

The Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation and Restructuring

Overview & Quick Facts

visit gracethroughseparation.com for more information

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GENERAL CONFERENCE

- General Conference (GC) is scheduled for August 29-September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis, MN.
- GC has been rescheduled multiple times due to COVID-related travel restrictions as well as obstacles to virtual conferencing. This is an evolving situation.

NORTHEAST JURISDICTIONAL (NEJ) CONFERENCE

- NEJ Conference, postponed until after GC 2022, is now set for Nov. 2-4, 2022.
- There will be no new elections of bishops until the NEJ meets in 2022.
- On March 29, 2021, the NEJ College of Bishops announced the vocational retirement of three bishops and a plan to cover episcopal areas using current bishops.

THE PROTOCOL - OVERVIEW

Background

- United Methodist leaders from traditional, centrist, and progressive caucuses met together after the called 2019 General Conference to discuss ways to allow for a "win-win" solution to the continued debate over issues related to human sexuality. This group decided to seek means of amicable separation for the United Methodist Church.
- A team formed and worked with an impartial negotiator to create legislation called "The Protocol for Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation and Restructuring."
- To go into effect, the Protocol legislation must be accepted by General Conference.

Highlights of the Protocol:

- Supports the formation of new Methodist denominations. A new traditional denomination preparing for formation is the Global Methodist Church. The movement birthing this new church was initiated by the Wesleyan Covenant Association. (See globalmethodist.org)
- Releases the Post-Separation UMC (psUMC) to pursue and adopt changes that progressive leaders have sought to make to the United Methodist Book of Discipline regarding homosexuality as related to marriage and ordination.
- Enables Central and Annual Conferences to vote whether to remain in the psUMC or to join a new traditional Methodist denomination or other new Methodist denomination.
- Individual local churches and clergy within each conference will be allowed to follow the decision of their conference or to align with one of the other new bodies.

THE PROTOCOL DETAILS

- The new traditional denomination(s) will be able to maintain the Book of Discipline's current stances regarding marriage and qualifications for ordination.
- New denominations will assume appropriate Pension Liabilities.
- A Central Conference (conference outside the US) may affiliate with a new denomination by a 2/3 vote.
- An Annual Conferences (AC) may affiliate with a new denomination by a 57% vote.
- Clergy (active and retired) who disagree with the alignment of their AC may declare affiliation with a different denomination by informing their District Superintendent.
- Local Churches disagreeing with the alignment of their AC can, by decision of their Church Council, invite their church members to vote their preference of affiliation. The Council may set the vote threshold at a simple majority or 2/3.
- Clergy joining a new denomination shall be grandfathered in at the point of their ordination journey.
- Annual Conferences and Local Churches moving to a new denomination shall retain all their property, assets, and liabilities.
- The UMC shall set aside \$25 million for the new traditional denomination(s) and \$2 million for any other Methodist denominations which might form.
- Disaffiliating churches not joining one of the new Methodist denominations shall pay unpaid apportionments of the past 12 months plus an additional 12 months.

METHODISM MOVING FORWARD

- If the Protocol passes at the next General Conference, at least two expressions of Methodism will form out of the current United Methodist Church:



Post Separation UMC (psUMC)

The psUMC will inherit the current UMC infrastructure, with Boards and Agencies, and will have progressive viewpoints on theology and human sexuality.



The Global Methodist Church (GMC)

The GMC, organized by the Wesleyan Covenant Association, will hold to orthodox theology with a traditional view of human sexuality.

IF PROTOCOL DOES NOT PASS

- The Transitional Leadership Council of the Global Methodist Church (GMC) will launch the new denomination without delay.
- UM Clergy may choose to disaffiliate from the UMC and join the GMC as they feel led.
- Local churches may call a church conference to vote on disaffiliation from the UMC via the current disaffiliation process in the Book of Discipline (§2553). This process includes a vote by the Annual Conference and payment requirements from the Local Church

CURRENT WESTERN PA CONFERENCE DISAFFILIATION MINIMUM PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

If a church conference votes to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for the disaffiliation shall be established by the resident Bishop with the advice of the Cabinet, conference Treasurer, conference Benefits Officer, Director of Connectional Ministries, and conference Chancellor. Presently, the guidelines are:

1. The present value of the local church's portion of the market value of the conference's unfunded pension liability.
2. Two years of apportionments, using 2019 amounts.
3. Complete payment of any current or previous unpaid apportionments, any unpaid direct billing, and any other liabilities.
4. The conference Trustees have the right to renegotiate these terms to a higher fee or retain property to benefit the continuing work of the denomination in that area.