

the Messenger



News about the UMC *Commission on the Way Forward* and Special Session of General Conference

Delegates from each Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church are preparing to meet in Special Session of the General Conference in St. Louis, Feb. 23-26, 2019. Their purpose is to receive and act on the report of the *Commission on a Way Forward*, based on the recommendations of the Council of Bishops.

This issue contains two documents to help us understand the options and the resulting outcome. See pages 12-15.

General Conference is the top policy-making body of the United Methodist Church. It is an international body of about 1,000 elected delegates that convenes every four years, and is scheduled to meet in 2020 in Minneapolis.

Join us for...

Pre - Valentine's Day
BRUNCH

Sunday, February 10 - 10:15 a.m.

Creating Community with God committee invites you to a **Comfort Food Potluck** immediately following the 9:00 a.m. Worship service on **Sunday, February 10**. Please bring your favorite comfort food dish so we can cozy up and share a warm winter brunch together. Come feed your body, warm your heart, and soothe your soul!!



UMC-Geneva and UMC scholarships are now open. See page 6 for complete listing and information.

Pastor's Page

Courageous Conversations

"The quality of our lives comes out of the quality of our dialogues and conversations," so says Mark Hansen, creator of the bestselling book series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. No doubt each one of us can recall such defining moments that literally shaped our lives, our relationships, and our world. Starting this month, UMC-Geneva will begin to engage in a number of courageous conversations that will equally influence the life of our church.

1. Our global denomination will engage in one courageous conversation as delegates from around the world meet for a **special session of General Conference** in St. Louis, February 23-26. The main purpose is to receive and act on a report from the Commission on a Way Forward (COWF) that examined paragraphs in the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explored options to strengthen the unity of the church. Your pastors have provided the congregation with three clear documents (in hard copy and electronic form) that explain 1) the purpose and process of the COWF; 2) the COWF's three major options that will be presented in St. Louis; and 3) a 2019 communication tool kit to help us engage in courageous conversations before the conference. In addition, your pastors have asked that both Church Council and Church and Society committees work with us to hold several opportunities for us to engage in discussion before and after the conference. Note: Regardless of the outcome of the vote, your pastors will remain at UMC-Geneva and move with you into whatever future God holds for us. The earliest any changes will take place at our Annual Conference level will be in roughly two years.
2. Last year Church Council appointed a special team, **Vision 2020**, to address the future of our church—both our challenges (declining numbers of members; worship attendees; children, youth and young adults, etc.) AND our opportunities (such as building on our strengths in the areas of music, outreach, and caring community). Vision 2020 seeks, with God's guidance and help, to turn the ship around and get us all on the same page via a ministry plan centered on our purpose to Reach Up! Reach In! Reach Out! You may have seen these phrases in the Messenger, our worship bulletins, weekly e-blasts, etc. And your pastors are currently in the middle of a six-week sermon series providing the biblical and theological basis for our church's ministries of Reaching Up to God in worship and spiritual growth, Reaching In to one another as a warm, caring community of faith, and Reaching Out to a hurting world through our many social justice ministries and missions. This month, Vision 2020 will begin to engage our church in a series of courageous conversations open to everyone in our church family. This will not be a 'flash in the pan' but an ongoing process led by Vision 2020, Church Council, and your pastors. Please join us. How can we proceed without you in the conversation?
3. Following a **Capital Campaign feasibility study** late last Fall, our Trustees will be leading a series of info-shares and building tours explaining our church's building needs in crucial areas such as a failing HVAC system, a leaky roof in the sanctuary, and leaky windows in the Fellowship Hall. Please accept the Trustees' invitations to engage in yet more courageous conversations on the strategic role that our building plays in all of our ministries.

Remember...the quality of our lives comes out of the quality of our conversations. Can we talk here at UMCG? I believe we can!

Pastor Rich

REACH UP...

February 2019 Worship Schedule

8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Sunday Services

Nursery provided at 9 a.m. service

Sunday School Schedule:

Children's Sunday School 9:00 a.m.: Godly Play (3-years-old - Kindergarten)
Journey of Faith (grades 1-4) & Route 56 (grades 5-6)

Youth Worship/Sunday School – 9-10:15 a.m. (excludes First Sundays)

Adult Sunday School - 10:30 a.m.

In February, we continue our six-week sermon series begun in mid-January based on the work of our Vision 2020 team. The series will help us understand the biblical and theological basis for our church's new ministry plan embodied in the phrase **Reach Up, Reach In, and Reach Out**.

February 3 Reach In!

In addition to Reaching Up to God in worship and spiritual growth (sermons 1 and 2 in January), we Reach In to one another as a caring community of faith. What does it mean to care for one another? **Pastor Rich**, in his sermon titled "Who Cares?" will explore this vital aspect of our life together through an exposition of the "one another" verses in the New Testament.

February 10 Reach In!

Inviting and welcoming others into meaningful, supportive fellowship is integral to being a warm and hospitable congregation. What can we learn from the early church in these areas? **Pastor Esther's** sermon will help us understand the crucial importance of being an inviting, welcoming, and hospitable church.

February 16 Saturday Evening Worship

On the third Saturday of each month, we will worship at 5 p.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments. Each month we will focus on a particular ministry or mission of our church. Our focus this month is on immigration and the ministry of Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON). **Pastor Esther** will be sharing her personal experience as an immigrant and her work as a board member of JFON, and Claudia Marchan, Executive Director of JFON, will give a presentation.

February 17 Reach Out!

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to reach out beyond the walls of our church in acts of compassion and acts of justice. Compassion is showing kindness to others. Justice creates change that makes things fairer in our community, society and world. In his sermon "What Should We Do?" **Pastor Rich** will preach from [Micah 6:8](#) and demonstrate how Jesus's prophetic ministry of compassion and justice in Luke's Gospel serves as an example for us today.

February 24 Reach Out!

What, exactly, is the mission of the church? Our church? In his sermon, "Yes...You Are a Missionary!" **Pastor Rich** will preach from two of Jesus's Great Commissions: [Matthew 28:16-20](#) and [Acts 1:8](#), and apply these passages to the life and mission of our church.

REACH UP... REACH IN... REACH OUT...

Wondering what this is about? We're introducing this descriptive phrase as part of our Vision 2020 plan. We **Reach Up** to God in worship and spiritual development, **Reach In** to help one another in our congregation, and **Reach Out** to serve others in our community and the world.

REACH UP...



A Great Way to Grow Your Faith! **DISCIPLE FAST TRACK BIBLE STUDY**

Tom Tamlyn will facilitate a 12-week study of the New Testament beginning Wednesday, February 13. Cokesbury says, "Disciple fast track, an adaptation of the original, bestselling disciple bible study, provides a viable option for busy people seeking comprehensive engagement over time with the entire biblical text. Participants read a manageable 3-5 chapters of the Bible daily in preparation for the weekly meetings, which last approximately 75 minutes. A brief, illustrated review video enables participants to recall important facts and ideas; lively and engaging video presenters then offer insights into the current week's session."

Cost of the New Testament manual for the 12-week study will be \$18.00.

Begins Wednesday, February 13 - 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. at the Church.

No previous Bible study is necessary to join this class! All are welcome.

For more information and the exact starting date, please contact Tom Tamlyn at 630-406-6907, or email: ttamlyn@sbcglobal.net.

A Lenten Study:

Simplifying THE SOUL: Lenten Practices to Renew Your Spirit

Groups meet: Tuesdays, 2 and 7 p.m.

Starts February 26

Facilitated by Becky Nicol



Are you yearning for a simpler life? Want to experience a lively Lent?

Come join us as we explore sayings of the Desert Mothers and Fathers, enjoy meditations from the author, and do the daily practices. Each day we will practice a simple act that renews our spirits, spending a week simplifying each of these: our space, the use of money, the care of the body, the mind, the schedule, relationships, and prayer.

Books are available in print and for Kindle, and will be available in the church office in mid-February.

REACH IN...

ATTENTION: ALL 2019 CHURCH COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A New Committee Member Orientation Session will be held Saturday, February 9, 10 a.m. – 12 noon, in the Youth Room. All NEW committee members and chairs are invited and encouraged to attend this gathering facilitated by Pastor Rich, Pastor Esther, and our Nominating Committee. All current committee members and chairs are also welcome. To RSVP, contact the church office at 630-232-7120 or visit <http://www.genevaumc.org/signups>.

Greeters Needed for Sunday Mornings: Provide a warm smile and a friendly handshake to our guests and members on Sunday mornings. Please sign up at www.genevaumc.org/signups or call the church office at 630-232-7120.

Book Club News

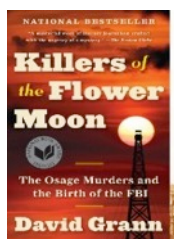
Book Club meets in a public room at Carriage Oaks Senior Residence on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. New members are ALWAYS WELCOME to join us for interesting discussion and fellowship. Contact Sharon at 630-879-9544 for more information.



Tuesday, February 5

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

Narrated from different characters' perspectives, this novel challenges readers, both young and old, to wonder about the true nature of empathy, compassion, acceptance, friendship, and kindness.



Tuesday, March 5

Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann

The Osage Nation in Oklahoma, 1920s, great wealth, mysterious deaths, and the newly formed FBI. A gripping non-fiction narrative that explores prejudice, greed, and the long-lasting consequences of community tragedy.

Coming up: April 2 – *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* by Lisa See
May 7 – *Clara and Mr. Tiffany* by Susan Vreeland

“Mental Health for Adults” Seminar

The Committee on Church in Society recommends a class called *Mental Health First Aid for Adults* offered by Delnor Hospital on February 23, 2019, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This class is offered free of charge. The training is for the benefit of anyone who would like more information on identifying mental health problems in friends or family and then knowing how to respond.

If interested, please contact Delnor Hospital at 630-933-4234. If you have any questions, please contact Nancie Lillie at 630-232-6696 or sandnillie@gmail.com.

STUDENTS: Our generous donors have blessed us with wonderful opportunities. The following UMCG college/vocational school scholarships are available. Applications are open now.



Apply online at www.genevaumc.org/scholarships. **The deadline to submit your application is April 1, 2019. No application will be accepted after that date, and all parts of the application must be received by April 1.** Students are encouraged to review the online application and start gathering the necessary information now. Please be sure to allow extra time for your school to process your transcript request. Use your current transcript. Scholarship Sunday is May 12, 2019. Please contact a committee member with questions or if you need help: Keith Worthington, Colleen Fasbender, Karla Poremba, or Gwen Powell.

The Lucinda Dittmer Memorial Scholarship \$2,000 for a student planning to study elementary education. Donated by Gary Dittmer. Lucinda was a member of Hugs and served on the Staff Parish Relations Committee. She was a faithful member of UMCG for 15 years. Lucinda was a teacher for academically gifted students in District 304. She joined the Illinois Math and Science Academy to develop their math curriculum, and earned her PhD in problem-based learning while at IMSA.

The William K. and Ruth A. Bullock Memorial Scholarships are for students who are active members of UMCG and are planning to enroll in a two- or four-year college or university, or a technical or vocational school. One \$5,000, and two \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded. Donated from the estate of Mary Bullock. Mary loved being a Kindergarten teacher in the Villa Park School District for 40 years. She loved life, dancing, singing and playing the piano.

The Bob Tucker Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship \$2,000 for a student of any major.

The Bob Tucker Memorial Graduate scholarship \$2,000 for a graduate student of any major.

Donated by Margo Tucker. Bob Tucker was a favorite speaker during Words for children. He wrote a book called *Grandpa Tucker's Rhymes and Tales* in 1999. Stories of Sammy the Snake were often told, always with a special message to the children.

The Mike Worthington Memorial Scholarship \$1,000 for a student of any major.

Donated by Ann Worthington. Mike was chairman of the scholarship committee and truly felt that an education made you a better person. He was a faithful member of UMCG serving on many committees. He always brought his red fire truck to the pancake breakfasts on Memorial Day for the children to climb on while he made pancakes.

W. P. McElroy Memorial Scholarship \$1,500 for a vocational school student.

Donated by Ed McElroy. Mac, as we knew him, was the first chairman of the Scholarship Committee. He was responsible for setting the criteria for this committee. He was a lifelong educator and mentor and was a faithful member of UMCG.

Yvonne W. McElroy Memorial Scholarship \$1,500 for an undergraduate or vocational school student. Donated by Brenda Pacey. Yvonne was a beloved fifth grade teacher who engaged her students in innovative learning. She initiated a special Geneva History Study Unit that involved students and the community. It became part of the Geneva curriculum.

General UMC of Geneva Scholarships for undergraduate or vocational school students.

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation: <https://www.umhef.org/scholarship-search>

YOUTH at UMCG

Youth Worship Schedule



February 3	Discussion: What's the Bible made of? New Testament
February 10	Discussion: Creator God, pt. 1
February 17	Discussion: Creator God, pt. 2
February 24	TBD

Pen and Paper

Meets 7 p.m. Saturdays
February 2, 9 & 23

Come have some fun!

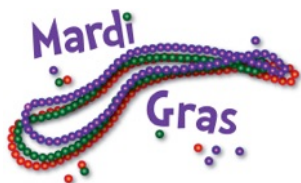
Youth Activities



February 3 Souper Bowl Sunday Packing of items donated for Hased House 10:30 a.m. - Noon, Youth Room.

February 16 Ski Trip TBD, Contact Keith Worthington if you are interested. Any adults willing to participate as drivers and/or chaperones please contact either Denise at denise@genevaumc.org, or Keith at keithworthington@ameritech.net.

February 24 Volunteer Project for Animal Anderson Shelter, 4–6 p.m. We will be making toys for the animals and collecting newspaper to shred. Beginning February 4 you can drop off newspaper in the marked bin under the coat rack in the Church Atrium.



March 3 Youth volunteers needed to assist Journey of Faith and Route 56 students with their Mardi Gras projects. More details to come.

For more information, contact Denise Clementz, Director of Youth Ministry, at denise@genevaumc.org.

REACH IN...

Altar Flowers:

If you would like to have flowers placed in worship on a Sunday in memory or recognition of a loved one or in celebration of a special event, please sign up at the Worship Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall, or visit our online Altar Flower Sign-up at www.genevaumc.org/signups to select a date and provide a brief dedication to be included in the Sunday worship bulletin. Lorie Montanye, our flower coordinator, will order the flowers from Town and Country Gardens in Geneva and they will bill you directly.



UMCG 4th Graders will receive Bibles on Sunday, February 24.

If you have a 4th grader and did not receive information in the mail, please call Director of Children's Education Jodi Borger, at 630-232-7120, ext. 180.



THE GREEN DIARY: Try Some New Green Habits for 2019! *from the UMCG Creation Care Team*

It's a New Year! Here's some ideas and habits the Creation Team will adopt!

Val will no longer buy bottles with pumps because plastic pumps cannot be recycled and will buy frozen juice concentrate instead of juice in plastic bottles.

Robbin will remember to ask for no straw for her take out drink and keep a metal straw in her car for when one is needed. She will remember to take reusable bags into every store she visits and if she forgets she will carry her purchase out in her arms. Lastly, she will keep a small bag of reusable carry out containers in her car and take them into every restaurant she visits.

Debbie will be switching to cloth napkins and striving for a paper towel free 2019. She will also strive to make and purchase gifts for family and friends that can be consumed or be useful for the person to go green.

Gail plans to advocate with groups in the public arena for responsible stewardship for our planet and it's resources. She will also research and share strategies to make recycling easier, like keeping a small magnifying glass by the kitchen sink to easily view the recycle codes.

See something you'd like to try in 2019? Have your own ideas?
Please share them – we'd love to hear them!

REACH OUT...

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

SAVE THE DATE – Tuesday, March 12, 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Our church is hostess for the **Annual Cluster Luncheon of United Methodist Churches** in the expanded Fox Valley area. All women of our congregation are invited to attend this event in Fellowship Hall, along with women from Baker Memorial, Batavia, West Chicago and Kaneville.

The program is “Being Good Stewards of the Earth” presented by Carolyn Burnham. Come join the fellowship and friendship of our neighboring congregations. For more information, contact Joan Hansen, jdhanzen@sbcglobal.net or (630) 365-9217.



FREE ADULT COUNCIL EVENT

The Adult Council has reserved a limited number of free tickets to Aurora University Celebrating Arts & Ideas Series. The following event is at Aurora University in Crimi Auditorium, 1347 Prairie St., Aurora:

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 7:30 p.m.

"THE RUST BELT REVIVAL, THE MIDWEST AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY"

Hear national thought leaders, including former Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mayor George Hartwell and Nonresident Senior Fellow with the Brookings Institution and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs John Austin address the critical issues facing the future of the Midwest in the global economy. Chicago Tribune Chief Political Reporter Rick Pearson moderates this Town Square.

To reserve your tickets or with questions please contact Jim McConnell at 630-715-3480 or email to mcjamesc@aol.com. Reservation deadline is Friday 3/15/19.

Opportunities to Reach Out



Salvation Army Food Pantry needs for February: peanut butter, jelly, dry pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruit, dish soap, and detergent.

Lazarus House in St. Charles - Overnight Volunteers needed 1st & 3rd Tuesdays every month

Where did you sleep last night? Where will you sleep tonight? Most likely your answer is, “at home in my own bed.” What if you didn’t have a home to call your own? *Lazarus House* in St. Charles provides a place for people to sleep who have no home – no other choice of where they will sleep. Please consider volunteering to sleep one night at the shelter. UMCG supports *Lazarus House* on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month by providing dinner and an overnight volunteer (9:30 p.m.-7:00 a.m.) The volunteer gets to sleep on a rollaway bed in a private staff office, and a *Lazarus House* staff person is awake and on duty all night. The volunteer helps with any late dinner arrivals and in the morning setting out a continental style breakfast. Questions? Please contact Carolyn Sprawka 630/222-4150.

NewsLetter DEADLINE

Please remember the deadline for submitting information to the Messenger is the 15th of every month. Send to Communications@genevaumc.org. This way, it will go to Becky, Debbie, and Lorie in the office.

Please send information that is written out in full – and remember to include appropriate dates, times, and location.

***Lent* begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6**

Once again UMCG is encouraging everyone to read the Gospels during Lent. Moreover, everyone is encouraged to respond to the challenge Jesus gave the Apostles: “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15). You can start now, to invite your relatives and friends to join in this important act of spiritual renewal and growth. Use e-mail, social media, the telephone, and even postal mail to send them copies of the reading program or to direct them to the UMCG Website where the program will be posted. Form a reading group or recruit a reading buddy with whom you can share the reading experience. Watch for the *Plan for Reading the Gospels During Lent* in the March *Messenger*, or at church.



COMING UP IN OUR NIC DISTRICT: open to all UMCG'ers

Laity Convocation, Saturday, February 9, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at New Lenox UMC, 339 W. Haven Ave., New Lenox, IL. Keynote Speaker: Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, Director of the Missional Church Consultation Initiative for the West Ohio conference. She will lead us in a discussion about her Breakthrough Prayer Initiative from her recent book, *Flood Gates: Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church*. Our small group breakouts will be all about learning and discussing the Way Forward and Special Session of General Conference, which will take place Feb. 23, 2019. Register online soon at www.umcnic.org/calendar/laity-convocation-1.

Inclement Winter Weather Policy

Now that winter weather has arrived, please remember that according to the policy our Staff Parish Relations Committee adopted in 2014, the church office will be closed for inclement weather whenever the Geneva Schools are closed for inclement weather. Staff and Pastors will also continue to use their best judgment to stay safe in Winter weather conditions.

Thank you for your support of this policy.





CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair	Kei Narimatsu
Vice Chair	David Dias
Recording Secretary	Jean Eakins
Lay Members to Annual Conference	John Kemble
Church & Society Co-Chairs	Carolyn Sprawka
Youth Council Co-Chairs	Gary Dittmer
	Keith Rawson
	Keith Worthington
Children's Council Chair	Jen Karwoski
Adult Council Co-Chairs	Marty Janners
	Jim McConnell
Endowment Fund Chair	Bill Johnson
Finance Committee Chair	Dave Werman
Membership Connection	
Men's Club President	Mark Byars
Missions Committee Co-Chairs	Jim Manos
Scholarship Committee	Sharon Anderson
Staff-Parish Relations	Keith Worthington
Stewardship Committee	Jules Heinemann
Treasurer	
Trustees	Jim Karwoski
Women's Ministry	Tony Zefron
Youth Representative	Carol Zars
Worship Committee	Trace Powell
Pastors (w/o vote)	Dick Keslinke
	Rich Darr,
	Esther Lee
Member-at-large	

UMCG Church Staff

Rich Darr	Senior Pastor
Esther Lee	Associate Pastor
Debbie Sampiller	Director of Administrative Ministries
Lorie Montanye	Administrative Assistant
Jodi Borger	Director of Children's Education
Denise Clementz	Director of Youth Ministry
Scott Stevenson	Director of Music Ministry
Mike Popplewell	Director of Choral Ministries
Becky Nicol	Director of Communications
Mary Gay McKinney	Coordinator of Congregational Care
Carol Schreiber	Nursery Supervisor

Commission on a Way Forward: 5 Things You Need to Now

A UMC.org Feature by Joe Iovino*

As a United Methodist, you may have heard about some of the things happening in our church today around the issues of human sexuality. There will be a [Special Session of General Conference](#) in February 2019, to receive and act upon a report by a group called the Commission on a Way Forward. This important work will help shape the future of The United Methodist Church.

These five things offer an overview of the Commission on a Way Forward, and what will be discussed and decided at the [2019 General Conference Special Session](#). Many links are included that take you to pages where you can learn much more.

1. Beginnings

At [General Conference 2016](#) in Portland, there were an overwhelming number of proposals dealing with issues surrounding same-sex marriage, the ordination of LGBTQ clergy, and related topics. During a discussion about how to proceed, a clergy delegate addressed the bishops, “We are asking for your leadership.” Another added, “We are in a stuck place... I’m pleading with you. Please help us.”

The bishops returned later in the [General Conference](#) with a plan. They would create a group to research and advise them of ways to help us get unstuck, to move us forward. The group they later brought together is the Commission on a Way Forward. *More about the formation of the commission [here](#) and [here](#).*

2. Task

The bishops carefully formed the Commission on a Way Forward, inviting 32 people who identified on all sides of the issues to be part of this special group. Eight bishops, 13 other clergy members, and 11 lay members constitute the commission. *[More about the members here](#).*

The work of the Commission on a Way Forward is “to inform deliberation across the whole church and to help the [Council of Bishops](#) in their service to the next General Conference in finding a way forward.” *[More on their “About Us” page](#).*

The commission regularly reported to the bishops during their work (see timeline to the right). Their [final report](#) will be presented to a [special session of General Conference](#), February 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri.

3. Issues

As the Commission on a Way Forward was beginning their work, the [United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry](#) (GBHEM) invited scholars to a gathering called “Unity of the Church and Human Sexuality: Toward a Faithful United Methodist Witness.” Twenty-eight academics from three countries gathered for three days in March 2017, at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, to present papers and discuss the issues. Eight members of the Commission on a Way Forward attended the event. *[More about this gathering here](#).*

Following the gathering, GBHEM produced [Unity of the Church and Human Sexuality](#), a study guide based on the scholars’ conversation. The study guide is available [free online here](#). Bound copies can be [purchased at Cokesbury.com](#). The papers presented by the academics are also available for [purchase at Cokesbury.com](#).

5 Things You Need to Know continued from previous page...

4. Recommendations

On July 31, 2018, the [final report of the Commission on a Way Forward](#) was released in the four official languages of The United Methodist Church. The report may be downloaded in [English](#), [French](#), [Portuguese](#), [Swahili](#) and [Spanish](#).

5. Who decides?

The report of the Commission on a Way Forward will be received and acted upon by a [special session of General Conference](#) in St. Louis, Missouri, February 23-26, 2019. This worldwide gathering of United Methodists will only act on items around our deep divide over homosexuality. [More here](#).

Originally, the Commission on a Way Forward understood their role as advisory to the Council of Bishops, who would then report to the special General Conference session. A [ruling of the Judicial Council](#) on May 25, 2018, clarified that the Commission on a Way Forward is to report directly to the General Conference. [More here](#).

At the request of the Council of Bishops, the Judicial Council [reviewed proposed legislation](#) for the [One Church, Connectional Conference, and Traditional plans](#) to determine their constitutionality. Oral hearings were held during their gathering in Zurich, Switzerland, October 23-26, 2018. [Their decision](#) was released on October 26.

Most of the delegates for the 2019 General Conference will be those who attended the 2016 General Conference, though [The Book of Discipline](#) allows annual conferences to elect new delegates if they so choose. As with every General Conference the number of clergy and lay (non-clergy) delegates will be equal. Bishops preside, but do not vote. [More about General Conferences here](#).

Our next regular General Conference will be held May 5-15, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Stay Informed:

- Website: [UMC.org/wayforward](http://umc.org/wayforward)
- Facebook: [UMCforward](#)
- Twitter: [@UMCforward](#)
- Instagram: [UMCforward](#)
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*To keep up with the latest news, be sure to visit our umc.org/wayforward.
If you have questions or concerns, be sure to talk to your [United Methodist pastor](#).*

**[Joe Iovino](#) works for UMC.org at [United Methodist Communications](#). Contact him by [email](#) or at 615-312-3733.*

This story was posted on March 6, 2018.

Edited August 9, 2018 and November 8, 2018, to include updates and to reflect changes.

This complete article may be found here:

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward-5-things-you-need-to-know>

Overview of Proposals for General Conference Points included in this document are provided as a summary of the recommendations to the special 2019 General Conference. For more information, please read the entire report from the Commission on a Way Forward.	One Church Plan Summary: This plan, preferred by a majority of the Council of Bishops, would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-gender weddings in UMC properties and ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." It would add language to protect churches and pastors who choose not to allow same-gender marriages.	Connectional Conference Plan Summary: This plan would replace the current jurisdictional conferences with three connectional conferences based on affinity: Progressive, Traditional and Unity. All three would use a general Book of Discipline (Articles of Religion, General Rules, Confessions of Faith) with the ability to adapt other portions to their context for ministry.	Traditional Plan Summary: This plan, developed more fully toward the end of the Commission on a Way Forward process, broadens the definition of "self-avowed practicing homosexual"; puts penalties in place for disobedience to the Discipline; and requires bishops, pastors and annual conferences to certify adherence to the Discipline.
Local Churches	<input type="checkbox"/> Most likely would make no changes in practice at the local level. <input type="checkbox"/> May rewrite wedding policies to explicitly allow or forbid same-gender weddings. <input type="checkbox"/> Will covenant with bishop on whether congregation will accept LGBTQ pastor.	<input type="checkbox"/> Can choose affiliation. <input type="checkbox"/> Still will set wedding policies with churches in the "unity" connectional conferences able to set parameters for building use and/or wedding policies in either direction.	<input type="checkbox"/> No vote unless the church disagrees with annual conference's decision to stay or leave the UMC. <input type="checkbox"/> Churches can leave if they disagree with annual conference's decision to adhere to Discipline.
Clergy	<input type="checkbox"/> Can exercise individual conscience. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishop & cabinet would take theological convictions into account for appointments. <input type="checkbox"/> Ends potential for church trials. <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTQ candidates can be ordained and appointed to local churches that approve and can request transfer of candidacy if conference Board of Ordained Ministry or clergy session chooses not to ordain LGBTQ persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Will choose a connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Transfers subject to approval by Board of Ordained Ministry. <input type="checkbox"/> Ordination would be recognized across all three connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Security of appointment determined by connectional conferences, with emphasis on protecting women and minorities. <input type="checkbox"/> Deacons and full-time local licensed pastors may see fewer opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Must maintain Discipline or leave for "autonomous, affiliated or concordat church." <input type="checkbox"/> Just resolutions from complaints must include commitment not to repeat offense. <input type="checkbox"/> First offense results in one-year unpaid suspension. <input type="checkbox"/> Second offenses result in surrendering credentials.
Annual Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/> No vote is needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Boards of Ordained Ministry and/or clergy session can discern whether to ordain LGBTQ persons. <input type="checkbox"/> General Conference can craft a way for churches to exit with grace.	<input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdictional and central conferences will vote to join a connectional conference on simple majority vote. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences who want to join a different connectional conference than their jurisdiction chooses may do so on a simple majority vote. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences could revote every years.	<input type="checkbox"/> Must certify that it will uphold the Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences that won't certify are urged to form "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church, and churches that leave can't use United Methodist name or logo past 2020.

Overview continued from other side	One Church Plan	Connectional Conference Plan	Traditional Plan
Council of Bishops	<input type="checkbox"/> Council continues as one body providing spiritual leadership. <input type="checkbox"/> Assignments will reflect convictions of bishops and annual conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops will be protected if their consciences will not allow him or her to ordain LGBTQ persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded by U.S.-based conn. conf. at comparable levels, with shared funding, as needed, for bishops outside the U.S. <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight and accountability falls to bishops of each connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Each bishop, active and retired, chooses a connectional conference <input type="checkbox"/> All episcopal elections would take place by 2022.	<input type="checkbox"/> Active and retired bishops must certify they will adhere to Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops who will not certify adherence no longer receive compensation of expenses as of 2021 and will be encouraged to leave for "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church.
General Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to operate as they do now. <input type="checkbox"/> If funding declines, boards and agencies would need to consider a strategic restructuring. Sustainability issues, however, are separate from the Commission on a Way Forward's task.	<input type="checkbox"/> Jointly funded boards include Wespath, GCFA, UMCOR, Archives, parts of GBGM and the Publishing House. <input type="checkbox"/> Task force would evaluate each general agency and propose new model for UMC by 2025. <input type="checkbox"/> Program agencies would only serve conn. conf. that desire participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Justice ministries structures would be determined by connectional conference, with expected emphasis on sexism and racism.	<input type="checkbox"/> All general boards and agencies continue. <input type="checkbox"/> Each agency can contract with churches that leave the UMC.
Related Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely no changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Commission conversations with members of these organizations indicate this plan makes it more likely for most institutions to maintain their affiliation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Properties owned by annual and jurisdictional conferences follow them to their new connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Institutions can choose to relate to one or more Cs, as their bylaws allow.	<input type="checkbox"/> No changes unless they choose to do so within the bounds of their own bylaws.
Finance & Pensions	Two petitions are recommended for any of the three plans: <input type="checkbox"/> Any church that leaves would have to pay their proportionate liability of unfunded pensions for their annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy would be removed from benefit and annuity risk pools and have accrued benefits transferred to an individual investment account.	<input type="checkbox"/> Same two petitions as One Church Plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Legal fees to navigate legacy connections. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath stays intact and extends to connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical and pension liabilities remain the obligation of the annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath will reassign pension liabilities for churches that opt to go to another connectional conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences manage budgets to care for boundary reconfiguration costs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Same two petitions as the One Church Plan.
Episcopal Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each episcopal area in the United States. <input type="checkbox"/> Other expenses would be shared via apportionments. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each U.S.-based connectional conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> No changes to central conference funding.
For resources on this subject, go to www.iaumc.org/conversationonawayforwardresources			

United Methodist Church of Geneva
211 Hamilton Street
Geneva, IL 60134

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MESENTER DEADLINE

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