

You may have seen that the United Methodist Church is once again in the mainstream news. I want to provide you with some high-level background and links to additional information.

As background, in May, 2020 a UMC General Conference representing all UMC churches from around the world will be held to continue discussions about how the global UMC can move forward in light of the polarizing viewpoints surrounding LGBTQ marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ people as clergy. Numerous plans were submitted by the November, 2019 deadline for consideration at the General Conference. These plans are now under review and it is expected that in late February, the UMC will announce which plans will be discussed at the conference in May.

We have started to see articles in mainstream news sources because a press release was issued on January 3rd by a small group of United Methodist Bishops and other leaders, announcing that they have crafted a proposal for how the church might move forward. Their proposal is being labeled as “Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation” and has similarities to some of the other proposals that have already been submitted. But it is important to understand that no decisions have yet been made, and we expect that multiple proposals will be discussed at the conference. Ultimately, a majority vote at the General Conference will be required for any plan to move forward.

If you would like to stay abreast of these discussions, we encourage you to refer to UM News. More information on this specific proposal can be found at

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/diverse-leaders-group-offers-separation-plan>

We are also committed to providing timely updates as events unfold in the coming months and you can expect more information on this topic in upcoming Epistle articles and other communication venues.

While we wait for things to become clearer, we ask that everyone be loving Christians to ALL of your siblings in Christ – especially those you may disagree with! Be welcoming and willing to engage in friendly conversation with ALL people, regardless of their perspective on this issue. Faithfully commit to Worship + 3 (Worship, Discipleship, Service, Generosity) as we build the body of Christ. And pray. And pray. And pray.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Tom Deviney