

## **2019 Special Session Legislation Recap**

### **Clergy Pensions:**

- The General Conference voted that Churches wishing to leave the denomination (currently there is no process for this) must pay for future clergy pension liability based on a formula provided by Wespeth.
- Clergy who withdraw from ordination will have their currently earned pension benefits converted to UMPIP, a voluntarily defined contribution plan, based on a formula provided by Wespeth.

### **The Traditional Plan:**

The Traditional Plan was passed in part. Two sections did not make it out of committee. Six petitions in the plan have already been declared unconstitutional. Some portions were amended but it remains to be seen if the amendments bring these sections into alignment with our UM Constitution.

Some of the paragraphs added to the Book of Discipline include:

- Clarified definition of homosexuality. In the qualifications for ministry section of BOD. *"Or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual."*
- Broadened the authority and responsibility of bishops to deny commissioning or ordination, even when persons are recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and affirmed by the Clergy Session.
- Forbids the College of Bishops from consecrating clergy elected to the Episcopacy if they are LGBTQ+.
- Requires Board of Ordained Ministry members to certify that they will uphold the Book of Discipline in its entirety.
- Sets a minimum penalty for clergy who move through trial for conducting same-sex weddings.
- Further defines how complaints must be handled including reasons for dismissal, and the role of the complainant.

### **Disaffiliation:**

- A petition designating steps for a church to leave the denomination was passed but, while an amendment was approved, it did not address issues previously raised by the Judicial Council which had declared the original resolution unconstitutional.
- This petition requires churches to work out a financial agreement with the Annual Conference in order to exit. Allows churches to maintain their real property and assets.

### **What didn't happen?**

Petitions **did not pass** requiring clergy to sign commitment cards, churches to take votes on their stands, nor conferences to make decisions on their alignment around LGBTQi.

\*\*\* *The Judicial Council will convene in Evanston, Illinois at the end of April to rule on the constitutionality of all legislation except the pension matters. If ruled constitutional, the Traditional Plan will go into effect Jan. 1, 2020.*