

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Key Highlights & Actions

RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE REMOVED: There are no longer restrictions on ordination of LGBTQ clergy or same-gender weddings. This went into effect immediately.

Additional language was added to emphasize that pastors & congregations can choose whether or not to hold same-gender weddings without fear of punishment. These changes bring the Book of Discipline back to the pre-1972 neutral language and stance.

REGIONALIZATION: Delegates approved legislation that would restructure the denomination to be more contextual in different regions served by the church. This will be voted on at Annual Conference in 2025.

REVISED SOCIAL PRINCIPLES: While not church law, the GC passed guidelines for what United Methodists agree are the most relevant social concerns throughout the world today and the church's position on those issues.

SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY: Approved allowing deacons to preside at the sacraments "when contextually appropriate" without approval from a bishop.

DISAFFILIATION POLICY ENDED: Delegates removed Paragraph 2553 from the Book of Discipline, ending the disaffiliation policy that was added by the special 2019 General Conference. There is currently no other provision for disaffiliation. They also required annual conferences affected by disaffiliation to develop grace-filled policies for reaffiliation of churches that want to rejoin the denomination.

BUDGET APPROVED: Delegates approved a 2025-2028 budget of \$373.4 million. That total is contingent on collection rates being at 90% or more for the next two years. If giving is below that percentage, the budget bottom line will be \$353.6 million. The total approved is significantly smaller than the budget approved by the 2016 General Conference. Annual conferences will be asked to pay less in apportionments.

APPORTIONMENTS LOWERED: Conferences will shift from their current base rate of 3.29% to a base rate of 2.6% for 2025 and 2026. Then, if the apportionment collection rate is 90% or higher in those years, the base rate will increase to 2.9% for 2027 and 2028.

OTHER IMPORTANT ACTIONS:

- Approved a constitutional amendment addressing the denomination’s commitment to eradicating racism, as well as other anti-racism actions.
- Approved an apology to victims and survivors of sexual misconduct by clergy and lay leaders in the church.
- Approved a new retirement plan for U.S. clergy, called Compass, which would be a defined contribution plan similar to what many corporate employers provide. The plan takes effect in 2026.
- Approved a full communion agreement with the Episcopal Church. If the Episcopal Church affirms the agreement, it will mean the denominations recognize each other as the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in with the Gospel is rightly preached and taught.
- Approved adding two bishops for Africa, for a total of 15, and set the number of U.S. bishops at 32 – a decrease from the 39 active bishops and one retired bishop currently serving episcopal areas in the U.S.
- Approved a resolution calling on United Methodist institutions not to invest in the government bonds of countries that have been cited by the U.N. Security Council or the International Criminal Court for prolonged military occupations.
- Elected a new Judicial Council, the denomination’s top court, and filled positions on the Commission on the General Conference, University Senate, general boards and agencies of the church and other entities, as well as trustees to John Street United Methodist Church in New York, the oldest continuously operating Methodist church in the United States.

For a more comprehensive summary and to download the full informational guide, visit susumc.org/gc