

# TLUMC Next Steps Taskforce

Where do we start?

- Book of Discipline
- Breakdown of major plans
  - Traditional Plan; UMC-Next Plan; Indianapolis Plan

# Creation of Priorities

Not in any priority order:

- Get out from under denominational fight
- Retain theological traditional vision - Wesleyan (based on results from vision team)
- Retain property and assets
- Retain as many people as possible
- Stay compassionate and welcoming
- Seek input from all constituencies, especially the youth
- Desire for a denominational connection of some kind

# **Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation**

Mediated Plan

# Yambasu Consultation

- Brought together 16 leaders from various perspectives (Centrist, Progressive, Traditional) and several bishops
- Mediator designated - Kenneth Feinberg (who negotiated 9/11 Victim Fund, Deep Water Horizon, and other high profile cases) - worked pro bono
- Smaller sub group met with Feinberg to hammer out details of agreement, which was reached on December 17

# Main Points of the Protocol

- Provides for a “Post-Separation” UMC to continue, while also providing for the creation of a new traditional Methodist denomination
- Other denominations (like a more progressive expression) may also emerge if they register with the Council of Bishops by May 15, 2021
- The Post-Separation UMC will modify the *Discipline* to fit its context and eliminate current language concerning LGBTQ issues, removing restrictions on marriage and ordination
- Traditional denomination will create its own Discipline and structure, which the Wesleyan Covenant Association has already done

# Decision-Making on Joining New Methodist Denomination(s)

- Central Conferences (Africa, Europe, Philippines) - will require a 2/3 vote to join new Methodist denomination, otherwise they remain with the Post-Separation UMC
- Annual Conferences - if no vote, they remain with Post-Separation UMC. To vote to join a new Methodist denomination, must pass that vote by 57%
- Local Churches - Church Council determines whether to hold a vote to join a new traditional denomination (if no vote, church remains with annual conference and Post-Separation UMC). Church Council determines whether voting threshold is to be 2/3 or simple majority of professing members present
- A Church Conference, presided at by the District Superintendent, must be held within 60 days of the Church Council's decision to hold a vote and determine a threshold.

# Property and Assets

- Local churches who join the new traditional Methodist denomination will retain their property and assets
- Local churches are expected to meet connectional responsibilities up to the date of separation, but there is no mechanism to enforce back payment of apportionments
- No additional apportionments or pension liability payments will be required upon separation, other than previously documented loans from the annual conference

# Property and Assets

- If a church chooses to close, property will be subject to a lien in favor of Wespath for payment of future unfunded pension liabilities
- Churches who disaffiliate but do not join one of the new Methodist denominations created by this Protocol will be subject to Paragraph 2553 of the UM *Discipline* (in other words, paying all unfunded pension liabilities + apportionments)
- Property belonging to Annual, Jurisdictional, and Central Conferences will be retained by those entities regardless of affiliation



# Financial Agreements

- A total sum of \$25 million will be paid by the General Council on Finance and Administration to the new traditional Methodist denomination over the ensuing quadrennium
- A total sum of \$2 million will be paid to any other potential Methodist denominations emerging out of this Protocol
- \$39 million will be set aside over the next two quadrennia to fund ministries for and by Asian, Black, Hispanic-Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander communities including the National Plans for these communities. This also includes support for Africa University.

# Pension Plan

- Pension plans remain in place for all current clergy and lay employees regardless of which Methodist denomination they affiliate
- Wespath will remain the administrator of the pension funds for all Methodist denominations emerging out of this agreement

# Next Steps

- Council of Bishops has requested the Judicial Council to make a declaratory decision on constitutionality of this Protocol
- Council of Bishops has requested GCFA to evaluate financial impact of the Protocol
- Council of Bishops will work with Commission on General Conference to make this Protocol the first order of business at General Conference 2020
- If passed, space will be provided for each new denomination (post-separation UMC and traditional denomination) to meet and begin their separate work

# Taskforce Thoughts on Mediated Plan

- Strengths: Resolves UMC fight; allows for retention of property and assets; ability to retain theological traditional path (depending on congregation vote); continue to stay compassionate and welcoming
- Opportunities: Get rid of appointment and apportionment system
- Threats: Church vote - anytime there is a vote it is risky; it forces people out to declare on a divisive and emotional issue; may impact staff; some could say we can still meet our value statement and stay in UMC; Risks of the unknown (new paths, or changes to existing UMC); There will be change regardless of decision

# Next Steps

Communication is vital

- Scheduled a series of town hall meetings to deliver information to individual congregants
  - Starting this month
  - How We Got Here
  - United Methodist Polity and Discipline 101
  - General Conference: Plans and Proposals
  - Pre-General Conference Briefing
  - Post-General Conference Briefing