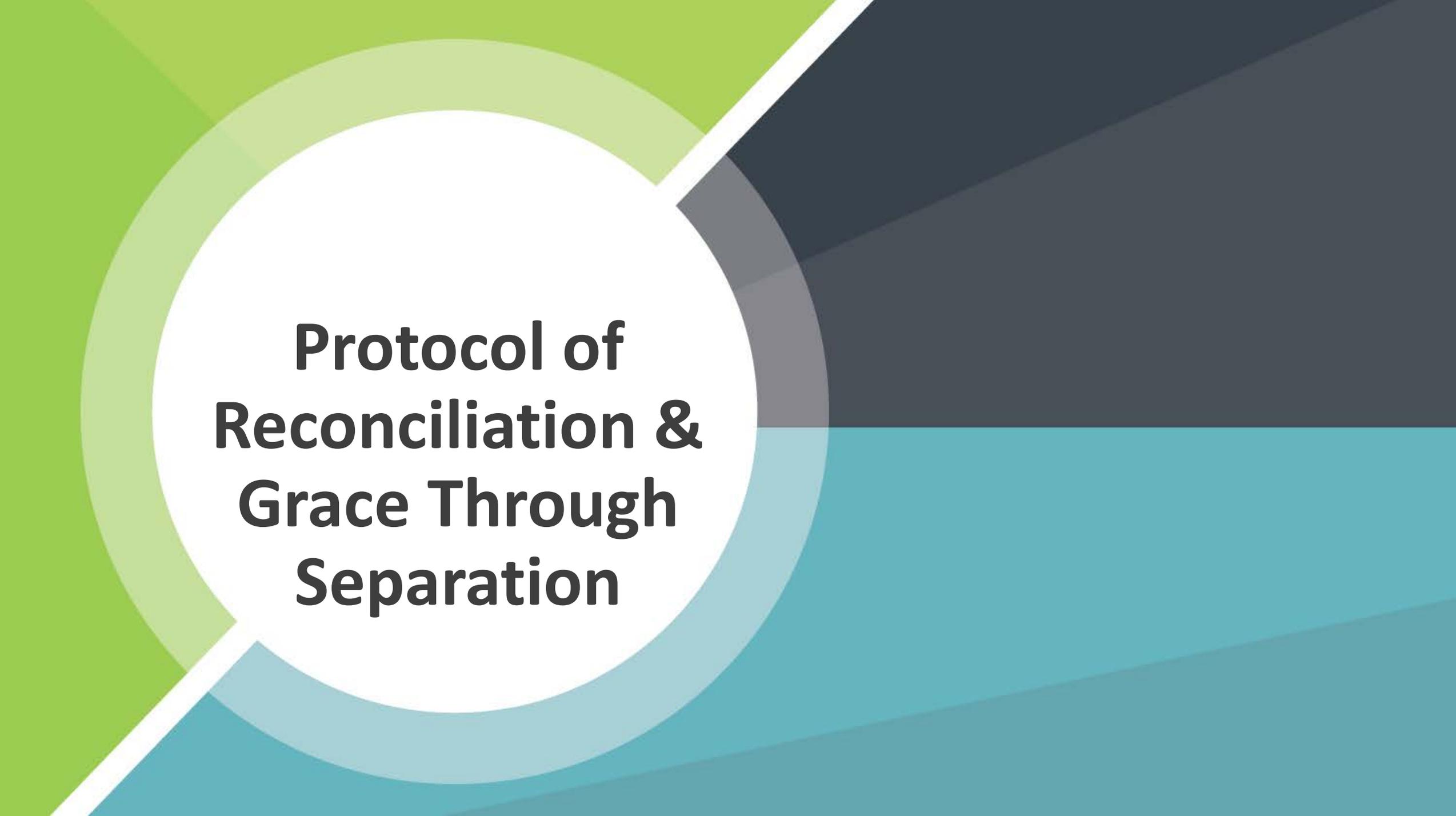




**Florida
Conference
Webinar
Regarding
General
Conference 2020**

Goals for Today

- Prepare you for legislation coming to General Conference.
- Answer your Questions.
- Help you prepare your church for General Conference.
- Give a few helpful hints along the way.



**Protocol of
Reconciliation &
Grace Through
Separation**

Givens

- We disagree on the interpretation of the biblical passages which refer to homosexuality.
- While it was hoped that the Special Session in February 2019 would provide a way forward for The United Methodist Church, the conference was characterized by anger and vitriol.
- Harm has been done to persons and to the witness of The United Methodist Church.

Other Plans

The Protocol is one of several plans that have been sent to the General Conference for consideration.

- “New Denominations of United Methodism” (Indianapolis Plan)
- “New Expressions Worldwide” (UMForward)
- “Next Generation UMC” (UMC Next)

The Mediation Team

- Bishop Yambasu and Central Conference bishops called the group together in July, 2019 in Chicago
- US Bishops
- Members of Central Conferences
- Progressives, Traditionalists, Centrists representing a variety of groups in the UMC
- No budget. All volunteer. No authority.



Kenneth Feinberg



- Deepwater Horizon, 9-11 Fund, TARP, Boeing, GM, Volkswagen, Hokie Spirit Fund
- Pro bono services – Six days of mediation along with meetings between sessions

Commitment to the Protocol

- Groups will no longer support the plans they created
- Some separation is assumed
- Mediation Team will develop legislation to offer the 2020 General Conference
- Group will use best efforts to encourage all parties/groups to vote for Protocol legislation
- Those who choose to separate agree to bring no claims for additional assets of the UMC in the future

Remaining United Methodist

- No Annual Conference must vote
- No local church must vote
- You are a UMC, and unless your Annual Conference votes to separate, you remain a UMC by simply doing nothing.
- If your Annual Conference votes to separate, you can vote to remain in UMC and move to another Annual Conference.

Primary Thing to be Considered

It will take time (possibly two to four years) to finalize how the post-separation UMC will view marriage and ordination.

A primary thing to be considered is whether you want to remain a United Methodist Church or leave the United Methodist Church to be something else (either independent or part of a new Methodist denomination).

Process and Timeline

- Registration of intent of forming new denomination: **5/15/21**
- Central Conferences may join new denomination: **12/31/21**
- All AC's may vote to join new denomination:
 - 20% support threshold to call for a vote
 - Must be supported by 57%
 - Affiliation vote must be conducted before: **7/1/21**

Process and Timeline - UPDATED

- Registration of intent of forming new denomination: ~~5/15/21~~**9/1/22**
- Central Conferences may join new denomination: ~~12/31/21~~**6/31/22**
- All AC's may vote to join new denomination:
 - 20% support threshold to call for a vote
 - Must be supported by 57%
- Affiliation vote must be conducted before: ~~7/1/21~~**12/31/22**

Annual Conferences

- Retain all property if they join Methodist denomination pursuant to the Protocol
- Wesley Foundations are treated like local churches

Process and Timeline

- Local churches who want to remain in the UMC if Annual Conference separates
 - Church Council: choose simple majority or supermajority vote
 - Vote taken at Church Conference

Financial Agreement

- Local Church joining a Methodist denomination (pursuant to the Protocol)
 - Retains its assets and liabilities
 - Annual Conference will not exercise its trust clause
 - Expected to maintain connectional responsibilities prior to departure

If the Protocol Passes ...

3 Avenues for Local Church Leaving the UMC

Unite with a New Expression of Methodism

- Church Conference either simple majority or 2/3 vote.
- Retains its assets and liabilities
- Expected to maintain connectional responsibilities prior to departure

¶2553 or similar

- Church Conference 2/3 majority
- 12-24 months of apportionments
- Pension liability withdrawal payment
- Legal costs

Close and Buy Back

- Charge Conference to close church
- Appraisal
- Negotiate with Conference Trustees regarding buy-back amount

Clergy

- Can choose
- Default is to continue as a member of your annual conference
- Provisions for if a clergy wants to do something other than the choice/or default of the Annual Conference
- Retain pension benefits. New denomination is responsible for defined benefit portion of pension and can decide level of future pension benefits.

A Possible Covenant in Florida

Bishop Carter and the Florida Cabinet have created a draft covenant to use with churches who may want to state clearly matters of conscience around weddings and clergy.

This is inline with Discipline's values of clergy choosing what weddings they perform, churches setting their building use policies and consultation taking place before appointments.

Financial Agreements

- Traditional Methodist denomination **\$25M**
- Other Methodist denominations **\$2M**
- If more than one Traditional Methodist denomination would be registered, \$25M would be split amongst those entities

Financial Agreements

- Earmark for Ministries to Asian, Black, Hispanic-Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander Communities and Africa University

\$39M over two quadrennia

Moratorium

- Bishops asked to place all administrative and judicial processes addressing restrictions in Book of Discipline related to self-avowed practicing homosexuals or same-sex weddings in abeyance
 - January 1, 2020 through adjournment of first conference of the post-separation UMC
 - Nothing in the legislation changes our current language about gay marriage or gay ordination.

Protocol Legislation

- Missed the September 18 petition deadline.
- An Annual Conference can submit legislation to the General Conference up until 45 days before GC.
 - Philippines Annual Conference Cavite ✓
 - Michigan ✓
 - Sierra Leone ✓
- To which legislative committee(s) will it be given?
- When will it be considered?

Reconciliation

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation --2 Cor 5:18

- The restoration of friendly relations.
- The end of estrangement.
- Reconciliation, as an outcome, is an improvement in the relations among parties formerly at odds with one another.

TIMELINE

- Late April 2020 – Judicial Council Review
- May 5-15, 2020 – General Conference
- June 4-6, 2020 – Florida Annual Conference
- July 15-17, 2020 – Southeast Jurisdictional Conference and election/assignment of Bishops to episcopal areas.
- July 1, 2021 – Deadline for Annual Conference vote
- December 31, 2024 – Deadline for Local Church vote

REVISED POSSIBLE TIMELINE

- Fall 2020 – Judicial Council Review
- TBD 2021 – General Conference
- Six weeks after GC – Southeast Jurisdictional Conference and election/assignment of Bishops to episcopal areas.
- December 31, 2022 – Deadline for Annual Conference vote
- December 31, 2025 – Deadline for Local Church vote



US Regional Conference

Currently, many if not most, GC petitions pertain mostly or exclusively to the UMC in the U.S.

- U.S. Church has no venue other than GC for considering this legislation.
- Allows US to have parity with existing central conferences for doing work on the adaptable portions of The Book of Discipline. (Consistent with work on General Book of Discipline)
- It would not change the role and authority of the U.S. jurisdictional conferences



Values of Christmas Covenant

Connectional relationships rooted in mission.

Respect for contextual ministry settings

(Doing otherwise fosters relationships that are essentially colonial.)

Legislative equality for regional bodies of the church.

Other Legislation

Social Principles

Study of Ministry

Pension Changes from
Wespath

In The Meantime ...

- Share your thoughts with the Florida Delegation at fldelegation@flumc.org.
- Find reliable information on umnews.org and umc.org
- Pray for the delegates going to General Conference.
- Treat others as you wish to be treated. Be kind. Don't exaggerate differences.
- Keep focused on the mission of making new disciples of Jesus Christ.

How to help prepare your church ...

- Keep it simple.
- Give accurate information.
- Stress that they have four years to process this.
- Build relationships across differences.
- Highlight the important ministry of the church.
- Don't make it about any one group. Listen to all.
- Go slow. Have multiple conversations. Be intentional.

Role of Pastor ...

- You are pastor to all persons no matter their viewpoint.
- Give accurate information.
- Manage your own stress and anxiety through support systems.
- Create a healthy process and practice shared leadership.
- Focus on the mission and ministry of the church.
- Don't make it about you.
- Allow for multiple perspectives to be shared.
- Keep Bishop and DS informed.

Things for churches to consider ...

- Take your time. You have four years. Wait and see how new things develop and how UMC walks with churches.
- No one is asking you to change your practice around weddings or to accept clergy without consultation.
- You may enter into a covenant with the Bishop and Cabinet around weddings and clergy appointments.
- Consider the connectional reality of being a United Methodist (UMCOR, Camps, Campus Ministry, Missions).
- Consider the unintended consequences around future appointments, financial impact, insurance/legal support.

Things for clergy to consider ...

- No one is asking you to change your practice around weddings or accept an appointment without consultation.
- You may enter into a covenant with the Bishop and Cabinet around weddings and appointments.
- Consider the connectional reality of being a United Methodist (UMCOR, Camps, Campus Ministry, Missions).
- Consider the unintended consequences around future appointments, pension support, etc.
- Take your time. Let the new expressions develop. Wait and see how the UMC walks with you through this.

Most of all ...

Most of all consider what will help us all remain faithful to the call God has placed on our lives to reach more and more people with the love of Christ.

Our commitment to you ...

- We will walk with you.
- We will continue to guard the unity of the church.
- We understand that some may depart. We will treat you with respect and dignity and allow you to depart with a blessing.
- We will respond appropriately and timely.
- We will find new ways to be in ministry together, praying and hoping for long term partnerships.



Questions and Answers

The image features a central white circle containing the text "Imagine a church ...". This circle is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of green, grey, and teal. The background is composed of large, overlapping geometric shapes in these same colors, creating a modern, abstract design.

**Imagine a
church ...**

Feedback and Questions ...

Give us feedback on survey ...

Send additional questions to: ashanks@flumc.org