

Called General Conference Session February 23-26, 2019 St. Louis MO

To follow the General Conference Session:

<http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session>

For information about the Commission on a Way Forward (CoWF) and its work:

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward-about-us>

To view or print the report of the CoWF:

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/way-forward-report-released-in-all-four-official-languages-of-general-conference>

August/September/October 2018 edition of **Circuit Rider**, an online quarterly periodical:

https://www.ministrymatters.com/circuit_rider/139/decision-2019-one-with-christ-one-with-each-other-one-in-ministry-to-all-the-world-augsepoct-2018

See the list of delegates from the Virginia Conference and any other VAUMC news regarding the Called General Conference: <https://www.vaumc.org/GC2019>

Virginia Conference resources for local church conversations: <https://vaumc.org/WayForward>

Books and small group resources from Abingdon Press:

<https://www.abingdonpress.com/faultlines>



Every United Methodist is being invited to:

- Engage in a weekly Wesleyan 24-hour fast from Thursday after dinner to Friday mid-afternoon. That fast does not have to be from food but could be from social media, emails or another daily activity.
- Pause and pray for our church's mission and way forward daily for 4 minutes from 2:23 through 2:26 AM or PM or at another time. This is because the Special Session of General Conference will be held February 23 through February 26.

- Pray using a weekly calendar that is posted on the UMCPrays.org website. The calendar will list a unique cluster of names each week which will balance United States bishops and delegates with Central Conference bishops and delegates. It will also include other individuals whose work is important to the General Conference session.

The Commission on a Way Forward (CoWF) has put forth three options to be considered by the 2019 Called General Conference. Each option represents the heartfelt convictions of deeply devoted Christ-followers.

In all this, REMEMBER:

- Teach, model and lead open, honest conversations filled with dignity and respect.
- Help individuals and groups understand that people who love Jesus can amicably disagree over how to interpret and apply Biblical teaching.
- Our language and actions are of extreme importance as we live out our General Rule of Discipleship: do no harm; do good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to everyone; and attend to the ordinances of God.

The One Church Plan, the plan most strongly affirmed by the United Methodist Council of Bishops, would allow different United Methodists in different places to make different decisions regarding ministry with or by LGBTQ+ persons rather than maintaining a single standard that operates everywhere throughout the worldwide church. In this plan, individual pastors would be entrusted with the decision about whether or not to officiate at same-sex weddings; individual congregations would be entrusted with the decision about whether or not same-sex weddings could be held on church property; and individual annual conferences would be entrusted with the decision about whether or not to ordain people who are self-avowed LGBTQ+. This plan would remove restrictive language from the **Book of Discipline**. The One Church Plan seeks to create adequate space for a divergence of perspectives and to honor United Methodists who believe that the current impasse over human sexuality does not necessitate a denominational split.

The Connectional Conference Plan replaces the five U.S. geographical jurisdictions with three connectional conferences which are defined, not by geographical boundaries, but by theology and perspective, each having clearly defined values (traditional, unity, and progressive). Jurisdictions, annual conferences, and local churches would have the opportunity to affiliate with the Connectional Conference with which they are in theological alignment. The Connectional Conferences would each have a College of Bishops and a contextualized **Book of Discipline**. Annual conferences and local churches would have options within given timeframes to reconsider affiliation with chosen Connectional Conferences.

The Traditionalist Plan affirms the current language in the **Book of Discipline** related to homosexuality and seeks to strengthen enforcement for violations of church law. It clarifies accountability standards in an effort to encourage both a more widespread adherence to Disciplinary proscriptions and a quicker resolution of complaints. The Traditionalist Plan seeks to preserve the denomination's established teaching and to honor those United Methodists who believe that changing the denomination's current position would be an unacceptable departure from a necessary orthodoxy. Those annual conferences, pastors and congregations which feel they cannot live within the boundaries of denominational practices can form or join self-governing bodies.

Other Plans Introduced as Petitions:

- The Simple Plan – endorsed by the Reconciling Ministries Network
<https://rmnetwork.org/reconciling-ministries-network-the-simple-plan/>
- A Plan of Dissolution – put forth by the Wesleyan Covenant Association
<https://wesleyancovenant.org/petitions/>