



**Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church**  
**5120 Burlington Road, Greensboro, NC 27405**  
**336-697-0444 \* [mountpleasantumc.org](http://mountpleasantumc.org)**

People of Mount Pleasant Church,

January 27, 2020

We are the people called Methodist, so-called because in the early days of our movement we were criticized for our methodical ways of discipleship. This arose primarily out of the practices of John Wesley and the Holy Club - a group of like-minded college-age Jesus followers who wanted to be more earnest in their commitment to God. As our movement became a church in the late 1700s, John Wesley urged the people called Methodist to "hold fast to both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out".

We find ourselves at another crossroads in the life of the church. Our denomination has debated the role of human sexuality in Christian life, since 1972. Our recent Called General Conference 2019 further exacerbated the debate and revealed, once again, we are at an impasse. Prayer and reflection afterwards led Bishop John Yambasu of Sierra Leone to call a gathering of principal leaders from caucuses, groups and organizations along with a diverse representation from the Council of Bishops. This process led to a recently released proposal entitled "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation".

The press release from the Council of Bishops about the proposal was picked up by the mass media and quickly become fodder for news reports and talk shows. Unfortunately, not all news people are Methodist and our unique terminology and polity did not fully inform these reports, thus giving rise to inaccurate reports saying things like "United Methodist Church Announces Plan to Split Over Same-Sex Marriage". The only denominational entity which speaks for the "United Methodist Church" is our legislative body - The General Conference - which has not met to consider this proposal, nor the several other proposals on the agenda for the quadrennial meeting.

Please note, the "Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation" is a proposal, not a final declaration. More so than other proposals, this one does represent a moderated and negotiated agreement across the opinion spectrum regarding human sexuality, so many people have hope that it is the way forward. However, that decision takes place sometime during the General Conference held May 5 - 15, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN.

Please stay informed from United Methodist News sources. They know our polity and discipline and will more clearly report what is taking place. You will find a packet of information regarding the proposals to General Conference and a list of recommended news sources on the Welcome Desks at Church. Please be in touch with any questions.

Continue in prayer for our local church and our denomination. There is much work to be done to further the Kingdom of God. We need to be about that work of "making disciples of Jesus Christ by loving God and neighbor".

In Christ,  
*Pastor Andrew Brown*

***"How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!" - Psalm 133:1***

## **Recommended Information Sources [with web links]:**

**United Methodist News Service of the United Methodist Church** - The official news service of the United Methodist Church.

[<https://www.umnews.org/en/>]

**UM News Daily Digest** - A periodical distributed by UM News summarizing news from across the denomination.

[<https://www.umnews.org/en/tag/daily-digest>]

**General Conference 2020 of the United Methodist Church** - The official website for General Conference the *legislative body* of the United Methodist Church.

[<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>]

**Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church** - The official website of the Council of Bishops the *executive body* of the United Methodist Church. [<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/>]

**Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church** - The Judicial Council webpage on the official UMC website. Judicial Council is the *judicial body* of the United Methodist Church.

[<https://www.umc.org/en/content/judicial-council>]

**United Methodist Church website** - The official website of the United Methodist Church. [[umc.org](http://umc.org)]

**Resource Website of the United Methodist Church** - The official resource site of the United Methodist Church.

[<https://www.resourceumc.org/en>]

# COMPARISON OF PROPOSALS TO GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020

This summary compares proposals from various groups, in alphabetical order, about the structure of The UMC.

It does not include proposals from individuals. Further details are in the documents and legislation. All proposals will be open for amendments at General Conference and may be subject to Judicial Council review. Updated on 1/7/20.

PLANS	“NEW DENOMINATIONS OF UNITED METHODISM” (INDIANAPOLIS PLAN) (MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTORS)	“NEW EXPRESSIONS WORLDWIDE” (UMFORWARD)	“NEXT GENERATION UMC” (UMCNEXT)	“PROTOCOL OF RECONCILIATION & GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION” (MULTIPLE CONTRIBUTORS)	“U.S. REGIONAL CONFERENCE” (CONNECTIONAL TABLE)
PLAN DOCUMENTS	<a href="https://indyplanumc.org/">https://indyplanumc.org/</a>	<a href="https://um-forward.org/the-new-plan">https://um-forward.org/the-new-plan</a>	<a href="https://umcnext.com/legislation/">https://umcnext.com/legislation/</a>	Protocol FAQS	<a href="https://www.umc.org/en/content/connectional-tables-us-regional-conference-legislation-now-available">https://www.umc.org/en/content/connectional-tables-us-regional-conference-legislation-now-available</a>
NUMBER OF DENOMINATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 or more global denominations - traditionalist and centrist/progressive</li> <li>• The UMC continues through the Centrist UMC.</li> <li>• Other denominations may be formed by 50+ local churches or an annual conference(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 global denominations - traditionalist, moderate, progressive and liberationist</li> <li>• The UMC dissolves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 or more - The UMC remains intact with options for new Methodist denominations that continue in relationship with the UMC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 or more</li> <li>• A new traditionalist denomination is formed and others may also be formed.</li> <li>• The UMC continues after separation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>KEY POINTS: This proposal relates to U.S. structure. It does not address LGBTQ related matters.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UMC remains intact with a new regional structure for the U.S.</li> <li>• Does not call for a major restructure of the UMC.</li> </ul>
WHO DECIDES WHAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual and central conferences, by simple majority, choose to join any new denomination.</li> <li>• Clergy and bishops choose to join any new denomination.</li> <li>• Central conferences may become autonomous.</li> <li>• Local churches, by simple majority, may choose a different denomination than their annual conference and retain property, assets and liabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A transitional council develops a plan of separation.</li> <li>• Annual conferences, central conferences, clergy and bishops choose to join any new denomination.</li> <li>• Local churches, by 2/3 majority, may choose a different denomination than their annual conference and retain property, assets and liabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congregations, clergy and conferences determine affiliations.</li> <li>• Local churches, by 2/3 majority, may choose to separate from the UMC and retain property, assets and liabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual conferences, by 57% majority, may vote to join a new Methodist denomination.</li> <li>• Central conferences, by 2/3 majority, may vote to join a new Methodist denomination.</li> <li>• Local churches, by either a simple or 2/3 majority, may choose a different denomination than that of their annual conference and retain property, assets and liabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until a U.S. regional conference is formed, an interim committee of the General Conference handles U.S. matters.</li> </ul>

PLANS	“NEW DENOMINATIONS” (INDIANAPOLIS PLAN)	“NEW EXPRESSIONS WORLDWIDE”	“NEXT GENERATION UMC”	“PROTOCOL OF RECONCILIATION & GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION”	“U.S. REGIONAL CONFERENCE”
REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets interim exemption from LGBTQ prohibitions for Centrist conferences, churches and clergy.</li> <li>• Sets interim suspension of complaints and disciplinary actions related to LGBTQ bans for Centrist conferences, churches and clergy.</li> <li>• Mandatory retirement for U.S. bishops waived until 2022.</li> <li>• U.S. bishop elections may be postponed until 2021 or 2022.</li> <li>• Central conferences elect bishops as determined by General Conference 2020.</li> <li>• Trust clause suspended for denominations other than Centrist.</li> <li>• Does not indicate constitutional amendments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes an immediate moratorium on charges, complaints and trials related to LGBTQ prohibitions.</li> <li>• Does not indicate constitutional amendments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removes LGBTQ prohibitions and Traditional Plan additions.</li> <li>• A moratorium on new or pending complaint proceedings and trials related to LGBTQ prohibitions takes effect at the close of General Conference 2020.</li> <li>• The special called General Conference makes constitutional amendments or adopts a new constitution proposed by the special commission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register intent to form a new Methodist denomination by May 15, 2021.</li> <li>• Requests holding in abeyance all administrative or judicial processes related to LGBTQ prohibitions and some church closures.</li> <li>• Local churches affiliating with a new denomination must maintain connectional responsibilities until separation.</li> <li>• ¶12553 applies to disaffiliating churches that do not join a new Methodist denomination.</li> <li>• Provisions are not severable. If any provisions are deemed unconstitutional by the Judicial Council or illegal by civil courts, the entire protocol will be null and void.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires constitutional amendments (2/3 majority vote by General Conference and annual conference members).</li> <li>• Amends Part VI, Chapter Four, of the Discipline to authorize and organize a U.S. regional conference.</li> </ul>
FINANCES/ ASSET DIVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of clergy pensions through each new denomination.</li> <li>• Apportionments paid by all denominations through 2020.</li> <li>• All denominations support funding for central conference ministries through 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General church assets divided equitably.</li> <li>• Provides for arbitration.</li> <li>• Establishes financial investments in historically marginalized and vulnerable churches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Conference includes grant funding for new denominations in relationship with The UMC in the 2021-2024 budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$25M over four years is paid to a new traditionalist denomination with no further claims to United Methodist assets.</li> <li>• \$2M is escrowed for other possible new denominations.</li> <li>• \$39M is allocated over eight years to support ethnic ministries and Africa University.</li> <li>• Property, assets, and liabilities of annual, jurisdictional, and central conferences are retained by those entities regardless of affiliation.</li> <li>• Pension plans for all current clergy and lay employees remain in place, regardless of affiliation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed regarding general church assets or agency structure.</li> </ul>

PLANS	“NEW DENOMINATIONS” (INDIANAPOLIS PLAN)	“NEW EXPRESSIONS WORLDWIDE”	“NEXT GENERATION UMC”	“PROTOCOL OF RECONCILIATION & GRACE THROUGH SEPARATION”	“U.S. REGIONAL CONFERENCE”
STRUCTURE AND AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All denominations develop their own structures, polity and governance.</li> <li>Wespath, UMCOR, UMW, UM Men, UMPH become independent to serve any denomination.</li> <li>Archives and History retains assets and liabilities and financially supported by each denomination.</li> <li>All other agencies become part of the Centrist UMC with the option to serve other denominations.</li> <li>Jurisdictional or annual conference institutions may change affiliation or become independent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New denominations determine their own policies, structure and processes.</li> <li>General agencies become independent 501(c)3 organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates a U.S. regional conference and a U.S. Regional Committee of the General Conference.</li> <li>A special commission proposes a new constitution and governance structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The UMC and new denominations may enter into ecumenical agreements and participation in agencies or mission activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Stage I) Creates an interim U.S. regional committee of the General Conference to handle U.S. matters.</li> <li>(Stage II) Creates a U.S. regional conference comprising the current jurisdictions, which continue with the same powers and geographic areas.</li> </ul>
TIMELINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective at the close of General Conference 2020.</li> <li>Aug. 1, 2020 - Interim new alignment begins.</li> <li>Jan. 1, 2021 - Default alignment with Centrist UMC if no choice made by an annual conference.</li> <li>Mar. 31, 2021 - Default alignment with Traditional UMC if no choice made by a central conference.</li> <li>Fall 2021 - Inaugural General Conferences held.</li> <li>Jan. 1, 2022 – New denominations fully established.</li> <li>2028 - Opportunity to choose a denomination remains open.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective at the close of General Conference 2020.</li> <li>Prior to 2024 - Special General Conference held to approve a plan of separation.</li> <li>Transition time for local churches extends until the Special General Conference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aug. 1, 2020 - Commission on a 21st Century Church begins work.</li> <li>Fall 2023 - Special General Conference meets.</li> <li>2025 - Local church disaffiliation provisions expire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD - UMC Special General Conference to create regional conferences.</li> <li>TBD - U.S. regional conference meets to address Book of Discipline changes.</li> <li>May 15, 2021 - Deadline to register intent to form a new Methodist denomination.</li> <li>July 1, 2021 - Annual conference deadline to vote to affiliate with a new denomination.</li> <li>Dec 31, 2021 - Central conference deadline to vote to affiliate with a new denomination.</li> <li>Dec 31, 2024 - Local church deadline to vote to affiliate with a different denomination than their annual conference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2021-2024 - Interim committee plans a new U.S. Regional Conference.</li> <li>2024 - New U.S. Regional Conference convenes.</li> </ul>