



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

North Texas Annual Conference  
P.O. Box 866188  
Plano, Texas 75086-6188  
Telephone: 972-526-5015 ~ Fax: 972-526-5014

MICHAEL MCKEE  
Resident Bishop

JOELL STANISLAUS  
Executive Assistant

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Two separate but related events in the life of The United Methodist Church transpired the last few days.

At the conclusion of its six-day meeting Friday, the Council of Bishops announced it would recommend the One Church Plan offered by the Commission on a Way Forward for the consideration of General Conference delegates. After much discernment, we feel this option best affords annual conferences the ability to make decisions about their ministries in accordance with the cultural context of their respective conferences.

That being said, the Council of Bishops also decided to send all three plans submitted by the Commission to delegates. Accompanying these plans will be a historical narrative of our combined work that illustrates to General Conference delegates how we – as a body – arrived at this recommendation.

Following its translation into the official languages of The United Methodist Church, the full report will be released no later than July 8. Plans are being made about how we will interact with the clergy and laity of the NTC about the recommended plan.

Attached is the press release from the Council of Bishops regarding Friday's decision.

Also last week, the Council of Bishops canvassed the results of the votes of the lay and clergy members of all the annual conferences in United Methodism on five constitutional amendments. For an amendment to be placed in The Constitution of The United Methodist Church, it must have received 2/3 of the members voting at General Conference. Upon passage by the General Conference, 2/3 of the voting members of all the annual conferences must vote in favor of the amendment to be adopted and placed in the Constitution.

Unfortunately, two of the amendments failed to receive the requisite 2/3 votes of the aggregate clergy and lay members of all the annual conferences.

The first amendment acknowledged that males and females are created in the image of God and that The UMC would seek to end discrimination against females. The second amendment provided clarity of The United Methodist Church's position about persons being denied access because of race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status or economic condition. The word "marital" was the addition to the amendment. My colleague Bishops and I are deeply disappointed about the actions that resulted in the failure of these amendments, as both were passed overwhelmingly at the 2016 General Conference.

Attached are three documents pertaining to these amendments:

- The press release from the Council of Bishops announcing votes pertaining to the amendments.
- A statement from the Council of Bishops responding to the voting, which states "we are unequivocal in our commitment to the equality of women and their full inclusion in our Church."
- A profound letter from the female bishops that the full Council of Bishops adopted unanimously.

My pastoral word to all is that all of God's children are welcomed in our churches. In all areas of the Church, our faithful work continues.

May the peace of our Risen Lord be with you.

Michael McKee