



East Ohio Conference

The United Methodist Church

Frequently Asked Questions about The United Methodist Church and the General Conference Held in 2024

The United Methodist Church is a worldwide denomination that shares the same constitution, doctrinal standards, theological task, and Social Principles, and embraces cultural, contextual and theological differences across the connection.

What is *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*?

The Book of Discipline is the denomination's governing document that contains its doctrine, constitution, church law, rules of organization, and procedures.

What is *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*?

The Book of Resolutions contains the denomination's position on current social issues. Resolutions are not church law. They help us put our faith in Jesus Christ into action as we live out our witness in the world.

What are The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church?

The Social Principles speak to human issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation. [Learn more about The Social Principles.](#)

What is General Conference?

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church. It meets at the beginning of each quadrennium to consider revisions to church law; to adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy, and economic issues; and to approve plans and budgets for church-wide programs for the next four years. General Conference last met April 23-May 3, 2024. [Learn more about General Conference.](#)

Restrictive Language Removed from The Book of Discipline

General Conference removed from The Book of Discipline all discriminatory language and practices related to LGBTQIA+ persons. **Effective Date:** Now.

Impact on Clergy

Removing the prohibitive language in The Book of Discipline regarding same-gender weddings does not mean all United Methodist pastors will be expected or required to officiate same-gender weddings. All clergy are given agency and freedom to serve God and their communities and to engage in mission and ministry according to their conscience and context without judgment or consequence. Pastors choosing to officiate same-gender weddings will honor the guidelines adopted by the local church to which they are appointed.

Impact on Local Churches

In collaborative, prayerful, discerning consultation with its pastor, local church leadership sets guidelines for use of the church building. Removing the prohibitive language in The Book of Discipline does not mean that all United Methodist churches will be expected or required to host same-gender weddings.

Nothing has changed regarding how pastors and congregations engage in ministry regarding marriage ceremonies and use of buildings except that there are no longer any denominational restrictions or prohibitions regarding officiating or hosting a same-gender ceremony. Pastors and churches still have the same freedom to make decisions as they did before any changes.

Impact on Appointment-Making

The bishop and Cabinet use a core set of values to guide their appointment work. They prayerfully consider the skills, gifts and experiences of a pastor, the input from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and the missional needs of the congregation and community when seeking to make the best missional match of a pastor to a local church. Removal of restrictive language from The Book of Discipline will not change the process by which clergy appointments are made.

Revised Social Principles

General Conference approved the first major revision of the Social Principles in 50 years. **Effective Date:** January 1, 2025. [Learn more about the Revised Social Principles adopted at General Conference.](#)

Church Apologizes to Victims and Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

On behalf of The United Methodist Church, the General Conference apologized to the victims and the survivors of sexual misconduct for the hurt and harm done to them by the Church. The United Methodist Church pledged to share the apology in every annual conference across the connection, educate church leaders, and provide healing resources. [Read the apology in its entirety.](#)

2025-2028 General Church Budget

The General Church budget for the 2025-2028 quadrennium was reduced as a commitment by the Church to keep more ministry dollars in local churches and annual conferences. **Effective Date:** January 1, 2025. [Learn more about the reduced 2025-2028 budget.](#)

Worldwide Regionalization Legislation

Worldwide regionalization will create relevance and equity across The United Methodist Church by enabling all regions of the Church to implement mission and ministry in the most effective ways for their context and culture. **Effective Date:** To be determined, because the approved legislation requires constitutional amendments. **Next Step:** Each annual conference in The United Methodist Church must vote on the same legislation approved by General Conference. For worldwide regionalization to become reality, at least two-thirds of all aggregate votes cast must approve the legislation passed by General Conference. [Learn more about worldwide regionalization of The United Methodist Church.](#)

Re-Affiliation Pathway

Paragraph 2553 was removed from The Book of Discipline, and no paragraph was added that would provide a pathway for disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. A petition was passed that requires annual conferences to develop and implement policies for how a local church that disaffiliated and now wants to rejoin The United Methodist Church may do so. **Effective Date:** Now.

Sacramental Authority for Deacons in Their Ministry Setting

Deacons have been granted authority to administer the sacraments in ministry settings where they have been appointed to serve. **Effective Date:** January 1, 2025. [Learn more about sacramental authority for Deacons.](#)

New Retirement Plan for U.S. Clergy

There will be a new retirement plan for United Methodist clergy in the U.S. called Compass. It will replace the current defined benefit plan with a defined contribution plan. **Effective Date:** January 1, 2026. [Learn more about the Compass retirement plan.](#)

Full Communion with The Episcopal Church

The communal agreement between The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church approved by the General Conference needs the approval of The Episcopal Church before going into effect. [Learn more about the full communion between The UMC and The Episcopal Church.](#)

United Methodist Church Resources

To learn more about these decisions and others made by the General Conference, you are encouraged to explore these official United Methodist resources:

- www.eocumc.com/gc/GC2020.html
- www.UMC.org
- www.resourceumc.org

The United Methodist Church Mission

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The East Ohio Conference Vision

To equip pastors, congregations, and faith communities to grow in their capacity to bear fruit that lasts:

- by being disciples, making disciples, and maturing disciples of Jesus Christ;
- by being God's agents of transformation in our communities and throughout the world; and
- by being bold and courageous leaders in reaching new people, younger people, and a more diverse people.