



S.C. DELEGATION

2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Table Conversations Feedback

Feb. 16 Listening Session (Mauldin UMC)

(Anderson/Greenville/Spartanburg districts)

Question 1: What are your hopes for the UMC?

- Move forward with prayer and grace.
- Stay true to who we are supposed to be – making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
- It really doesn't matter what my hopes are.
- Provide clear resolution so that the church can get back to the mission and ministry of the church.
- To be unified in Christ love so we can move forward to be a church that is accepting, loving and welcoming to all of God's people.
- That we stay united as one church.
- That we still love/tolerate each other after this is over.
- That we set a good example for our denomination, keep an open mind, and accept the final resolution while respecting each other.
- We respond in ways that draw people of God, versus turning away from God.
- Remember God gave us the Bible for instruction.
- We don't want to wind up divided.
- We go through this process and continue to love each other.
- All-inclusive
- Non-judgmental
- Listening with open minds.
- Avoid a big split.
- Be in prayer for the church.
- Be on the same page.
- Acknowledge we are all God's children.
- Hope for UMC to be a unified entity.
- All people identified acceptable questions.

- In order to have church vitality we seek, a peaceful separation is a sad necessity.
- In light of differences of members and clergy, divorce amicably with each church retaining their property and clergy retaining retirement.
- Stay together.
- Continue our mission.
- Show the world God's love as we stay together.
- Work as one, making disciples.
- The church should be such that all feel loved, respected and safe.
- Not to let theology be a stumbling block to those seeking the Lord.
- Hope all steps lead to unity.
- If the UMC is going to split, let it be done in a factual, decisive and loving way.
- Resolve the issue in a godly fashion, praying earnestly for how to answer the question before us.
- Can we resolve this without our church splitting.
- We want an amicable separation.
- Remain Christ-centered; remember the downtrodden and outcast.
- Make disciples for Christ; bring more believers back to Christ.
- Christ-centered and inclusive of all humanity.
- Be of one accord, following the teachings of Jesus.
- Mean what we say and say what we mean – "all are welcome".
- Process – Improved loving and respectful (moving forward, however).
- Outcome – Focus on witness, discipleship.
- Fully inclusive – Truly living into "Open hearts, Open doors, Open minds".
- Welcoming, nurturing home for youth.
- Stay united by continuing to communicate and compromise.
- Not changing the Discipline.
- Affirming all marriage and leaders.
- Decision sooner rather than later – don't kick the can.
- Peaceful/respectful of differences in opinion.
- Stay united, if possible, but if not, go ahead and separate peaceably in love.
- Resolution at General Conference.
- Unity of resolution.
- Discernment of scripture.
- Gain strength as denomination and as disciples.
- Resolution through unity after great discernment of scripture, and be stronger by the experience.
- Unity
- Follow God's will.
- Growth

- Indianapolis plan
- Honor our “Open minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors”.
- Protocol
- Listen to God’s will for the UMC.
- Maintain tradition with unity.
- Finally split so the church can move forward.
- Become people who impact others for Christ so that we grow the church.
- Reach those who are disenfranchised and marginalized.
- Focus on Christ and embody the unity Christ calls us to so that others will see him in us.
- Follow God and God’s word, but resolve it once and for all, peacefully.
- Have a good death and resurrection.
- Show God’s love; be an example.
- Continue to be united.
- Concerned the church will not survive a split.
- Move forward despite disagreements: Be united in a Christ-like way.
- Love like Christ: Every group/community is included and welcomed.
- Find hope and strength out of this division, to be who Christ calls us to be as a church.
- Be known as a church of unity and love.
- Be focused on continuing the mission to make disciples of Jesus around the world.
- Remain as one conference by focusing/building on our similarities vs. our differences.
- To reach a conclusion that satisfied and fulfilled everyone’s desires and needs, one that all can live with.
- Prefer to remain one denomination, if it is acceptable throughout the denomination.
- Hope for clarity, even if it means a division.
- We hope to reach a conclusion that allows the work of the church to move forward.
- United does not mean that we all think alike, but they that we all love alike.
- We hope the church can work out disagreements and not split.
- Move forward to honor God, to love all people.
- We hope to be inclusive.
- Faith and Bible-based.
- Based on current established Discipline.
- Staying united for world missions despite Discipline changes.
- Keep preaching God’s word without changing it based on changing societal views.
- Stay true to our traditional, conservative, Wesleyan founding.
- If we can’t be unified we should be fully separated.
- Resolution
- That smaller churches (all churches) do not lose their identity
- Don’t want the churches/people to be torn, divided.
- Behave – Act like church people.

- Understanding and acceptance of others viewpoints.
- Practice Eric Law's respectful communication.
- Humble openness to God and one another.
- True toleration for a humble process to bring resolution.
- Hope to stay united as one church while recognizing we have differences.
- Treat all people with dignity and love while praying to God for guidance.
- Do not let differences consume our mission.
- The UMC survives and stays intact.
- Improve our worldwide witness.
- That the 2020 General Conference is less contentious, with better decorum among delegates.
- That the UMC is not the reason someone turns away from God (do no harm).
- That we do not take the "United" out of the United Methodist Church.
- To be respectful no matter the outcome of General Conference.
- Be more loving – agape, forgiving.
- Unified church for God; less focus on denominations.
- Prayerful study of the word not the world.
- Being unified and moving forward to a future.
- Continue to have "Open Arms, Open Hearts and Open Doors".
- Loving everyone and healing the heart.
- Hope the split doesn't reflect negatively on Christ so that the world views us as Christians
- Find ways to help UMC members deal with their own beliefs and internal struggles.
- Amicable resolution for the naming issue.
- Find a way to agree to disagree respectfully.
- Examine ourselves and look for God's grace and direction.
- We need to split in order to carry on the ministry of the church.
- Common mission with separate expressions.
- Amicable separation with the spirit of love through transition.
- Standing together in Christ's love.
- Any resolution presented needs action.
- Agree to disagree with love and respect.
- Do no harm, do good, and love God.
- Put God first.
- Discern and do God's will.
- Resolution that will be accepted by the church as a whole.
- The local church will remain loving and welcoming and communicates that neither viewpoint is equated with hate.

- We follow the will of God and remain civil and loving through the process as this situation is resolved.
- If we must divide, we should dissolve the United Methodist Church and create two new denominations.
- Remain united.
- Remain united and Discipline to remain same.
- Remain inclusive.
- Change the Book of Discipline to be non-punitive with regard to some clergy decisions.
- Survive and thrive.
- Stay united in Christ.
- Be inclusive.
- That it will be guided by the word of God and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and that the Discipline will remain as it is.
- That the Bible will be the source of its actions.
- That it will continue to be inclusive and accepting of all people: “Open doors, Open hearts and Open minds”.
- Remain united as believers who share a common faith in Jesus Christ.
- Accepting and loving of all people.
- Arrive at a conclusion so that we can move forward in mission.
- We welcome everyone to worship but would have a problem with taking leadership roles from practicing homosexuals.
- Retain and keep the doctrine that is in place.
- Anyone who wants to change the current doctrine should be the churches that have to separate.
- The church will stay the same – following the traditional model and leaving the Discipline as it is.
- Pastors need to be held responsible for following the rules and Discipline.
- Churches need to find ways to attract younger and new members.
- The Book of Discipline remains as-is and the church stays united, focusing on traditional biblical teachings.
- Biblically based way forward to God’s will.
- Common support for common missions.
- No winners/losers labels.

Question 2: What are your main concerns?

- How will ministry be carried out as God intended?
- How will administrative structure be affected?
- We are losing sight of our mission to make disciples for Christ.
- Current church is becoming irrelevant to young people.
- This conflict is hurting our witness in the world and here at home.
- Lack of love and respect.
- What's next.
- To be relevant and 21st-century.
- We as members need to be more engaged.
- Intentional discipleship
- Be more mission on an outward focused.
- Not focusing on the mission of UMC making disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Clergy accountability
- Decrease in membership
- Increase in technology alienating older members, without alienating younger members.
- Lack of reverence in the sanctuary.
- Outreach – Lack of connection to others, especially where older smaller congregations are limited or feel limited.
- Apathy about one-on-one ministry.
- Understanding and following the UMC Discipline.
- How to maintain harmony and seek God's will for each church.
- What happens to small churches.
- Continuation of mission efforts.
- General Conference will come to a definitive decision.
- Only scriptural clarity can restore the church.
- Church leadership needs to follow scripture.
- UMC population leaving the Methodist Church for other denominations.
- Impact on next generation if church splits.
- Are we going to follow biblical scripture, teachings that have been in place forever, or change our beliefs according to social pressures in today's society?
- The mission of the church, glorifying God, has been sidetracked.
- Culture is dictating doctrine.
- Fear of sharing the gospel truth in love because of ridicule or attack.
- That we survive as a denomination.
- How well our strong mission/outreach programs at local, state and foreign levels be affected.
- If we split, will there be an equitable division of property.
- How will the conservative viewpoint be perceived – to not be taken as bigoted.
- Declining membership and attendance.
- Equitable division of assets.
- Failing in our mission to make disciples.
- What will happen to the organization of the UMC if there's a separation.

- If the church splits, what does that mean for those in the middle of the ordination process?
- Clear communication: Judicial Council rulings, clear reporting an easy access to info.
- Saving lives is more important than inclusivity.
- Listen to God, make him number one in your life.
- UMC is losing membership, not attracting young people.
- Stewardship is a way of life.
- Divisiveness
- Lack of connection with young people.
- Theological conflicts
- Implosion/closure
- The devil is having a great time with our arguments.
- Get back to our purpose and mission.
- Sustainability of individual churches and our denomination.
- Repercussions of this controversy.
- Concerns of seminary students and clergy about implications of the sexuality issue on their practices, higher ability and usefulness.
- Reaching out to youth and the unchurched.
- World perspective of our disunity/conflict is turning people off.
- Lost our focus/first love.
- Shrinking size
- Straying from scriptural integrity.
- Faith is not as strong as it should be.
- Lack of clarity around beliefs.
- Not enough focus on local community, too much focus on church.
- Viewed by world as not loving all people, not Christ-like.
- Division
- Dwindling membership, finances and mission.
- Resistance to how we worship.
- Opposite sides of issue will not treat each other well after split.
- Small churches will disappear if UMC splits.
- We are losing focus by concentrating on the issues of splitting, and we should be reaching out to others.
- Sustainability – financially, membership, agency/seminary.
- Including the community we have harmed and embracing that group completely.
- If Book of Discipline stays as-is, do restrictions on LGBTQ members become more?
- Can all members serve on councils, lead Sunday school/Bible studies, serve in children's ministries?
- Losing membership.
- Model for the world.
- Structure, polity, pastoral appointments, buildings.
- God's children: Raise us all up in the church.
- Financial concerns of individual churches if there is a split.
- Quality and supply of clergy if denomination splits.

- Concerns about future of local and global missions.
- The fear of the implications of a split.
- Declining membership, not engaging younger people.
- Financial struggles
- Lack of love and compassion dividing us.
- We won't live into our "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors".
- If the church splits, what happens to groups like you UMW, UMM, etc.?
- The church should reach out into our community to attract young families and children.
- If the church splits, which group gets to continue to be the United Methodist Church?
- That it not be led by the culture of the world but by faithfulness to the scriptures in the Book of Discipline.
- That there be better communication from denomination leadership to the members.
- But the denomination will always reach out to the people in the world with Jesus love.
- That we will be able to remain united.
- That The UMC will try to be all things to all people and weaken denomination.
- That an amicable separation can be reached, and in the health of the church and its mission will remain strong and constant.
- The UMC will lose many members, and some will distance themselves from their faith.
- What is our discipleship based on: culture? scripture? holiness?
- Is our leadership failing us?
- The unknown
- Are we looking at division due to culture or scripture?
- If division occurs, how do we continue God's work and UMC missions?
- That Methodism/Wesleyism will disappear from the face of the earth.
- That we can maintain relationships and respect with our friends, church members and the global church.
- How do we engage young adults?
- Leadership development
- Do no harm.
- How can we trust the leaders of The UMC, since they totally disregarded the work of the special conference in February 2019?
- If there is a split, how can we be sure the agreement will be kept?
- UMC is trying to be politically rather than scripturally correct (Rev. 3:16).
- Hurting people by not being inclusive and loving; church is getting negative attention, which doesn't help people who are unchurched; not prioritizing need for belonging and purpose.
- Biblical literacy: theology, what it means to be UMC.
- No action is taken (kick the can down the road).
- Wrong focus (currently on maintaining status quo instead of new ways of discipleship).
- UMC is not effectively engaging/bringing in a younger crowd of members.
- How will the divorce of The UMC impact the local churches, organizations ad missions of the church?
- What are the logistics of the separation/divorce at local levels?

- Concerned about the negative impression the current situation is getting from the news coverage and how it affects what non-believers and our communities see in us as Christians.
- Concerns over the growth of the local and American congregation.
- That we as a church not conform to society's norms, but act as a reflection of God.
- Division: Perfect storm is brewing.
- We are not who we say we are; we should be disciples of Christ, should be Christ-like; basic principles should be love.
- Losing membership, especially youth and young people.
- Polarization based on personal beliefs as to what the church should/should not be.
- Being able to move forward and channel more energy to making disciples and reaching the unchurched.
- Are we alienating youth and affecting their future spirituality and faith journey.
- The viability of our missions locally, statewide, nationally and worldwide.
- What happens to associated groups, Wesleyan, missions, ministries, growing the future of new clergy? Are we hurting our future?
- We are hurting/losing unity and the emphasis on the Good News by focusing on one issue.
- Financial concerns
- If split happens, will I lose my church?
- Outside witness can be damaged or lost.
- Credibility diminishes.
- \$? Continue with work of the church in missions, etc. (UMCOR, UMVIM) inside and outside the country.
- What are we saying to our youth?
- Financial responsibility by the church and the conference.
- Relating to 18-35-year-olds.
- Honesty and transparency in church matters.
- Separation: Is it worth it? Is it what members want? How do members know?
- Are we being faithful in making disciples of Jesus Christ?
- How will a split affect the church in 20 years?
- Are we being faithful to God's word?
- Church structure will be such that it jeopardizes the mission.
- Damage our witness to those who need it most.
- Alignment of clergy and congregations.

Question 3: What do you want S.C. delegates attending the 2020 General Conference to know?

- Make a decision to move forward.
- We will be praying for the delegates throughout this process; please read all comments and feedback.
- More communications/clarity passed down to local churches as we move forward.
- Each delegate will vote his/her conscience and not be intimidated by those with loud voices.
- Each delegate has a clear understanding of the desires of all SC UMC laity before casting votes to represent us.
- Delegates should engage in prayerful listening and holy conversation.
- Time has come for a separation.
- No more business as usual.
- No more postponing.
- That we are praying for you.
- Be open-minded.
- Resolve issues with love.
- Our prayers are with them.
- Please support the Protocol.
- They represent the people of the South Carolina Annual Conference and not their own views.
- We will be praying for you all.
- Strive to maintain unity.
- Thank you, thank you, thank you.
- Maintain scriptural integrity.
- Be decisive, proactive; sooner is better.
- We thank you for your service.
- We really do not want the church to split over sexuality issues. We can disagree and still love.
- Listen to God's voice.
- The traditionalists should not be the ones forced to change.
- Traditionalists should not be afraid to speak out and let the progressives dominate the discussions.
- The Bible is still the final authority.
- We love the church and all are welcome.
- Everyone is valued and has worth.
- Give us closure on the issues dividing The UMC.
- That we appreciate their service and that we will be praying for them.

- That the delegates remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- That opposing sides also and equally regard scripture.
- That we be the inclusive church our mission statement says that we are.
- That none of us know.
- That they are prayed for.
- That the world is watching this process unfold.
- Keep in mind the future of the church.
- Communicate to the churches in language that's understandable.
- Seek God's guidance in making a decision and not have a predetermined position.
- Prayerfully consider everything before you, make a decision on what you think best, and go with it.
- Take out offending language.
- Vote your conscience based on what Christ teaches.
- Try to set aside personal biases.
- Churches are praying for you.
- Be gracious to all regardless of outcome.
- We appreciate your time and dedication.
- We are praying for you.
- Expect you to be representative of the majority of your constituents.
- Speak softly for productive and construction discussion.
- So I can select a church to attend, request that the conferences communicate on the conference webpage which way each church leans (progressive, traditional, etc.).
- It's time to make a decision.
- Remember the three simple rules.
- Vote according to church membership.
- Give church membership a voice.
- No changes to the UMC Discipline.
- Holding them in prayer.
- Want them to be of sound mind and make good decisions.
- Discern God's will, not their will.
- Be at peace when the job is done, not judged or ostracized.
- Thank you delegates for listening. We want you to vote your heart and convictions.
- Do all you can to keep us the united church.
- Remove the harmful language from the Book of Discipline.
- Congregations are praying for you and you are supported by our God and Savior.
- We want you to listen to what is said.
- We want you to make a decision regarding human sexuality and don't kick the can down the road.
- UMC to say United without animosity.

- Communicate our needs according to the strict interpretation of the Bible.
- Division of property should a divide occur?
- Before you re-define marriage, justify through scripture and tradition.
- We need a gracious exit plan.
- Delegates, remember you support the people.
- To love, not who we love.
- Engage in prayer for listening and holy conversation.
- We pray for you.
- Change the language / Keep the language.
- Make a decision.
- We are praying that you focus on discovering God's will and leaving it in his hands.
- We don't want to split. We want our differences to be settled in unity and love.
- We'd like to have more help/ideas on reaching our youth.
- We are not pleased with Protocol. Start over.
- The majority of memberships are conservative.
- The split is leadership-directed and is unpopular.
- We are praying for each of you.
- Listen and love.
- Patience when the tensions get high.
- Protocol is a good plan and should be voted on as presented. Waive the rules if needed.
- Go to God in prayer before voting. The Holy Spirit moves.
- Come to a decision in Minneapolis and don't postpone.
- Go to Minneapolis with unity as a priority.
- Stay close to the Bible.
- Realization that there's no common ground.
- Discerning God's will.
- Prayers and support.
- Treat division fairly.
- Listen to church members and don't vote solely on your own.
- Listen, pray, let Holy Spirit lead.
- Don't fear change.
- Be patient.
- Praying for the General Conference.
- Supporting reconciliation.
- We are praying for you.
- We are giving you permission to split.
- It is time to act. We expect a split and a split is essential.
- What you must do is difficult, it is demanding; the world is watching. Show them we are Christians by our love.

- Your congregations are tired and want resolution.
- We will be praying for you all whether you vote your conscience or the will of God.
- Delegates go to General Conference informed, but not with a predetermined decision.
- We appreciate you and are praying for you during this time.
- We trust you to take our hopes and concerns seriously.
- There is no one, perfect solution, but we respect your vote whether we agree or not.
- Praying for them.
- Wording of Discipline stating that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teachings needs to be removed.
- Set aside individual wills and search for God's will.
- We are praying for you.
- We want transparency. Real people and lives are being affected.
- Christ's work will continue, no matter what.
- Thank you for serving during difficult times.
- Make decisions based on traditional doctrine.
- Laity should communicate regularly before and during conferences to remain a cohesive and organize voice of the people in the church.
- We, clergy and laity, are concerned and feel deeply regarding the United Methodist Church.
- We want the public at-large to see us act with respect for each other – integrity.
- Be true to the scriptures.
- We will be in prayer for the delegates, praying there is no split in our denomination.
- If there is a split, the finances and the timing need to be re-negotiated.
- The governing body of the church is growing more than the churches.
- Traditionalists should not have to form a new denomination if split is approved.
- Properties/ministries begun by traditionalist congregations should remain with the traditionalist side of any split. (i.e outreach, missions, etc.)
- Make sure Global Ministries like UMCOR continue. Perhaps this is an area both sides could work on together.
- Require pastors, like churches, to declare which side of split they will align with.
- We are praying for you, the delegates.
- Your concern is for the people, not your personal beliefs/preferences.
- You are representing the masses.
- Is it our need to judge people.
- Champion the Book of Discipline and the Bible.
- Focus on core Methodism.
- If we do separate, we need to be clear on who is separating from what.
- If a division is necessary, make it so that there are no winners or losers. i.e. dissolve the UMC name and create two new denominations.

- Don't take anger to the conference, show that there is no hatred toward any group from our church – we love all people.
- Take the will of the people to the conference, not personal agendas.
- Vote according to biblical teachings and not on political correctness.
- Rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit when voting and understand the deep gravity of your decision.
- Delegates, treat each other with respect.
- Jesus Christ was all about reaching out to the least, the last and the lost, and bringing them into a relationship with him.
- Represent the unifying love of Christ with your votes. The world is looking to the UMC. Let us be a beacon of hope to all.
- Vote for a UMC that is accepting and loving to all and committed to embracing all of God's children.
- We are ready for a final resolution. It is time to move on.
- People are praying for the wisdom of the delegates, that their considerations should be based on God's word.
- Keep your focus on God's church and his will.
- Each UM member has a direct vote provided to the delegate.
- Learn/study what other denominations have done when facing these issues.
- Vote for love.
- We are praying for you.
- There is love and respect amongst us – show it to each other.
- Listen to still, small voices.