

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN BRIEF EVERY SINGLE VOTE MATTERS

These amendments to The United Methodist constitution were approved by General Conference delegates in 2024. They must be supported by two-thirds of the voting members of all the Annual Conferences in order to be ratified.

WHO CAN VOTE?

People in the following categories only are eligible to vote on constitutional amendments:

- lay voting members seated in the bar of Annual Conference
- deaconesses, home missionaries, active diaconal ministers, lay members by virtue of office (these are lay voting members of Annual Conference)
- ordained clergy in full membership of the Annual Conference (except for those on honorable or administrative location)



DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS

Lay and clergy members of Annual Conferences may debate the constitutional amendments as printed. However, they may not change the wording of the proposed amendments in any way.

HOW AN AMENDMENT BECOMES CHURCH LAW

- The United Methodist General Conference 2020/2024, made up of lay and clergy delegates from across the connection, approved these amendments to the UMC constitution.
- Each amendment was submitted by a trustworthy United Methodist body.
- The next step is ratification by the voting members of all United Methodist annual conferences.

In Northern Illinois, balloting on each amendment will take place on Tuesday afternoon, June 10.

- Voting options are yes or no. No abstentions will be counted.
- All UMC annual conferences will be voting on these amendments. The vote numerical totals will be sent to the Council of Bishops. All votes are added together after all annual conferences have voted.
- The annual conferences will not report their vote tallies to their annual conference. The information is irrelevant because every single vote cast at every annual conference will be added to the others.
- Each amendment will require a two-thirds affirmative vote in order to be ratified and added to the church constitution.



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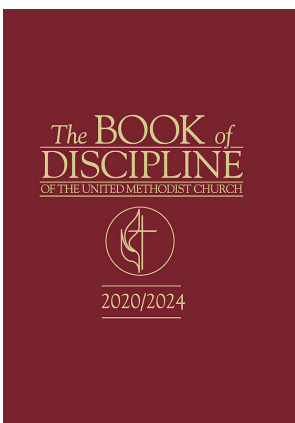
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BALLOT #1: REGIONALIZATION

This amendment would organize the United Methodist Church into geographic bodies.

Right now, the church in the United States is organized into five Jurisdictions. Northern Illinois Conference is part of the North Central Jurisdiction. One of the main tasks of Jurisdictional Conferences is electing and assigning bishops. The United Methodist Church outside of the United States is divided into eight Central Conferences. Central Conferences are those located in Europe, Africa, and the Philippines.

The Annual Conferences in both the Central Conferences and the United States send voting representatives to the quadrennial General Conference, which makes decisions on behalf of the entire denomination. These appear in the Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions. The Central Conferences may adapt these rules to fit their contexts. The United States' conferences may not. Thus, Central Conference representatives vote on rules they can adapt but the United States conferences may not. Also, many legislative proposals submitted to General Conference relate to the United States context only.



This amendment would discontinue the phrase “Central Conference” and reorganize the worldwide church into equal regional conferences. The church in the U.S. would become a regional conference (retaining jurisdictions). The regional conferences may make rules for themselves that do not bind other regional conferences. There are parts of the Discipline that would be the same for all of the regional conferences: the constitution, those sections identified as the General Book of Discipline, “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task,” “The Ministry of All Christians,” and the Social Principles’ preface, preamble, and paragraphs 160-166. The rest may be adapted by regional conferences to fit their contexts.

This amendment would put all conferences on an equal footing and enable them to pass rules relevant to their own contexts.



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BALLOT #2: INCLUSION IN MEMBERSHIP



If adopted, this amendment would add “gender” and “ability” to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership in a United Methodist congregation.

The amended Paragraph 4, Article IV in the constitution would read, “All persons, without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.”

BALLOT #3: RACIAL JUSTICE

The complete revision of the constitution’s Paragraph 5, Article V aims to strengthen the denomination’s longtime support for racial justice.

The new version would read:

“The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God’s goodness and love, God created all persons as God’s unique and beloved children. Racism opposes God’s law, goodness and love

and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy and

colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity and undermine God’s work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The

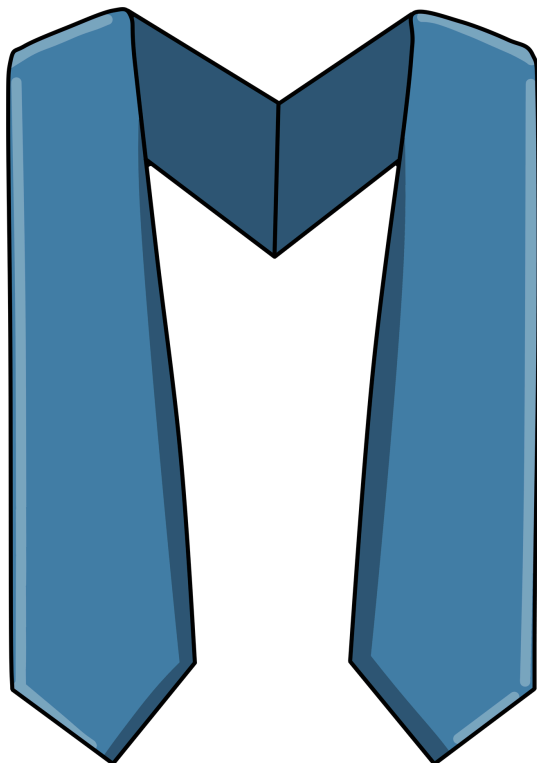
United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.”



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BALLOT #4: EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTING RIGHTS



This amendment to Paragraph 35, Article IV aims to clarify the educational requirements for clergy who may vote for clergy delegates to General Conference and Jurisdictional Conferences.

An equal number of lay and clergy delegates are elected by Annual Conference voting members. Clergy elect clergy and laypeople elect laypeople. Local pastors (who are not ordained) are not eligible to vote for either lay or clergy delegates.

The amendment allows clergy (ordained or licensed) who meet certain educational requirements to qualify to vote for clergy delegates. They must have completed course of study or a master of divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school (or its equivalent as recognized in a Central Conference) and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

LEARN MORE

- **Resource UMC:** resourceumc.org/amendments
- **How the Constitution is Amended** (video):
umc.org/en/content/how-is-the-united-methodist-constitution-amended
- **Amending the United Methodist Constitution:**
umc.org/en/content/amending-the-united-methodist-constitution
- **General information and voting rights:** umcnic.org/2025-annual-conference/voting-at-ac
- **Debunking Disinformation About Regionalization:**
umnews.org/en/news/debunking-disinformation-about-%20regionalization
- **What Is the General Conference?**
resourceumc.org/en/content/what-is-the-general-conference



Northern Illinois Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Updated: 3/21/25

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