



General Conference Legislative Recap

Restrictive Language Related to LGBTQIA+ People removed from Book of Discipline

The General Conference voted by overwhelming majorities to remove from the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* discriminatory language and bans related to ministry by, with and for “self-avowed practicing” gay and lesbian people. These changes bring our polity back to a neutral place where one group is not singled out for discrimination. Clergy are allowed the same permissions, and discretion over, when to officiate over same-sex weddings. A full list of restrictions removed can be found at the webpage linked at the bottom of this summary.

Smaller budget approved, apportionment percentage decreased

Delegates voted to reduce the base rate — a key component used in calculating requested annual conference apportionments — to 2.6% for 2025 and 2026. If collection rates are 90% or higher, it will increase to 2.9% in 2027 and 2028. Delegates approved a 2025-2028 budget of \$373.4 million, contingent on collection rates being at 90% or more for the next two years. If lower, 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.

Deacons Granted Sacramental Authority

Delegates approved allowing deacons to preside at the sacraments “when contextually appropriate.” The new language further states: “Presiding at the celebration of the sacraments involves taking responsibility to lead the gathered community in celebrating baptism and Holy Communion.”

Historic Firsts Recognized

Bishop Tracy S. Malone (East Ohio) became the first Black female president of the Council of Bishops. Firsts to preside over General Conference included Bishops David Wilson (Native American, Great Plains), Carlo Rapunot (Filipino-American, Desert Southwest), Karen Oliveto (openly gay, Mtn Sky), Héctor Burgos Núñez (from Puerto Rico).

Regionalization Petitions Approved

Delegates approved legislation that would restructure the denomination to be more contextual in different regions served by the church. It is an effort to put the church’s different geographical regions on equal footing and to make the General Conference less U.S.-centric. Since it involves an amendment to the church’s constitution, it will need ratification by at least two-thirds of the total votes cast across all annual conferences worldwide to take effect.

Revised Social Principles are adopted

Delegates approved the first overhaul of the denomination’s Social Principles in nearly 50 years. The Social Principles reflect official United Methodist teachings on a wide range of topics. In addition to the language changes regarding human sexuality and inclusiveness, the Social Principles address the importance of advocating for human dignity and combating racism and other threats, caring for creation and the environment, standing against social ills, and supporting healthy community in all its forms, including economic, social and political.

Disaffiliation Policy Ended, Re-affiliation Measure Approved

Delegates removed Paragraph 2553 from the Book of Discipline, ending the disaffiliation policy that was added by the special 2019 General Conference. They also required annual conferences affected by disaffiliation to develop grace-filled policies for reaffiliation of churches that want to rejoin the denomination.

Learn More about Other Major Actions Approved

Delegates to the postponed 2020 General Conference had over 1,300 petitions to sort through. While many were combined due to similarity, and others rejected for a variety of reasons, no single page could do justice to the historic work of this legislative body.

For a more extensive recap of the Major Actions of the 2020 General Conference, visit: <https://resourceumc.org/en/content/general-conference-legislative-recap>