

GOTHENBURG FIRST UNITED
 METHODIST
 1401 LAKE AVENUE
 GOTHENBURG, NE 69138
 REV. JAMIE NORWICH MCLENNAN



February 2019– Volume 30– Issue 2

Overview of Proposals for General Conference <small>Points included in this document are provided as a summary of the recommendations to the special 2019 General Conference. For more information, please read the entire report from the Commission on a Way Forward.</small>	One Church Plan	Connectional Conference Plan (CCs)	Traditionalist Plan
Local Churches	<p>Summary: This plan, preferred by a majority of the Council of Bishops, would remove restrictive language from the Book of Discipline that prohibits same-gender weddings in UMC properties and ordination of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals." It would add language to protect churches and pastors who choose not to allow same-gender marriages.</p>	<p>Summary: This plan would replace the current jurisdictional conferences with three connectional conferences based on affinity: Progressive, Traditional and Unity. All 3 would use a general Book of Discipline (Articles of Religion, General Rules, Confessions of Faith) with the ability to adapt other portions to their context for ministry.</p>	<p>Summary: This plan, developed more fully toward the end of the Commission on a Way Forward process, broadens the definition of "self-avowed, practicing homosexual"; puts penalties in place for disobedience to the Discipline; and requires bishops, pastors and annual conferences to certify adherence to the Discipline.</p>
Clergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Most likely would make no changes in practice at the local level. <input type="checkbox"/> May rewrite wedding policies to explicitly allow or forbid same-gender weddings. <input type="checkbox"/> Will covenant with bishop on whether congregation will accept LGBTQ pastor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can choose affiliation. <input type="checkbox"/> Still will set wedding policies with churches in the "unity" CC able to set parameters for building use and/or wedding policies in either direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No vote unless the church disagrees with annual conference's choice to stay in UMC. <input type="checkbox"/> Churches can leave as a partner in ministry but not as part of the UMC if they disagree with annual conference's decision to adhere to Discipline.
Annual Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No vote is needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Boards of Ordained Ministry and/or clergy session can discern whether to ordain LGBTQ persons. <input type="checkbox"/> General Conference can craft a way for churches to exit with grace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdictional conferences will vote to join a CC on simple majority vote (50%+1). <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences who want to join a different CC than their jurisdiction chooses may do so on a simple majority vote (50%+1). <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences could revoke every 4 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must certify that it will uphold the Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences that won't certify are urged to form "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church, and churches that leave can't use United Methodist name or logo past 2020.

Just a reminder that delegates will be voting on Saturday February 23, 2019. Information on contacting delegates can be found on next page.

Continued on next page.

Overview continued from other side	One Church Plan	Connectional Conference Plan (CCs)	Traditionalist Plan
Council of Bishops	<input type="checkbox"/> Council continues as one body providing spiritual leadership. <input type="checkbox"/> Assignments will reflect convictions of bishops and annual conferences. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops will be protected if their consciences will not allow him or her to ordain LGBTQ persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Funded by connectional conferences at comparable levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight and accountability falls to bishops of each CC. <input type="checkbox"/> Each bishop, active and retired, chooses a CC. <input type="checkbox"/> New bishops would be elected at organizing conference in 2022.	<input type="checkbox"/> Active and retired bishops must certify they will adhere to Discipline. <input type="checkbox"/> Bishops who will not certify adherence no longer receive compensation of expenses as of 2021 and will be encouraged to leave for "autonomous, affiliated or concordat" church.
General Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to operate as they do now. <input type="checkbox"/> Have to adjust to potential declines in funding, as sustainability issues are separate from the Commission on a Way Forward's task.	<input type="checkbox"/> Jointly funded boards include Wespath, GCFA, UMCOR, Archives, parts of GBGM and the Publishing House. <input type="checkbox"/> Task force would evaluate each general agency and propose new model for UMC by 2025. <input type="checkbox"/> Program agencies would only serve CCs that desire participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Justice ministries structures would be determined by CCs, with expected emphasis on sexism and racism.	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to operate as they do now. <input type="checkbox"/> Each agency can contract with churches that leave the UMC.
Related Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Likely no changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Commission conversations with members of these organizations indicate this plan makes it more likely for most institutions to maintain their affiliation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Properties owned by annual and jurisdictional conferences follow them to their new CC. <input type="checkbox"/> Institutions can choose to relate to one or more CCs, as their bylaws allow.	<input type="checkbox"/> No changes unless they choose to do so within the bounds of their own bylaws.
Finance & Pensions	Two petitions are recommended for any of the three plans: <input type="checkbox"/> Any church that leaves would have to pay their proportionate liability of unfunded pensions for their annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing clergy would be removed from benefit and annuity risk pools and have accrued benefits transferred to an individual investment account.	<input type="checkbox"/> Same 2 petitions as One Church Plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Legal fees to navigate legacy connections. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath stays intact and extends to CCs. <input type="checkbox"/> Medical and pension liabilities remain the obligation of the annual conference. <input type="checkbox"/> Wespath will reassign pension liabilities for churches that opt to go to another CC. <input type="checkbox"/> Annual conferences manage budgets to care for boundary reconfiguration costs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Same 2 petitions as the One Church Plan.
Episcopal Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each episcopal area in the United States. <input type="checkbox"/> Other expenses would be shared via apportionments. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to Central Conference funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> Salaries and benefits would be paid by each U.S.-based CC. <input type="checkbox"/> No changes to Central Conference funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> No changes to Central Conference funding.

Resources available at www.greatplainsumc.org/cowf | Email delegates at gcdelegates@greatplainsumc.org

February Birthday's

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1– Kadie Anderson, Savanna Porter | 24– Brian Brede |
| 2– Braeden Sabin, Valerie Peterson | 21– Carol Bartels |
| 5– Patrick Moore | 23– Preston Foster |
| 7– Ali Bartels | 27– Ashley Abramson |
| 10– Kelly McCoy | 28– Mike Anderson, Linda Bowman |
| 11– Mark Tederman | |
| 13– Brian Weaver | |
| 14– Judy Vincent, Lois Johnson | |
| 15– McKinley McCoy | |
| 16– Hailey O'Keefe, Trey Bartels | |
| 17– John Jensen, Steven Windrum | |
| 18– Cora Bosch, Kathryn Bartruff, Justin Sabin | |
| 20– Kim Humphrey, Beth Advey, Sharon Sukraw | |





Pastor's Perspective

January has been a month of deep conversations about what it means to be a United Methodist. I have found this very interesting, because I usually only have those conversations with kids in Confirmation Class, or with those who are thinking of becoming a member of the church. But this year, it seems that many others are joining in on the conversation. I believe this to be a good conversation, because our goals for the year are: “Love God and Your Neighbor...Tell Your Story of God in Your Life...Share with Others.”

We tend to talk about loving God and neighbor in pretty generic terms—and it is much easier to love others when we don't talk about the particulars in others that may make us angry, sorrowful or joyful. But when we get to the point of telling the story about how we have been loved by God and how we have loved others, we have to talk a lot more about the particular situations involved; and that is where the stories get both very interesting and complicated! Sometimes our conversations then get emotional and we may stop telling the stories of how God is in the process of transforming our lives.



To me, one of the most challenging things that has come out of these conversations is the emotional discussion of which Bible we read—and why. The pictures to the left show the various Bibles that I use for study and worship each week as I approach the texts for Sunday. I read from a variety of translations and interpretations because I cannot read the words from the original Hebrew, Greek, Latin or Aramaic in which they were written. I am dependent upon those who have done so, and I must trust that they have practiced due diligence in their study. I read a variety of translations and interpretations to help me better understand the story that the writer of that particular text is trying to tell. These books of the Bible are their story; and then once I have read their story, it is up to me to understand what that story means for my life today. That is part of the work that, I believe, is the delight and responsibility of each disciple of Jesus. And, particularly as a United Methodist Follower of the Way, I am invited to reflect on the texts using the four-fold process called “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral” that uses Tradition, Experience and Reason to understand the scriptures. Even better, I am invited to read scripture in community with other believers, share my understandings and listen to theirs. This often results in new understandings about the way God is working in all of our lives.

This is not easy work—but it can be very rewarding. As I shared with the group who gathered on Sunday January 20th—I believe that every conversation ends with a “,” or “...” because God is not finished with us yet. We are on our way to being “sanctified” and “made perfect in the love of God” each and every day; and it is important to not close the door on our conversations.

In case you are wondering about those words, they are more United Methodist “Speak” of how the grace of God works within us. If you want to know more, come and talk with me. I promise that I will listen with open ears and open heart, and that the conversation will remain open with possibilities...

The Beat

February 2019– Volume 30– Issue 2
Gothenburg First United Methodist Church

RISE AGAINST HUNGER

Many of our church youth and members were blessed to be a part of a group that gathered on Wednesday January 23rd at the Gothenburg High School and helped bag 180,000 meals for those less fortunate. This was the 5th year for this program. Rise Against Hunger is a wonderful organization that provides meals to those who are in need in this country and overseas. In the last 4 years the Gothenburg community has bagged over 100,000 meals and fed over 400,000 people. This organization gathers its funds from tow fundraisers and donations. A walking taco stand at the Living Out Loud concert and a soup supper and silent auction in November. Donations are always being accepted. Each bag of food costs 35 cents and all materials are purchased with the donations and the monies raised from the fundraisers. We are always taking volunteers to help with fundraisers or the bagging. Thank you to those who donated this past year and volunteered.



Sunday School Scoop

Many thanks go out to Lisa Jorgenson, Kris Loostrom, Jami Brundage, Judy Jensen, Lindsey Tederman and Lynnette Stevens for teaching Sunday School youth during January. Joan Windrum, Laron and Alice Peters continue to lead the adults during Sunday School.

Teachers are NEEDED for the rest of the Sunday School year through May 12 for Pre-Schoolers through 5th grades. Curriculum is provided, the students are there, but a leader/teacher is absent. Call Lynnette to help out, even if it's just for ONE Sunday!

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"

~Galatians 6:2

Music Minute

Once again I am asking to consider getting involved in our choir, we have started working on another Easter Cantata and we could always use a few more voices to sing with us. We meet every Wednesday night at 8:00 pm and we really are a fun group to be around! Even if you can't be there every week that's ok.

Music is a very special part of our worship services and I thank the band, choir, Barry and those who run the sound and power points for all you do.

~Karla



The Beat

February 2019– Volume 30– Issue 2
Gothenburg First United Methodist Church



“Use your God-given talents to serve others”

~1 Peter 4:10

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

January Highlights

Budgeted items

Mission Shares– The United Methodist Church is a connectional church; this is one of the ways we continue to reach out to the greater world and touch the lives of others in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sunday School material– we have a great children’s Sunday school and truly enjoyed the Christmas program they provided the first Sunday of January.

Nursery expenses– this provides for young child-care during our worship service.

Non-budgeted items

Small Group study material– finances for small group study books were provided for the Mary & Martha circle through a special fund available to help small groups with study materials. For more information regarding this fund please contact the Finance Committee.

Youth Trip– ask a youth about the trip they took in January and the one they are planning this summer.

Special Offering (Human Relations Sunday)- More information may be found at the following link: <http://www.umcgiving.org/question-articles/human-relations-day-faq>.

These are only a few highlights of highlights of the many ministry activities we are involved in.

February Opportunities:

Daycare and Pre-School– While these two organizations help provide a financial stream for our church, they are also a great mission within our church. They provide good stewardship opportunities for volunteering to help and more. Great opportunity to make a difference in a child’s life (or their parents) in the name of Jesus Christ.

More Finance information is available in the church office.

Mark your Calendars!

Don't FORGET!



Retired Persons Lunch Bunch

Happy Valentine's Day! We will be gathering on Wednesday February 6, 2019 at 11:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. All seniors are welcome and we invite you to come, bring a covered dish to share, and eat with us. Hope to see you there!!

MOVIE NIGHT IS BACK!!!

We are going to twist it up and make this a lunch date. This is a faith based movie about a young man who was the best ever walk on football candidate and an amazing Christian bringing others to Christ through their spiritual journey.

Join us on Sunday February 24th at 12 noon for a pasta dinner, snacks and a movie. Bring a friend and join us!! See you at the movie!



PRAYING TOGETHER:

Bishop Saenz has invited us to join United Methodists worldwide in praying for our Church and particularly for our specially-called General Conference. The model our Bishop has suggested is that we set an alarm for 2:23 p.m. every day and pray the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. The time is as a reminder that the special session is set to begin on February 23rd (2/23/19). The special session of General Conference will be voting on the proposal for organizing our Church. I invite you to join in this daily time of prayer, and to take part in educational forums to learn more about our work together. If you stop by at 2:23 p.m. I will be praying!

~Pastor Jamie

The MOE committee would like to thank our church family from the bottom of our hearts. Gifts from the Heart was a success because of all the help, volunteers, prayers and love we received. We were able to donate \$500 to the Ministerial Association to help those in need. God commands us to help others and this church never fails. Thank you to those who donated their gently used items, the cookie provides, the endless hands that helped set up, set out and continually straighten, the volunteers who were here to just help. We couldn't have done it without all of you! Our mission continues to be touching hearts and lives with Jesus.