

# GENERAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY

After years of intensive and prayerful debate, General Conference delegates from all over the world voted to remove language that prohibited United Methodist clergy from performing weddings for same-gender couples. This change allows churches and clergy to operate according to their conscience, without consequence. Pastors have always decided who they will marry and will continue to do so. Churches will continue to determine what weddings are held in their church buildings. Pastors are asked to respect the decisions made by their local church. District Superintendents are available to assist with working through these decisions and their implications.

The delegates of the General Conference also voted to remove prohibitions that prevented a Board of Ordained Ministry from recommending a gay or lesbian person for ordination. Gay persons may enter the process to become candidates for ministry, and if approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, can now be licensed, commissioned, and ordained. The Bishop and Cabinet will continue to work with churches and clergy to ensure the best match possible when making appointments.

Annual conferences will pay lower apportionments over the next quadrennium. Delegates voted to reduce a key component of calculating apportionments, shifting from the current base rate of 3.29% to a base rate of 2.6% for 2025 and 2026. Then, if the apportionment collection rate is 90% or higher in those years, the base rate will jump to 2.9% for 2027 and 2028.

General Conference delegates approved the Compass Plan, a new way of handling clergy retirement funds and will allow clergy their own their retirement accounts (something like a 401(k) plan.) The clergy and their accounts will continue to be supported and cared for by Wespeth.

Petitions on the worldwide regionalization plan were affirmed by the General Conference. This is a multi-step plan that requires an aggregate vote of the annual conferences around the world. The work has just begun on a time of information sharing and education about regionalization so that annual conference members can make an informed vote at the 2025 annual conference.

Delegates approved full communion with the Episcopal Church. This agreement needs the approval of the Episcopalians before going into effect, which might not happen until they meet in 2027. This means that the two denominations recognize each other as “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in which the Gospel is rightly preached and taught.”

General Conference delegates passed new legislation granting authority to deacons to preside at the sacraments in their ministry settings. This means deacons can now offer communion and conduct baptisms where they have been appointed to serve, whether that is a church, outreach ministry or mission.



Learn more at [www.wvumc.org/general-conference](http://www.wvumc.org/general-conference)



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