

PETITION
to the
2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Total Number of Pages 3

Suggested Title: Organizational Restructure of the United Methodist Church

Discipline Paragraph (or Resolution Number): Several Chapters in the Discipline

General Church Budget Implications: None Yes

Global Implications: None Yes

CONTENT OF THE PETITION:

ACTION DESIRED:

- 1 All general church, jurisdictional and central conference structures shall be dissolved by January 1, 2023 with
2 the exception of the General Council on Finance and Administration and the General Board of Pensions and Health
3 Benefits, presently doing business as Wespath.
- 4 The General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits will continue as a separate nonprofit corporation. It will
5 contract separately with the annual conferences and other religious groups that fit into the board's mission. It will
6 also be responsible for continuing the benefits presently accumulated by all annual conferences and present
7 participants. The members of the present board will continue to serve until December 31, 2024. By that time the
8 General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits will have in place new bylaws that will include a new official name
9 and a new method for selecting governing board members. That method will be used to select board members
10 whose terms will begin January 1, 2025.
- 11 The General Council on Finance and Administration will continue until December 31, 2025. It shall be
12 responsible for the disposal of all general, jurisdictional and central conference church assets and the equitable
13 distribution of those assets to the annual conferences. This distribution will be made based on each annual
14 conference's contributions to the general church through the apportionment process for the period of January 1,
15 2014 through January 31, 2019. This amount will be divided by the total amount received by the general church
16 through the apportionment process for that same time period and that ratio would be used to distribute all assets
17 coming from the dissolution of the general, jurisdictional and central conference church structures and agencies,
18 with the exception of the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.
- 19 After the General Council on Finance and Administration has completed its work on or before December 31,
20 2025 its assets will also be distributed to the annual conferences using the same formula.
- 21 Since Jurisdictional and central conferences would be eliminated, each annual conference would elect its own
22 bishop. The annual conference would make its rules for this process. The Episcopal Church might be a good model
23 for this.

24

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

RATIONALE (Not Debatable):

1 This petition preserves our connectional nature since the annual conference is the main source of our connection
2 and preserves the theological diversity necessary for a church to change and grow.

3 It will allow most of the assets that have accumulated in our denomination to be used for ministry rather than
4 for the extended legal actions that are likely to take place if the United Methodist Church dissolves in a piecemeal
5 manner. It would be the worst possible stewardship to use the assets that have been accumulating over centuries for
6 ministry on legal expenses. In fact the assets received could be placed in an endowment by the annual conference to
7 support ministries into the future. This would allow the annual conferences to lower their apportionments to local
8 churches while continuing their ministries.

9 Each annual conference and local church would be able to use the cross and flame logo and the name of the
10 United Methodist Church followed by a comma and the conference name.

11 Our Discipline recognizes that local churches and annual conferences are different from central, jurisdictional
12 and general conferences. People in the local church and annual conference are members. Other conferences do not
13 have members, they have delegates which changes responsibilities and attitudes that lead to discussions based on
14 power and self-interest.

15 The annual conferences have shown that they are able to work in ministry across large theological differences
16 through discussion and love for all members of the local church and annual conference.

17 This will also allow annual conferences to make their own choices as to how they do their ministries and what
18 other groups they would like to affiliate with in their ministries. There are many options; annual conferences could
19 operate as independently, they could join with other annual conferences to create new Methodist structures or they
20 could join other denominations presently operating that would fit well into their own ministry understandings. These
21 are only three of the many potential options the annual conferences would have.

22 This keeps the trust clause in deeds in effect since the property of a church that no longer is United Methodist
23 goes to the annual conference which will still exist.

24 This is a fair and just way for us to move forward the ministry in all parts of our church and allow our focus to
25 be on ministry rather than power and self-interest that is so evident at our general conference gatherings. We would
26 be freed to minister as God has given us a vision rather than constantly fighting over conflicting visions.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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