

United Methodist Church
General Conference
Three Proposed Plans Summary
Tony Alstott, General Conference Delegate



ROOTED IN CHRIST
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Definition: LGBTQ+ represents people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, The+ sign represents additional categories.

The One Church Plan is the plan favored by the Council of Bishops.

- It changes the church's official teaching on marriage by changing the definition of marriage. "Sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, leteFSsemml marriage between two adults" (proposed 161.G).
- It allows but does not force pastors to perform same-sex unions.
- It delegates to each local church the decision of whether or not to allow same-sex unions to be performed at its facilities.
- It delegates to the clergy of each annual conference the decision about what standards to impose for ordination on clergy regarding same-sex practices. The official vote for the conference is done at the clergy session of each Annual Conference (304.31).
- It does not require Bishops to ordain anyone who is a "self-avowed practicing homosexual" by providing for ordination through the College of Bishops.
- It includes protections of conscience and restricts bishops and superintendents from coercing or punishing clergy who disagree with them about same-sex weddings.

The Traditionalist Plan would reaffirm the UMC's present definition of marriage that the covenant of Biblical marriage is between a one man and a one woman. The plan would increase accountability.

- It keeps the definition of marriage as a covenant of fidelity between a man and a woman.
- Pastors would not be allowed to perform same-sex unions.
- Local churches would not be allowed to have same-sex unions performed at their facilities.
- Annual conferences would not allow persons who are living in a same-sex union or partnership to be ordained or to serve a church. It changes the language from 1972 of "self-avowed practicing homosexual" to include persons living in a same-sex union.
- It provides a mandatory minimum penalty for clergy found guilty of performing a same-sex wedding.
- It holds annual conferences accountable for not enforcing the *Discipline*. They would be restricted from using the United Methodist name or logo and could not give or receive funds through the general church.

- It provides a new accountability process for bishops, whereby the Council of Bishops could place a bishop on involuntary leave or involuntary retirement.
It prohibits bishops from dismissing a complaint unless it has no basis in law or fact.

The Connectional Conference Plan would create three branches of the church: one for traditionalists, one for centrists, and one for progressives. The three branches would operate under a unified Council of Bishops. The three branches would remain connected to the General Conference agencies. Each of these three connectional conferences would be empowered to choose its own name and insignia, which may or may not include the use of the cross and flame and the name "United Methodist." Each branch would have different standards concerning human sexuality.

o Traditional Connectional Conference.

- Marriage is defined as a union between one man and one woman .
- Pastors will not perform same-sex weddings.
- Churches are not allowed to have same-sex unions performed at their facilities.
- Those practicing homosexuality will not be ordained or serve as pastors.
- Accountability is increased

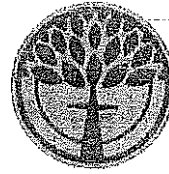
o Unity Connectional Conference.

- It acknowledges that members are not of one mind regarding biblical interpretations related to marriage and human sexuality.
- Pastors are allowed but not required to perform same-sex weddings.
- Churches are allowed but not required to have same-sex unions on their facilities.
- Qualified LGBTQ+ persons who are practicing homosexuality may be ordained.
- Local churches are allowed but not required to receive an LGBT person as pastor. A bishop, pastor, or congregation is not compelled to act against conscience in these matters.

o Progressive Connectional Conference.

- Marriage is defined as a union between two adults.
- Pastors are required to perform same-sex unions.
- Churches will allow same-sex unions to be performed at their facilities.
- Qualified LGBTQ+ persons who are practicing homosexuality may be ordained .
- Churches will welcome LGBTQ+ persons as pastors.

**United Methodist Church
General Conference
Graceful Exit Proposal and Alignment
Tony Alstott, General Conference Delegate**



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Definition: LGBTQ+ represents people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. The+ sign represents additional categories.

Graceful Exit Proposal

Currently, if a congregation votes to become independent from the United Methodist Church, it would forfeit all properties. Graceful Exit refers to a local congregation being allowed to exit the denomination while maintaining its properties.

The One Church Plan requires any local church leaving the denomination to pay its share of the annual conference's unfunded pension liabilities. Whether or not the local church can keep its property is the decision of each annual conference.

The Traditional Plan allows a church to exit the denomination while retaining its property.

The Connectional Plan has no provisions for Graceful Exit.

Wesleyan Covenant Association <https://wesleyan covenant.org/>

The Wesleyan Covenant Association (WCA) is an association of congregations, clergy persons, and laity who desire to cooperate in the mission of the WCA to promote the ministry of the gospel from a Wesleyan theological perspective within The United Methodist Church and kindred bodies.

Gender Equality: Scripture teaches that men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. Accordingly, the church should treat women and men equally. We believe that both women and men are called to and gifted for ordained and licensed ministry, and both genders are able to hold any role of leadership within the WCA.

Equality: We believe that all persons are of sacred worth. Therefore, we gladly welcome all who seek to grow in their relationship with God to attend worship services and participate in the church's ministries. No person shall be disqualified from becoming a member of a local congregation, holding a leadership position in the church, or becoming an ordained or licensed clergy based on race, color, nationality, national origin, marital status, or economic condition. The WCA specifically renounces all racial and ethnic discrimination and commits itself to work toward full racial and ethnic equality in the church and in society.

Marriage and Sexuality: We believe marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God. In keeping with Christian teaching through the ages and throughout the Church universal, we believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union. We believe that God intends faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness.

Human Dignity: We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the WCA.

Reconciling Ministry Network <https://rmnetwork.org/>

Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) is a network of congregations, clergy persons, and laity who desire to bring inclusiveness and social justice into The United Methodist Church.

Spiritual Grounding: RMN is committed to the justice imperative of the Gospel and to grounding its ministries in the Wesleyan practice of personal and social holiness. RMN is committed to utilizing inclusive language and respectfully recognizing the diverse approaches to scripture, tradition, reason, and experience of the congregations and communities with whom it relates.

Reconciliation: RMN is committed to reconciliation that leads to the healing and transformation of animosity into honest relationships that respect all God's children. Authentic reconciliation requires the naming and the speaking of truth to create relationships and communities grounded in peace with justice.

Naming Privilege, Ending Oppression: RMN aspires to fulfill our baptismal covenant to recognize and utilize our privileges to resist oppression in whatever form it presents itself in our movement, church, and world. RMN has a commitment to ending institutional oppression in all its forms by working at the intersections of oppression and focusing on an ongoing examination of internal processes and external actions at all levels including its selection of issues and organizing strategies.

Integrating Sexuality with Spirituality: RMN believes that human sexuality is a good gift from God. RMN is committed to supporting the integration of healthy, loving expressions of sexuality and spirituality for everyone. We celebrate the sexuality and spirituality of same and opposite gender loving persons and pledge to provide resources that lead to a deeper understanding of God's precious gift.

Relationships: RMN acts in hospitality across theological divides and is committed to the creation of community, interconnectedness, and deep relationships.

Systems Change: RMN is committed to policy change and the creation of long-term solutions and practices that create full inclusion in The United Methodist Church and our broader society.

Commitment to Intersectional Justice: RMN frames its work from the optic of justice, inclusion, and liberation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer persons. To sharpen that optic, RMN applies an intersectional lens to focus on points of convergence between LGBTQ oppression other forms of oppression including racism, sexism, patriarchy, classism, and gender inequality.

Bishop Trimble will be hosting the next event: West District - Sunday, October 7, 2-4 p.m.

Mt Pleasant UMC, Terre Haute: IN

Board:sexuality:SpecialCommissionGracefulExit

2016 Book of Discipline

Some paragraphs concerning human sexuality

What we believe as The United Methodist Church is articulated in The Book of Discipline 2016. The Book of Discipline does not replace Scripture but guides The United Methodist Church in how we are structured, what we believe, and how we behave.

11161.C Marriage

We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

11161. G Human Sexuality

We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The Church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

11 4. Constitution, Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church

The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.

11 214. Eligibility (for membership into the local church)

The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection **111 4**). In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

11 304.3 Qualifications for Ordination

While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

1. "*Self-avowed practicing homosexual*" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual.

11 613 Responsibilities [of the conference council on finance]

The [conference council on finance and administration] shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions:

19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The UMC "not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends" **111 161 Fl**. The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church's ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogues or educational events where the Church's official position is fairly and equally represented.

11 2702.1.

A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference **1113701**, local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged [subject to the statute of limitations in **11 2702.41** with one or more of the following offenses: [a] immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage; [b] practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies; [c] crime; [d] disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; [e] dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; [f] relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor; [g] child abuse; [h] sexual abuse; [i] sexual misconduct or [j] harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; or [k] racial or gender discrimination.

Board:Sexuality:SameSexBookofDiscipline

For more, in-depth information, please read the 93-page report by clicking this link:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/council-of-bishops/news_and_statements/documents/Way_Foward_Report_-_Final_-_ENGLISH.pdf