



January 11, 2024

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church is the top legislative body of the denomination, responsible for making decisions on behalf of the entire United Methodist community. It convenes every four years as a forum for delegates to set the policies for the work of the church, to adopt the worldwide denominational budget, and to strengthen the mission by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

During the General Conference, delegates address a wide range of issues including local church administration, social justice, and organizational structure. Important decisions, such as revisions to the *Book of Discipline* (the denomination's rulebook) are made during these gatherings. The conference is designed to be a representative assembly, with delegates elected from annual conferences, across the globe, based on the number of members in each area.

While the General Conference provides a platform for collective decision-making, it is also a place where differing opinions within the denomination may be discussed. Debates on a variety of theological and social issues have been prominent in recent years.

Overall, the General Conference plays a crucial role in shaping the direction and identity of The United Methodist Church, fostering unity, and addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the denomination on a global scale.

The last, full, regular session of General Conference was in 2016. There was a special called General Conference held in 2019, and then the 2020 General Conference was postponed, due to Covid-19, but will now be held on April 23 – May 3, 2024, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

As we move toward the convening of the 2020 General Conference in 2024, the Holston Invitation Team is working with our delegation to help us prepare for what's to come.

Here are some of the things you can expect to see in the new year:

- A comprehensive website within holston.org dedicated to the General Conference.
- Updates on legislation that will be voted upon. *(It is important to note that proposed legislation published prior to General Conference (GC) may not be the same legislation finally voted upon at GC. Legislation can be amended, eliminated, substituted, or merged with other pieces of legislation.)*
- Explanations of how delegations are chosen and how the voting process works.
- Weekly prayers leading up to General Conference.
- Answers to questions surrounding disaffiliation. *(Note: On October 28, 2022, the Invitation Team worked with the Holston Conference Trustees on a resolution that allows a gracious, fair, and non-punitive separation process for local churches at least through December 31, 2024 if the language in the Book of Discipline surrounding human sexuality changes in a way that causes a local church to believe it is untenable to continue as United Methodist, and the General*

*Conference does not provide a new separation process. **See below for the complete resolution.***)

There are always many questions and speculations that arise during a General Conference year. We implore you to double check things you hear before taking them as fact. We will do our best to keep up-to-date information on [Holston.org](https://www.holston.org), and we invite you to send any question you may have to delegation@holston.org. We also want to suggest checking out the official [General Conference website](#) for the latest information.

Blessings,

Holston Conference [Invitation Team](#)

Disaffiliation Resolution

WHEREAS, the 2019 called General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted ¶ 2553 of the *Book of Discipline* to allow congregations to disaffiliate gracefully from the denomination for reasons of conscience related to human sexuality by December 31, 2023; and

WHEREAS, ¶2553 became effective as of the adjournment of the session of the 2019 General Conference as declared by the Judicial Council on November 1, 2019 in Decision 1385;

WHEREAS, when ¶2553 enacted, the 2020 General Conference was scheduled to begin approximately a year after it became effective, but the 2020 General Conference was postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently scheduled to begin in May of 2024; and

WHEREAS, if the 2020 General Conference had been held in 2020 or even in 2022 as the date to which it was first postponed, congregations would have been allowed time *after* the 2020 General Conference to understand fully any disciplinary changes and to discern whether to

disaffiliate based on proposed legislation adopted by the 2020 General Conference; and

WHEREAS, Since the 2020 General Conference was postponed and General Conference will not convene until after ¶2553's sunset provision of December 31, 2023, discerning congregations face the burden of a deadline without the benefit of additional insight into legislation that may be adopted by the General Conference in 2024 concerning the future direction of The United Methodist Church or possible additional legislative pathways for separation of local churches; and

WHEREAS, the Holston Conference trustees empathize with congregations who feel rushed to make a decision by the known process described in ¶2553 rather than risking that legislation adopted by the 2024 General Conference might be less gracious;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Holston Conference resolves that if there are changes made at the 2024 General Conference related to human sexuality that cause our local churches to believe it is untenable to continue as United Methodist churches, the Holston Conference and its trustees commit – within the parameters of the *Book of Discipline* - to seek a gracious, fair and non-punitive separation process for such local churches at least through December 31, 2024;

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Holston Conference resolves to continue working to advance legislation that provides such a gracious, fair, and non-punitive separation process to be considered at the next session of the General Conference and to work collaboratively with other annual conferences to build consensus concerning proposed legislation that would fulfill the aspirations of this Resolution.

[Download the Resolution →](#)

