

**General Conference Webinar
Dakotas Conference
The United Methodist Church
General Conference Webinar
Questions and Answers**



How many committees are there?

There are 14 legislative committees. Rev. Rebecca Trefz, Dakotas Conference clergy delegate, serves on the Ordained Ministry legislative committee. Kara Heagel, lay delegate for the Dakotas Conference, serves on the Higher Education / District Superintendency legislative committee. [View the list and membership for each of the legislative committees beginning on page 108 of the Advanced Daily Advocate.](#)

If regionalization would pass, would this add another layer to our polity, or would it remove a layer? Would we still have a General Conference?

There would still be a General Conference. The General Conference would be more focused on issues that affect the whole world instead of specific issues that relate to specific regions.

Would regionalization be by geographic or theological connections?

Regionalization would be geographical. The United States would all be in one region.

Is the U.S. only one of the eight regional conferences, if so, do all conferences within the U.S. follow the same guidelines in the Book of Discipline as written?

Yes, we are currently all following the same guidelines in the Book of Discipline and would continue to follow the same Book of Discipline.

What are the eight regions?

The U.S., Congo, West Africa, Philippines, Germany, Africa Central Conference (which encompasses the eastern and southern side of the continent), Central and Southern Europe, and Northern Europe and Eurasia.

With 1,099 petitions, what gets prioritized? Who decides what gets priority over other petitions?

Legislative committees have been meeting to help decide what gets prioritized, as well as how to be as efficient as possible. The committees will continue to meet the first week of the General Conference to prioritize, amend, and review legislation.

Are there any proposals for another disaffiliation window in the U.S.?

Yes. There are proposals to extend 2553, as well as different proposals about how to lead the denomination.

Are there proposals for how churches can return from disaffiliation?

There are currently policies for churches to join the United Methodist denomination. Those same plans would be followed.

With the proposed change in the social principles, what does that mean for the local church?

It strengthens our connection with the worldwide church. The social principles put are faith into action as one body of Christ. We are trying to make the social principles more applicable worldwide. Overall, it is a great educational opportunity.

What are some salient issues for the U.S. region?

These topics and petitions appear to be U.S. centric human sexuality, financial matters, issues related to U.S. laws that relate to the UMC's mission, and adaptations to how we are growing and changing as a country.

What are some areas of the budget which will no longer be funded?

All general agencies will have less funding. Several agencies and ministries will be restructured including Discipleship Ministries, youth and children ministries, the Commission on Archives and History. The funding for episcopal leadership [bishops] will be less.

Will performing same gender weddings be up to individual clergy?

There are multiple petitions on this topic. Currently, clergy choose whether they feel comfortable performing a wedding.

Concerning the environment and climate justice, are you aware of fossil free UMC?

Yes. Fossil Free UMC, is about divesting pension funds through Wespath, from fossil fuel industries and businesses, adding it to the list of not investing in tobacco, alcohol, gambling, etc.

In 1984, we didn't have an Africa University fund, so, what changes to the budget will such funds as African University and the Black College Fund take?

There are reductions, as with all UMC agencies. They will remain in the budget. Giving to the university, and the fund will not go away, it will just look different.

Some leaders of the disaffiliation movement plan to attend General Conference. Is it fair that retired UMC pastors continue to advocate for the Global Methodist Church and disaffiliation?

Some would say it is not right or appropriate, as they are pastors and churches in covenant with one another and another denomination. These retired pastors are folks that are advocating for changes or things they believe in, just like others will advocate for changes and things that they believe in. It has been a challenge. It is a challenge to discipleship and leadership that we are living out.