

One Church Plan

As supported by a majority of bishops of
The United Methodist Church

This plan, preferred by a strong majority of the Council of Bishops, would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-sex weddings in UMC properties and ordination of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.” It would add language to protect churches and pastors who choose not to allow same-sex marriages.

Local Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely would make no changes in practice at the local level • May rewrite wedding policies to explicitly allow or forbid same-sex weddings • Will covenant with bishop on whether congregation will accept LGBTQ pastor
Clergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can exercise individual conscience • Bishop and Cabinet would take theological convictions into account for appointment • Ends potential for church trials • LGBTQ candidates can be ordained and appointed to local churches that approve and can request transfer of candidacy if conference Board of Ordained Ministry or clergy session chooses not to ordain LGBTQ persons
Annual Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No vote is needed, though may be desired in clergy session • Board of Ordained Ministry and/or clergy session can discern whether to ordain LGBTQ persons • Conference in clergy session may return the current restriction on ordination
Council of Bishops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council continues as one body providing spiritual leadership • Assignments will reflect convictions of bishops and annual conferences • Bishops will be protected if their consciences will not allow them to ordain LGBTQ persons
General Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to operate as they do now • If funding declines, boards and agencies would need to consider a strategic restructuring • Sustainability issues, however, are separate from the Commission on a Way Forward’s task
Related Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely no changes • Commission conversations with members of these organizations indicate this plan makes it more likely for most institutions to maintain their affiliation
Finance & Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two petitions are recommended for any of the three plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Any church that leaves would have to pay its proportionate liability of unfunded pensions for its annual conference » Clergy would be removed from benefit and annuity risk pools and have accrued benefits transferred to an individual investment account
Episcopal Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries and benefits would be paid by each episcopal area in the United States • Other expenses would be shared via apportionments • No changes to central conference funding