

# Understanding the Results of the 2020/2024 UMC General Conference

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# PSALM 46

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.

**God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.**

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# PSALM 46

The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

Come, behold the works of the Lord;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

**He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;**

he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.

**“Be still, and know that I am God!**

I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”

**The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

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# SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION

- **More “local” control of vision and direction for our local churches as well as the various “regions” of the world served by the United Methodist Church.**
  - **A less U.S. “centered” denominational structure, reflecting the reality of our growing international presence.**
  - **Revised social principles and removal of restrictive language that honors the varying convictions of our clergy and our local churches, while ending a half-century fight.**
  - **A restructured and reduced general budget to aid the local church.**
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# REGIONALIZATION

- **This has been a long-time goal of the denomination, and in some ways, already a part of the way we do church outside the U.S. Delegates approved 8 petitions that would restructure the denomination to be more contextual in different regions served by the church.**
  - **Regionalization represents an effort to put the church's different geographical regions on equal footing and to make the General Conference less U.S.-centric. The current central conferences and the U.S. would become regional conferences, with the same authority to pass legislation for greater missional impact.**
  - **Delegates also approved the continuation of work on a General Book of Discipline that would be brought to the next regular session of General Conference. We are one church, that simultaneously holds shared doctrinal beliefs and differing contextual allowances for ministries.**
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# REGIONALIZATION

- **The regionalization legislation involves an amendment to the church's constitution. This would have to be approved by at least two-thirds of the total votes cast across all annual conferences worldwide in order for much of the regionalization legislation to take effect. If they receive the necessary number of votes, the results would be announced by the United Methodist Council of Bishops. The regionalization constitutional amendment is to be sent out 30 days after the adjournment of General Conference, which means some annual conferences could be voting on the amendment this year. This will likely take until late 2025.**
  - **Regionalization stands as distinct from the other work of General Conference. It had been in development for many years, with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the Connectional Table collaborating on the petitions that were submitted. It received support from delegates from every region.**
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# WHAT CAN BE “REGIONALIZED?”

- **1. Criteria for ordained and licensed ministry:** Regional conferences would set the minimum qualifications and educational requirements to ordain, commission, and license clergy within their bounds. Annual conferences within each regional conference could include additional qualifications and educational requirements as well.
  - **2. Criteria for specialized lay ministries:** Regional conferences would also set the minimum qualifications and educational requirements for specialized lay ministries within their bounds.
  - **3. Criteria for admission of and care for lay members:** Regional conferences could set their own criteria to determine whether persons qualify for professing membership in The United Methodist Church within their bounds, as well as set expected standards of character and conduct for persons to be continued as professing members.
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# WHAT CAN BE “REGIONALIZED?”

- **4. Organization of the regional, annual, district, and charge conferences:** Regional conferences could create their own forms of organization for these bodies within their region and document them within their regional Book of Discipline. All such forms of organization must comply with the laws of the country or countries involved.
  - **5. Hymnal and ritual:** Each regional conference could develop and publish its own hymnal and ritual, including its own rites for marriage and burial, for use within its bounds.
  - **6. Judicial administration:** Each regional conference would establish its own judicial court to rule upon questions arising from new or adapted sections of the regional Discipline over time. It would also set its own rules and processes to implement its rules for the investigation and, if needed, trial of its clergy and laity when formal complaints are brought based on the chargeable offenses and penalties as adopted in its regional Book of Discipline.
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# WHAT CAN'T BE "REGIONALIZED?"

- **Regional Conferences cannot touch Paragraphs 101-199 of the Book of Discipline, which include Doctrinal Statements, General Rules, The Ministry of All Christians, and the Social Principles.**

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# REMOVING RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE

- **The 2024 General Conference neutralized language about weddings and ordination by removing sections in The Book of Discipline that prohibit persons in same-gender relationships from being ordained and same-gender weddings from taking place in our churches or being officiated by United Methodist clergy. This takes us back to pre-1972 language in The Book of Discipline.**
- **Pastors will continue to have the right to choose what weddings to perform and local church Boards of Trustees will continue to have the right to determine which weddings to host. This was reinforced by Judicial Council Decision 1503.**





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# REMOVING RESTRICTIVE LANGUAGE

- **Persons are not prohibited from ordination due to being in a same-gender relationship. The Conference Board of Ordained Ministries and District Committees on Ministry will continue to have authority to recruit, examine, confirm the calling of and discern the qualifications of those to be credentialed into licensed and ordained ministry.**
- **The Bishop and Cabinet will continue to use careful and prayerful consultation in the appointment process, with the goal of clergy/church matches that result in effective ministry.**



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# REVISION OF SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

- **Our statements about “faith in practice” have a long history in the UMC. In 1908, the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) adopted an 11-point Social Creed, primarily focused on workers' rights, the first such statement by any denomination. •**
  - **The Methodist Protestant Church (1916) and the M.E. Church South (1914) followed suit in the next decade, and the EUB created a statement of social beliefs in 1946. •**
  - **General Conference adopted the first Social Principles of the United Methodist Church in 1972, and they have been revised at every General Conference since then.**
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# REVISION OF SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

- **"The Social Principles are not church law. Instead, they represent the prayerful and earnest efforts of the General Conference to speak to issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation that is in keeping with the best of our United Methodist traditions. The Social Principles are thus a call to faithfulness and to social engagement and intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. Moreover, they challenge all members of The United Methodist Church to engage in deliberative reflection and encourage intentional dialogue between faith and practice."** (Preface, 2024 Social Principles)
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# REVISION OF SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

- **Process of revision began in 2012, and involved over 4000 participants from around the worldwide church. They are more theologically/Biblically grounded, succinct, and global in focus.**
  - **Delegates approved all but one of the six sections on the Social Principles by Consent Calendar. The one amendment that was made from the floor was on marriage, by a lay delegate from Zimbabwe: "Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith (adult man and woman of consenting age; or two adult persons of consenting age) into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community."**
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# RESETTING THE BUDGET

- **Declining Local Church budgets**
  - **Declining Conference budgets**
  - **Declining church attendance in the U.S. since 1980 (sharply down since 2019)**
  - **Importance of preserving assets in a shrinking environment**
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# BUDGET/BASE RATE CHANGES

- **Conferences will shift from their 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.**
  - **The total budget comprises seven different funds: the World Service Fund, Ministerial Education Fund, Black College Fund, Africa University Fund, Episcopal Fund, General Administration Fund and Interdenominational Cooperation Fund.**
  - **North Alabama uses a tithe model, where local churches give 10% of their unrestricted receipts.**
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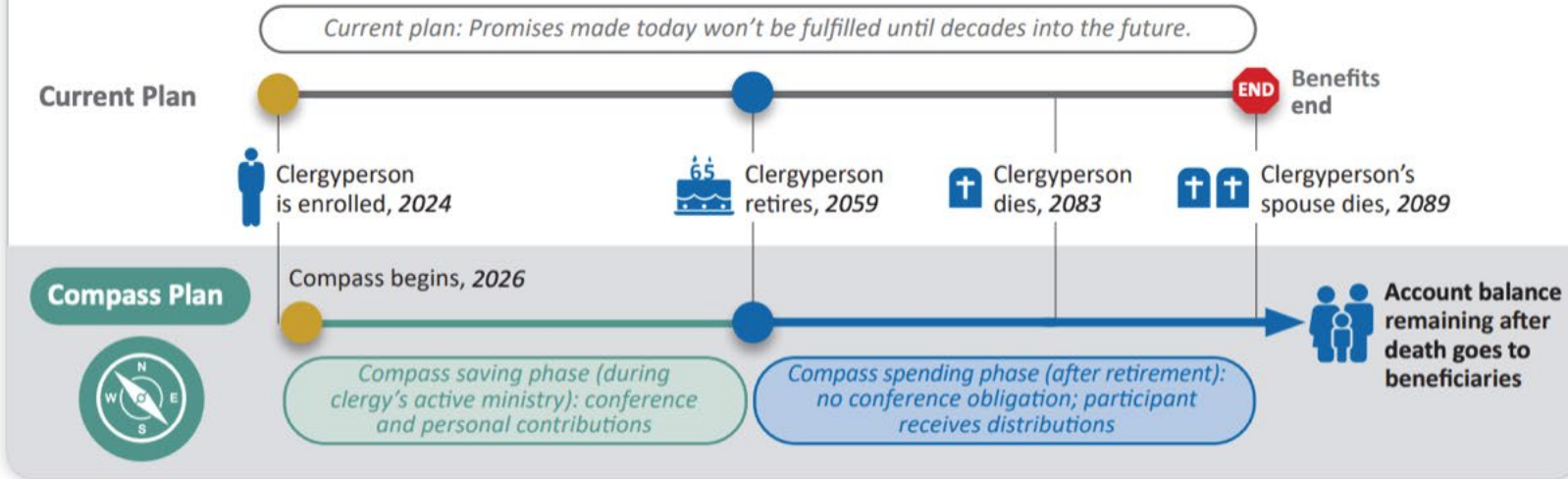
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# WESPATH “COMPASS” PLAN

- **With Compass, clergy will have retirement accounts that they control. They are encouraged to contribute at least 4% of their salary to receive a full matching contribution from the church. All U.S. clergy, regardless of their church's size, will get at least a \$150 monthly contribution plus 3% of pay for their account balance — and beyond that, will get another dollar-for-dollar match on up to 4% of pay.**
  - **Wespath has for years offered the Clergy Retirement Security Program, which combines defined-benefit and defined-contribution components. That program will be frozen at the end of 2025, with Compass taking effect on Jan. 1, 2026. Clergy will retain CRSP benefits earned through the end of 2025 and then begin earning benefits through Compass. The plan does not affect the benefits of clergy who have already retired.**
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# WESPATH "COMPASS" PLAN

## Increasing Long-Term Plan Sustainability



### Compass Plan



### Church Contributions

- \$150 flat dollar contribution\*
- 3% of clergy's pay
- \$1/\$1 match on up to 4% of pay



INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT

### Clergy Contributions



## What are the Compass Contributions?

Compass is an account-based plan with contributions from the Church and the clergy person.

- The Church ('employer') makes three types of contributions.
- Clergy are encouraged to contribute at least 4% of compensation to receive the full matching contribution from the Church.

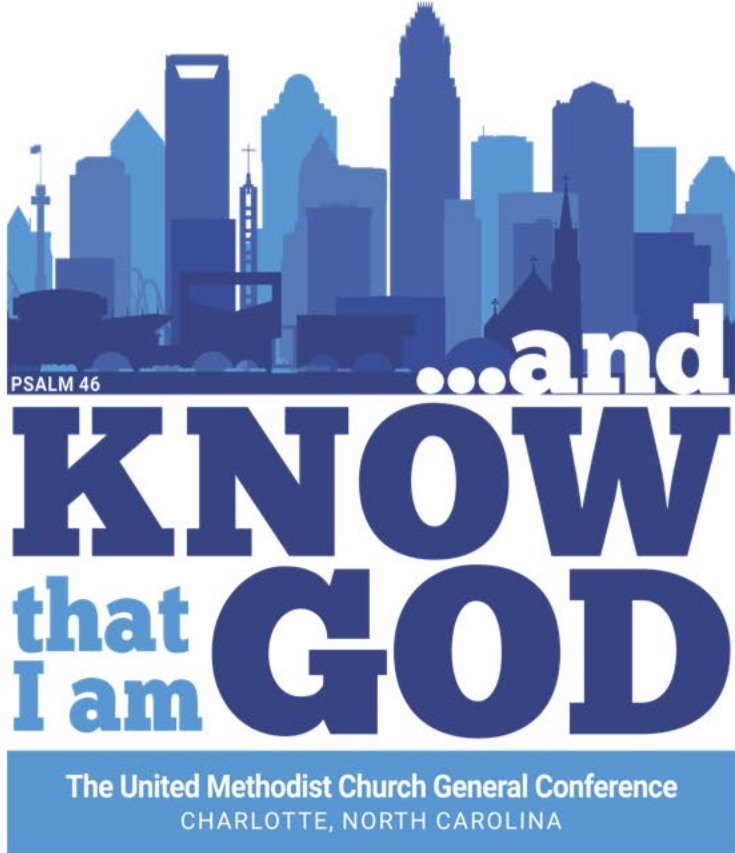
\*2026 amount; will increase 2% per year in \$5 increments



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# ALSO PASSED...

- **Removed paragraph 2553 for disaffiliation, commissioned annual conferences to create paths for reaffiliation.**
  - **Full sacramental privileges for deacons.**
  - **Apologized for sexual misconduct in the UMC that was mishandled.**
  - **Approved the departure of four Eurasian annual conferences in Russia due to political and cultural issues.**
  - **Full communion with the Episcopal Church, meaning clergy could serve in both contexts, if approved by the Episcopalians in 2027.**
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# Understanding the Results of the 2020/2024 UMC General Conference