

## 2019 General Conference Results

### Ordination

1. The definition of self-avowed practicing homosexual now includes persons living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual. (Petition 1, 90032, Calendar Item 18)
2. Bishops are prohibited from consecrating bishops who are self-avowed homosexuals even if they have been elected. Bishops are prohibited from commissioning or ordaining those on the deacon or elder track if the Board of Ordained Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed practicing homosexual. (Petition 5, 90036, Calendar Item 4)
3. Board of ordained ministry members must certify to the bishop that they will uphold the Book of Discipline in its entirety including but not limited to all qualifications for ordination (Par. 304, 330, 335, 336) (Petition 6, 90037, Calendar Item 6)  
This new church law requires that before individuals can be appointed to the annual conference board of ordained ministry, they must be willing to uphold the entirety of our ordination standards. It also requires bishops to certify that they have only nominated people to this board who will uphold all of our ordination standards.

### Violations of the Discipline

4. The minimum penalty if someone is convicted of conducting same-sex ceremonies is one-year suspension without pay (first offense), and termination (second offense) (Petition 11, 90042, Calendar Item 11)  
This requires mandatory penalties for clergy found in a church trial to have violated our covenant against performing same-sex union ceremonies.
5. The district committees on ordained ministry and conference boards of ordained ministry shall not approve or recommend persons who do not meet the qualifications of Par. 304.1-3 after full examination and the bishop shall rule any unqualified candidate so recommended out of order (Petition 12, 90043, Calendar Item 12)  
This requires district committees on ministry and boards of ordained ministry to conduct a “full examination and thorough inquiry” into every ministry candidate’s compliance with our standards, forbids them from recommending any candidate who does not meet our standards, and requires bishops to prevent candidates who obviously violate our standards from being approved in clergy session.
6. Bishops can only dismiss complaints against a clergy if the complaint has no basis in law and the reason for dismissal must be shared with the complainant (the person who brings the charge) (Petition 13, 90044, Calendar Item 13)  
This petition forbids bishops from dismissing complaints unless the complaints have “no basis in law or fact.” This petition also requires that any time bishops dismiss a complaint, they must share a written explanation with the person who filed the complaint. This also applies to complaints against bishops.
7. Just Resolutions must state all identified harms and how they will be addressed to the complainant. (Petition 14, 90045, Calendar Item 14)

This petition requires that all just resolutions must “state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed.” A “Just Resolution” is an alternative to a church trial.

8. The complainant(s) must be a party to the Just Resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution (Petition 15, 90046, Calendar Item 15)

This new church law makes the complaint filer a party to the process, and requires that “every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.”

9. The Church can appeal a case against a clergy based on egregious errors of law to the committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council. If there is jury nullification, the church has recourse to prosecute. (Petition 16, 90047, Calendar Item 17)

If you had a case of “jury nullification,” in which a church trial refused to enforce certain church laws with which they disagreed, even when the facts of this church law being violated were clear, previously there was nothing that could be done. But now, for such extreme cases, there will be a right for those seeking accountability to appeal if there were clearly “egregious errors of church law.”

### **Exit Strategies**

#### **Petition 90016 Wespeth**

If a local church or charge in the United States changes its relationship to The United Methodist Church through closure, abandonment, or release from the trust clause, it is responsible for unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference.

#### **Petition 90017 Wespeth**

Protects the pension of the clergy who terminate relationship with the annual conference; secured and protected from future disruptions by converting to an actuarially account balance.

#### **Petition 90066**

This supports a gracious exit for congregations to leave our denomination with their property if they find that they cannot live with United Methodism’s current approach to sexuality matters. Churches may exit with their property and assets if two-thirds of the members vote to do so. They must pay pension liabilities and one year of apportionments. This would also require a two-thirds vote of the annual conference. (This has been referred to the Judicial Council for constitutionality.)

These are the petitions that were voted “priority” for this General Conference. The “One Church Plan” was given a lower priority and was defeated.

The Judicial Council will meet in April 2019.

This legislation becomes official law on January 1, 2020.