

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PLANS BEFORE 2019 SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE

Plans before General Conference	One Church Plan	Connectional Conference Plan	“Modified” Traditional Plan
<p>This chart is a summary of recommendations in the Commission on a Way Forward’s report to the special 2019 General Conference. For more information, read the entire report of the Commission which can be accessed at http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session.</p>	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Affirms sexual relations only within the covenant of monogamous marriage between two adults (thereby permitting homosexual marriage) *Declares we are not of one mind regarding human sexuality and permits persons in the church to interpret and decide issues of human sexuality differently *Permits pastors to bless monogamous homosexual marriages anywhere secular law permits such marriages *Removes restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-gender weddings at UMC properties and ordination of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” *Does not require churches or conferences to accept such practices and contains language to protect consciences of pastors and congregations 	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Replaces current five U.S. jurisdictional conferences with three connectional conferences based on affinity on issues related to the definition of marriage and ordination standards – Progressive, Unity, and Traditional *All three would use a general Book of Discipline (Articles of Religion, General Rules, Confession of Faith) with the ability to adapt other portions to their context of ministry *Provides space for different practices and beliefs by the different connectional conferences *Central conferences could choose to be own connectional conference or join a U.S. one *Requires numerous Constitutional Amendments 	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Retains the church’s current position on the practice of homosexuality, enhances accountability, and provides a gracious exit path for annual conferences, local churches, and clergy who cannot abide by the requirements of the Book of Discipline into a new self-governing Methodist church *This plan will be adjusted to adhere to Judicial Council Decision 1366
<p>Local Churches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Could be assigned practicing homosexual clergy or pastors who would perform same-sex weddings, and would not be able to refuse the appointment *Relies on bishops to be sensitive as to the desires of local churches *May write policies explicitly allowing or forbidding same-sex weddings on church property (requires local church vote) *Creates a patchwork of different practices across the UMC *No gracious exit provisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Can choose affiliation with any of the three connectional conferences regardless of their annual conference’s choice. Thus congregation may have to vote on where to align if disagrees with annual conference choice *Clergy appointment only within the chosen connectional conference *Abide by wedding policies set by their connectional conference *Ordination standards determined by the chosen connectional conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No vote unless local church disagrees with annual conference decision to stay or leave UMC *If annual conference votes to leave, church may vote to stay. *If annual conference votes to stay, church may vote to leave with property and join another annual conference which is leaving *Churches which elect to stay when their annual conference is leaving would be realigned with a remaining annual Conference *Churches that leave must pay their share of pensions
<p>Clergy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Depends on bishops matching clergy with churches of similar theological conviction, but clergy have no way of refusing an appointment based on a mismatch *Clergy have ability to refuse to perform same-sex ceremony for reasons of conscience *Ends potential for church trials involving same sex weddings and homosexual practice *LGBTQ candidates can be ordained and appointed if Board of Ordained Ministry and Clergy Session permit or can transfer to a conference where it will be permitted *Conscience of bishops and superintendents not protected from having to oversee or appoint practicing homosexual clergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Choose a connectional conference with subsequent transfer subject to Board of Ordained Ministry approval *Ordination recognized across all connectional conferences, but service depends on the standards of each connectional conference *Security of appointment determined by each connectional conference *Could result in misalignment of the number of churches and clergy in a particular connectional conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Clergy subject to current prohibition of same-sex weddings with due process rights guaranteed *Bishops may not arbitrarily dismiss charges for no reason *Penalty for first conviction for performing a same-sex wedding results in one-year unpaid suspension *Penalty for second conviction is surrender of credentials *Church given right to appeal trial verdict for egregious misapplication of church law *Practicing homosexuals cannot be ordained or appointed

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Lay People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Limited input on whether practicing homosexuals can be ordained because <i>only</i> Board of Ordained Ministry and Clergy Session make that determination *Participate in local church conference vote on whether to allow same-sex weddings on church property * May find themselves in church which votes to accept same-sex practice and weddings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participate as delegates in decision of jurisdiction and annual conference as to which connectional conference to affiliate with *Participate in local church conference vote to affiliate with different connectional conference (if desired) *May find themselves in a church which votes to join a connectional conference with which they do not agree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Participate as delegates to annual conference in determination of whether to enforce the Discipline or exit from the UMC *Participate in any local church vote to exit from the UMC
Annual Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No vote needed. Progressive position is de facto adopted *Central conferences would need to make their own statements on ordination and same-sex weddings *Boards of Ordained Ministry and/or clergy session can vote to ordain LGBTQ persons with limited lay involvement *In order to adopt traditional position, clergy session must affirmatively vote to do so by a majority vote *Traditionalists would not be able to prevent the assignment of an openly homosexual bishop to their episcopal area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Jurisdictional and central conferences will vote to join a connectional conference on simple majority vote. *Annual conferences who want to join a different connectional conference than their jurisdictional or central conference may do so on a simple majority vote. *Annual conferences can revote every four years. *Clergy and churches may find themselves displaced as alignment changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Must certify it will uphold whole Discipline. *Conferences not upholding the Discipline cannot use the UM name or insignia or participate financially in the general church. *Annual conference can vote to leave denomination with their property if they disagree with the Discipline. *Those who choose to leave can negotiate continued participation in some UM general church agencies. *\$200,000 grant to departing conferences
Council of Bishops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Continues as one body providing spiritual leadership to the whole church *Assignment may match convictions of bishops and annual conferences. *Bishops protected if conscience will not allow them to ordain practicing LGBTQ persons, but must call upon a bishop who will ordain and allow it to occur *Must lead their conference regardless of personal conviction *No protection of bishops from having to appoint or supervise practicing LGBTQ clergy on basis of conscience *All bishops funded by the whole church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Learning and support community for bishops and ecumenical relations, less supervisory authority *U.S. bishops funded solely by their connectional conference at comparable levels *Central conference bishops funded by general church apportionments *Oversight and accountability of bishops is provided by each connectional conference. *Each bishop chooses a connectional conference and abides by its requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Bishops must certify they will adhere to the whole Discipline *Bishops who will not certify adherence no longer receive compensation of expenses as of 2021 and will be encouraged to leave for a self-governing Methodist church *Bishops held accountable by an independent global committee with due process rights guaranteed
General Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Continue to operate as now *Could overtly support LGBTQ causes *If funding declines, boards and agencies would need to consider a strategic restructuring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wespath, GCFA, UMCOR, Archives, parts of GBGM, and the Publishing House funded by entire church *Task force would evaluate each general agency and propose new model for UMC by 2025 *Program agencies would only serve connectional conferences that choose to relate to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *All general boards and agencies continue *Each agency can contract with churches that leave UMC as occurs now with affiliated, autonomous churches *If funding declines, boards and agencies will undergo strategic restructuring

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Related Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No change with related institutions *Some independent conservative institutions may no longer work with the UMC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Properties owned by annual or jurisdictional conferences follow them to new connectional conference *Institutions can choose to relate to one or more connectional conferences as bylaws permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No change unless they choose an action permitted by their bylaws *If annual conference leaves the UMC, owned or affiliated institutions go with it unless they change affiliation under their bylaws
Finance & Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wespath has recommended two petitions to cover churches or clergy who withdraw from the UMC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wespath has recommended two petitions to cover churches or clergy who withdraw from the UMC *Wespath stays intact and works with connectional conferences. *Wespath will allocate pension liabilities associated with churches depending on connectional conference chosen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wespath has recommended two petitions to cover churches or clergy who withdraw from the UMC *Churches which leave pay proportionate share of unfunded pension liability. *Clergy which leave have accrued benefits transferred to an individual investment account
Episcopal Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No change to funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Central conference funding unchanged; U.S. salaries & benefits paid by connectional conferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No change to funding

This table is adapted from a similar summary distributed by the Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.