How does the UMC work?



General Conference

- Every UMC in the world
- Meets every 4 years to make big decisions that affect the whole church

Jurisdictional Conference

- We're in the North Central Jurisdiction
- Every UMC in a specific area
- Meets every 4 years
- Elects Bishops, the presiding elder for each annual conference

Annual Conference

- We're in the Indiana Annual Conference
- Every UMC in a smaller area, for us the state of IN
- Meets every year



How did we get here?

A Timeline of Events

2016

An openly gay married woman, was nominated and elected bishop.

Some interpret this as an act of justice; others see it as a breaking of covenant.

2020

Agreement reached to split the UMC (Protocol of Grace through Separation.)

Never passed because General Conference postponed to 2022 due to Covid 19.

2022-2023

Over the course of two years, 25% of UMC congregations within the US disaffiliated. Disaffiliation clause (passed in 2019 as part of Traditionalist plan) expired at end of 2023.

2015

US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all states.

2019

Special Called General Conference to heal the split and find a way forward. Traditionalist plan passed but only furthered the divide.

2022

General Conference postponed a second time until 2024. Global Methodist Church launched. This is a more traditionally minded denomination holding conservative views of LGBTO issues.

2024

General Conference is scheduled to meet April 23-May 3.

What's Next?

General Conference is expected to debate/vote upon three pieces of legislation related to the issue of same-sex marriage.

- The first topic will be regionalization. While same-sex marriage is legal in the United States, it is not legal in many countries within Africa (where United Methodism is still growing strong). Regionalization would combine the five jurisdictions of the United States into one "regional conference," while elevating current "central conferences" around the globe to equal stature. Each regional conference will have its own Book of Discipline; no region will be able to impose its will on another. Regionalization will allow each area of the world to decide its own stance upon the issue of same-sex marriage.
- Centrists & progressives have proposed the removal of all "restrictive" language for all LGBTQ persons, thereby allowing clergy, churches, and annual conferences within the United States to determine their own decisions around same-sex marriage.
- Finally, General Conference will vote whether or not to renew the "disaffiliation paragraph" that would allow dissenting congregations a pathway to exit the denomination. Legislation would be required to extend the option of disaffiliation to all "central conferences" around the globe.