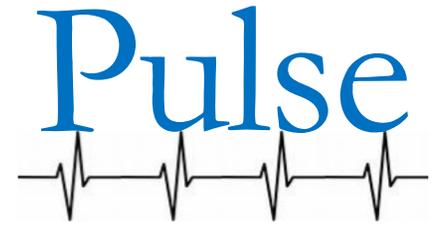


Judicial Council Goes Virtual

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the April 2020 session of the Judicial Council was cancelled. In an effort to safely continue their work for the church they will meet through a series of Zoom conferences over the coming weeks and months to deliberate items on their revised Fall 2020 docket. Decisions and Memorandums will be posted on their website as each one is finalized. Briefs can be submitted but there will be no oral arguments on any of the docket items.

A request from the Council of Bishops for a ruling on the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation has been added to the docket. The Judicial Council will decide if it has the jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of the Protocol. The decision at this meeting will ONLY be whether or not the court has jurisdiction, not on the constitutionality of the Protocol itself.

The Judicial Council will also be reviewing a request by the Council of Bishops that was on the original April 2020 docket regarding Paragraph 2553 of the Discipline. This paragraph, adopted by the 2019 GC, allowed for the "disaffiliation of a local church over issues related to human sexuality." The legitimacy of this decision continues to be questioned by some due to accusations of voter fraud.



*Confessing Jesus Christ as
Son, Savior and Lord!*

Will There be a GC in 2021?

Many people are concerned about GC 2021 actually taking place, especially with the continued rise in COVID-19 cases. After the cancellation of the May 2020 gathering of the top policy-making body of the UMC, questions are being raised about the prospect of a virtual General Conference in 2021. What would that look like? How could delegates from across four continents and 13 time zones be ensured full participation as well as the tools needed to navigate new technology and the myriad of other challenges that would be especially difficult for the Central Conference? Although a meeting in person is still preferred and planned, the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the pandemic may require an alternative plan.

In response to these concerns, the Commission on General Conference has created a Technology Study Team to look at creative alternatives to the gathering should it not be possible to convene in one place as in years past. The Commission will meet virtually December 11-12, 2020. There will certainly still be many unknowns in December but it is important that these discussions begin now. Much work has been done to generate a plan, the Protocol, that would garner support from UMs across the theological spectrum to amicably separate, allows for a new denomination to be formed and needs to be voted on without further delay. The conflict has gone on long enough!

November 2020

STAND FIRM AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD

These are not easy times for those of us who are United Methodists. While many churches are holding regular services and meetings, many others, because of the corona virus, are still worshipping and meeting remotely. What will the long term effects of the pandemic be on our churches? We simply don't know yet.

On top of this we have great concerns for our denomination, the United Methodist Church. A year ago we believed that the General Conference of 2020 would pass the "protocol" plan providing for an amicable separation. Conservative and evangelical churches would have the opportunity to start fresh in a new Wesleyan denomination that would uphold Scripture, would grant freedom to pursue ministries apart from needing "official" sanction, and would offer relief from heavy taxes (apportionments). Liberal and progressive churches could purge from the *Discipline* all references to homosexuality and "celibacy in singleness and fidelity in marriage" and could pursue the interests of LGBTQ advocates, as well as other progressive causes. The virus forced the cancellation of the conference. Another is being specially called for September, 2021, but even this is in question, again because of the virus.

So we wait. In the meantime we ask if the Confessing Movement has any words of wisdom for our present situation. The answer is

YES, the words of Moses when he sought to encourage the Hebrew people as they stood before the Red Sea as the Egyptian chariots bore down on them: *Fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord (Ex. 14:13).*

The CM is working with others to develop a plan for a new Methodist denomination including anew doctrine and discipline. Which should be completed and have an announcement after the first of the year.



GETTING READY FOR A CHURCH THAT WILL CARRY ON THE BEST OF METHODISM

While the Confessing Movement and other evangelical renewal groups urge UMC members and churches to be patient and wait to see what God will bring about as a new form of Methodism. Groups and task forces have been consulting, planning and dreaming for a new church fully committed to the Scriptures, the historic creeds and to our Wesleyan and EUB Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith. There should also be an updated version of John Wesley's General Rules.

It is also quite certain that churches will not be pressured, for example, to use only "official" Sunday school material, "official" evangelists, or support only "official" missionaries. There will not be anything like

the present trust clause which states that ultimately properties belong to the denomination. There will for sure be a new statement on baptism and membership more in line with Methodist and EUB practice through the years. There will be ministers trained and vetted by the denomination for appointment to local churches as well as more involvement by the local church in selecting pastors.

Churches don't spring into existence without a lot of planning. There will be a period after the Protocol plan is approved by the General Conference when annual conferences and local churches will decide whether to be a part of the new group. In the meantime there will be a transition team to guide discussions and lead the churches before some sort of organizing conference. All this is creating excitement in numbers of individuals and churches who await the new thing God has in store for his people.

These statements are based on discussions but the new denomination will make all decisions for itself.

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