



2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE GUIDE

MAY 10 - MAY 20, 2016 | PORTLAND, OREGON



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®



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Delegates pray for healing during a worship service at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

EPISCOPAL WELCOME



On behalf of the clergy, laity and churches of our Greater Northwest Episcopal Area and the entire Western Jurisdiction who share in this opportunity to host you, let me extend a hearty welcome to the 2016 General Conference. Our local host committee, under the general leadership of Dr. Bill Haden, is committed to offering extravagant hospitality to every one of you in our great city of Portland, Oregon.

The city of Portland has the infamous motto: “Keep Portland Weird.” This saying expresses our unique sense of cool quirkiness that attracts by rejecting the status quo. In this age of increasing secularism, The United Methodist Church can also be a place of countercultural value where the poor and hungry are the first to feast at the banquet table, the lost and lonely receive the best care and the environment around us is elevated to the same protection of our family home.

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ has a more important message than those offered by political parties, economic systems or even the entertainment industry. Our prayer is that this spiritual message, which prioritizes “the least of these,” can shine through all of you who represent the very best of our United Methodist Church.

We are committed to pray for you before, during and after our General Conference. May God guide your discernment, deliberations and actions during these next two weeks, and may nothing come between us except Christ Jesus.

Be the Hope,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Grant", written in a cursive style.

Bishop Grant Hagiya
Greater Northwest Episcopal Area

GENERAL CONFERENCE: AN OVERVIEW

General Conference, the top legislative body of The United Methodist Church, meets May 10-20, 2016, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. The center is billed as the largest convention facility in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. Some 864 delegates, elected from around the world, will gather to set policy and direction for the church, as well as handle other important business. Meeting every four years, General Conference is the only entity that speaks for the denomination. The United Methodist Book of Discipline, updated every four years, incorporates changes made by General Conference.

At its October 2013 meeting, the 25-member Commission on the General Conference voted to reduce the number of delegates for the 2016 General Conference from nearly 1,000 to approximately 850. The 2012 General Conference shifted the responsibility for determining the target number of delegates from the secretary of the General Conference to the commission, offering the rationale that it should not be the decision of only one person.

The theme of the 2016 General Conference is “Therefore Go.” The Commission on the General Conference selected the theme in 2013. United Methodist Communications developed the logo as an action-themed graphic that ties to the roots of The United Methodist Church in the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:19-20). That passage reads, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Commission on the General Conference, led by Judi Kenaston, a laywoman and secretary of the West Virginia Annual Conference, planned the conference. A local committee from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference, under the leadership of Bishop Grant Hagiya of the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, is conference host. William “Bill” Haden, Portland, and the Rev. Steve Sprecher, Lake Oswego, are co-chairs of the host committee. Some 4,000 people, many of them volunteers, will serve in a variety of roles, such as greeters, registration officials, marshals, pages, translators, guides, drivers, musicians, technicians, reporters and emergency responders.

Projected cost of the 2016 General Conference is \$10,532,800, compared with \$8,654,406 for the 2012 session. The changing global nature of The United Methodist Church, due in part to the rapidly growing membership in central conferences, resulted in increases to two of the four major General Conference financial drivers. One is the cost of language services, increasing from \$380,000 in 2000 to an estimated \$2.3 million in 2016; the other is travel expenses. In 2012, the average travel cost for each delegate from within the United States was approximately \$493, while the average travel cost for delegates from central conferences was approximately \$3,000 each. As representation from central

conferences grows, so likewise does the total cost of travel for delegates.

Percentage breakdowns are approximate:

- Delegate expenses, including travel and per diem, 32 percent;
- Operations, including convention center and equipment, publishing and distribution of the Daily Christian Advocate (DCA) and Advance DCA, software, worship, music and other business expenses, 24 percent;
- Language services, including translation and interpretation, 22 percent;
- General Conference staff offices, including business manager, secretary and treasurer, 15 percent;

- Commissions and committees, 5 percent; and
- Sponsorship expenses, 2 percent.

Per-diem allocations for delegates are Tuesday, May 10, \$92 for hotel, plus \$39 for meals; Wednesday, May 11, through Saturday, May 14, \$92 for hotel, \$29 for meals (lunch is provided those days); and Sunday, May 15, through Friday, May 20, \$92 for hotel, \$39 for meals.

The Commission on the General Conference launched a sponsorship program for the 2012 conference intended to create an income stream that may permit repayment of any accumulated deficit. The program will continue in 2016.



Delegates and visitors fill the plenary hall in the May 1 afternoon celebration of Pan-Methodist Full Communion at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. On the screen are United Methodist Bishop Sharon Rader and Bishop John F. White, African Methodist Episcopal Church. A UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry.

THE SITE

The site of the international gathering has traditionally rotated among the church's five regional U.S. jurisdictions. Since 1968, General Conference has convened in the following cities:

- 1968 Dallas, Texas (uniting conference)
- 1970 St. Louis, Missouri (special session)
- 1972 Atlanta, Georgia
- 1976 Portland, Oregon
- 1980 Indianapolis, Indiana
- 1984 Baltimore, Maryland
- 1988 St. Louis, Missouri
- 1992 Louisville, Kentucky
- 1996 Denver, Colorado
- 2000 Cleveland, Ohio
- 2004 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2008 Fort Worth, Texas
- 2012 Tampa, Florida
- 2016 Portland, Oregon

The 2020 General Conference will be in Minneapolis in the North Central Jurisdiction. The Commission on the General Conference voted to hold the conference outside the United States for the first time in 2024, selecting Manila, Philippines, and again in 2028, selecting Harare, Zimbabwe.



Visitor Janet Gollery McKeithen uses her iPad to record images of the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. McKeithen is from Santa Monica, Calif. A UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry.

MOBILE APP AND WEBSITE

The 2016 mobile app is available for both Android and iOS devices.

The iOS app, available on the iTunes store, will work on all Apple devices running iOS 7.1 or above. The Android app, available on the Google Play store, works on all Android devices running Android 2.3.3 or above. The apps will help interested people keep up-to-date on the latest developments as General Conference nears. Additional features will be added, with the first update scheduled in January 2016. Some of these include maps, schedules and petition tracking. The final update is scheduled for April 2016.

Delegates and others can follow the proceedings on the General Conference website at <http://gc2016.umc.org> (or umc.org/gc2016). You can also follow General Conference on Facebook and Twitter using #UMCGC. Features will include news coverage in multiple languages, with daily summaries, feature stories and videos, such as interviews with delegates, volunteers and other key individuals. All plenary sessions, worship services, episcopal and laity addresses, and other special events will be live streamed. Users can track petitions and obtain general information about the legislative process. Plenary transcripts and consent calendars will post each day.



Irene Innis, spouse of Bishop John Innis from Liberia, checks her cellphone during a plenary break at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry.

A daily schedule of events will be posted, as well as practical information for delegates and visitors, such as information about Portland, the convention center and maps. Multimedia videos and photos from conference events will post. Delegates can go to the website to find committee assignments, seating changes and the delegate list. Journalists can access a glossary, background on General Conference and credentialing procedures.

In 2016, the Advance Daily Christian Advocate will also have a digital component and be available in the electronic publication (EPUB) format, which allows copious digital note taking for anyone with a tablet.

2016 General Conference Schedule

<i>Registration</i>		
Saturday, May 7	1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.	Central Conference Delegate & Interpreter Registration at Convention Center
Sunday, May 8	12:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.	Central Conference Delegate & Interpreter Registration at Convention Center
	5:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.	Delegate & Official Participant Registration at Convention Center
Monday, May 9	8:00 A.M. to 7:30 P.M.	Registration (all categories) at Convention Center
Tuesday, May 10	8:00 A.M. to 7:30 P.M.	Registration (all categories) at Convention Center
Wednesday, May 11	8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.	Registration (all categories) at Convention Center
Registration will be closed during opening worship on Tuesday.		
Registration after 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, May 11 will be in Room B119, Office of the Secretary of the General Conference		

Agenda and Program

Following is the overall program of the 2016 General Conference in Portland, Oregon. The Committee on Agenda will plan in detail each day's business schedule once the Conference convenes. The first week is assumed to be for legislative committee work through Saturday, and the second week is for plenary sessions. **All times listed are considered "Orders of the Day". Announcements will be held prior to the end of each Plenary as necessary.**

Saturday, May 7	
9:00 – 10:30 A.M. Registration Booth Worker & Computer Operator Orientation	9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Tablet Training – Central Conference Delegates
10:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. Registration Computer Operator Orientation	9:00 A.M. – Committees continue to meet as necessary Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters Committee on Reference Committee on Calendar and Agenda
Sunday, May 8	
2:00 – 8:00 P.M. Orientation for Central Conference Delegates	9:00 A.M. – Organization of Committees Committee on Courtesies and Privileges Committee on Credentials Committee on the Journal Committee on Presiding Officers
Monday, May 9	
8:00 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters	9:00 A.M. Orientation for Seminary Students
9:00 A.M. – 9:30 P.M. Committee on Reference	9:30 – 11:30 A.M. – Briefings (See notes at end of Agenda) Briefing for Youth and Young Adult Delegates A Briefing for Delegates of Color and Allies (Not official activities of the General Conference)
9:30 – 11:30 A.M. Briefing for Central Conference Women Delegates (Not official activities of the General Conference)	10:30 A.M. Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
10:00 A.M. – 9:30 P.M. Committee on Calendar and Agenda	12:15 – 1:30 P.M. Orientation for First-time Delegates
1:30 P.M. Dedication of Prayer Room and Prayer Walk	2:00 – 3:30 P.M. Opening Worship & Holy Communion – Preacher: Bishop Warner Brown, Jr.
2:00 – 5:00 P.M. Tablet Training – Central Conference Delegates	3:30 – 4:30 P.M. Call to Order Invitation to Authentic Engagement and Inter-cultural Competency Christian Conferencing <i>Presentation by the Committee on Faith and Order</i>
2:00 – 5:00 P.M. Orientation of Legislative Committee Recorders	4:30 – 4:45 P.M. <i>Afternoon Break</i>
4:00 – 9:30 P.M. Orientation for Marshals and Pages	4:45 – 6:30 P.M. Organization of the General Conference
6:30 – 8:30 P.M. Briefing for Women Delegates (Not official activities of the General Conference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll Call and Setting the Bar of the Conference • Emergency Procedures, Queuing System Introduction and Testing the Voting System • Commission on the General Conference Report and Plan of Organization and Rules of the General Conference
Tuesday, May 10	
8:00 – 9:00 A.M. Orientation for Heads of Delegations	

- Elections
 - Coordinator of the Calendar
 - Inter-jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy
 - General Conference Administrative Committees
- Report of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar
- Committee on Presiding Officers
- Announcements

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Wednesday, May 11

7:00 A.M.

Committee on Calendar and Agenda
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 8:30 A.M.

Worship

8:30 – 10:25 A.M. – Plenary Session

Episcopal Address (45 minutes)

Greetings for Portland

Voting System Demonstration

Election of Facilitation Group

Reports:

- Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
 - Committee on Credentials
 - Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
 - Committee on the Journal
 - Committee on Reference
 - Committee on Agenda and Calendar
 - Committee on Presiding Officers
- Announcements

10:25 – 10:45 A.M.

Morning Break

10:45 A.M. – 12:45 P.M.

Christian Conferencing: World Wide Nature of the Church
(Legislative Committee Rooms)

12:45 – 1:45 P.M.

Lunch Recess – Meal provided for Delegates

12:55 P.M. – 1:25 P.M.

Service of Holy Communion

Presider: Bishop Beverly Shamana

1:45 – 3:45 P.M.

Organization of the Legislative Committees

3:45 – 7:45 P.M. – Dinner and Mandatory Leadership Training for

Legislative Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Parliamentarians,
Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Recorders, and Sub-
Committee Chairs

Small Group Leaders and Facilitation Group

3:45 P.M.

Recess for All Others – on your own

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

Thursday, May 12

7:00 A.M.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

Committee on Reference

8:00 – 8:45 A.M.

Worship

– Preacher: Bishop Christian Alsted

8:45 – 10:10 A.M. – Plenary Session

Introduction of Representatives from Affiliated Autonomous
Churches, Affiliated United Churches and Concordat
Churches

Reports:

- Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
- Committee on Credentials
- Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
- Committee on the Journal
- Committee on Reference
- Committee on Agenda and Calendar
- Committee on Presiding Officers

10:10 – 10:30 A.M.

Morning Break

10:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Legislative Committees

12:30 – 1:30 P.M.

Lunch Recess – Provided for Delegates

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.

Service of Holy Communion

1:30 – 4:00 P.M.

Legislative Committees

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.

Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:20 P.M.

Legislative Committees

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:20 – 6:30 P.M.

Closing Devotion (Legislative Committees)

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. – Dinner Meeting

Organization of the Inter-jurisdictional Committee on
Episcopacy including election of officers and executive
committee

Friday, May 13

7:00 A.M.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

Committee on Reference

8:00 – 8:45 A.M.

Worship

– Preacher: Bishop Sally Dyck

8:45 – 9:55 A.M. – Plenary Session

Laitly Address (30 minutes)

Connectional Table: State of the Church and Vision Casting
(15 minutes)

GCFA Report (15 Minutes)

Reports:

- Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
- Committee on Credentials
- Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision

- Committee on the Journal
 - Committee on Reference
 - Committee on Agenda and Calendar
 - Committee on Presiding Officers
- Announcements

9:55 – 10:15 A.M.
Morning Break

10:15 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Legislative Committees

12:30 – 1:30 P.M.
Lunch Recess – Meal provided for Delegates

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.
Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop Benjamin Boni

1:30 – 4:00 P.M.
Legislative Committees

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.
Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:20 P.M.
Legislative Committees

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:20 – 6:30 P.M.
Closing Devotion (Legislative Committees)

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Saturday, May 14

8:00 – 8:45 A.M.
Worship
– Preacher: Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

8:45 – 10:25 A.M. – Plenary Session
Young People's Address (30 minutes)
Group Discernment Introduction Session
Reports:

- Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
- Committee on Credentials
- Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
- Committee on the Journal
- Committee on Reference
- Committee on Agenda and Calendar
- Committee on Presiding Officers

Announcements

10:25 – 10:45 A.M.
Morning Break

10:45 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.
Small Group Session 1

12:15 – 1:15 P.M.
Lunch Recess – Meal provided for Delegates

12:25 P.M. – 12:55 P.M.
Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop Peggy Johnson

1:15 – 2:45 P.M.
Small Group Session 2

2:45 – 3:05 P.M.
Afternoon Break

3:05 – 5:30 P.M.
Legislative Committees

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.
Dinner Recess – on your own

7:30 – 9:20 P.M.
Legislative Committees

9:20 – 9:30 P.M.
Closing Devotion (Legislative Committees)
(Adjournment – no later than 9:30 pm.)

Sunday, May 15

1:00 – 5:00 P.M.
Facilitation Group

Monday, May 16

7:00 A.M.
Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.
Worship
– Preacher: Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey
Consecration of Deaconesses and Home Missioners

9:00 – 10:00 A.M.
Opening Prayer
Reports:

- Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
- Committee on Credentials
- Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
- Committee on the Journal
- Committee on Reference
- Committee on Agenda and Calendar
- Committee on Presiding Officers

Consent Calendars
Four Areas of Focus (15 minutes)
Vital Congregation Moments (5 minutes)

10:00 – 10:20 A.M.
Morning Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Voting Demonstrations
Elections:

Trustees of John Street Church
250th Anniversary: John Street Church (7 minutes)
Elections:
Secretary-designate of the General Conference
Commission on the General Conference
General Agencies
Judicial Council
University Senate
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

12:30 – 2:00 P.M.
Lunch Recess – on your own

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.

Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop Linda Lee

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Global Social Principles (10 Minutes)
Calendar Items & Conference Business
150th Anniversary: United Methodist Women (3:53 P.M.)
(7 minutes)

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.
Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:10 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Africa University (5:25 P.M.) (15 minutes)
Higher Education Report (5:40 P.M.) (30 minutes)

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. Closing Devotion

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Tuesday, May 17

7:00 A.M.
Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.
Worship
– Preacher: Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams
General Secretary, World Methodist Council
Methodist Church of Southern Africa

9:00 – 10:00 A.M.
Opening Prayer
Reports:
• Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
• Committee on Credentials
• Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
• Committee on the Journal
• Committee on Reference
• Committee on Agenda and Calendar
• Committee on Presiding Officers
Consent Calendars
Ecumenical Introductions

10:00 – 10:20 A.M.
Morning Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Opening Prayer
200th Anniversary: Birth of the AME Church (7 minutes)
Facilitation Group Report
Calendar Items & Conference Business

12:30 – 2:00 P.M.
Lunch Recess – on your own

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.
Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop William McAlilly

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Recognition of Retiring Bishops
Presentation of new Episcopal Leadership Team
Calendar Items & Conference Business

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.
Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:10 P.M.
Calendar Items & Conference Business
“Missing in Action” – United Methodist Men (6:03 P.M.)
(7 minutes)

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. Closing Devotion

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Wednesday, May 18

7:00 A.M.
Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.
Worship
– Preacher: Bishop James Swanson, Jr.

9:00 – 10:00 A.M.
Opening Prayer
Reports:
• Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
• Committee on Credentials
• Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
• Committee on the Journal
• Committee on Reference
• Committee on Agenda and Calendar
• Committee on Presiding Officers
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Imagine No Malaria (9:48 A.M.) (12 Minutes)

10:00 – 10:20 A.M.
Morning Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Global AIDS Report (12:18 P.M.) (7 minutes)
Vital Congregation Moments (12:25 P.M.) (5 minutes)

12:30 – 2:00 P.M.
Lunch Recess – on your own

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.
Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop W. Earl Beldsoe

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.
Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits Report
(3:51 P.M.) (7 minutes)
30th Anniversary: DISCIPLE Bible Study (3:58 P.M.) (2
minutes)

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.
Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:10 P.M.
Open Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Report on the Sand Creek Massacre (5:40 P.M.)
(30 minutes)

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. Closing Devotion

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Thursday, May 19

7:00 A.M.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

Worship
– Preacher: Bishop John Yambasu
Commissioning of Missionaries

9:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Opening Prayer
Reports:
• Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
• Committee on Credentials
• Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
• Committee on the Journal
• Committee on Reference
• Committee on Agenda and Calendar
• Committee on Presiding Officers
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Vital Congregation Moments (9:55 A.M.) (5 Minutes)

10:00 – 10:20 A.M.

Morning Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
200th Anniversary: Death of Francis Asbury (12:29 P.M.)
(1 minute)

12:30 – 2:00 P.M.

Lunch Recess – on your own

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.

Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop Jeremiah Park

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Opening Prayer
Recognition of Retiring Judicial Council Members
Introduction of new Judicial Council Members
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Recognition of Neil M. Alexander (3:58 P.M.) (2 minutes)

4:00 – 4:20 P.M.

Afternoon Break

4:20 – 6:10 P.M.

Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Report from the Committee on Peace (6:00 P.M.) (10
Minutes)

Korean Association of The United Methodist Church

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. Closing Devotion

6:30 P.M. Adjournment

Friday, May 20

7:00 A.M.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Committee on Reference

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

Worship
– Preacher: Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky

9:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Opening Prayer
Reports:
• Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
• Committee on Credentials
• Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
• Committee on the Journal
• Committee on Reference
• Committee on Agenda and Calendar
• Committee on Presiding Officers
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Vital Congregation Moments (9:55 A.M.) (5 Minutes)

10:00 – 10:20 A.M. *Morning Break*

10:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Opening Prayer
GCFA Report
Calendar Items & Conference Business

12:30 – 2:00 P.M.

Lunch Recess – on your own

12:40 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.

Service of Holy Communion
Presider: Bishop John Michael Lowry

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Opening Prayer
GC Staff Recognitions (18 minutes)
Recognition of Rev. L. Fitzgerald Reist, II (2 minutes)
Calendar Items & Conference Business

4:00 – 4:20 P.M. *Afternoon Break*

4:20 – 6:30 P.M.

Opening Prayer
Calendar Items & Conference Business
Closing Message (15 minutes)
Closing Worship
– Preacher: Bishop Bruce Ough
Final Adjournment

Note:

For the purposes of the General Conference, the Commission on the General Conference offers the following definitions:

Orientation – The act or process of acquainting delegates and other official participants with the processes and procedures of how the General Conference functions and the role of participants within the work of the General Conference.

Briefing – The act or instance of giving instruction or preparatory information to delegates and other official participants relating to legislative matters coming before the General Conference.

The Secretary of the General Conference and the Commission on the General Conference have the primary responsibility of offering orientations to prepare delegates and other official participants for full participation in the work of the General Conference. A variety of other organizations, both official bodies of The United Methodist Church and unofficial groups, may also provide orientations and briefings. If such an event intends to talk about actual legislation under consideration by the General Conference, then the Commission on the General Conference encourages the sponsors to use the title of “Briefing” rather than “Orientation” to communicate more effectively the nature of the event.

The Commission on the General Conference has granted authority to the Business Manager to make space available at the Convention Center for briefings provided by any of the General Agencies of The United Methodist Church to the extent that space is available. The General Conference agenda and registration processes may include briefing provided that they are clearly differentiated that these are events sponsored by specific general agencies and not an official activity of the General Conference under the auspices of the Commission on the General Conference.

The following briefings are offered by General Agencies and are not an official activity of the General Conference under the auspices of the Commission on the General Conference.

Briefings for Central Conference Women Delegates and all Women Delegates – sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the United Methodist Women

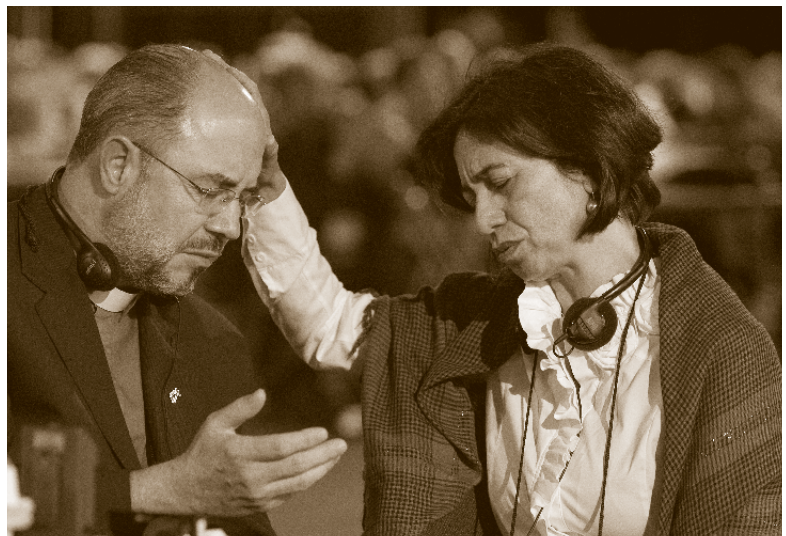
Briefing for Youth and Young Adult Delegates– sponsored by the Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship

A Briefing for Delegates of Color and Allies – sponsored by the General Commission on Religion and Race

A WORD ABOUT SCHEDULES

Because of the fluid nature of General Conference, it is impossible to tell exactly when delegates will discuss a particular issue. Even when an item is scheduled, it can be delayed if other issues have taken more time than expected. Items can also be added at the last minute if more time is available than expected.

A committee meets each night to plan the agenda for the next day. This proposed agenda appears in the early-morning Daily Christian Advocate. Even then, there is no guarantee that the schedule will be followed. Occasionally, the delegates schedule an order of the day to discuss a particular subject in plenary sessions.



Bishop Marisa de Freitas Ferreira (right) of the Methodist Church of Brazil prays for Bishop Adonias Pereira do Lago, also of Brazil, during evening worship at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

OPENING WORSHIP, ADDRESSES, OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

General Conference will open at 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, with a worship celebration that will include Holy Communion. The preacher will be Bishop Warner H. Brown Jr. of the San Francisco Episcopal Area, president of the Council of Bishops.

The Episcopal Address by Bishop Gregory V. Palmer of the Ohio West Episcopal Area will be Wednesday, May 11, at 8:30 a.m. The Council of Bishops selected Palmer to prepare and deliver the Episcopal Address on behalf of the entire council, composed of 65 bishops presiding

over episcopal areas in the United States and central conferences. The council also includes retired bishops, which now number 88.

The Laity Address will begin the 8:45 a.m. Plenary Session on Friday, May 13. Dr. Scott Johnson of the Upper New York Annual Conference will be the main speaker. Supporting him will be Courtney Fowler, Great Plains Annual Conference; Brian Hammons, Missouri Annual Conference; Warren Harper, Virginia Annual Conference; Simon Mafunda, Zimbabwe East Annual Conference; and Holly

Neal, Tennessee Annual Conference. The speakers were solicited from laity through a process of voluntary submissions. A group of judges reviewed all submissions and recommended both presenters and content. Written content from all submissions was crafted into one address. The Executive Committee of the Association of Annual Conference Lay

Leaders coordinated the speaker search.

The Young People's Address will open the Saturday, May 14, Plenary Session at 8:45 a.m. The speakers are Peter Cibuabua of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chelsea Spyles of Detroit, who will share their witness



Celebrating opening worship at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla., are (from left) Bishops Larry Goodpaster, Peggy Johnson, Rosemarie Wenner and João Somane Machado; and the Rev. April Casperson. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

for the church. They will also feature videos and interviews with other youth and young adults who submitted their ideas through media, including podcasts, YouTube and web channels. "This will not be an address by youth for youth. This will be an address by young people for the whole church," said the Rev. Carl Thomas Stroud Gladstone, Discipleship Ministries' Young People's Division regional staff member for the North Central Jurisdiction.

Delegates and visitors will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church on Tuesday, May 17, at 10:20 a.m. The AME Church is a sister Wesleyan denomination that was born in protest against slavery. It will hold its 50th quadrennial session of General Conference July 6-13 in Philadelphia.

The morning of Wednesday, May 18, will include a celebration of the successful Imagine No Malaria campaign scheduled to begin at 9:48 a.m. When the General Conference launched Imagine No Malaria in 2008, the intention was to save lives. As this revolutionary ministry culminates in celebration today, United Methodists around the world attest to the denominational transformation that has occurred, the lives saved, the crowning financial goals reached and the emphatic message that we are stronger when we work together. Truly, God “is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20b, NRSV)! A reception that evening will be a time of food and fellowship as we continue to celebrate the amazing journey through video and stories of personal witness.

This eventful day will also include a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the highly successful DISCIPLE Bible Study at 3:58 p.m.

Delegates will hear a report on the Sand Creek Massacre later on May 18 at 5:40 p.m. The 2012 General Conference participated in “An Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous People,” which continues to be an ongoing process, and called for further attention to Sand Creek. The Council of Bishops and the General Commission on Archives and History were charged with authorizing a joint resource

team, including an independent body, to explore the involvement of the Rev. John M. Chivington, a Methodist Episcopal clergyman, and John Evans, a Methodist and territorial governor, in the 1864 massacre. A 700-person force of the Colorado Territory militia destroyed a peaceful village of Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho people, most of whom were women and children.

Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky of the Mountain Sky Area offers insights into the observance planned in conjunction with the report. “The Sand Creek Massacre of 1864,” she says, “is the most thoroughly documented atrocity against Native Americans in United States history, and it was led by a Methodist preacher.” The 2016 General Conference will welcome and honor descendants of the Sand Creek Massacre as it receives the report “to provide full disclosure of the involvement and influence” in the massacre by Chivington, Evans, “the Methodist Church as an institution and other prominent social, political and religious leaders of the time.” As part of the continuing work of repentance for harm done to indigenous peoples, in this report, The United Methodist Church will ask itself how we could wander so far from the gospel of love, justice and mercy and how we can form healing relationships with the people who still bear scars 150 years later.

The 2008 General Conference voted to contribute \$50,000 to the development of a research and learning center at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, 160 miles southeast of Denver. The United Methodist Connectional Table designated an additional \$75,000 for the historic site from the World Service Contingency Fund.

MAIN TASKS

As the top policymaking body of the global United Methodist Church, General Conference is the only entity that speaks for the 12.3 million-member denomination.

During the 11-day session, delegates will revise The Book of Discipline, which regulates the manner in which local churches, annual conferences and general agencies are organized. The Discipline includes policies regarding church membership, ordination, administration, property and judicial procedures. The assembly may modify most paragraphs by a simple majority vote, but amending the Constitution of The United Methodist Church requires a two-thirds affirmative vote, followed by a two-thirds

affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members voting in annual conference sessions. Revoking or changing the Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of the delegates, and three-fourths of the annual conference members must concur.

Delegates also revise the Book of Resolutions, a volume declaring the church's stance on social justice issues. The statements in the book are considered instructive and persuasive but are not binding on members.

In addition, the assembly approves plans and budgets for churchwide programs for the next four years and elects members of the Judicial Council and University Senate.

KEY PEOPLE

DELEGATES: Each U.S. annual conference elects equal numbers of lay and clergy delegates to General Conference, and every annual conference is guaranteed at least one lay and one clergy delegate.

The number of lay and clergy delegates for each annual conference to elect changes every four years (known as a quadrennium) based on the number of lay and clergy members. The Book of Discipline limits the total number of delegates to 1,000. Article I of Section II of the United Methodist Constitution mandates that the General

Conference shall be composed of no fewer than 600 or more than 1,000 delegates, half clergy and half laity, to be elected by the annual conferences in an open and fair process. In 2016, 504 delegates (58.3 percent) will come from annual conferences in the United States.

Groups of churches in Africa, Asia and Europe are central conferences. In 2016, central conferences will have 350 delegates. This is eight delegates fewer than 2012, but a proportional increase since the previous General Conference had 988 delegates. Of the central conference

The Surrendered dance team from Nuevo Nacimiento United Methodist Church in Lebanon, Pa., dances before the evening plenary session at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.



delegates, 260 (30 percent) are from Africa, 40 from Europe and Eurasia, 50 from the Philippines and 10 from “concordat” churches with which United Methodism has formal relationships. These represent special covenant relationships with Methodist churches in Great Britain, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Caribbean and the Americas.

BISHOPS: All bishops, active and retired, attend General Conference but do not vote and may not speak in plenary sessions without permission from the assembly. Individual bishops preside over business sessions, customarily serving for one morning, afternoon or evening period. A General Conference Committee selects presiding bishops, and each presiding bishop selects a bishop colleague to serve as a parliamentarian.

CONFERENCE OFFICIALS: The secretary of the General Conference is the Rev. L. Fitzgerald “Gere” Reist II, a member of the Susquehanna Annual Conference. The treasurer is Moses Kumar, general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration. Sara Hotchkiss, a staff executive with the General Council on Finance and Administration, is business manager. She is chief administrative officer of the Commission on the General Conference.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL: The United Methodist Judicial Council will meet to decide if questions related to constitutionality emerge during the conference. The Rev. William B. Lawrence, a member of the North Texas Annual Conference and dean of Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, leads the council, the denomination’s highest judicial body, or “court.” The General Conference elects its

nine members. The Judicial Council determines the constitutionality of acts or proposed acts of the General, jurisdictional, central and annual conferences. It acts on these either on appeal of lower rulings or through requests for declaratory decisions. It also rules on whether acts of other official bodies of the denomination conform to the Book of Discipline. This follows procedures established in the Discipline.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC DIRECTOR: The Commission on the General Conference named the Rev. Laura Jaquith Bartlett of Eagle Creek, Oregon, worship and music director for the 2016 United Methodist General Conference. Bartlett is president-elect of The Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts and program director at the Alton L. Collins Retreat Center, as well as worship coach for several United Methodist churches. Her experience in leading music and worship spans more than two decades. She is an ordained deacon in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference and a three-time delegate to General Conference, serving as head of her delegation in 2012.

OTHER PARTICIPANTS: More than 2,500 visitors are expected for the duration of General Conference. These will include all members of the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table. Chief executive officers of the 12 United Methodist general agencies and the Connectional Table will also attend. Members of the church and secular press will provide coverage. Numerous United Methodist members and other interested individuals will receive credentials to sit in the visitors’ gallery.

SOURCES OF LEGISLATION

The primary sources of legislation are petitions and proposals from churches, agencies and organizations. Petitions must be submitted 210 days before the opening of the conference. Any organization, ordained minister or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference. Approximately 1,000 petitions were submitted for 2016, down slightly from the 2012 conference.

The bulk of General Conference happens in legislative committees, which receive petitions

and proposals, debate them and determine whether to approve, amend, combine or disapprove them for recommendation to the full body of General Conference.

All proposed legislation – from individuals, organizations, churchwide agencies and annual conferences – is printed in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate. Once this document is distributed to elected delegates, the petitions are posted on the General Conference website.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

All 12 legislative committees of the General Conference will meet in the convention center. The meetings are open to everyone, including media representatives, though space may be limited. Names of people serving on each legislative committee appear in the Handbook for Delegates volume of the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.

The committees review, sort and refine legislative proposals. No action is final until approved by the General Conference in plenary session. Progress reports from each committee will appear in the next day's issue of the Daily Christian Advocate.

The committees were reduced from 13 to 12 for 2016. The General Conference Commission

voted to combine the work previously done by the Higher Education and Ministry Committee, which deals with petitions concerning seminaries, ordination and clergy, and the Superintendency Committee, which deals with petitions concerning district superintendents and bishops.

The 12 committees and their assigned topics are:

1. CHURCH AND SOCIETY 1

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the General Board of Church and Society and the Social Principles, with the exception of paragraphs in the Book of Discipline dealing with “The Nurturing Community” and “The Social Community.”

2. CHURCH AND SOCIETY 2

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to “The Nurturing Community” and “The Social Community” sections of the Social Principles.

3. CONFERENCES

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to the composition and activities of General, jurisdictional, annual, provisional, missionary and district conferences.

4. DISCIPLESHIP

All petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of Discipleship Ministries go to this committee.

5. FAITH AND ORDER

This committee receives all petitions relating to “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task,” the “Ministry of All Christians,” and the meaning of ordination and conference membership.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and the United Methodist Publishing House. The budget and recommendations prepared by GCFA are submitted to this committee for study and review. When the GCFA presents its report to the General Conference for action, the committee presents its recommendations and may propose amendments.

7. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the Connectional Table. The Connectional Table

report is submitted to this committee for study and review. After the Connectional Table presents its report to the General Conference for action, the committee presents its recommendations and may propose amendments.

8. GLOBAL MINISTRIES

All petitions and resolutions relating to the work and concerns of the General Board of Global Ministries go to this committee.

9. INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to commissions and ecumenical concerns. The commissions include Archives and History, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Communications, Religion and Race, the Status and Role of Women, and United Methodist Men. Ecumenical concerns relate to the denomination’s membership in or relationship with the World Methodist Council, the World Council of Churches, other councils and consultations of churches, and the American Bible Society.

10. JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

All petitions and resolutions relating to judiciary concerns and investigations, trials and appeals go to this committee.

11. LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY

This committee receives all petitions and resolutions relating to the organization of the local church and its membership, programs, boards, councils, commissions and committees. The committee also considers petitions relating to local church property.

12. HIGHER EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENCY

This newly combined committee receives all petitions and resolutions pertaining to higher education and ministry, which deals with petitions concerning seminaries, ordination and clergy, and superintendency, which handles petitions concerning district superintendents and bishops.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CENTRAL CONFERENCE MATTERS

This committee handles legislative proposals affecting central conferences.

Recommendations by a legislative committee emerging the first week of the conference are just that – recommendations. No action is final until it has the approval of the entire General Conference. Delegates take most final actions during the second week. Final action by the General Conference is required of any statement that speaks for the denomination.

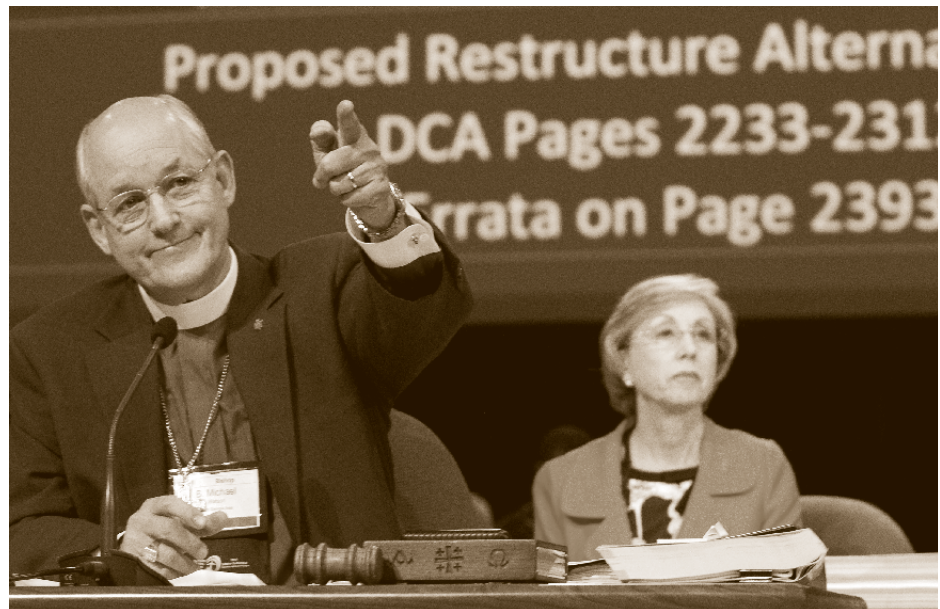
If a plenary section approves legislation that involves funding, that action is referred to GCFA and the Connectional Table (or their committees or expenditure review groups) for advice and review. The groups bring the legislation back to the assembly with specific recommendations about sources and amounts.

When GCFA and the Connectional Table present

their report, the Financial Administration Legislative Committee may propose amendments to those recommendations and presents its own recommendations. Only after the conference acts on this funding proposal does the legislation take effect.

If two-thirds of General Conference delegates approve a proposed change in the church's constitution, that action must be ratified by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of annual conference members voting at their yearly gatherings. A proposal to alter one of the Articles of Religion or the Confession of Faith requires a three-fourths majority of annual conference members. No changes may occur until the Council of Bishops announces ratification.

Most legislation becomes effective Jan. 1, 2017, unless the legislation specifies another date.



Bishop B. Michael Watson presides over a debate on church restructuring at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. At right is Bishop Janice Riggle Huie. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

TRACKING LEGISLATION

Following the progress of legislation through the General Conference process can be a challenge. Most issues come before delegates in the form of petitions sent by individuals, groups, annual conferences and governing bodies of general agencies. These appear in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate, on the General Conference 2016 Mobile App and on the General Conference website, <http://gc2016.umc.org>.

Each petition from an individual, local church, annual conference, general agency or other group receives a number and is assigned to a legislative committee. Each delegate serves on a committee and spends most of the first four days of General Conference in committee meetings.

Each legislative committee deals with petitions related to a series of paragraphs from the Book of Discipline. Petitions related to the Book of Resolutions are sorted by subject.

A legislative committee can recommend adoption, rejection or referral of a petition to a plenary session. That recommendation is called a “calendar item.” The item is assigned a number and printed in the Daily Christian Advocate, which will also be available in electronic publication format for tablet devices.

If a proposal has no financial implications, seeks no change in the constitution and receives fewer than 10 negative votes in the legislative committee, it goes on a “consent calendar.” A vote of 20 delegates is needed to remove it from

the consent calendar. If it is not removed, it is voted on with other noncontroversial items, which conserves precious floor time in the plenary session.

To summarize the legislative process:

- Annual conferences, local churches, general agencies and other organizations and individuals submit petitions.
- The petitions secretary (the Rev. Gary W. Graves for 2016) assigns a petition number to each. The number indicates the legislative committee, chronological order and source. Each petition is assigned to a legislative committee.
- Petitions are printed in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.
- A reference committee reviews assignments by the petitions secretary. The committee combines petitions and makes new assignments to legislative committees as necessary.
- Legislative committees review petitions and make recommendations to the plenary session.
- Reports are sent to the Daily Christian Advocate. A copy is returned to committee officers for approval and sent to the General Conference secretary for a calendar number prior to printing in the Daily Christian Advocate.
- Delegates in plenary session act upon the calendar item.
- Adopted legislation is printed in the Book of Discipline or the Book of Resolutions. The Daily Christian Advocate becomes the official journal of General Conference.

MAJOR ISSUES

Several major issues face delegates to the 2016 General Conference.

CHURCH STRUCTURE/POWERS

RESTRUCTURING GENERAL CHURCH

Delegates will consider a number of proposals to restructure the ministries of the general church. Several proposals focus on the Connectional Table. However, a proposal that has drawn perhaps the greatest amount of attention is Plan UMC Revised, which aims to restructure the church's general agencies.

In 2012, almost 60 percent of General Conference delegates voted for Plan UMC to restructure general agencies. On the last day of conference, the Judicial Council declared that the plan violated the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. In the years since, proponents of the plan have developed a revised proposal to present to General Conference. They see the proposal as a critical component in fostering vitality and reversing membership declines in the United States.

Key components of Plan UMC Revised:

- It gives the Connectional Table new authority to elect top executives for United Methodist Discipleship Ministries and the general boards of Global Ministries, Church and Society, and Higher Education and Ministry following nominations by the agencies' boards. The top executives would be accountable programmatically to their boards and

administratively to a newly created position of Connectional Table executive general secretary.

- It authorizes the Connectional Table executive general secretary to evaluate these agencies' top executives annually. It includes possible dismissal of such executives, "based largely in part on the degree of cooperation and collaboration with other agencies toward the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ." The legislation prohibits a bishop from serving as executive general secretary.
- It details the Connectional Table's authority to evaluate agencies based on how they direct the flow of energy toward vital congregations and carry out the mission of the global church.
- It reduces the size of some agency boards, while increasing representation from outside the United States, especially Africa. It reduces the size of the Connectional Table from 59 to 45 members.
- It eliminates the General Commission on Archives and History and moves its functions to the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA).
- It eliminates the general commissions on Religion and Race and the Status and Role of Women and moves their work to a new Connectional Table committee called the United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness.

In May 2015, active members of the Council of Bishops voted to ask the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision regarding the constitutionality of this proposed legislation. In



The Rev. George Tinker (left) receives the applause of United Methodist Church leaders after giving the sermon during an “Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples” at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. Applauding Tinker (from left, front row) are: the Rev. Thom White Wolf Fassett and Bishops Mary Ann Swenson, Robert E. Hayes Jr. and Larry M. Goodpaster. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

October 2015, the Judicial Council announced it would defer ruling on the constitutionality of the plan until its meeting in May, just before General Conference. The court said it would be “an untimely intrusion” into the legislative process to rule on one plan, when other proposed plans might face constitutional questions. The decision left open the possibility the Council of Bishops could also refer any other such plans for constitutional assessment.

GENERAL AGENCIES

The General Board of Global Ministries is developing legislation to establish a new unit on

global health for the mission agency. The strategy for a new international program, tentatively called “Abundant Health: Our Promise to Children,” would take into account intersections with the other denominational areas of focus, including ministry with the poor, developing principled Christian leaders, and creating new and renewed congregations. It would build on the successes of the Imagine No Malaria campaign, which the 2016 conference will celebrate. Agency leaders link the health strategy to Global Ministries’ work through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The agency directors are also

asking General Conference to change the name of One Great Hour of Sharing, the traditional time of an offering to pay administrative costs for disaster relief, to UMCOR Sunday.

The General Commission on Religion and Race is developing legislation related to equipping the church for relevance and relationships in a global community. It would expand and redefine the agency's role to include resourcing and increase the possibility of central conference participation.

GENERAL CONFERENCE

The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders will present legislation that would empower General Conference to override a Judicial Council ruling of unconstitutionality. The lay leader group's report concludes that such power would leave the Judicial Council in place for resolving conflicting paragraphs of the Book of Discipline, making initial decisions of constitutional review, deciding appeals from church trials and reviewing a bishop's decisions of law. "In most of these processes," the report says, "the Judicial Council would have its proper role as an appellate body where other Church bodies have considered and ruled on the issues. But the General Conference would be empowered ultimately to make its own decisions on the constitutionality of acts in keeping with our polity that General Conference is the only body empowered to speak for The United Methodist Church."

CENTRAL CONFERENCES AND JURISDICTIONS

The General Board of Global Ministries is proposing the creation of a Southeast Asia and Mongolia Provisional Central Conference.

Delegates also will consider proposals from the North Texas and Central Texas conferences for a U.S. central conference. The Northeastern Jurisdiction is proposing organizing the church into four continentwide "connections" for Africa, Asia, Europe and North American as part of its wide-ranging "Global Connection Plan."

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders will also submit two petitions related to annual conference structure. One would amend the Disciplinary paragraph defining the annual conference as the basic body in the church and delineating its rights and functions by adding a sentence: "Except when the General Conference shall prescribe specific features of its organization and structure, each annual conference, as the basic body of the Church, shall have authority to organize and structure itself as it shall determine." The other legislation would amend multiple paragraphs to empower annual conferences to determine their own agenda and structure.

The Detroit Annual Conference is requesting a change in the annual conference lay-clergy equalization formula that would base the formula for equalization of annual conference membership on average attendance of clergy and laity.

The General Commission on Religion and Race is submitting legislation that would mandate commissions on religion and race in annual conferences of central as well as jurisdictional conferences, and expand the role of the conference commission.

LOCAL CHURCH

The Association of Annual Conference Lay



Dear Friend in Christ,

Greetings! This year promises to be eventful as we move toward General Conference. I look forward to a time of prayer, fellowship and decision making as we live into God's mission for The United Methodist Church.

Whether you are attending General Conference as a delegate, a communicator or an interested church member, I welcome you to this momentous occasion in the life of our denomination.

We designed this guide as a resource for you. It contains information for all aspects of your General Conference experience. You will find the agenda for the assembly, details of the legislative process and summaries of key issues. You'll also discover information on the history of The United Methodist Church, as well as overviews of its structure, membership and finances.

You may also find that this guide will serve as a helpful reference when General Conference ends. I encourage you to share information about the assembly with your annual conferences and local congregations.

As in the past, this guide is available in multiple languages as we embrace our global connection. It also is available as a print edition and online at www.GC2016.umc.org.

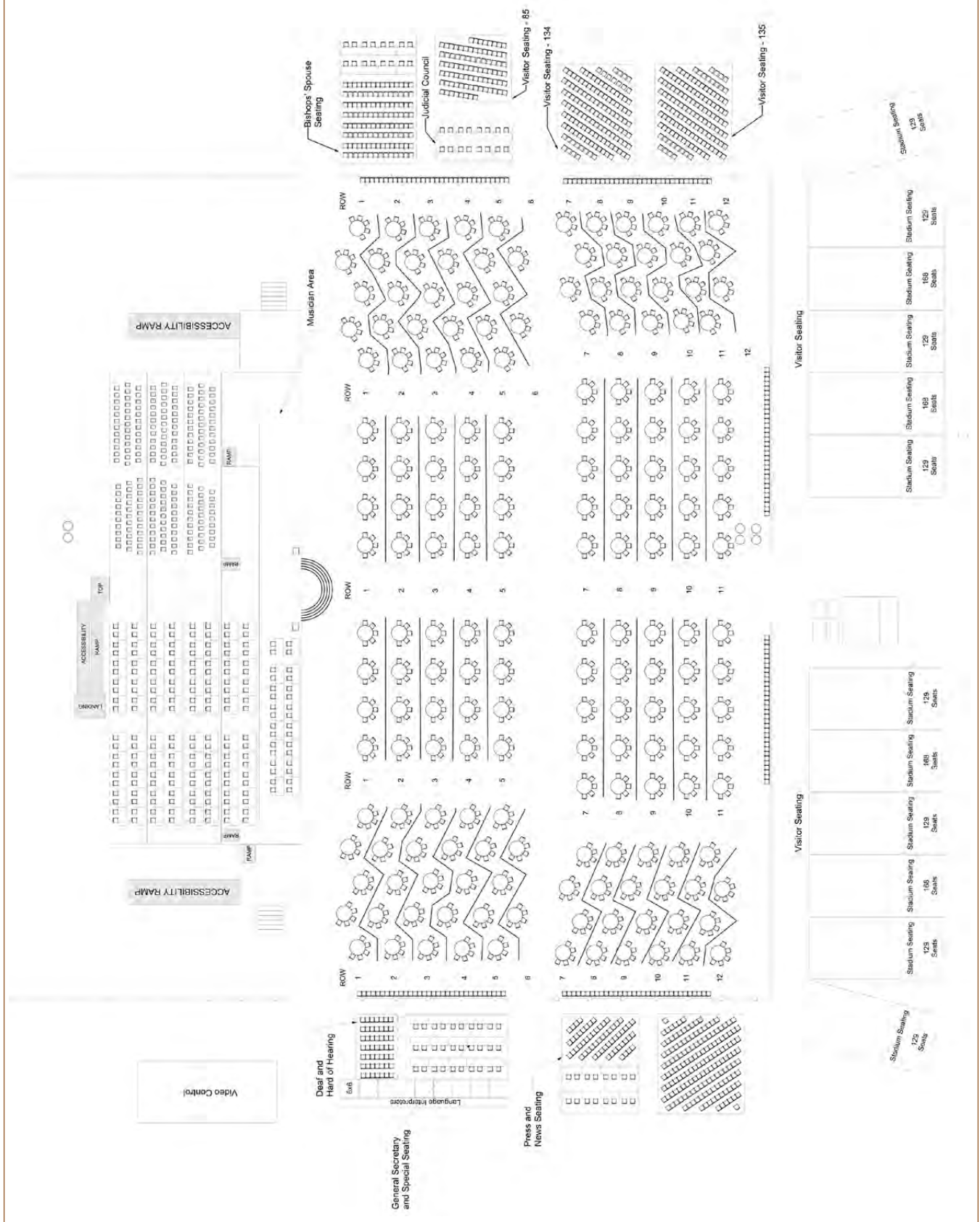
As we meet together in Portland, Oregon, I pray you will share my enthusiasm at the opportunities available. What amazing work we can accomplish when United Methodists from around the globe discuss how we, as a denomination, can best work toward making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel P. R. Krause". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

General Secretary
United Methodist Communications

PORTLAND CITY CENTER PLENARY HALL



Leaders has submitted proposed legislation that would broaden the concept of what constitutes a local church. This alternate concept of a local church would include various emergent ways in which people can gather in God's name. Examples are coffeehouses, mall and outdoor ministries, retirement home ministries and other innovative models.

The Susquehanna Annual Conference is proposing changing guidelines for the chairperson of the church administrative council and lay leader.

Methodists Representing the Concerns of Hispanic Americans (MARCHA) is requesting an amendment to the Disciplinary paragraph on covenant relationships between churches sharing facilities. The change would stipulate that the financial relationship in such covenants be intended neither to generate profit nor to support the general budget (other than utilities) of the receiving church.

WORLDWIDE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

MAKING THE DISCIPLINE TRULY GLOBAL

In 2012, the General Conference assigned the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to assist in developing a truly global Book of Discipline. Unlike U.S. jurisdictions, central conferences have authority under the United Methodist Constitution to make "such changes and adaptations" to the Discipline as missional needs and differing legal contexts require. The standing committee, in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order, must recommend

to General Conference which portions of the Discipline are not subject to adaptation. Committee leadership gave an update of their work to a February 2015 joint meeting with the Connectional Table.

The standing committee has 39 members, three from each jurisdiction and central conference, as well as three from the General Board of Global Ministries. It is the only denominationwide body in which most members are from outside the United States. Focus of the committee's work is to assess the Discipline, Part VI, Organization and Administration, which contains material most directly related to organizing ministry in the central conferences. Committee members express hope that the 2020 General Conference would approve a "General Discipline" with a worldwide outlook and possibly fewer paragraphs. The committee will make available to 2016 delegates a draft of a shorter version of Part VI and receive feedback. The only legislative proposal asks for an extension through 2020 to continue its work. After the 2016 General Conference, the committee plans to ask each annual conference to respond to the proposal using specific questions.

General Conference has determined the following parts of the Book of Discipline should apply to all United Methodists and are not subject to local adaptation. To change any of the following would require General Conference action: The Constitution, Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task, The Ministry of All Christians and The Social Principles.

Concurrent with the work of the standing committee, the General Board of Church and

Society has held global consultations on the Social Principles. These principles are not church law, rather, “prayerful and thoughtful ... to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world.” The consultations are a first step in developing more global Social Principles, a process that will last at least through 2020.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry is also submitting a legislative proposal dealing with a General Book of Discipline process in light of the worldwide nature of the church.

GCFA is sending a proposal for global funding of the general church. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters is cosponsoring the proposal. Under the proposal, central conference apportionments would contribute to two of the seven general church funds — Episcopal and General Administration. That money supports the work of bishops and the operations of denominationwide administrative bodies, including General Conference. The GCFA board recommends a different formula for central conferences, many of which are in developing countries. The formula for giving outside the U.S. would begin with the U.S. apportionment for the Episcopal and General Administration funds — \$4.24 per member.

BISHOPS

The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders has approved a petition calling for limited tenure for bishops and changing the relationships of retired bishops from the Council of Bishops to an annual conference. The legislation adds the term “residential” bishop, defined as bishops who are not retired

and whose terms of office have not expired. This would apply to both annual and central conferences. Bishops completing one eight-year term would be eligible to be elected for another eight years. The lay leaders are also submitting legislation related to conflicts of interest on the Committee on Episcopacy, removing the three-year term limit on assignments of bishops and changes in the episcopal complaint process.

CLERGY MATTERS

ORDAINED/LICENSED MINISTRY

The 2013-16 Ministry Study Commission, formed by the 2012 General Conference, is proposing significant changes in the ordination process for elders and deacons and standards that are more rigorous for local pastors. The 2012 General Conference asked the commission to tackle a range of issues, including “the nature and grounding of the elder” and education for local pastors, whose numbers continue to grow.

The most dramatic proposal, known as “early ordination” but termed “reshaping the ordination process” by the commission, would move ordination to the front end of the process — at the time a candidate is elected to provisional membership. Currently, those who have met educational requirements to be ordained as an elder or deacon must serve as a provisional member of their annual conference for at least two years. These candidates are ordained during the annual conference session at which they are elected to full membership. Rationale offered by commission leaders includes concerns that The United Methodist Church is losing clergy candidates because the current process is so lengthy. One concern that has surfaced from annual conference boards of

ordained ministry involves what would happen if a candidate were ordained, then does not achieve full membership. In that case, the commission notes, the ordination would no longer be valid in the United Methodist understanding.

The commission report includes issues affecting licensed local pastors, including strengthening the mandated course of study. It would also eliminate one requirement for local pastors who want to apply for provisional membership and get on the track to ordination as an elder. They would no longer have to be at least 40 years old.

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will introduce legislation related to the commission's call for the agency to collaborate with United Methodist-related colleges to develop an undergraduate degree program that would

also meet course-of-study requirements. The commission report also calls for changes in the Discipline referencing the course of study as a five-year program.

Another proposal would give deacons more flexibility to preside at the celebration of sacraments, and all clergy would get additional ongoing formation through mentoring and covenant groups.

The commission is making no proposals concerning the issue of security of appointment for elders, often referred to as "guaranteed appointment." The 2012 General Conference approved legislation to end this practice, but the Judicial Council ruled the legislation in violation of the Constitution.

The Association of Annual Conference Lay



Bishop Minerva Carcaño (center) joins others in celebrating the Higher Education Night celebration at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. Photo by Kathleen Barry, UMNS.

Leaders is introducing several pieces of legislation on clergy matters, including revisiting the issue of security of appointment in the constitution, requesting a role for the lay leader in appointment-making and requesting that the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry conduct a study of the number of United Methodist seminaries.

NEW HYMNAL

Discipleship Ministries is proposing a new hymnal that would use digital technology to provide music and worship resources, customizable to meet the needs of different faith communities. The Hymnal Revision Committee at Discipleship Ministries would have primary responsibility for the content of the hymnal. While part of the collection of music and resources would be uniform across all versions, another part would contain additional hymns, songs and worship resources that the user could select. The hymnal collection would go to the 2020 General Conference for approval.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly is asking annual conferences to ensure representation across all age groups, by whenever possible, electing one of every three lay delegates as a youth or young adult. They are also submitting a petition that asks annual conferences to consider the schedules of young people when setting meeting times for boards and agencies.

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

REVISED SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

At the request of the General Conference and

the Connectional Table, the General Board of Church and Society is continuing to develop revised Social Principles for a worldwide church. The board recommends continuation of its work following General Conference 2016.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

Numerous annual conferences and other groups are petitioning General Conference on the denomination's stance and statements on homosexuality. Many propose either removing or adding less-restrictive language to the Social Principles. Others call for upholding the current language and denominational standards regarding homosexuality. Some, such as the Texas Annual Conference, propose maintaining the present stance while offering "more gracious language."

The Connectional Table has voted a compromise legislative proposal that will be before the 2016 General Conference. It would remove prohibitive language from the Discipline concerning homosexuality, while making minor changes to existing Social Principles. The proposal would allow United Methodist clergy to perform ceremonies that celebrate same-sex unions if they wish, but no clergy person would be required to do so. The proposal would also remove being a practicing homosexual or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies from the list of chargeable offenses for clergy. In addition, the proposal removes language saying that the church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers it incompatible with Christian teaching, while recognizing this has historically been the church's position.

The Connectional Table describes the proposal as



Boy Scouts Justin Jackson (left) and Ryan Wilson receive The United Methodist Church's Good Samaritan Award from Larry Coppock on April 29 during the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. Coppock is director of scouting ministries at the General Commission on United Methodist Men. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

a possible “third way” to help the church resolve this contentious issue. It would end church trials over homosexuality and allow the exercise of conscience by United Methodist clergy, yet retain the authority of annual conferences to discern suitability for ordination.

United Methodist bishops in Africa have released a statement calling on all United Methodist bishops to fulfill “their shepherding responsibility” regarding the church’s teachings on marriage and sexuality. They released the statement in November 2015, at the Council of Bishops’ retreat.

The General Board of Church and Society is offering a resolution on “The Rights of All

People,” with the specific goal of protecting human and civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

In April 2015, the Commission on the General Conference voted to support an alternative discernment process for dealing with legislative petitions that may benefit from discussion in small groups. Delegates would have to approve this process.

ABORTION

Several petitions ask The United Methodist Church to withdraw from membership in the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Two petitions from Indiana call for seeking common ground and supporting adoption.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

General Board of Global Ministries' directors endorsed a new statement on religious freedom based on the love ethic of the New Testament. The proposed resolution challenges the right of any government to limit religious freedom or to use the idea of religious freedom "in ways that would harm others by denying anyone services, honor, dignity, equal rights and equal protection. Such actions that harm or discriminate against others are not expressions of religious freedom."

DISABILITIES

Several petitions address the needs and equitable treatment of persons with disabilities. One from the Pacific-Northwest Annual Conference would amend the Discipline to require that a person with a disability be a part of the committee determining clergy medical leave and that a disability would not disqualify provisional candidates. Another petition from the conference asks that the Disciplinary paragraph on conference agencies include revised language indicating every effort shall be made to ensure all meetings scheduled by the annual conference and its districts, boards and agencies convene in places that are accessible to all.

SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE

INVESTMENTS

A number of petitions address issues of investment strategies. Several would ask the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to divest from investments in fossil fuels. Others seek divestment from companies, such as Caterpillar and Motorola, which they contend go toward supporting efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Texas Annual Conference

is suggesting a "Pathway to Peace in Israel and Palestine."

RACISM/XENOPHOBIA

The General Commission on Religion and Race is submitting numerous proposals on use of diverse languages in the United States, ethnic ministry plans, ongoing acts of repentance for racism and responsibilities for eradication of racism at all levels of the church. Other proposals oppose membership in clubs or organizations that practice exclusivity; white privilege in the United States; global racism, tribalism and xenophobia and its impact on women, children and youth; and racial profiling in the United States. The Upper New York Annual Conference is asking for a "Fruits of Repentance" resolution calling for an end to the celebration of Columbus Day. United Methodist Women is calling to amend and readopt "A Charter for Racial Justice Policies in an Interdependent Global Community." Two other United Methodist Women petitions deal with transforming the context of hate in the United States and a stop to criminalizing communities of color in the United States.

IMMIGRATION

The General Board of Church and Society is seeking to amend and readopt "Welcoming the Migrant to the United States" and to continue the work of the United Methodist Task Force on Immigration.

CREATION CARE/ENVIRONMENT

The Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly has issued a statement, "Beyond Resolutions to Environmental Action," asking all levels of the church to conduct an

environmental study. The General Board of Church and Society is presenting two proposals: “Caring for Creation: A Call to Stewardship and Justice” and “Climate Change and the Church.” United Methodist Women seeks re adoption of a document called “Law of the Sea,” calling for global cooperation of this common resource through the United Nations. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is asking for re adoption of a resolution around “God’s Creation and the Church.”

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

The General Board of Church and Society has submitted two pieces of legislation dealing with justice in the world of economics: “A Call for Just Tax Structures” and “A Call for Faithful Lending Practices.” The latter decries predatory lending practices that affect the poor.

RESOLUTIONS

Many petitions deal with the United Methodist Book of Resolutions.

Annual conferences have submitted resolutions on a wide variety of subjects, including health care, prayer and support for veterans, income inequality and a request to cross-reference the Book of Discipline with the Book of Resolutions.

BUDGET

Of every dollar given in the offering, approximately:

- 85 cents stays in the local church to pay salaries and provide a building for worship, hymnals, heat and air conditioning, vacation Bible school resources and more.
- 7 cents goes to district, annual and jurisdictional conferences to provide camps and retreats,

continuing education for laity and pastors, confirmation rallies, new-church starts and more.

- 6 cents goes to “designated giving” such as The Advance, World Service Special Gifts, churchwide special Sundays and other causes.
- 2 cents goes to the general church. That is where, together, we help build new churches, prepare clergy and lay leaders, provide continuing education for pastors, send students to college and seminary, pay missionary salaries, expand Bible studies, serve with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work, ensure financial oversight and accountability of church funds, engage in diverse life-changing ministries and more.

GCFA and the Connectional Table are proposing a budget of \$611.4 million to support apportioned general funds for 2017-20. This represents an increase of 1.4 percent over the previous quadrennium. The budget for 2013-16 operations was the first time a smaller budget went before General Conference.

Budgeted funds support seven general apportionments: Africa University Fund, Black College Fund, Episcopal Fund, General Administration Fund, Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, Ministerial Education Fund and World Service Fund. The latter provides most of the funding for the denomination’s general agencies.

The proposed budget would go to support United Methodist Church missional strategies, the Four Areas of Focus, to enable vital congregations shaped by and witnessed through four focus areas: calling and shaping principled Christian leaders, creating and sustaining new places for

new people, ministries with poor people and communities and abundant health for all.

World Service is God's people reaching out in love and compassion in the name of Christ. It represents a call and a challenge to each United Methodist. The Book of Discipline calls the full payment of the World Service Fund the "first benevolent responsibility" of each congregation.

The 2012 General Conference approved two new initiatives, funded through World Service:

First, the Commission on Central Conference

faculty development, supporting associations and networks of faculty and schools, and supporting new and innovative approaches to theological education. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry administers this designated fund.

Second, the Young Clergy Initiative Fund is a three-quadrannium effort begun in 2013 to enable the denomination to focus efforts on encouraging young adults responding to the call to ordained ministry by providing a strong theological education in the United Methodist



United Methodists from around the world sing during the Opening Worship of the 2012 General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry.

Theological Education (¶817), elected by the Council of Bishops, is tasked with developing theological schools, developing courses of study, developing libraries and contextually developed resources, providing scholarships and

tradition. The initiative is in addition to the funds the church has already budgeted for discernment, recruitment, nurturing, education and support of young clergy leaders.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The union of the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist churches formed The United Methodist Church in 1968.

The Evangelical United Brethren Church, established in 1946, represented the union of two U.S.-born denominations: the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Both originated among German-speaking people in the colonies during the great spiritual awakening of the late 18th century.

The two fellowships and the Methodist Church were similar, particularly in terms of church polity and evangelistic zeal.

Jacob Albright, a lay preacher in eastern Pennsylvania, gathered followers in the early 1800s. These “Albright people” formed the Evangelical Association, later to become the Evangelical Church. The Rev. Philip Otterbein, ordained by the German Reformed Church, started the United Brethren movement in the late 1700s.

Meanwhile, the Methodist movement, which had begun in England in the early 1700s under Anglican clergyman John Wesley and his followers, had spread to Ireland and the colonies. Wesley did not officially organize a new church, but sparked a renewal movement within the Church of England.

Methodist classes and congregations met in the United States beginning in the 1760s. Around

Christmas 1784, some 60 ministers gathered in Baltimore and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. The word “episcopal” refers to the church’s administration by bishops. The denomination, which grew rapidly, was known for its circuit-rider pastors on the frontier.

In the late 18th century, racism in the church caused some groups of African-American Methodists to leave and form their own denominations, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion. In 1870, another division in the parent church led to the creation of a third black Methodist denomination, known today as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

As the church continued to grow, philosophical differences and division were inevitable. In 1830, a group, which insisted on lay representation in church government, separated and became the Methodist Protestant Church.

In 1844, the Methodist Episcopal Church split over the issue of slavery. The offspring denomination was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The north and south churches reunited in 1939, compromising on the race issue by creating a segregation system. The Methodist Protestant Church was part of the merger. Alongside the five geographic jurisdictions, an overlapping Central Jurisdiction was formed for African Americans. The 1968 merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches dissolved the Central Jurisdiction.

CENTRAL CONFERENCES

Outside the U.S., annual conferences are organized into seven central conferences. Central conferences were first established in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Asia (India in 1885 and China in 1897), then in Europe (1908), and in Africa and Latin America in the 1920s.

In the 1930s and 1960s, for a variety of reasons, many annual conferences outside the U.S. became autonomous (independent and self-

governing), particularly in most regions of Asia and in all of Latin America. Most of these autonomous churches are affiliated autonomous or affiliated united churches with The United Methodist Church and send non-voting delegates to General Conference.

Since the early 1970s, membership in the central conferences has increased tremendously, and the number of members now far exceeds those of the 1920s and 1960s.



Simone Akoh and Anne Paclio Soto, both from Côte d'Ivoire, wave during the Opening Worship of the 2012 United Methodist General Conference held in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Kathleen Barry.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in The United Methodist Church worldwide grew to more than 12.3 million in 2014, due predominantly to increases in Africa, Europe

and Asia, where membership rose from nearly 4.4 million in 2009 to 5.1 million in 2014. U.S. membership declined in the same period, from nearly 7.7 million to slightly more than 7.2 million.

STATISTICS OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

UNITED STATES

*(Sources: General Council on Finance and Administration
2014 Statistical Review of The United Methodist Church)*

2014 Lay Members 7,183,193

African American/Black	438,343
Hispanic	76,332
Native American	21,440
Asian American	93,211
Pacific Islander	14,520
White (Non-Hispanic)	6,460,538
Multiracial	62,467

2014 Clergy Members 45,651

African American/Black	2,015
Hispanic	821
Native American	135
Asian American	863
Pacific Islander	100
White (Non-Hispanic)	26,820
Multiracial	26

Women Clergy 9,580

Deacons	964
Diaconal Ministers	76
Active	31,021
Retired	2,535 (under appointment)

Active Bishops 45

African American/Black	10
Hispanic/Latino	2
Asian American	6
White	30

Active Women Bishops 12

Retired Bishops (All Nations) 88

2014 Organized Churches 32,408

2014 Average Weekly

Worship Attendance	2,832,239
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2014 Annual Conferences 57

2015 Annual Conferences 56

EDUCATION

*(Source: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry,
2015)*

Two-year Colleges 3

Four-year Colleges and Universities 92

Theological Schools 13

Professional Schools 1

Pre-collegiate Schools 10

2016 DELEGATE COUNT

North Central

Dakotas	2
Detroit	6
East Ohio	12
Illinois Great Rivers	10
Indiana	16
Iowa	12
Minnesota	4
Northern Illinois	6
West Michigan	2
West Ohio	16
Wisconsin	6

Northeastern

Baltimore-Washington	12
Eastern Pennsylvania	8
Greater New Jersey	8
New England	6
New York	8
Peninsula-Delaware	4
Susquehanna	10
Upper New York	12
West Virginia	6
Western Pennsylvania	12

South Central

Arkansas	8
Central Texas	8
Kansas East	4
Kansas West	4
Louisiana	8
Missouri	12
Nebraska	4
New Mexico	2
North Texas	10
Northwest Texas	4

Oklahoma	14
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	2
Rio Texas	10
Southwest Texas	8

Southeastern

Alabama-West Florida	10
Florida	18
Holston	12
Kentucky	10
Memphis	4
Mississippi	12
North Alabama	8
North Carolina	16
North Georgia	22
Red Bird Missionary	2
South Carolina	16
South Georgia	8
Tennessee	8
Virginia	22
Western North Carolina	20

Western

Alaska	2
California-Nevada	6
California-Pacific	8
Desert Southwest	2
Oregon-Idaho	2
Pacific Northwest	2
Rocky Mountain	6
Yellowstone	2

Africa Central

Burundi	8
East Africa	4
East Zimbabwe	4
Eastern Angola	2
Malawi Provisional	2
Mozambique North	2

Mozambique South	6	Eastern Russia and Central Asia Provisional	2
South Africa Provisional	2	Estonia	2
West Zimbabwe	2	Finland-Finnish Provisional	2
Western Angola	10	Finland-Swedish Provisional	2
Central and Southern Europe		Northwest Russia Provisional	2
Austria Provisional	2	Norway	2
Bulgaria-Romania Provisional	2	South Russia Provisional	2
Czech and Slovak Republics	2	Ukraine and Moldava	2
Hungary Provisional	2	Philippines	
Poland	2	Bicol Philippines Provisional	2
Serbia-Macedonia Provisional.	2	Bulacan Philippines	2
Switzerland-France-North Africa	2	Central Luzon Philippines	2
Congo		East Mindanao Philippines	2
Central Congo	6	Middle Philippines	2
East Congo	12	Mindanao Philippines	2
Kasai	2	North Central Philippines	2
Kivu Provisional	2	Northeast Luzon Philippines	2
Lukoshi	14	Northeast Philippines	2
North Katanga	48	Northern Philippines	2
North-West Katanga	10	Northwest Mindanao Philippines	2
Oriental and Equator	2	Northwest Philippines	2
South Congo	14	Palawan Philippines	2
South-West Katanga	6	Pampango Philippines	2
Tanganyika	8	Pangasinan Philippines	2
Tanzania	6	Philippines	2
West Congo	2	Philippines Cavite	2
Zambia	6	Quezon City	2
Germany		Rizal Philippines East	2
Germany East	2	South Nueva Ecija Philippines	2
Germany North	2	Southern Tagalog Philippines Provisional	2
Germany South	2	Southwest Philippines	2
Northern Europe and Eurasia		Tarlac Philippines	2
Central Russia	2	Visayas Philippines	2
Denmark	2	West Middle Philippines	2



Bishops who will retire in 2012 are honored at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

West Africa

Central Nigeria 6
 Côte d'Ivoire 34
 Liberia 12
 Northern Nigeria 4
 Sierra Leone 12
 Southern Nigeria 12

Concordat

Caribbean and the Americas 2
 Great Britain 4
 Mexico 2
 Puerto Rico 2

SUMMARY

North Central 92
 Northeastern 86
 South Central 108
 Southeastern 188
 Western 30
 Africa Central 42
 Congo 138
 West Africa 80
 Central and Southern Europe 14
 Germany 6
 Northern Europe and Eurasia 20
 Philippines 50
 Concordat 10
TOTAL 864

STRUCTURE OF THE DENOMINATION

THE CHURCH AS CONNECTION

United Methodist leaders often speak of the denomination as “the connection.” This concept has been central to Methodism from its beginning. The United Methodist structure and organization began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness. Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, recognized the need for an organized system of communication and accountability and developed what he called the “connexion,” a network of classes, societies and annual conferences.

Today, our denomination continues its organization in a “connectional” system. Every local church links to an interconnected network of organizations that join in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish far more than any one local church or person could alone.

Within the connectional structure of The United Methodist Church, conferences provide the primary groupings of people and churches for discernment and decision-making. Wesley described Christian conferencing as a spiritual discipline through which God’s grace may be



Delegates consider legislation at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

revealed. At every level of the connection, church leaders and members come together in conversation, or conferencing, to discuss important issues and discover God's will for the church. The word "conference" thus refers to both the assembly and organization of people as well as the process of discerning God's call together.

The United Methodist Church does not have a central headquarters or a single executive leader. Duties are divided among bodies that include the General Conference, the Council of Bishops and the Judicial Council. Our Constitution, a foundational document, requires each of these entities to be part of our structure and to play a significant role in the life of the church.

LOCAL CHURCHES AND DISTRICTS

As the visible presence of the body of Christ, the local church is where members grow in faith and discipleship, putting their faith into action through ministry in the world. Each local church is part of a district, an administrative grouping of churches in a geographic area. A charge conference governs each local church with a church council as the year-round supervisor. The church council plans and implements the programs and ministry of the local church, as well as oversees the administration of the church.

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Districts group into annual conferences, regional bodies that meet yearly for legislative purposes. Annual conferences approve ministry and mission, programs and budgets; elect delegates to General, central and jurisdictional conferences, and examine and recommend candidates for

ordained ministry. The denomination has 56 annual conferences in the United States and 75 in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

JURISDICTIONAL AND CENTRAL CONFERENCES

Five geographic jurisdictions (regions) in the United States include eight to 15 annual conferences each. Jurisdictional conferences meet simultaneously every four years to elect and assign bishops, to elect some members of general church agencies and, in some cases, to develop jurisdictional programs. Members of the jurisdictional conferences are General Conference delegates from that region plus additional delegates. Annual conferences in the region elect an equal number of laypeople and ordained clergy. United Methodists in Africa, Europe and the Philippines call the comparable geographical division a central conference. The church has seven central conferences. Each is composed of annual conferences and divided into several episcopal areas.

BISHOPS AND EPISCOPAL AREAS

Elected by jurisdictional and central conferences every four years, bishops are superintendents of their respective areas. The church has 45 active bishops and 46 episcopal areas in the United States and 20 in Africa, Europe and the Philippines. Episcopal areas include one or more annual conferences. Each bishop provides oversight of the ministry and mission of annual conferences in his or her area and appoints all clergy to their places of service.

The Council of Bishops gives general oversight of the ministry and mission of the church and

spiritual leadership to the entire church connection. Composed of all active and retired bishops, the council meets as a group at least once a year. Through its Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, the council builds and maintains ties with other Christian denominations as well as other faith groups.

GENERAL (CHURCHWIDE) AGENCIES

General agencies are primarily accountable to the General Conference rather than to the Council of Bishops. Boards of directors – lay and clergy elected jointly by General Conference and regional organizations – govern the agency staffs.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

As the denomination's highest judicial body or "court," the Judicial Council interprets church law and determines constitutionality of proceedings at all levels of church life. General Conference elects its nine members, made up of laity and clergy. They normally meet twice a year to consider whether actions of the various church bodies adhere to the constitution and follow the rules outlined in the Book of Discipline.

The Council of Bishops, the annual conferences or the General Conference generally refer cases to the Judicial Council. According to the Constitution, decisions of the Judicial Council are final.



The opening worship of the 2012 United Methodist General Conference held in Tampa, Fla., brings together worshippers from around the globe. Betty Kazadi Musau from the province of North Katanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo unfolds her prayer mantle, a gift from The Prayer Support Ministry Team. A UMNS photo by John C. Goodwin.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The United Methodist Church is a member of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, the World Council of Churches and the World Methodist Council; one of nine denominations participating in Churches Uniting in Christ; and a provisional member of Christian Churches Together. It is also part of the Pan-Methodist Commission, a 43-member body that includes representatives of The United Methodist Church and five historically African-American Methodist churches: the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Union American Methodist Episcopal and African United Methodist Protestant denominations. The commission fosters cooperation among its member denominations in evangelism, missions, publications, social concerns and higher education.

ETHNIC INITIATIVES AND CAUCUSES

**BLACK METHODISTS FOR CHURCH RENEWAL
INC. (BMCR INC.), GAMMON THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY, ATLANTA, 470-428-2251**

The Rev. Cedrick Bridgeforth, chair,
info@bmcrumc.org

Website: <http://www.bmcrumc.org>

**METODISTAS ASOCIADOS REPRESENTANDO
LA CAUSA DE LOS HISPANO-AMERICANOS
(MARCHA)**

Raul Alegria, president, ralegria1130@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.marchaumc.org>

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASIAN
AMERICAN UNITED METHODISTS (NFAAUM)**

The Rev. Jacob S. Dharmaraj, president,
nfaaum@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.nfaaum.org>

**NATIONAL PLAN FOR HISPANIC/LATINO
MINISTRIES, GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL
MINISTRIES, NEW YORK**

The Rev. Francisco Cañas, director,
fcanas@umcmmission.org

Website: www.nphlm.org

**NATIVE AMERICAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN,
DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES, NASHVILLE,
TENNESSEE**

The Rev. Anita Phillips, executive director,
aphillips@UMCdiscipleship.org

Website: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/leadership-resources/native-american>

**NATIVE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CAUCUS
(NAIC)**

Cynthia Kent, chair

Website: <http://www.naicumc.info/contact.html>

**PACIFIC ISLANDER MINISTRY PLAN, GENERAL
BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES, NEW YORK**

The Rev. Christian Van, executive secretary, Asian
American Language Ministry and Pacific Islanders
Ministry Plan, CVan@umcmmission.org

**PACIFIC ISLANDER NATIONAL CAUCUS OF
UNITED METHODISTS (PINCUM)**

The Rev. Sione Veikoso, chair,

Lonivk@yahoo.com, 818-470-6984

**STRENGTHENING THE BLACK CHURCH
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, DISCIPLESHIP
MINISTRIES, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

The Rev. Fred A. Allen, national director,
fallen@umcdiscipleship.org, 615-340-1721

Website: www.sbc21.org

**UNITED METHODIST COUNCIL ON KOREAN-
AMERICAN MINISTRIES, GENERAL BOARD OF
GLOBAL MINISTRIES, NEW YORK**

Paul Hak-Soon Chang, executive director,
pchang@umcmmission.org, 212-870-3864

Website: <https://www.umcmmission.org/Connect-with-Us/National-Plans/Korean-Ministry-Plan>

REFERENCE MATERIALS

The Daily Christian Advocate (DCA) is the most important reference tool for General Conference. Edited by United Methodist Publishing House staff member Brian Sigmon, it is comparable to the U.S. Congressional Record. An Advance DCA is available before the conference. That volume will be sent prior to General Conference to delegates and subscribers.

One issue of the DCA will be published each morning during the 11-day session and placed on delegates' desks. The final edition with an index will be mailed to the homes of delegates and subscribers after General Conference adjourns.

The Advance Edition includes all legislative proposals from individuals, local churches, caucuses and general agencies. The volume also contains reports from the study committees and all general agencies.

A Handbook for Delegates includes an alphabetical listing of delegates, legislative committee assignments, seating assignments and proposed rules of order for the conference.

The Daily Christian Advocate contains daily transcripts of the conference proceedings, news stories and features, and daily summaries of legislative committee actions.

Representatives of all United Methodist and other church-related publications can order their own DCAs (advance and daily issues) by calling Cokesbury, 800-672-1789, or online at www.cokesbury.com. Copies of the daily editions will

be available for purchase at the Cokesbury booth in the convention center.

DAILY CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE PRICES:

Handbook for Delegates (Vol. 1): Names, addresses and committee assignments for all delegates, plus information about the conference and proposed rules of order. (9781501810299; \$10.99)

Advance Edition (Vol. 2, Sec. 1, 2, 3 and 4): All board and agency reports, plus all legislative proposals organized by committee. (9781501810350; \$67.99)

General Council on Finance and Administration Report (Vol. 3): Report of the council. (9781501810374; \$12.99)

Daily Christian Advocate and Roundup: Every issue of the Daily Christian Advocate plus the roundup edition. (Picked up daily at General Conference, 9781501810398; \$67.99) (Mailed after General Conference, 9781501810398; \$67.99)

Daily Christian Advocate: All five volumes (9781501810534; \$124.99)

The website for General Conference, <http://gc2016.umc.org>, provides links to general agency petitions, proposals and reports and a list of delegates, along with the legislative committees and paragraphs of The Book of Discipline with which they will be dealing. This same information will appear in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate.

CROSSING THE LANGUAGE BARRIERS

The United Methodist Church is a diverse denomination with congregations speaking a variety of languages. Simultaneous voice translation for delegates will be available in English, French, German, KiSwahili, Korean,

Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Swahili. The Advance Daily Christian Advocate will be available in English, French, KiSwahili and Portuguese.



Pan-Methodist church leaders join together on May 1 at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. From left are: Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader, The United Methodist Church; Bishop Thomas Hoyt Jr., Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; the Rev. W. Robert Johnson III, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; and Bishop John F. White, African Methodist Episcopal Church. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

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The United Methodist Church



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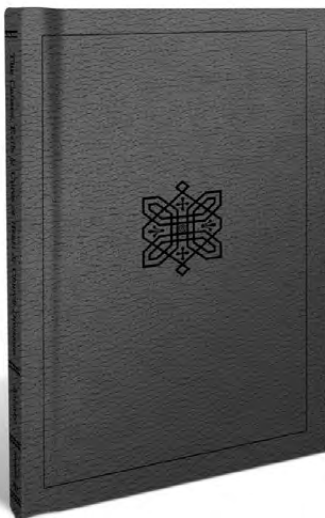
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In 1792, Francis Asbury compiled a small book of short entries based on two earlier works: Richard Burroughs's *Heart Divisions, the Evil of Our Times* and Richard Baxter's *The Cure of Church Divisions*. The result was *The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*, addressing faithfulness in the midst of internal and external struggles. Asbury intended the book to be used by "all ministers of the gospel, and professing Christians of every denomination . . . that they may cultivate a spirit of unity and brotherly love."

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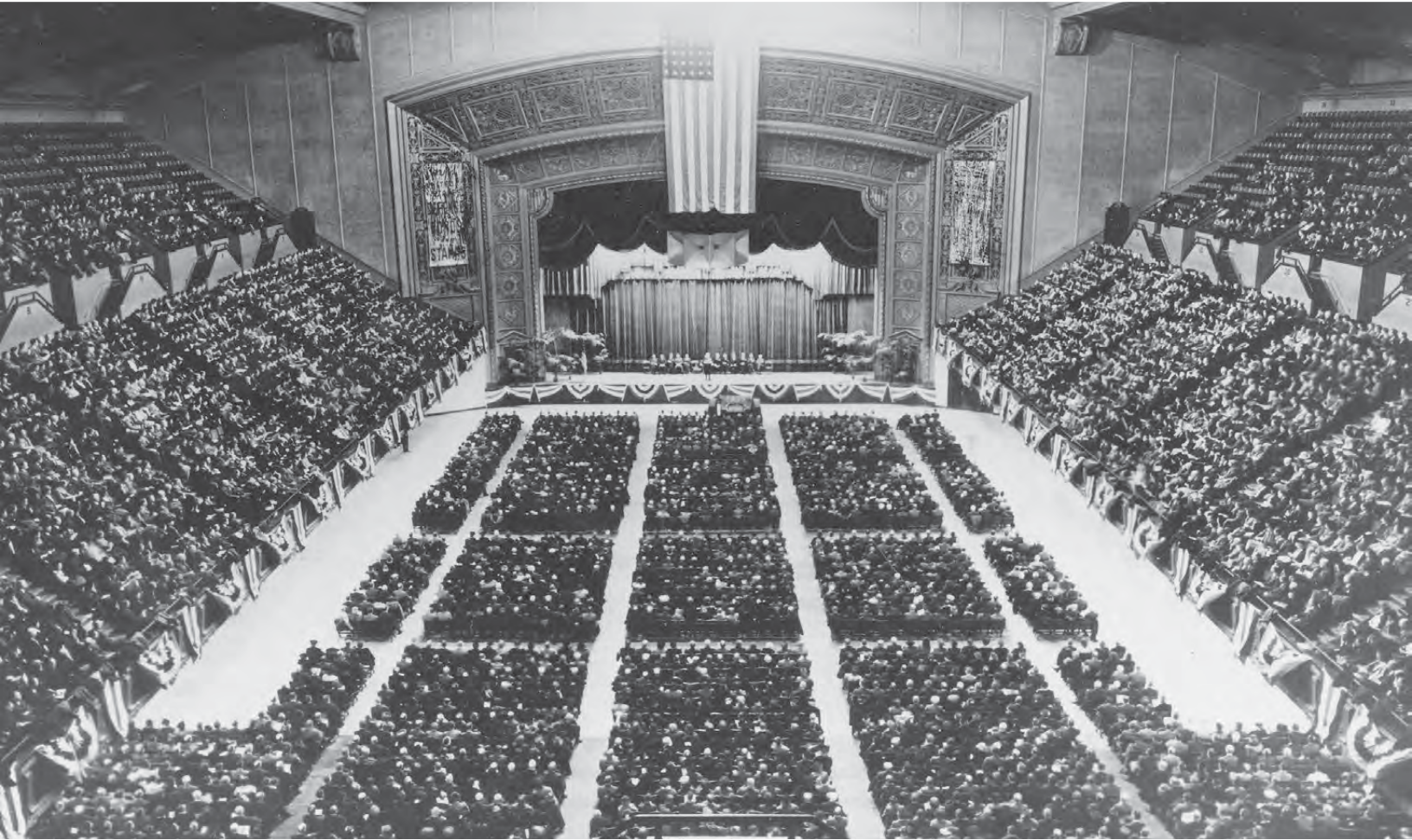


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COMMUNICATIONS

The United Methodist Church



Telling the story of General Conference

Over the last 75 years, our role at General Conference has expanded from the initial media relations and reporting to include:

- Strategic planning
- Message development
- Pre-General Conference briefings
- Production/Live streaming
- Tech support and logistics
- Website/mobile app
- Delegate training
- Multimedia news coverage
- Public information
- Delegate toolkit and resources
- Newsroom
- Social media

These efforts reflect the work United Methodist Communications does every day to inform, inspire and engage the people of The United Methodist Church and the world.

Learn more at UMC.org/GC2016

PORTLAND AREA MAP



CREDITS

Compiled by the Rev. Joan Gray La Barr, Dallas, and edited by Barbara Dunlap-Berg and Tim Tanton, United Methodist Communications, with additional proofing by the United Methodist Communications Content Team. Photo assistance by Kathleen Barry. Production by Carlton Loney, United Methodist Communications. Design by Cronin Creative.

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COVER PHOTO

Bishop James King (left) and the Revs. Moteo Yamada Foor (center) and Kim Reisman sing during worship at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Fla. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.



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