



Q & A

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2019



Q. *Is The United Methodist Church going to split?*

A. While we do not know what the future holds, we do know God holds the future. There is a possibility that the United Methodist Church may look different after General Conference, but our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ will remain the same. No matter what happens, we pray our church is strengthened, not divided, by this historic event.

Q. *What is going to happen to my church? What should I be doing to prepare?*

A. Until the General Conference takes action, there is little way of knowing how much or how little the actions taken, or not taken, by General Conference 2019 will affect the local churches of the Texas Annual Conference.

No matter what happens, our churches will continue to actively pursue our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. It's important to continue telling people about Jesus.

The most important thing you can do before, during and after General Conference is to pray. Pray for the General Conference, the bishops, the delegates, the support staff, the church in general and your local church.

Q. *What is the General Conference?*

A. General Conference is the top legislative body in The United Methodist Church and is the only body that sets policy for and speaks for the denomination. It consists of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual conferences. General Conference typically convenes every four years to determine the denomination's future direction.

Q. *When and where will the Called Special General Conference take place?*

A. The Council of Bishops has called for a special session of the 2019 General Conference to take place February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri (www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session).

Q. *If the General Conference is every four years, why is it meeting in 2019 instead of waiting until 2020?*

A. The 2016 General Conference, after much discussion, debate and deadlock over the issues of human sexuality, made a formal request of the Bishops of the UMC to find a way to lead us forward on this issue that promotes the unity and mission of the Church. As part of their response to that request, the bishops called this Special General Conference.

Q. *What is the purpose of the Special Session of the General Conference?*

A. Delegates will be voting on the best way forward for the United Methodist Church regarding human sexuality, including how marriage is defined by our denomination, whether self-avowed practicing homosexual persons may be ordained and whether churches are permitted to conduct same-gender wedding ceremonies. There are three proposed plans that will be voted on: The Traditional Plan, The One Church and The Connectional Conference Plan.

Q. *What are the details of the proposed plans?*

There are three proposed plans: The Traditional Plan, The One Church and The Connectional Conference Plan. Each have strengths and weaknesses.

The Traditional Plan allows for the current language regarding the practice of homosexuality and marriage as outlined in The Book of Discipline to remain the same. The One Church Plan will remove the current language regarding homosexuality and marriage from The Book of Discipline. The Connectional Conference Plan creates three values-based connectional conferences each with distinctive definitions of homosexuality and marriage, accountability, contextualization and justice. You can learn more details about each plan [here](#).

Q. *Is General Conference 2019 voting on whether LGBT persons would be allowed to worship in and/or participate in the ministries of The United Methodist Church?*

A. No. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth and are welcome in worship and encouraged to participate in the ministries of the United Methodist Church. For more information on our views on homosexuality go [here](#).

Q. *What will be discussed and debated at General Conference 2019?*

A. In addition to voting on the three proposed plans, the three primary questions are:

1) How will the United Methodist Church define a Christian marriage? Is it a union between a man and a woman or a union of two adults?

- 2) Will same-gender weddings be allowed in the local churches of The United Methodist Church and/or be officiated by UMC clergy?
- 3) Will the ordination of “self-avowed, practicing” homosexual persons be allowed?

Q. *Are any or all of the three proposed plans “written in stone” or will General Conference have the opportunity to amend the plans?*

A. The delegates of General Conference will have the opportunity to discuss, debate and amend any proposal duly put forth.

Q. *Did the Council of Bishops recommend one of the plans?*

A. By a majority vote (37-24), the Council of Bishops decided to recommend The One Church Plan. However, there are differing views among the Bishops as to the best way forward.

Q. *Has the Texas Annual Conference endorsed a plan?*

A. There are benefits and challenges of each proposed plan, and the Texas Annual Conference has not endorsed a plan. Our Bishop, Scott J. Jones, has sought to educate us about the pros and cons of each plan, which can be seen at <https://www.txcumc.org/thewayforward>.

Q. *Who are the delegates representing the Texas Annual Conference at General Conference 2019?*

A. Texas Annual Conference has 18 godly men and women who were elected to serve as clergy and lay delegates and alternate delegates at General Conference 2019. They are listed at <https://www.txcumc.org/2019Delegates>.

Q. *If General Conference decides on a plan, when will it take affect?*

A. While we don't know for sure, typically, actions taken by General Conference do not go into effect until January 1 of the next calendar year.

Q. *Is General Conference 2019 required to vote on one of these plans – or an amended version?*

A. The Conference is not required to approve or adopt any of the three plans – or any plan. However, it must take action on each petition duly presented to the body. No matter what is decided at the General Conference, we know as a church that God is in control.

Q. *What happens if no action on A Way Forward is approved?*

- A.** If no action is taken, the church will move forward under the current provisions as stated in The Book of Discipline. That said, regardless of what happens, our mission will not change, and we will continue to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.