

United Methodist Conservatives Announce Plans to Form New Denomination, 'Global Methodist Church'

Conservatives within the United Methodist Church have announced their plans to form a new denomination, the Global Methodist Church, with a doctrine that does not allow for same-sex marriage. The move is expected to hasten the long-anticipated split of the nation's largest mainline Protestant denomination.

The UMC's General Conference, at which such a split would be debated, has now been postponed for two years and is scheduled to take place in Minneapolis Aug. 29-Sept. 2, 2022, per RNS. Conservative Methodists first put forward a plan to separate from the church in 2019 after much contention over the approval of the church's so-called Traditional Plan, which upheld opposition to the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ United Methodists.

"The church is basically stalemated right now," the Rev. Keith Boyette, president of the Wesleyan Covenant Association and chair of the Transitional Leadership Council, which is guiding the creation of the Global Methodist Church, said in an announcement on the WCA website. "We don't believe an additional year is going to be helpful for anybody."

"Over the past year the council members, and hundreds of people who have informed their work, have faithfully and thoughtfully arrived at this point," Boyette added. "They are happy to share with others a wealth of information about a church they believe will be steeped in the lifegiving confessions of the Christian faith."

"I am convinced the Global Methodist Church will be a vibrant, vital expression of Methodism in terms of its teachings and ethics," said Dr. Bob Hayes, a Transitional Leadership Council member and bishop in residence at The Woodlands United Methodist Church in The Woodlands, Texas, also per the WCA announcement. "As a fourth generation Methodist I am excited by a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit where I see God doing a new thing! God is creating a church rooted in Scripture and the love of Jesus, and he is calling us to participate with him. We're not there just yet, but given our vision, our hope, and our perseverance, I'm confident we'll get there!"

The WCA announcement also notes that Council members believe once the United Methodist Church adopts pending legislation making way for a split, "thousands of local churches and clergy in Africa, Eurasia, the Philippines, and the U.S. will want to join the Global Methodist Church. It is widely recognized that clergy and laity in Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia, and in parts of the Philippines are more theologically conservative than their counterparts in the U.S. Although, even in the U.S., a significant percentage of laity identify as theologically conservative, and are part of small, midsize, and large traditionalist local churches."

"I believe Methodism is on the cusp of another Great Awakening," said Transitional Leadership Council member Cara Nicklas, an attorney and General Conference delegate from the Oklahoma Annual Conference, also per the WCA announcement. "The Global Methodist Church is the vehicle by which that will happen because we value a connectional, global church with doctrine and discipline that is not guided by our U.S. culture but is simply focused on bringing people into a deep and intimate relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

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