

Frequently Asked Questions Answers.

1) There are several factual pieces of information that can help answer the question. All are related to what changes may be made in the current Book of Discipline and how those rules may or may not be enforced.

- There are five jurisdictions in the United States. Pendleton is in the Southeast Jurisdiction that includes conferences in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
- In November 2022 each of the five U.S. jurisdictions met separately and approved overwhelmingly similarly worded measures aspiring to a future church where “LGBTQIA+ people will be protected, affirmed, and empowered.” (See footnote 1) As conservative as the Southeast has been, the measures easily passed.
- They also passed a non-binding measure asking anyone to withdraw from leadership roles if they are planning to leave the denomination soon. That will almost certainly remove Traditionalist (conservatives) from any decision-making processes going forward.
- The delegates that voted at the five U.S. Jurisdictional Conferences in 2022 will be the same delegates that will vote at the April 2024 UMC General Conference. Over 6,000 traditional minded churches and their delegates have already separated from the UMC. With the absence of Traditionalist delegates the measures will easily pass at the next General Conference in April 2024. (To see more on the three measures. (See footnote 2) Another measure of future direction is the impact of views held by new leadership. Thirteen new bishops have either taken on their new roles this year or will in the very near future. All 13 bishops favor changing the current language in the Book of Discipline’s definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. They would endorse changing the language to accept ordination of practicing gay and lesbian pastors and support the ability of pastors to perform same-sex weddings. (See footnote 3)
- Conclusion: The UMC is moving to be more Progressive (liberal). They appear to have the strength to change the wording in the current Book of Discipline to officially allow for more diversity. Because UMC Leadership is not enforcing the current Book of Discipline, even a change in wording will not stop an accelerated movement to a more Progressive agenda in 2024.

Pendleton United Methodist Church, and other generally conservative (Traditional) churches, will be under pressure to conform to new more Progressive standards in the coming years. The replacement of our present South Carolina Resident Bishop, Johathan Holston, is significant. He will either retire or leave the UMC SC in July 2024 at the next Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference. The recent trend is to appoint candidates with a more Progressive view which could lead to the elimination of the current separation process.

FOOTNOTE LINKS:

- 1) LGBTQ-Friendly Votes Signal Progressive Shift for Methodists
(voanews.com)
- 2) Three measures passed by the Southern and other Jurisdictions in 2022.
 - a) <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=c8ea3d01be&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msgf:1781283409693566656&th=18b863d2cf14e6c0&view=att&disp=inline>
 - b) <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=c8ea3d01be&attid=0.2&permmsgid=msgf:1781283409693566656&th=18b863d2cf14e6c0&view=att&disp=inline>
 - c) <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=c8ea3d01be&attid=0.3&permmsgid=msgf:1781283409693566656&th=18b863d2cf14e6c0&view=att&disp=inline>
- 3) Charting a New Direction for the UMC (Part 1) – Good News Magazine