

CUMC's Q and A for General Conference - April 14, 2024

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Who, what, where and when of General Conference 2024?

General Conference is April 23 through May 3, 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina. There are 862 delegates (equal lay and clergy from around the world) to meet for worship, prayer, and decision making on over 1,008 petitions (for the BOD or BOR). Visit the Indiana Conference of UMC Facebook page to view recording of Facebook live GC Q&A sessions and one webinar with Bishop Trimble.

2. How can I express my thoughts and questions to our Indiana delegation of clergy and laity?

Write the delegation (Rev. Russ Abel, delegation leader) at this email address: 2020inumcdelegates@inumc.org

3. How can I follow the gathering of General Conference in real time?

News and Commentary on General Conference by UMC people (non-secular media source)-

<https://www.umnews.org/en/landing-pages/general-conference-news-and-commentary>

The Advance Daily Christian Advocate (like a daily report of GC)-

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/supplemental-adca-now-available-online>

4. What is disaffiliation and its protocol? How many churches left the UMC? Can churches still disaffiliate?

General Conference 2019 established Para 2553 of the BOD which presented necessary steps for congregations to work around the trust clause and leave the denomination over the matter of human sexuality. About 25% of the UMC in the USA disaffiliated. If you want to read more: <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/twenty-five-percent-of-churches-disaffiliated-from-the-united-methodist-church/>

Para.2553 expired on 12/31/2023. There may or may not be different legislation passed at GC 2024 which could create another pathway for congregations to leave the denomination.

5. What big topics will be covered or potential issues will be discussed this time?

GC will address matters like budget, mission and ministry, as well as topics like local pastors, changes to Wespath (UMC's entity for clergy and staff health care & pensions) as well as social matters like human sexuality. One group is promoting a three-fold response on the matter of human sexuality with: 1) regionalization of how areas of the world are organized and 'governed', 2) lifting restrictions in the BOD, and 3) changes to the Social Principles. Please read these articles:

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/us-delegates-name-general-conference-goals>

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/values-and-purpose-of-worldwide-regionalization-legislation>

<https://www.umjustice.org/who-we-are/proposed-revised-social-principles-for-general-conference-charlotte>

6. What are the UMC Book of Discipline and Book of Resolution? How are they different?

The Book of Discipline (BOD) is the denomination's law book, and the Book of Resolutions (BOR) is the denomination's stance on moral, social, public policy and economic issues (resolutions expire after 8 years). The resolutions are considered instructive and persuasive, but not binding. Resolutions are aspirational, not legally binding within our church law. Book of Resolutions- https://www.umofficialresources.com/help/bor_users_guide.html

Book of Discipline- <https://www.umcna.org/postdetail/122181>

7. What are implementation timelines of any changes to Book of Discipline?

Most changes to BOD, if they do not appear to have conflict with the Judicial Council, would be implemented by the new calendar year following the general conference. However, if there are more significant changes, such as regionalization legislation, each annual conference will be required to take action steps (like vote on this proposal), then the whole process is extended until necessary steps are completed.

8. What is Calvary UMC going to do or not do?

We will continue to keep the main thing the main thing: worship of Jesus and making of disciples as we Seek GOD, Love One Another, and Reach Out. By God's grace we have lived through hard, difficult things; this is no different. Calvary leaders will pay attention, keep us informed, and if or when there are steps to take we will do those. Until then, let us all continue to pray, be kind, and serve: this is what Calvary is already known for!!