

# Ask The Pastor



***Question: What is a resolution and what does it mean that it is adopted by the Annual Conference? What is the relationship between the resolution and General Conference?***

To help answer this question I called upon one of my breakfast buddies, who is a lay member in his church and a member of the Committee on Resolutions for the North Georgia Conference to be sure I was right in my explanation. A resolution is simply a statement asking for something to be done. This year at Annual Conference we had four resolutions that we voted on, and all passed.

- Resolution of Support for Legislation to Authorize Sacramental Authority for Deacons
- Resolution Regarding Gun Violence Prevention
- Encouraging Leadership With Integrity
- Affirmation of the Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA+ People in The UMC

Resolutions can be submitted by a clergy member, a lay member of the conference, or a layperson who is a member of a local church within the conference and whose church board has endorsed the resolution. Normally they have to be submitted by February 1 so that the Committee can determine if they need to go to a particular organization within the Conference or if they will need to act upon it. This year was different as most came in after the February 1 deadline, which is allowed. In fact, the *Resolution Regarding Gun Violence Prevention* was introduced the day Annual Conference started with the Bishop's permission to include it for this year. Here again, this is allowed but not common.

A resolution can call for action, or they may be aspirational. All the resolutions this year were aspirational, but they still have meaning. *The Resolution Regarding Gun Violence Prevention* was asked to be sent to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of Georgia so it will be handled by the appropriate office within the Conference to do so.

The *Resolution for Encouraging Leadership With Integrity* is aspirational, but it is not binding. While it asks for those who intend to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church to step away from leadership, it cannot rule that they step away. To do so would put it in conflict with the Book of Discipline which allows all members of the United Methodist Church to be eligible in leadership roles.

The same can be said of the other two resolutions regarding allowing Deacons to serve communion and the Affirmation of Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice. While they would presently violate the Book of Discipline, they carry a lot of clout. Both issues will most likely be brought up as resolutions at General Conference. If they are, then our passed resolutions would indicate the support of our Annual Conference for that resolution. If other Annual Conferences pass similar resolutions, it could indicate the type of support a resolution could have at General Conference. With the passed resolutions, our Annual Conference would be expressing their support for Deacons to be allowed to serve communion and support for full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in the United Methodist Church. In fact, the resolution on *Affirmation of the Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA+ People in The UMC* has been adopted in all five Jurisdiction Conferences. Jurisdiction Conferences are our regional conferences and the North Georgia Annual Conference is part of the Southeast Jurisdictional Conference. Most of the delegates to General Conference will be those who were also delegates to Jurisdictional Conferences, so this would give an indication of how voting would go at General Conference with the delegates from the United States. I will address General Conference in a separate Ask the Pastor.

Once resolutions are passed, or adopted, in our Annual Conference then they are recorded in the Annual Conference Journal which is our record of what transpires at Annual Conference.

I hope this helps some. If you have any questions regarding the resolutions, email me and I will try to answer. If you have any other questions for Ask The Pastor during this time of discernment, send it in. Keep praying, keep asking, and keep seeking.

In His Grace,  
Pastor Jim