



SCRIPT

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2019



BEFORE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2019

Over the next several weeks, there will be discussion within the United Methodist Church regarding human sexuality and our denomination's stance on the definition of marriage, whether self-avowed practicing homosexual persons may be ordained and whether churches are permitted to conduct same gender wedding ceremonies.

- On February 23-26, the Special Session of the General Conference will be held for a worldwide vote on these issues. This is the culmination of decades of discussion within the United Methodist Church.
- During the General Conference, delegates will vote on three proposed plans. These plans offer three possible outcomes and the most likely scenarios, but delegates may also choose to go a different direction entirely.
- A *brief description* of each plan is as follows:
 - The Traditional Plan maintains the current language regarding the practice of homosexuality and marriage. It strengthens the definitions to make complaint procedures and trials more easily decided. It provides for a gracious exit of annual conferences or groups of churches to join new, self-governing denominations.
 - The One Church Plan removes the language from The Book of Discipline that restricts pastors and churches from conducting same-sex weddings and annual conferences from ordaining self-avowed practicing homosexual persons and it affirms sexual relations only within the covenant of monogamous marriage between two adults. Local churches will have the freedom to decide whether or not to allow same-gender marriages in their churches. Clergy will have the freedom to decide whether to perform same-gender marriages. Annual Conferences will have the freedom to decide whether or not to ordain practicing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer persons.

- The Connectional Conference Plan provides a new form of unity that includes shared name, logo, doctrine and services. This plan creates three values-based connectional conferences that have distinctive definitions of accountability, contextualization and justice. Current central conferences have the choice of becoming their own connectional conference or joining one of the three values-based connectional conferences.
- Bishop Scott Jones, who presides over the Texas Annual Conference of which we are a part, has provided unbiased, thorough analysis of each plan. If you wish to learn more, you can find this analysis at www.txcumc.org/gc2019.
- As we approach the General Conference, I ask for you to join me in prayer for wisdom for our delegates, unity of the body and hope for the future of the United Methodist Church. *For the Lord gives wisdom; from God's mouth come knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 2)*
- No matter what is decided at the General Conference, God is in control. *The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (Psalm 103)*
- The mission of the United Methodist Church is to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We were founded, according to John Wesley, to “spread scriptural holiness throughout the land” and it is this that we continue to commit ourselves. Join our church and the Texas Annual Conference in recommitting ourselves to this mission as we move forward.