

**The Bridge**  
**June 2024 Issue**

**Delegates from around the world gather for General Conference**

After meeting for ten days, the postponed 2020 General Conference adjourned Friday, May 3. United Methodists worldwide gathered in Charlotte, North Carolina to worship, pray, and conduct legislative work. The 862 voting delegates, ten of which were from Upper New York, considered more than 1,000 petitions and other action items, including regionalization and the removal of restrictive language related to LGBTQ people, revising the church's Social Principles, adopting a record-low budget, approving a new retirement plan for clergy, and much more. Following the adjournment of General Conference, Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez shared a video addressing five key areas that happened during this time of holy conferencing and what it means for Upper New York.

Watch the video: <https://vimeo.com/942499709>

View the transcript: <https://www.unyumc.org/news/article/from-the-desk-of-bishop-hector-a.-burgos-nunez-recapping-general-conference>

**General Conference legislative recap**

General Conference is the top lawmaking assembly of The United Methodist Church and the only entity that speaks for the denomination. It convenes every four years, with delegates from the denomination's regions around the world. Here are a few of the major legislative actions approved.

**Regionalization Petitions Approved**

Regionalization represents an effort to put the church's different geographical regions on equal footing and to make the General Conference less U.S.-centric. The current central conferences and the U.S. would become regional conferences, with the same authority to pass legislation for greater missional impact.

**Removal of Restrictive Language Related to LGBTQ People**

The General Conference voted by overwhelming majorities to remove from the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* discriminatory language and bans related to ministry by, with and for "self-avowed practicing" gay and lesbian people.

### **Adoption of Revised Social Principles**

Delegates approved the first overhaul of the denomination's Social Principles in nearly 50 years. The Social Principles, contained in both the *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions*, are statements that reflect official United Methodist teachings on a wide range of topics. They are not church law but are intended to inform United Methodist witness on issues of the day with a biblical foundation.

### **Approved Budget and Decreased the Apportionment Percentage**

The total approved is significantly smaller than the budget approved by the 2016 General Conference. Annual conferences will be asked to pay less in apportionments.

Learn more about the actions approved at General Conference:

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/general-conference-legislative-recap>

### **History is made at General Conference**

Bishop Héctor A. Burgos Núñez became the first bishop from the island of Puerto Rico to preside over a plenary at a general conference on April 26, 2024. Bishop Tracy S. Malone, resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference, became the first Black female president of the Council of Bishops on April 30, 2024. Bishop David Wilson, resident bishop of the Great Plains Conference, became the first Native American bishop to preside over a general conference on April 25, 2024. Bishop Carlo Rapanut became the first Filipino-American bishop to preside over a general conference on April 24, 2024. Bishop Karen Oliveto became the first openly gay bishop to preside over a general conference on May 3, 2024. The Rev. Aleze M. Fulbright became the first person of color to be elected secretary-designate of the General Conference on May 1, 2024.