox"/> Program agencies would only serve conn. conf. that desire participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Justice ministries structures would be determined by connectional conference, with expected emphasis on sexism and racism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All general boards and agencies continue. <input type="checkbox"/> Each agency can contract with churches that leave the UMC. |
| <p>Related Institutions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Likely no changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Commission conversations with members of these organizations indicate this plan makes it more likely for most institutions to maintain their affiliation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Properties owned by annual and jurisdictional conferences follow them to their new connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Institutions can choose to relate to one or more Cs, as their bylaws allow. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No changes unless they choose to do so within the bounds of their own bylaws. |
| <p>Finance & Pensions</p> | <p>Two petitions are recommended for any of the three plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Any church that leaves would have to pay their proportionate liability of unfunded pensions for their annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy would be removed from benefit and annuity risk pools and have accrued benefits transferred to an individual investment account. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Same two petitions as One Church Plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Legal fees to navigate legacy connections. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath stays intact and extends to connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical and pension liabilities remain the obligation of the annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath will reassign pension liabilities for churches that opt to go to another connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences manage budgets to care for boundary reconfiguration costs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Same two petitions as the One Church Plan. |
| <p>Episcopal Fund</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each episcopal area in the United States. <input type="checkbox"/> Other expenses would be shared via apportionments. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each U.S.-based connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding. |