

# **Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference**

## **The Commission on a Way Forward Summary**

*September 2018*

**The Commission's Report and other resources may be found at:**  
[www.bwcumc.org/resources/commission-on-a-way-forward](http://www.bwcumc.org/resources/commission-on-a-way-forward)

### **The Commission's report includes:**

- History of the Commission's work
- Key Foundational Ideas (Common Core, Need for Space, Global Church, Public vs. Private Mission, etc.)
- Missional and Theological Framework
- The Three Plans
  - One Church
  - Connectional Conference
  - Traditional
- The Appendices include information about the possibility of churches who desire to change their relationship with the UMC, the Council of Bishop's recommendation, and Wespath implications.

### **The One Church Plan – Summary**

- Recognizes the diverse theological and scriptural understandings of our global church
- Provides generous unity for conferences, churches, and pastors
- Removes the restrictive language from our current *Book of Discipline*
- Maintains the current structure of the denomination
- Does not require any annual conference, bishop, congregations, or pastor to act contrary to their convictions
- Allows congregations and pastors greater freedom to reach new people

### **Connectional Conference Plan – Summary**

- Unified core that includes shared doctrine and services
- Creates three values-based connectional conferences: Traditional, Unity, and Progressive
- Allows for a *Book of Discipline* within each connectional conference
- Reduces General Boards and Agencies to a few shared services: Wespath (health and benefits), Publishing House, Finance and Administration, Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Committee on Relief, parts of Global Ministries.

- Current central conferences have the choice of becoming their own connectional conference or joining a values-based connectional conference
- Council of Bishops is focused on shared learning and ecumenical relationships
- Episcopal oversight, accountability, elections, assignments, and funding occur within the College of Bishops of each connectional conference
- Jurisdictional Conferences choose their connectional conference
- Annual Conferences can choose a different connectional conference than Jurisdictional Conference
- Local churches can choose a different connectional conference from their annual conference

### **Traditional Plan – Summary**

- Strengthens the current language of the *Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality and increases accountability
- Asks annual conferences and bishops to certify they will support the *Discipline*
- Streamlines the process to enforce penalties for violations of the *Book of Discipline* related to marriage and ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexual persons
- Maintains the current structure of the church
- Continues all general agencies
- Designs process for those who cannot live within the *Discipline* to change their relationship with the UMC.

### **Timeline**

October 23-26, 2018 – Judicial Council rules on constitutionality of plans

(<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/judicial-council-to-consider-bishops-request-on-petitions> )

November 2018 – *Advanced Daily Christian Advocate* is released with all petitions

February 23-26, 2019 – Special Session of General Conference, St. Louis, Mo.

(<http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session> )

*Implementation Note:* Legislation passed at a General Conference is effective January 1 following General Conference unless otherwise specified. The One Church Plan suggests December 31, 2020, implementation. The Connectional Conference Plan would have to wait for ratification of constitutional amendments by annual conferences (2/3<sup>rd</sup> aggregate voting total needed for passage).