



S.C. DELEGATION

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Table Conversations Feedback

Feb. 9 Listening Session (Central UMC-Florence)

(Florence/Hartsville/Marion districts)

Question 1: What are your hopes for the UMC?

- Glorify God in the process.
- Praying that we are still united.
- Keep God at the center of the process.
- Continue to follow Wesley's principles as outlined in the current Book of Discipline.
- Get along.
- More unity among churches.
- Unity
- Focus on Christ
- Young people involvement
- Stay focused to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- Frustrated: no loyalty, many challenges.
- Sustaining ministries to continue mission.
- Stay united, stay together, let the scriptures lead us.
- Find a way to bring Christ to those who are lost.
- See what the Bible has to say; we must find a way to remain united.
- Somewhere God will interfere.
- UMC should abide by the Word.
- Strictly by the Bible.
- Come together, remain UMC.
- Stay biblical.
- Make a scripture the priority.
- History of the church changes, scripture never changes.
- To remain how we are today, with the Discipline remaining the same and enforced.
- To grow spiritually as well as in numbers.
- We need to go back to the Bible and back to the basics.

- Hope the denomination can stay together and not split.
- Whatever happens can be done with dignity and respect, and show the world the love of Christ.
- Return to the authority of scripture.
- Hope to be unified in our following of Christ.
- Discern God's will.
- Stay united (whether we have differences) to still live together in love.
- Do not compromise our beliefs.
- Learn the difference between religion and spirituality. Religion is of man, spirituality is of God.
- Have a high view of scripture (scripture primary).
- Evangelize people.
- Expect scriptural holiness.
- Expect Holy Spirit revival (a church led by the Holy Spirit).
- A split in the spirit of love and respect.
- We need the details of the split before it happens.
- Growth
- Unity without separation.
- Respect each other.
- Missions
- Holy Spirit-led decisions.
- Delegates should use their own judgment and pray for guidance.
- That whatever happens, we remain faithful and hopeful for the future of the church.
- That the change(s) to come will reflect the sentiment of all people. Face-to-face, verbal, written truth be shared. This will help all to embrace God's plan and not man's. Pray.
- Word of God is unwavered.
- Global ministries (mission efforts) remain successful and continue to grow.
- Worship is life-giving.
- Positive experience for church workers now and in the future.
- We hope the church will live more fully and faithfully into the unity implied within our name, seeking clarity and responding faithfully to all the issues that divide us.
- Lean not on our own understanding, but focus on God's word.
- Unity
- Stick to our roots of Methodist.
- Unity
- Clarity
- That we might all be one.
- Zeal for Christ that we can be set apart from the world.
- To be unified showing each other respect, love and grace.

- Remain united.
- Unified under the authority of scriptures.
- Growth
- Remain traditional.
- End to division.
- More laity involvement in decision-making.
- Follow the Bible.
- Hope the church remains together.
- Church members commit to being disciples for Christ.
- God's word changes people, not people change the word.
- We hope the church lives out its call to baptism by building each other up in obedient community as disciples of Jesus Christ with the love of God.
- Don't lose the gift of diversity and the joy of being United Methodist.
- Unity with accountability for whatever "UMC" establishes in the Discipline.
- Scriptural integrity
- Remain united. This is important for the stability of the church, but not the most important. Following the word of God must be the most important.
- Find a way to be united in all resolve, faith, hope and love – the greatest of these is love.
- Guidance comes from the gospel.
- That we figure out how to be in ministry together.
- Figure out how to reach people and be in community with each other.
- To remain scripture-based and remain in unity.
- Traditional as it is now.
- Unity
- Follow Jesus, love God, love neighbor.
- Generate enthusiasm to encourage growth.
- Attract young people.
- Move past the struggle with grace and love.
- Looking for hope. If separation, do with honor and love.
- Follow your hearts, see others as God sees them.
- Unity – work together.
- Agree to disagree.
- Communication
- All should follow the word of God.
- The church welcomes everybody.
- Thrive together at one table.
- Follow Christ.
- Align with scripture.

- For the church to be the church – to love like the church, to serve like the church – and for each individual to act like a Christian, to act like Christ.
- To be unified.
- Growth – youth
- Unity
- Scripture-based (entire Bible)
- Better communication
- Emphasis on discipleship.
- Growth – Sunday school
- Core values?
- Amicable resolution so that we can walk away in peace.
- Let each go in their own way in a positive and productive ministry.
- Continue to follow the Book of Discipline as it is currently written.
- If divided, we hope for equal distribution along theological lines, that this issue can be put behind us, that we can get back to the business of the church.
- Whatever decision is made, that it be made with love and in love.
- To reduce apportionments.
- To remain true to God’s word, to not conform to the world, to stay true.
- Unity
- Tradition
- Maintain openness.
- Maintain tradition.

Question 2: What are your main concerns?

- Lack of attendance.
- Lack of financial stability.
- Lack of accountability through studying of the word of God.
- Churches must treat all sins alike.
- That there will be no resolution to the human sexuality question.
- That churches are aging with no younger adults taking over responsibility – need more workers.
- Need to stay positive – a split will shatter/fracture the UMC.
- Financial concerns, membership concerns (loss of).
- Following the word of God.
- Availability of ministers.
- Teach right from wrong, sin is sin.
- Teach hard-core biblical teachings.
- Financial stability.
- Continued discipleship to all for all, how do we love and still teach the gospel?
- Crossing racial lines for ministry.
- Decreasing population affects funding.

- Growth
- What will happen if the church splits.
- Accountability at all church levels.
- Outward focus
- Working of the church (internal groups, organizations, etc.).
- Church making disciples (maintaining viability).
- Inability to attract members, losing members.
- Discipline: rule setting, following rules, chaos if not followed, lack of accountability.
- Financial: losing members, losing money.
- Membership seems to be fading.
- How do we get people (youth) through the door? And then, how to be welcoming?
- How dissension affects the face of open minds and hearts we present to the public, as well as the potential for financial devastation, which diverts from mission and ministry.
- How are small churches going to be affected by any of resolutions of General Conference?
- Need for young adults and youth programs to help draw young people into and back to church.
- How to keep and attract young people. How to help them feel a part of and responsibility for the UMC – leadership roles within the church.
- New ways to minister to all – young, old, church, unchurched – move past “the way it has always been done” mentality. Meet others where they are.
- Evangelism – reaching out to all.
- Why the bishops at times are not willing to follow the Book of Discipline.
- Where are the new ministers going to come from?
- Missions – Instead of the smaller churches sending so much to apportionments, shouldn't the smaller churches use that resource for their own community?
- Certain small churches do not receive help from the conference.
- How to reach and maintain younger people.
- More outreach projects within the communities.
- Staying true to the Great Commission.
- Staying true to the Discipline.
- Concerns for the young generation and how to get them in the church.
- Concerned for reaching the unreached/unchurched because of the example displayed at the 2019 General Conference.
- How will the direct billing concerns be addressed in the event of a denominational split?
- Disconnect with conference leaders.
- Viability
- Commitment of membership.
- There is too much politics, instead of concern over the mission of the church.
- Sexism in the UMC.
- How is our image in the world being affected? And how will that affect growth and sustainability in individual churches because of the effect on young people and the unchurched?
- We feel the UMC is moving too far away from God and God's word.
- The bad spiritual publicity this movement/division has caused in the UMC.
- Little or no communication with the small churches.

- Communication with the small churches.
- Moving away from doctrine and discipline, rewriting to appease others and not God.
- Listening to all churches, no matter size, united stands for all.
- The future for small congregations and children.
- To maintain unity based on accountability and upholding the Discipline based on scriptural/biblical integrity, Sunday school/education programs, outreach ministries – how we share the gospel message.
- Communication across the denomination, especially smaller churches and small congregations.
- How can we keep the church from splitting?
- If split occurs, what effect will that have on ministers and finances for each church?
- How will the conference's organization be affected?
- Reaching the younger generation.
- Financial viability of the church/clergy.
- Remain focused on God.
- Declining U.S. participation.
- Assignment of pastors does not always match the congregations they serve.
- The current UMC leadership are adhering to scripture as written in the Bible (KJV).
- We have lost respect for God because we don't know who God is.
- The current issue will divide the UM Church.
- What changes will there be within the conference as a result of the issue?
- How will it affect pastors?
- How do we help each other grow in love and knowledge of God?
- Why are we changing our Book of Discipline to suit modern sexual preferences?
- Why are we considering a possible split, when God's word is final?
- That we stay true to scripture.
- That we remain and grow relevant, engaged in our communities.
- Inclusive hospitality (welcome everyone).
- Preach the scripture, rightly dividing the word.
- The leadership and membership should be held accountable to their vows.
- Losing members in the church.
- Concerned about the lack of enthusiasm of spirituality, growing in faith.
- No longer acknowledging the church belongs to God (us and them), taking ownership of what is God.
- Concerned about investing in the future of the church – our youth.
- Keep poking each other's eyes out.
- The lack of scripture studying, don't just read it.
- The political atmosphere of the church.
- Aging of the church, reaching younger generation.
- Inclusion/exclusion. How will church look if separation occurs? How will church operate? (structure/finances)
- Influence of the world on our church.
- Youth participation
- Treat individuals with respect and dignity while adhering to scripture.

- Not to lose members of any age.
- Stick to decisions made at Conference and General Conference.
- Not losing focus on our mission, and remembering we are open hearts and open minds and open doors.
- Why are we doing this again?
- How do we communicate in “today’s language”?
- That we don’t lose sight of our mission in our communities.
- Ministry to youth and families and how to disciple them in a scripturally holy way.
- Concerned about how people are being prepared for ministry in seminaries (Wesleyan way?).
- Authenticity in Christian practices.
- Recovering lost youth.
- Reduce financial burden on churches.
- Church not priority for younger generations.
- Surrendering to political correctness, seeking political solution to spiritual problem.
- The ramifications of what happens after the split.
- Drifting away from scripture.
- Better communication.
- Division among the races within the UMC.
- How to bring in younger membership, from toddlers on.
- What will happen to the small congregation if the church splits?
- All sinners are welcome and that God’s word is taught.
- Will funding be for those leaving the progressive and the church property remain with them?
- Are we a people of open hearts, open doors, open minds?
- Love inreach and love outreach plus (the cross) reconciliation.
- Redefining (?) making disciples for the transformation of the world.
- Inability to attract new people.
- Division caused by clergy designations.

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

- Listen to people in your congregation (not the other clergy).
- Have a plan for post-split.
- Clear-cut, definitive way forward.
- Look closely at a traditional plan.
- Make a decision based on thinking of the people of the local churches, consider impact on future generations.
- Decision will have consequences and impact. We need to have a vision.
- Be driven by the Holy Spirit in our decision-making.
- We are praying for you.
- Let God be the focus of the decisions you make, not the individual opinions.

- Prayerfully ascertain the will of God for the future of the church.
- Why do we have to conform and change our way to please someone else? Stand on God's word.
- We want the delegates to stand firm and strong with the Discipline.
- Need to get back to John Wesley's teachings.
- Read Proverbs 19:3 and Proverbs 18:2.
- We hope the church would be reconciled.
- More resources should be directed to the local church – to include human, financial – helping churches to pool resources and merge, if necessary.
- That cross-racial appointments be mandated by General Conference action.
- God's word.
- We are praying for them.
- Psalm 91
- Bathe decisions in prayer.
- Look for alternatives to separation.
- Seek God's guidance.
- Put the Bible first.
- Listen to the people.
- We are praying for you.
- For the Holy Spirit to be your guide.
- John 3:16, Isaiah 43:19.
- We will hold you in our prayers.
- Trust in God and vote the way the Holy Spirit leads.
- We cherish our connectionalism.
- Delegates have our prayers and support.
- Continue to listen to the local churches.
- Resolve this issue so we can get on with the church.
- Make a fair, equitable and orderly decision now, with the Lord's guidance, and do it with respect and love for all.
- Not to be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Do not allow our present apportionments to support the progressive movement.
- To make a decision, even if it means a split.
- To seek God's will and his face and to do his will.
- Be mindful of holy scripture, with rules to govern and determine our goals and directions for our lives.
- Let the love of God guide all you say and do.
- WWJD
- Understand separation would lose members, not ready to give up on each other.
- Let's not fail and not let God down.

- Seek God's guidance in decision-making.
- Need to know beliefs of delegates prior to their election.
- If this is really a listening session, delegates need to take our input into consideration.
- We must represent God in all votes taken.
- Be one strong voice for God's people, you are not an echo.
- Reminder: We may be a small conference, but we represent God in a large way. We are not grasshoppers.
- Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Although we understand that the delegates are not representatives, we hope that they will listen to the voices of the congregations.
- Let's fulfill our motto and be open-minded with open hearts.
- To do God's will, stand on his word, and don't change his word.
- If the teaching of God's word, why do we have to change?
- Vote as God leads them, not according to their personal bias.
- Stick with the traditional Discipline.
- Pray long and hard before you vote.
- Do not want to leave our church.
- Thank you, you are taking on a difficult task.
- Be aware of possible consequences to your actions, but do not be afraid. Think things through.
- Want a church that tells people about Jesus.
- Inclusivity is important.
- Know that we are praying for them to hear from the Holy Spirit.
- Not vote without knowing what the churches they represent feel.
- Multiple levels of communication.
- Prepare well for the General Conference.
- Pray.
- God's will to be done.
- What do we want our church to look like in the future?
- We want unity.
- Is there an affordable provision for churches to maintain church property?
- Do what God wants, not what pleases you or others.
- Know God's will.
- If you don't know God's will, get out of the way.
- Follow scripture.
- Sin is sin.
- Do what is right.
- Stay together.
- We are praying for you to do God's will.

- It is not about a denomination, it's about the gospel.
- Follow the directions in the book "Bible".
- Follow the Holy Spirit.
- Recognize there will be pain, regardless of the decisions.
- We need to lower the financial burdens of apportionments and direct billing, especially for small churches.
- How will we care for "orphaned" clergy, that is, clergy whose theological convictions are different from the conference where they are located?
- People need to be educated on the plans. Simply going to the website is not enough. Need more resources such as PowerPoint handouts, not just the plan comparison chart.
- We want them to know we are praying for them that they will have discernment regarding the issues.
- Employ faith, hope and love in the confrontations you will have.
- Christianity was and still is based on the Bible.
- The will of God takes center stage in all deliberations.
- Remember the gospel has answered all these questions. Through discernment, what is the will of God for the people of God?
- Don't be Jonah.
- Love ye one another as God has loved you.
- Vote with Holy Spirit in mind and heart.
- Break up of church is not wanted.
- Vote according to what we have learned in scripture (the word of God).
- What percentage of church is interested in split-up.
- Do God's will: Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.
- We will be praying for each delegate.
- Understand the deep gravity of your decision and rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance.
- Purposely pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your conscience.
- Return to Wesley vision of the church.
- Primacy of scripture.
- We affirm marriage of one man and one woman.
- Make a stand based on scripture and the Book of Discipline, and let that decision be final.
- Go prayerfully to conference, allowing the Holy Spirit to make decisions. Let delegates decrease and God increase in decisions made.
- Delegates respect the feelings of all the church and share those feelings with the conference.
- Once decisions are made, stand firm to decisions and God.
- Praying that God will lead you in prayer and scripture-based decisions.

- We pray for the delegates to pray to discern God's will. God's will will never contradict God's word.
- We do not want our denomination to split over divisive issues.
- We are concerned about the perceptions of post-General Conference decisions about individual churches (inclusion).
- Vote on supporting conservative scriptural integrity.
- Develop/support most fair plan for separation.