

January 7, 2019 –
Revision 1

Dear Church
Family,

In February 2019 The United Methodist Church will be holding a Special Session of General Conference meeting to specifically discuss “helping the global church move beyond its debilitating disagreement over human sexuality”.

At the heart of the crisis is the UMC’s struggle with issues related to human sexuality, of which one issue is the practice of homosexuality. Our Book of Discipline speaks of the sacred worth of all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation; and states that *“the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.”* (§ 304.3). The upcoming Special Session contains models to change the church’s “incompatible” language.

Attached you will find a brief summation of what lies ahead. We have taken snippets of commentary from the United Methodist Advocate, December 2018 issue and two separate pastoral letters to outline the broad context for the upcoming Special Session.

We as members of the 2018 Aldersgate UMC Church Council strongly support and embrace the Traditional Model.

We encourage you to:

- Act
 - Educate yourself:
 - Read the enclosed letter.
 - Read the United Methodist Advocate article in its entirety.
 - Read the pastoral letters in their entirety.
 - Visit the referenced websites for additional information.

- Ask
 - Any questions or concerns that you have may be directed to our Aldersgate UMC Way Forward team comprised of: Pastor Day, Marcus Johnston, Jon Brooks, Lynn Boan, Jan Levy, Lynn Wallace, Jerry Allred, Tanya Sari, Dennis Bolen or Mark Sari.
- Conviction
 - Meditate, pray and commit yourself to the path that you think is best for the global United Methodist Church.
- Convey
 - Reach out to other Church Family members to make them aware of this significant moment in our Church's history.
 - **Very important to** convey your convictions to our South Carolina delegates that will be representing us at the Special Session.

Your Brothers and Sisters in
Christ,

Aldersgate UMC 2018 Church
Council

Special Session of General Conference – Revision 1

The Way Forward

The following information has been excerpted from the United Methodist Advocate and two pastoral letters from Mt. Horeb UMC and Chapin UMC. Links to the full bodies of work and other points of references are provided at the end of this missive.

In less than three months, 864 United Methodist from across the world who are delegates from each annual conference in the denomination will gather in one place with one purpose: helping the global church move beyond its debilitating disagreement over human sexuality.

Eight South Carolina clergy and eight South Carolina laity are among the 864 total who will serve as delegates to the 2019 Special Session.

The Way Forward commission was created at the will of the last General Conference, in 2016, and charged to examine paragraphs in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality and help the full church explore ways to move beyond its impasse around ministry and human sexuality.

The Way Forward commission developed three plans that will go before General Conference 2019; The One Church plan, the Traditionalist Plan and the Connectional plan.

In October, the Judicial Council, which is the top court for The United Methodist Church, ruled on the constitutionality of two of the three plans. Both the One Church plan and the Traditionalist plan both pass general constitutional standards although each has issues requiring further resolve. The Judicial Council said it does not have jurisdiction to rule on the Connectional plan, because the plan contains proposed constitutional changes.

1. THE TRADITIONAL MODEL - Keep the same Discipline statements regarding human sexuality as in the Book of Discipline currently. However, since bishops, conferences, boards of ministries and churches are presently in open defiance of the Discipline as it now stands, close the loopholes and tighten the accountability sections of the Discipline. The Traditional Plan also allows a gracious exit strategy from the denomination with their property and assets for

churches not willing to abide by this plan.

2. THE ONE CHURCH MODEL - Reverse the church's historic teaching in regard to human sexuality. Remove all references to homosexuality and marriage as between a man and a woman. Let individuals, churches and conferences decide for themselves what standards they wish to follow. Churches would be allowed to perform same-sex marriage and gay clergy would be ordained and appointed to serve. Build assurances that the convictions of traditionalists will be honored.

3. THE CONNECTIONAL MODEL. This option would divide the church into three separate branches of United Methodism and let each branch adopt their own Discipline, select their own bishops, adopt their own criteria for ordination and set its own standards for human sexuality. Each annual conference would decide which Connectional Conference with which to align. A local church could choose to be in a conference other than the conference with which their annual conference aligns. Clergy could identify with a particular conference or make themselves available for more than one conference. This plan would require at least 8 constitutional amendments.

Links:

United Methodist Advocate –
www.advocatesc.org

Pastoral letters -
<http://www.advocatesc.org/2018/11/pastor-letters-on-sexuality/>

UM News -
<https://www.umnews.org>

Wesleyan Covenant Association -
<https://wesleyancovenant.org>

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