

DREAMING A NEW METHODIST MOVEMENT

The Future of the
Desert Southwest Conference
August 19, 2019

OUR GOAL

90% of churches in the Desert Southwest Conference, and the clergy who serve them, covenant together to create this new movement.

THE BEST OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- Episcopal leadership
- Connectional
- Ministry of the Orders: Elder, Deacon, Licensed Local Pastors, Diaconal, Deaconness, Missioners
- Itinerant, guaranteed appointments for Elders
- Ministry of the Laity: trained laity leading alongside clergy into the community and world
- Open hearts, open minds, open doors

WHAT CHANGES?

- Annual Conference becomes the main decision-making body of the new Methodist Movement.
- The Discipline is simplified. Remove all restrictive language around human sexuality; remove references to General Conference and General Boards and Agencies; limit scope of Jurisdiction; replace description of local church structures and how decisions are made; allow for greater contextual flexibility in structure.

OUR DREAM

A new Methodist movement: a fully inclusive church, relevant in today's world, embodying Christ's love and rooted in our Wesleyan heritage.

OUR PURPOSE

To grow disciples of Jesus Christ: people who love God, love others, and work together to transform the world.

OUR VALUES

- Rooted in relationships (including trust & compassion)
- Authenticity
- Boldness (breaking barriers & building bridges)
- Collaboration
- Sacredness of all creation (includes inclusivity, diversity, and earth care)

- Annual Conference structures streamlined, with the focus of ministry on local churches. Superintendency redefined; those serving in such capacity are trained in development of healthy church culture/practices in order to resource local church pastors. Conference becomes a center for training clergy, including intentional preparation prior to appointment changes. Programming initiated and evaluated by trained leaders within local churches (less need for Conference programming staff).
- Appointment process becomes more collaborative.
- Guaranteed appointment adapted; more protection for local pastors; easier exit process for ineffective clergy.
- Apportionments a simple tithing (10%): Simplified apportionment structure would support carefully selected mission projects, Episcopal and staff compensations, and agreed-upon support for general agencies.
- Term limits for Bishops (3 terms). District Superintendents and Conference Program Staff serve 4 years (with a maximum of 6 years).
- A streamlined General Conference brings delegates together to work on common ministries centered on mission and justice projects.
- Annual Conferences work together on mission and justice ministries.

WHAT REMAINS?

THE BEST OF THE METHODIST MOVEMENT

- Grounded in grace: prevention, justifying, sanctifying
 - Social holiness and personal piety
 - Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Experience
 - Open Communion
 - Ministry of all believers
 - Big Tent: worship and work together while respecting differences
- ### CORE PRACTICES
- Celebrate and measure foundations of faith (baptisms, new disciples, acts of justice and mercy, connectional ministries, ministries with future and oppressed populations.
 - Pastors remain in local churches for minimum of 5 years (with few exceptions).
 - Conference leadership is intentionally diverse in ethnicity, age, sexual and gender expressions.
 - Deep Demographic Connection: The attendance and leadership of our churches match the demographics of our communities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens to clergy pensions?

Wespath assures clergy that benefits are secure. In the future, they will work with all Wesleyan related churches for health and pension benefits.

WHAT HAPPENS TO UMCOR AND OTHER UM BOARDS AND AGENCIES?

These agencies and boards are valued and necessary in our Methodist expression in the global and local context. Each conference will determine what percentage of apportionments will be funding the boards and agencies.



Desert Southwest Conference
The United Methodist Church

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August 19, 2019**

*Don't remember the prior things;
don't ponder ancient history.
Look! I'm doing a new thing;
now it sprouts up; don't you
recognize it? I'm making a way
in the desert, paths in the
wilderness.*

Isaiah 43:18-19 CEB