

A Resourcing Guide for Leaders

Why You Need to Talk About the Future of the UMC Now

Why Talk About It at All?

- Informed Participation is Needed
 - Clergy and congregations will have important and unavoidable decisions to make.
 - These decisions should be made with forethought, constructive planning, and compassion.
 - Everyone deserves access to fair and accurate information and should have the opportunity to participate fully in the decision-making process.

Why Not Just Wait and See?

- Real Change is Coming
 - Intense conflict expressed at the 2019 GC led to a near 50/50 vote in support of the traditional plan that maintained the traditional standards for marriage and ordination in the Book of Discipline (BOD). A shift in the balance of influences could lead to dramatic changes in doctrine and practice.
 - UMNNext was formed by some influential leaders to oppose and reverse decisions of the 2019 GC.
 - The Liberation Methodist Connexion (LMX) launched as a new progressive Methodist connection to advocate unbounded inclusivity/ affirmation.
 - The GMC is prepared to launch as a new traditional Methodist denomination when Protocol passes and promises to launch even if the Protocol is not approved.
 - Negotiated by and supported by leaders of diverse groups, the Protocol gives practical steps to divide the UMC and increases the certainty that the UMC will divide.

What is the Difference?

- The UMC Will Not Be the Same
 - The Protocol anticipates the UMC will separate into at least three new denominations, not one of which will fully represent the United Methodist Church as we have known it.
 - The GMC represents those who want to uphold traditional understanding of our core doctrinal standards, as well as the traditional stance on human sexuality.
 - UMNNext and LMX want to change the doctrine and discipline historically supported by the church.
 - UMNNext communicates a vision of a more inclusive and progressive post-separation UMC (psUMC).
 - LMX embodies an alternative that is highly progressive, embracing unbounded inclusion/ affirmation.

Where Would You or Your Church Fit?

While the GMC, UMNNext, and LMX may not definitively represent the options that will emerge, a comparison of key issues between them will clarify the main distinctions that are anticipated.

- Global Methodist Church (GMC) – www.globalmethodist.org
 - Identity: Wesleyan, biblical, orthodox, evangelical
 - Theological foundation: *grounded in Scripture and the life-giving confessions of the Christian faith as found in the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed.*
 - Missional Focus: *make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.*
 - Human Sexuality: will preserve the current standards of the BOD on sexuality, marriage, and ordination.
- UMNNext (psUMC) – www.umcnnext.com
 - Identity: centrist, broadly encompassing differing views from moderate to progressive
 - Theological foundation: *anchored in scripture and informed by tradition, experience, and reason.*
 - Missional Focus: *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*
 - Human Sexuality: anticipates *eliminating discriminatory language and the restrictions and penalties in the Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons.*
- Liberation Methodist Connexion (LMX) – www.thelmx.org
 - Identity: *justice-oriented, affirming, liberationist*
 - Theological foundation: *our human understanding continues to evolve as we deepen our personal and collective understandings of God... expanding our Methodist theological heritage with various expressions of liberation theologies, theories and praxis.*

- Missional Focus: *strives to be a relevant, thriving, justice-oriented, affirming, liberationist connexion.*
- Human Sexuality: pursuing all-encompassing inclusion/ affirmation.

Let's get Started!

1. Begin with informal conversations to get to know people's level of awareness, questions, and concerns.
2. Introduce leaders to information and resources that will empower them to discuss what's happening.
3. Engage leaders in defining their core beliefs and values so they can choose the future that preserves their identity and matches their convictions.
4. Communicate with the congregation and provide open forums to present info, answer questions, and dialogue over the issues.
5. Dialogue offers information without argument, invites questions without criticism, and offers transparency without manipulation.

Some Do's and Don'ts

1. Help laity gain their voice.
2. Be transparent about your personal decision, and allow others freedom to make their own.
3. State differences clearly and without malice
4. Don't argue or condescend or demean or attack people in your church or the church at large.
5. Don't limit information to only your own perspective or pressure people to make a decision.
6. Don't focus on what we are against, but focus on what we are FOR.

What are We FOR in the GMC?

Mission & Vision

- Making disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.
- Our **vision** is to join God in a journey of bringing new life, reconciliation, and the presence of Christ to all people, and to each person to increasingly reflect the character of Christ.

Seven Areas of Focus of the Global Methodist Church

1. Accountable Discipleship
2. Church Multiplication
3. Church Revitalization
4. Ministry with Youth & Young Adults
5. Ministry with Marginalized Peoples
6. Global Missional Partnerships
7. Christian Living

How can we move forward in the coming year?

1. Begin to live into the mission and vision of the Global Methodist Church in making disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.
2. Study the practices of Wesleyan classes and bands. Create small groups to foster disciple-making.
3. Preach and teach from a distinctly Wesleyan bent as we proclaim the gospel.
4. Build good foundations in all areas of ministry from children to youth to adults.
5. Invite and encourage pastors and congregations to participate in the opportunities the WCA offers at local and global levels to be informed and encouraged as we move forward together.
6. Build relationships with pastors and laity who share the vision and passion for the GMC.

Resources to help you stay involved and informed

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| 1. WCA | www.wesleyan covenant.org |
| 2. WPA WCA website | www.wpawca.org |
| 3. GMC | www.globalmethodist.org |
| 4. The Protocol | www.gracethroughseparation.com |
| 5. Good News Mag | www.goodnewsmag.org |
| 6. Firebrand Mag | www.firebrandmag.com |
| 7. UM News Service | www.umnews.org |