

## General Conference Update by David Grey

### *Judicial Council*

The UMC Judicial Council (aka the Supreme Court) will hold a meeting on April 23-26, 2019. At the meeting, the Judicial Council will decide whether the Traditional Plan, as adopted by General Conference is constitutional (in accordance with the UMC Constitution).

The Traditional Plan, as adopted, had petitions (mostly associated with accountability of bishops and boards of ordained ministry) ruled previously by the Judicial Council as not constitutional. Those unconstitutional petitions were not corrected at General Conference, so there are parts of the Traditional Plan that are unconstitutional and will be ruled as such.

On the other hand, there are petitions of the Traditional Plan that are constitutional. So, the question before the Judicial Council is do the unconstitutional petitions invalidate the entire Traditional Plan or can it still be adopted without the unconstitutional petitions.

The other item before the Judicial Council is the constitutionality of the Taylor Disaffiliation Plan. This would allow churches, who disagree theologically with the United Methodist Church to leave with their property. In order to do so, it would require a 2/3 vote of a church conference (only members of the church can vote) to disaffiliate. The terms of disaffiliation would be set by the Conference Board of Trustees, including the continued payment of pension liabilities.

If either or both plans are ruled as constitutional, they would go into effect on January 1, 2020.

### *General Conference*

Recently, there have been news articles about voting improprieties at General Conference. The UMC has hired an independent third-party to review the voting records and attendance records to determine if individuals who were not authorized to vote did. This should not affect the outcome of the Traditional Plan; however, it may affect the passage of the Taylor Disaffiliation Plan because it only passed by a vote of 402-400.

Currently, there are groups of progressives, centrists, and conservatives who have come to the realization that an amicable split may be the best way forward for the United Methodist Church. Over the next few months, if anything were to occur, we will inform the congregation but the earliest something could happen would be after next year's General Conference.

### *Prayer*

Dear Heavenly Father,

This morning, we turn to your Word to discern what has been written about the topics before us. As we walk through this together, do not allow one side or the other to weaponize the Scripture. During this season of Lent, let us all remember before the Cross, none of us are without sin. Finally, as Christ-Followers, let us also remember the new commandment given by Jesus at the Last Supper, "...Love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." AMEN