

A Way Forward: Proposed Plans

	One Church Plan	Connectional Conference Plan	Traditionalist Plan
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to maintain the structural unity of the UMC while providing room for those who believe differently about the issues surrounding LGBTQ. No Annual Conferences, bishops, congregations, or pastors are compelled to act contrary to their convictions. Maintains present leadership structure. Removes language from The BOD restricting pastors and churches from conducting same-sex weddings, and Annual Conferences from ordaining self-avowed, practicing homosexual persons. Adds language that intentionally protects religious freedom of pastors and congregations who choose not to perform or host same-sex weddings, and Boards of Ordained Ministry and bishops who choose not to ordain self-avowed, practicing homosexual persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to reflect a unified core that includes shared doctrine and services. Five U.S. geographical Jurisdictions are replaced by three connectional conferences, each covering the entire country, based on theology and perspectives on LGBTQ ministry (progressive, unity, and traditional). Some general agencies would continue, e.g., Wespath, Publishing House, Archives & History. Each connectional conference elects and pays for its own bishops. Each connectional conference would create its of BOD. Judicial Council would continue as supreme judicial body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains current language on homosexuality. Aligns The UMC in the United States with the majority of the global UMC outside of the United States on issues related to LGBTQ. Requires that annual conferences and bishops certify that they will uphold and enforce the standards set forth in the BOD regarding marriage and ordination. As of 2021, annual conferences and bishops that refused to certify compliance with the BOD would not be allowed to use the United Methodist name or logo, and could no longer receive funds from The UMC.
Effect on the Local Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is anticipated that individual congregations will see much difference from how they operated before. In Annual Conferences where ordination of homosexual person is allowed, churches may enter into an agreement with their bishop whether to receive clergy whose convictions differ from those of the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual congregations may choose to align with a different connectional conference other than the one chosen by their annual conference. This would require a congregation simple majority vote of 50% + 1. Individual congregations will abide by the building use/wedding/ordination policies associated with their connectional conference. Those who are in the unity connectional conference may decide for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congregations that disagreed with their annual conference's decision to not enforce the BOD could vote to remain with The UMC. Congregations that disagreed with their annual conference's decision to enforce the BOD could vote to withdraw from The UMC.
Effect on Clergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clergy would have the freedom to exercise individual conscience. Clergy who cannot abide a denomination that provides this much leeway in belief are free to leave with a blessing. Clergy who do not believe the way their Annual Conference chooses will be supported in their request to transfer to another Annual conference, if that is their wish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clergy will choose which connectional conference they will affiliate with. They can choose to be available for appointment in more than one connectional conference as long as they abide by the theology and other qualifications of that connectional conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clergy who could not maintain the BOD's standards on LGBTQ issues would be encouraged to join another "autonomous, affiliated, or concordat" church. Clergy would have to surrender their credentials if found guilty of violation of the LGBTQ standards in The BOD.
Effect on Annual Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boards of Ordained Ministry or Executive Session of the Clergy that wish to ordain LGBTQ persons (or restrict such ordination) could do so by entering into a discernment process with the bishop and cabinet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic boundary adjustments may be made based on how many church opt in or out of the connectional conference decision made by the annual conference. Annual Conferences may reconsider their connectional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires annual conferences to certify that they will uphold and enforce the standards set forth in the BOD regarding LGBTQ marriage and ordination. As of 2021, annual conferences that refused to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are local churches or clergy who wish to leave the UMC, they could do so through the current processes outlined in The BOD. The possibility also exists that the General Conf could adopt new procedures to facilitate the leaving of churches or clergy. 	<p>conference alignment every 4 years.</p>	<p>certify compliance with the BOD would not be allowed to use the United Methodist name or logo, and could no longer receive funds from The UMC.</p>
Effect on Council of Bishops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishops would be appointed by the Jurisdiction to Annual Conferences that are compatible with their convictional stance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishops will choose which connectional conference they will affiliate with. They can choose to be available for appointment in more than one connectional conference as long as they abide by the theology and other qualifications of that connectional conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires that bishops certify that they will uphold and enforce the standards set forth in the BOD regarding marriage and ordination. As of 2021, bishops that refused to certify compliance with the BOD would not be eligible to receive compensation for expenses, and would be encouraged to join another “autonomous, affiliated, or concordat” church.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not seem to require any changes to the UMC Constitution If passed by the called General Conference in Feb 2019, it is recommended it take effect December 31, 2020 after a “settling in” period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If adopted by the Feb 2019 called General Conference, constitutional amendments would be voted on by annual conferences in 2019 or 2020 depending on when they are ready for distribution. 2020: Existing jurisdictional conferences would have the first-level vote (simple majority, 50%+1) regarding which connectional conference to affiliate with. By August 1, 2021: Annual Conferences that disagree with the decision of their jurisdiction may decide to affiliate with a different connectional conference. By July 1, 2022: Any local church that wishes to consider affiliating with a different connectional conference that their annual conference chooses must complete their congregational vote. Fall 2022: Organizational conferences of the connectional conferences. 2025: First Conference meetings of the new connectional conferences following General Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be financial implications related to long-term pension liability for congregations that chose to leave The UMC. A process for graceful exit would need to be established for congregations that chose to leave The UMC. Feb 2019: Approval by called session of General Conference. Jul-Aug 2019: Annual Conferences and Cabinets prepare communication for Annual Conference and local church discernment. Jan-Feb 2020: Annual Conference decisions. Mar-Apr 2020: Local church decisions. Jan 1, 2021: GCFA shall neither receive funds from, nor send funds to, annual conferences that choose to not certify compliance with The BOD.