



S.C. DELEGATION

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Table Conversations Feedback

Jan. 26 Listening Session (Union UMC-Irmo)

(Columbia/Greenwood/Rock Hill districts)

Question 1: What are your hopes for the UMC?

- One disciple-making church.
- Love one another as Christ loved us.
- Let God judge.
- A United Methodist Church that is accepting of all.
- Remain united so we can continue our world mission.
- Remain united as a church based on our understanding of Jesus' teachings.
- United in Christ and with one another and scripture-based and with unconditional love.
- Respectful and amicable separation.
- Unity and love.
- Keep Christ central.
- Wesleyan heritage
- Primacy of scripture
- Unity and love for all
- Stay true to mission of making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.
- Accept the Bible as the holy inspired word of God.
- Seek unity in love in our expressions of faith.
- Our hope is to practice Christianity by adhering to Wesley's three rules:
 - Do no harm.
 - Do good.
 - Stay in love with God.
- So that the denomination is inclusive and ceases to harm/hurt any part of its membership.
- God – First priority – and glorifying God.
- Teach the Word (the truth) – the Bible.
- Love and unity.

- To do God’s will, to thrive, to grow.
- To be united, even if we have differences about what it means to be “united”.
- To acknowledge the authority of scripture.
- To reflect the love of God.
- Maintain focus on Jesus Christ by our unity.
- Decisiveness where there has been indecision, but also a sense of union and “unitedness” in the mission of God/Jesus/Holy Spirit as guided by the scriptures toward the growth of discipleship.
- Continue with our mission of making disciples of Christ, following the foundation laid by the Wesley brothers of referring to scripture, reason, experience and tradition – and when conflict arises, scripture is the final authority; maintain The Book of Discipline as it defines marriage.
- Discerning God’s will for the church.
- Reaching the community by sharing God’s love.
- Creating an atmosphere of love and peace.
- Seeking God’s will (not ours) in our church.
- Where we live together in:
 - Love
 - Unity
 - Acceptance
 - Agreement
 - Peace
 - Fairness
 - Equitable
- A place where we can all be disciples of Jesus.
- Survive without destroying the church.
- Be able to refocus on missions and ministry of being the church.
- Determining and fulfilling God’s will according to God’s word.
- Remain united as a church with the core beliefs as defined in current discipline, for which we pledged as members to support, knowing and showing the love of Christ as disciples to him.
- Live into the scripture.
- Be a unified church.
- Love God and each other.
- Christ-centered church focused on God’s will and God’s word.
- Christ-like healing in separation.
- We would be a good example of respecting each other through conflict.
- With the leadings of Jesus, we seek to be Methodist Christians and, above all, pleasing to God.
- Let us leave the past issues behind and move toward the future.

- To be unified in our love of Christ in our objective of showing love to others.
- Agree to disagree respectfully, while remaining unified and connectional, unconditionally, inclusively as taught by Jesus Christ.
- Unity – We are all better off together.
- Diversity makes us stronger.
- Embracing everyone with the love that Jesus had.
- Respect and reverence guided by scripture (scriptural basics).
- Deepen/strengthen connectional (define “UMC”).
- Live “open doors, hearts, minds”.
- That we not lose what we have already built:
 - The making of disciples
 - A passion for mission
 - Love for all of our neighbors
 - Ministries of compassion
 - That we do what Jesus would do
 - Unity
- Open to the Holy Spirit’s transforming work in our lives so we become more like Christ and engaged in God’s mission to transform the world.
- To remain united and grow in a way that is relevant and reaches out to the community and the church and its mission.
- UMC fulfills God’s mission.
- Teach God’s word as it was written.
- Whatever our decision, do it in love.
- Relationships/unity/community within school, home, work, church.
- My hope for the UMC is to continue to love all people and invite those nearest to our church by inviting them to experience our love.
- Prayerfully.
- Being intentional with a plan to attract people in general, with a focus on young people, or the church dies.
- Honoring our traditions such that it does not interfere with “prayerfully.”
- Remain one – unified.
- Reflect the love of Jesus to all people.
- Continue to make disciples of Christ.
- Unity within the churches that are attended.
- All are God’s children and each person is responsible for his own relationship to God, but some people are uncomfortable with the church policy and feel the church itself should be united in policy.
- Remain unified, as we know it now.
- Maintain the current language of The Book of Discipline.

- Further conversation and clarification on the meaning of inclusivity.
- A unified church grounded on the words and examples of Jesus Christ.
- Growth and vitality.
- Diversity to reflect the communities in its membership and ministry.
- Respectful.
- Move forward.
- Unity.
- Our hope is that the UMC remains united, continuing to work as disciples of Jesus Christ, with our focus on acceptance.
- Love, common ground and unity.
- That we live together despite our differences.
- Unity of the purpose of the church to share Jesus for the transformation of the world.
- Stay unified, unless differences are irreconcilable.
- Guided by the Bible:
 - Our mission
 - Continuing revelation through prayer/Holy Spirit
- Take a stand on what UMC stands for, clear on what we believe.
- If not broken, don't fix it.
- Need to have open doors and hearts – not our place to choose who comes through our doors.
- To follow Jesus' example of loving and respecting each other with open hearts and minds to transform the world.
- Stay united and recognize and accept authority of scripture and General Conference.
- Be better at making disciples.
- Let us stop arguing and get on with the business of the church. If we are going to split let us get it done in a manner that is fair with everyone. There needs to be a definitive plan and stick to it. There needs to be clear responsibilities set and clear leadership.
- Settle differences and stay as one.
- Our hope is that we can reach definitive disagreement so that the Judicial Council can enforce the discipline.
- Unified behind the leadership of Christ.
- Unity and understanding, tolerance and love for one another, our church and God.
- Unity with flexibility in order to bring peace within the church and allow the church to continue to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- That The UMC be missional:
 - Christ in the center
 - Council of Bishops who behave in the Holy Spirit
 - The church be one with humanity
 - Unconditional unity
 - Get back to the word of God

- Stop using race, ethnicity to designate churches
- Growth across all age groups in the church.
- Healing beyond a quick fix.
- Trust in diversity.
- Peaceful coexistence.

Question 2: What are your main concerns?

- Alienation of members and communities.
- Losing our spirited direction.
- Unwilling to change.
- Financial.
- Acceptance of all people in The UMC.
- That no decision will be made – need “a” decision made based on God’s word.
- Don’t be conformed to the world.
- Respect for each other in process.
- That our churches don’t split.
- Gay clergy and lay members welcome – concern with church marrying gay members.
- Other General Conference business will not get proper attention until issue of LGBTQ resolved.
- Division.
- Lack of evangelism.
- Departure from the word of God.
- Split.
- The possibility of three or more churches.
- Loss of membership.
- Loss of revenue.
- We should not be as concerned by what the media is saying as to what Christ is saying.
- We are concerned that we are not going to be seen as relevant.
- Bishops, pastors and churches who don’t follow the rules or The Book of Discipline and the Bible.
- To regain focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ.
- We are concerned that we will condemn people we disagree with.
- Missional power loss of force for good.
- Lack of unity to truly move forward.
- Asset division and church structure.
- Appointment process.
- Prayerfully discerning God’s will and not just our will.

- Our main concern is that as a church we lose our desire/ability/mission to be concerned for people beyond our four walls.
- If it splits the conference with “traditional” language, retain the name Methodist.
- If we split, we will be less effective at God’s mission.
- What will happen to church assets, pastors, etc.
- The church was established to glorify God and to help all find Jesus – not to accommodate the world, but stand on God’s word.
- Even though Traditional Plan passed in 2019, it is not being honored and upheld.
- Mission, outreach endangered.
- Eliminate exclusivity to accept everyone.
- How media portrays UMC.
- Split.
- Relevance to younger generations.
- How do we grow the church?
- There may be a split.
- How will we heal and move on (grow)?
- Want to keep Jesus and Gospel central. Gospel getting lost.
- Keep property.
- Worried that our conflict sends a negative message to the world and may turn people away from Jesus.
- Clarity of identity as The UMC (the General Conference, Book of Discipline enforcement or lack thereof, issues in the church).
- The lack of young people as lay and clergy.
- Public perception.
- The potential of division of The UMC.
- This will impact:
 - Relationships
 - Financial stability of the UMC
 - Outreach and witness
- That we become so liberal that we lose our roots.
- We are losing younger people to non-denominational churches.
- We are losing faith in the Holy Spirit to guide us. That causes us to move in self-direction.
- Our hope will not be realized.
- Missing demographics:
 - Age
 - Race
- Will General Conference speak for me? (What happens with/without decision?)
- Fear of losing inclusive nature of UMC.

- If there is a split, how can different separate groups survive?
- Fear that we are missing an opportunity to prepare for the future.
- Survival of the church.
- Disagreement over biblical interpretation/inspiration vs. literal/inerrant vs. errant
- Faithfulness.
- Unity.
- We fear divisiveness, a church split, and that we will die, but hopefully we will model God's love, learn from others who have experienced this to stay relevant within the community.
- We are not united on the heavier topics throughout The UMC.
- We are focused on topics and losing sight of the mission of the church.
- Lack of growth in The UMC (particularly younger generation).
- Lack of diversity and not reaching the community we represent. We are not growing because we are excluding people and, therefore, losing them.
- We have lost our way with our Wesleyan tradition, and our denomination doesn't look any different from any other reformed denominations; we are losing our ability to be effective disciples.
- That we will go for a quick fix, and it's about financial and property.
- That we remain open, available and accessible into the future.
- How will the decision affect missions?
- How do we explain this to the younger generations?
- What does The UMC stand for?
- Lack of:
 - Unity
 - Involvement
 - Growth
- Youth and young adults are leaving.
- Need to have conversations in loving, positive way – not hurt one another.
- If our doors are not open to everyone – not very Christian.
- Want people to come together and not split the church.
- We will no longer be united by the love of Christ – instead we'll have the form of "religion" without the witnessing love of Christ in our lives.
- Losing our focus on God's will.
- The church is taking a step backward to the time of separation.
- That our children are loved unconditionally and fully included.
- Judicial Council will hold bishops and clergy accountable to the scriptures and Book of Discipline they vowed to uphold.
- Calling sinners to repentance.
- We need to be example to the world of united not un-tied.

- It will divide the churches in the conference. UMC now accepts all cultures regardless, and now women pastors – the church has survived.
- Can we accept the LGBTQ person as a “child of God” without accepting his or her behavior?
- We need to make a decision. Limbo is not good. Let’s conclude the process. Clean break.
- Fear that we will be single-issue focus; church should be about a lot more.
- Concern that we are straying from the word of God.
- Was always proud to be a United Methodist. If we’re not unified, then what?
- Our actions matter. In some parts of the world, LGBTQ individuals are persecuted.
- Our public worldwide witness (everybody is looking at the General Conference).
- Local churches are concerned about property rights and UMC “branding” (it took 52 years to build this brand).
- We are becoming more segregated – fewer views are considered.
- Preserving UMC theology.
- Growth (lack of) in the church.
- What will happen to our church?
- Anxiety about the future.
- That we will stay in the quagmire.
- That the two sides will pull so hard that the majority in the middle will be the most damaged.
- That the issues don’t cause us to forget that we’re all God’s children who should be treated with love.
- Hurt each other as we lose our Christian witness because of our conflicts and the way we are treating each other.
- How the next generation will view the church.
- Legal ramifications of a split.
- Disobedience of Book of Discipline:
 - Clergy
 - Marriage
- Separation of the church.
- Being relevant and loving.
- Being true to the discipline and doctrine of the church.
- How to manage differences without split.
- Emotions are intense – can breed hate – long-lasting animosity.
- How to learn from ways we have managed differences in the past (race, gender).
- How to respect one another.
- Fear we will lose focus on Christ and mission.
- Are we being directed by culture or influencing culture?
- Loss of power and focus away from God.

- Concern with division within the church relative to:
 - Finances
 - Foundation for future generations
 - Not finding resolution on dividing issues
- What a split will mean to our local church.
- That a split will be a poor example of the nature of God.
- That we find ways to love each other even more.
- Splintering of the denomination and its impact on our mission.
- That “we” The UMC are not reaching the younger generation.
- Lack of inclusion.
- Long-term financial stability of the church.
- Loss of focus in making discipleship, which includes people of all ages.
- Older congregations mentoring confirmands.
- If our current positions change, how will we address the traditional UMC beliefs? Family structure.
- How can we find common ground for all viewpoints?
- Are we really “open hearts, open minds, open doors”?
- The conflicts of the church (stresses) affect our overall focus and witness.
- Declining membership (especially young people).
- Lack of effectiveness concerning ministry and purpose.
- Ceasing to be biblically based in outreach and teachings.
- No clear guidance from our leadership.
- Lack of enforcement of discipline.
- Getting bogged down in personal preferences and not making disciples.
- Loss of individuality in worship.
- UMC should not reflect society but should reflect the word of God.
- Standards for church leadership.
- The stance of the local church is not necessarily reflected by the delegates.
- The current practices of the UMC will lead to the death of the denomination.
- (Mis) interpretation of scriptures by proof-texting continues to cause division.
- Whatever is decided, that we not come away discouraged.
- All clergy be recognized as clergy (as of 2019).
- Rely on the Holy Spirit, not personal decisions.
- Things will stay the same resulting in continued harm, hurt and alienation.

Question 3: What do you want S.C. delegates attending the 2020 General Conference to know?

- God's will.
- We do not hate those we disagree with.
- Want fair distribution of property.
- Church security needs to be addressed.
- Please keep us up to date as things develop.
- What are the various proposals?
- We want to know what delegates positions are on issues.
- Which plan/proposal our delegates support.
- We're praying for you.
- We're worried and concerned.
- Rely on biblical references, prayer and the Holy Spirit.
- Keep Tradition Church intact (as voted on in 2019).
- Vote on biblical teaching (not on political corrections) tempered with love.
- Campus ministry is a vital avenue to bring young people into the UMC.
- Delegates need to be mindful of the diversity within the UMC when they are voting.
- The delegates vote the way of the people they represent (not personal feelings).
- Resolution – Do something so this doesn't dominate all action and focus.
- Prayers for delegation.
- We know you cannot make everyone happy. We understand a split is likely.
- Represent the "whole church."
- Acknowledge that we are not just "left" or "right" – but the "middle".
- Support a plan that is based on scripture to carry out the mission of the UMC.
- Respond to their constituents, not just vote based on their own belief.
- Hoping they know the policies before they vote on them.
- We want delegates to have true knowledge of what individuals are feeling.
- Big concern: No one addressed the elephant in the room. We feel like the three questions were extremely vague and did not allow us to express near enough of our opinion and our heart where any voter (delegate) can vote with a feel for our opinions/wishes.
- Prefer to remain united.
- We have weathered divisive issues in the past and have become stronger because of it.
- We are praying for you.
- Abide by the general rule: Do no harm.
- Attend to the mission.
- How the majority of SC churches would vote (delegates support).
- Keep our churches informed and educated on issues of General Conference.

- Praying for them to do the right thing.
- Know that they are in our prayers.
- Confident that they will be faithful and do their best work.
- Be open-minded and not be distracted by just one issue.
- Our group represented differing opinions (General Conference 2019), but we all desire resolution, and we trust you to do it.
- Be Christ-like and respectful to others.
- We are looking for honesty, respect and dignity.
- Discern God's will and vote accordingly.
- We need a decision.
- Closure.
- You are in our prayers, and we want you to know.
- The current language in the Discipline is wrong and hurtful.
- Listen to God/Jesus' word and not human interpretations.
- This is your chance to stop the hurt and build the church.
- People are afraid of the split.
- Much prayer is needed.
- Be in prayer for God's will.
- To do no harm.
- Property ownership?
- We are praying for our church leaders.
- More division will result within local churches if the Book of Discipline is amended.
- Your decision has worldwide effects; other countries may leave.
- Equal representation of:
 - The delegates of SC.
 - The people of The UMC.
 - Current Discipline and spiritual belief.
- We are praying for our delegates and for all of us.
- No changes to The Book of Discipline.
- Our table is divided. Conclude the process. Make a decision.
- WWJD?
- We are praying.
- Prayerfully consider our youth and young adults; listen to them.
- We (The UMC) are willing to work on ways to be united in our differences. Let us try.
- Stay positive.
- Many churches have not included laity in discussing the issues.
- Pay attention to the writing on the wall.
- You are doing God's work through your work w/ the General Conference, so be sure to follow Christ's teachings.

- Think globally, act locally, and consider our young people and the church they may inherit as you consider legislation.
- Listen to/hear the Holy Spirit.
- We're concerned about the future of the church.
- That we all love everyone, whether we are traditional or progressive.
- If a new creation is necessary, it is OK.
- Don't sacrifice human rights for unity.
- The weight of the decisions are heavy, and it is time to stop dragging it out.
- That having youth delegates to General Conference would speak to our future.
- That we want to be heard and feel we are represented.
- That we are in prayer for the General Conference.
- We trust you will make prayerful decisions as you represent us. Avoid distractions.
- Discern God's plan.
- Pray all the time before you take action.
- Take time to listen to the Father's leading.
- Be swift to follow God's leading.
- Pray for delegates' vote to be united and majority rules.
- No split.
- A love for the order of The UMC. It is time tested.
- God is still in charge.
- Faith that our relationship will remain the same.
- God is the one and only judge.
- God not want delegates to vote for sin.
- "This is my Father's world...and God is the ruler yet."
- We are keeping the delegates and conferences in prayer that God will reveal the correct decision and give us, the members, and the strength to accept what is decided.
- Feel as if we can't be sure our voice is being represented.
- Protect UMC theology.
- Decisive vote – concerns about splitting the church.
- Our prayers are with the delegates to vote how God is leading.
- You have our prayers and ask that you listen to what God puts on your heart.
- Enter into this prayerfully.
- Make decisions based on researching scriptures. Love people, don't judge them.
- We will be praying for them.
- Make sure what we say here gets to General Conference.
- Come up with a solution so we can regain our momentum.
- It is 2020. We need to advance our thinking to achieve resolution, so remember the lives that will be affected, and know that we are praying for you, and ask that you trust your heart and the Holy Spirit.

- Prayer for our delegation to seek God's will and not their own.
- Removing derogatory and condemning language from Discipline.
- We want them to know that we are praying that they do the very best that they can, knowing that they are commissioned to do God's work.
- It's all about God.
- We're praying for the delegation.
- We pray that they represent the people in the pews, who pay the bills, and not their own agenda.
- We will be praying for them that God's will be done.
- We encourage them to pray for discernment.
- Use scriptures to help them.
- Prayerfully consider your position.
- Counsel from God and not from man.
- We are praying that you will do God's will, not your own.
- Be Christ-like in your representation; remember you are the example for the rest of us (for the sake of the world and media who are watching).
- Be diligent, patient and open-minded in your decision-making.
- We prayerfully support you.
- Please request at least two quadrennial cycles for revisiting any issues/decisions made at General Conference and enforce the ones in place
- We are praying for you and support you.
- Once 2020 is settled, we want to be able to put the "Open doors..." sign back up and mean it.
- Keep the church as it is.
- We are praying for our delegates to put aside their personal wishes and discern God's will for the future of The UMC.
- We will be in prayer for them while they are in conference.
- Decisions from General Conference will be used by God to promote the gospel.
- That we will be in prayer for them.
- That having a difference of opinion doesn't mean a lack/absence of love.
- We hope they'll be able to represent our voice to the best of their abilities.
- Praying for you
- Regardless of decision, God loves you/us and will show the way.
- Remember who they are and whose they are.
- Our mission is paralyzed by focus on a small percentage of population.
- We love you, support you, pray for you.
- Keep hope that changes do not affect our witness as a body of Christ.
- Trust in guidance from the Holy Spirit. Do not act out of fear.
- Think about the consequences of what we do.

- Consider the world's image of us. As elected officials, we (the body) trust them to be open to the Holy Spirit.
- You have our prayers.
- We the people of the SC church will be praying for you.
- We want you to exhibit tolerance.
- We want other church business to be addressed.
- We pray that we will accept your decisions. You can't please us all.
- If you are going to change the Discipline, then accept the changes.
- Know God's standards.
- Be led by the Spirit as you read and interpret the word of God, trusting that God is with you.
- Use your conscience to represent our voice.
- Bring back hope for the United UMC.
- Open hearts and minds in Christ.