



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

Ready or Not... General Conference

Conference Forum | March 2024

Petition Summary

Wespath submitted 27 petitions

- **26 petitions—first submitted 2019**
 - **15 original petitions**—active; no updates
 - **10 substitute petitions**—updated versions submitted
 - **1 withdrawal request**—to Committee on Reference
- **1 new petition**—submitted July 2023

Prioritization of Wespath Petitions

“Must-Do” Petitions

- 1-4. Benefit Plan Amendments
 - CRSP, Compass, RPGA, CPP
5. Authority to Amend Mandatory Benefits Plans
6. **Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments**

“Nice-to-Have” Petitions

- 7-8. Wespath Service to Non-UMC Organizations
 - Voluntary Benefit Plans
 - Institutional Investors
9. Board Composition
10. Agency Name (“Wespath”)
11. Board Meetings
12. Board Committees
13. Investment Disclosures
14. Central Conference Pension Program
15. Cost Allocation of Mandatory Plans
16. Investment Ethics (*Book of Resolutions*)

“Can Live Without” Petitions

17. General Agency Property Reporting Exemptions
18. General Agency Pay Equity Reporting
19. Health and Wellness Information
20. Pension Duties and Responsibilities of Annual Conferences
21. Financing Pension and Benefits Programs
22. Conference Pension Conflict of Interest Policies
23. Joint Distributing Committee Cross-Reference
24. General Agency Benefit Funding Plan Reporting
25. General Agency Pension Credit
26. Clergy Salaries

Request Withdrawal

27. Pension Matters for Disaffiliation

Refreshed General Conference Priorities



**Benefit plans
legislation**



**UN717
Sustainable
Investments**



Regionalization

Requests to Committee on Reference

Benefit Plan Petitions

- Petition 20946-FA: substitute for 20220-FA (¶ 1504.1 **Compass Plan**)
- Petition 20948-FA: substitute for 20227-FA (¶ 1504.1 **CRSP**)
- Petition 20949-FA: substitute for 20219-FA (¶ 1504.1 **RPGA**)
- Petition 20951-FA: substitute for 20228-FA (¶ 1504.1 **CPP**)
- Petition 20947-FA: substitute for 20222-FA (¶ 1504.1 **Amendment Authority**)

Wespath Services

- Petition 20950-FA: substitute for 20221-FA (¶1504.2)
- Petition 20952-FA: substitute for 20223-FA (¶1504.16)

Requests to Committee on Reference

Wespath Governance

- Petition 20945-FA: substitute for 20214-FA (¶1502.1 **GBPFB Membership**)

Investment Ethics

- Petition 20982-GA: substitute for 20266-GA (¶717)

Other *Discipline* Updates

- Petition 20953-FA: substitute for 20229-FA (¶1505 **General Agency Plan**)

Investment Pensions Matters for Disaffiliation by U.S. Annual Conferences or Groups of Local Churches

- Petition 20701-FA: withdraw petition for new paragraph (¶2555)

Preparing for General Conference

- Meeting with delegations
- Assembling an on-site team
- Anticipating objections or concerns
- Identifying delegates who might help us
 - Financial Administration
 - General Administration



Wespath's Key Legislation

- Compass: retirement plan for U.S. clergy
- Sustainable investments
- Other benefit plan changes
- Wespath Board of Directors
 - Membership
 - Authority



Sustainable Investment Petitions (¶717)

Wespath Petition	Non-Wespath Petitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizes ambitious engagement• Prioritizes “just and equitable” transition• Big-picture engagement approach	1) Exclude fossil fuels from all UM investments
	2) Exclude government securities of countries conducting prolonged military occupations

Commonalities: Shared concern and urgency for environmental well-being, human rights, and caring for creation.

Differences: Multiple valid responses versus exclusion as the only path.

Other Wespath Petitions

To streamline or enhance benefit plans

For flexibility
and cost savings

**Clergy
Retirement
Security
Program
(CRSP)**

Transition to
Compass

**Ministerial
Pension Plan
(MPP)**

New
distribution
option

**Comprehensive
Protection Plan
(CPP)**

Death benefits,
disability
benefits:
enhancements

CPP

Connectional
support
for legacy
benefit plans

**Plan
Amendments**

Minor plan
updates
between
General
Conferences

**Board
Composition**

Reduction in
board size

Plan Amendment Authority

Permit Wespath Board of Directors to amend a U.S. clergy plan *only if it:*



- Does not reduce participant “benefits, rights or features”
- Does not add cost
- Is not prohibited by applicable law or Judicial Council ruling

WHY: Allows flexibility to amend U.S. clergy plans between General Conferences

Current authority limited to changes required by

- U.S. law
- *Book of Discipline*

Wespath's Board of Directors

Reduce Board from 32 members to 25

10 members	Elected from U.S. jurisdictions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 SE, 2 NE, 2 SC, 2 NC, 1 W
2 members	Bishops elected from Council of Bishops
3 members	Elected by General Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 from U.S., 1 from a central conference
10 members	With specialized knowledge (law, benefits, investments, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nominated by Wespath Nominating Committee

WHY:

- **Cost savings**
(travel, administration)
- **Flexible** for changing needs
 - 9 of 13 UM agencies trimmed boards since GC 2012
 - Average agency board size: 23*
 - 10 Wespath-elected:
specialized knowledge in investments, benefits, law, etc.

* Average members excludes Church and Society (62) and Wespath (32)

Petitions from Others



CRSP MPP Revision

Petition 20719:

- Remove MPP annuity requirement
- 100% MPP balance eligible for rollover to UMPIP or elsewhere



Delete ¶1504.23

Petition 20218

Eliminates pension liability withdrawal payments for church closures, disaffiliations or transfers



US Regional Conference



Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and Connectional Table

A Christmas Covenant
Our Gift of Hope

An Equitable Structure of Global Regionalism



Regionalization Proposals

Why Regional Conferences?



EFFICIENCY

- Much General Conference time and resources spent on matters **irrelevant to entire Connection**
- Many petitions pertain largely or only to the U.S.

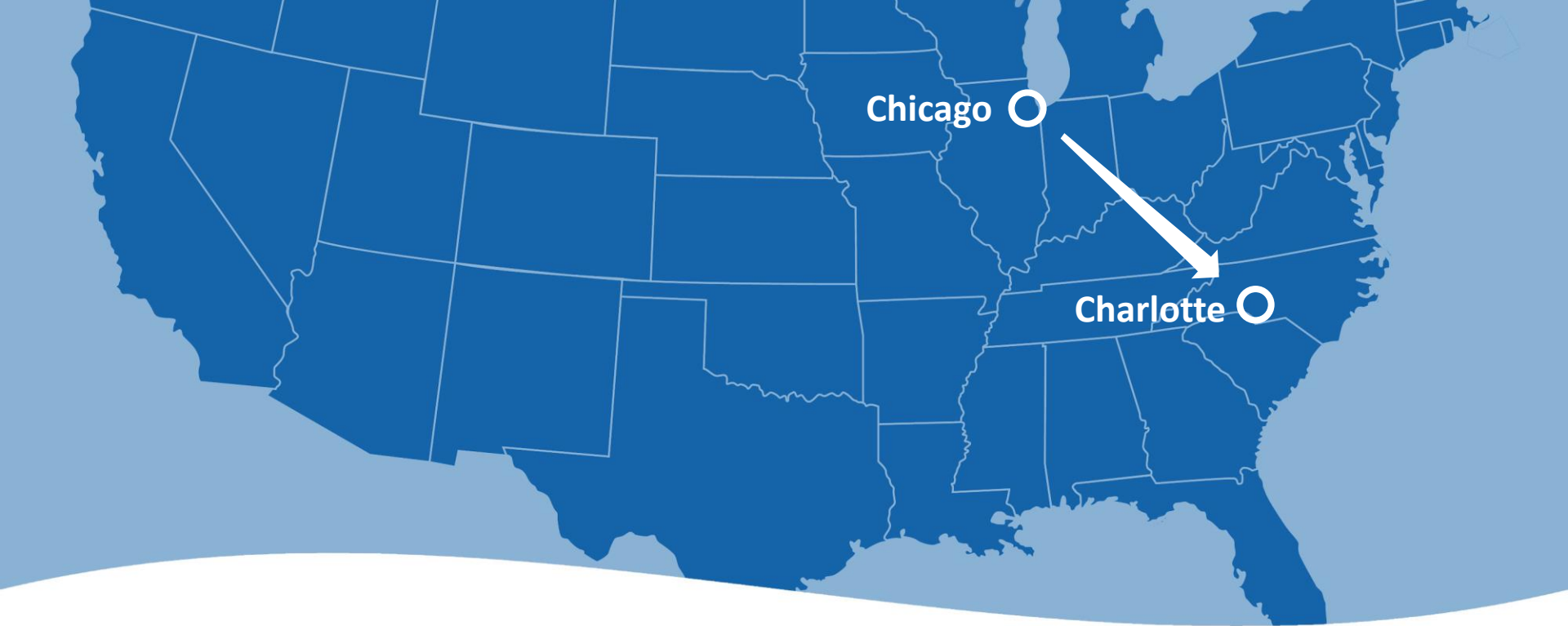


CONSISTENCY

- Central conferences can amend parts of *Discipline* for their needs and contexts
- No venue exists for U.S.–specific matters currently

What Is Wespath's Interest?

- Enact benefit plans by the bodies to which they apply
- General Conference: increasingly international body
- U.S. clergy plans depend on U.S. laws and tax codes



En Route to Charlotte

Recent and Upcoming Activities

- Online delegate orientation
- Continuing delegation meetings
- Other delegate communications
- Monitoring of advocacy and interest groups and associations
- Feedback from stakeholders





Wespath at General Conference

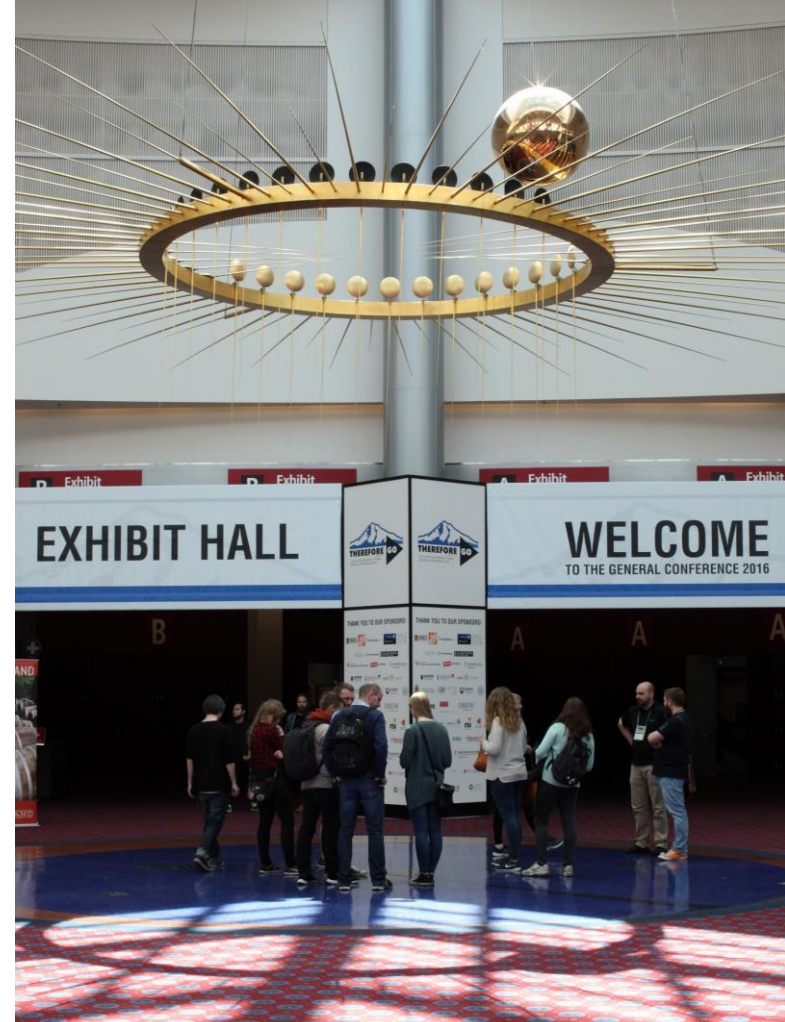
Onsite Presence and Participation

- Central Conference Delegate Orientation
- Requests to Committee on Reference
- Legislative committees
- Social media
- Plenary presentation
- Booth



Who Will Be in Charlotte?

- Senior Leadership Team members
- Associate General Counsels
- Sustainable Investment Strategies
- Some staff members from
 - Benefit plans
 - Communications
 - Plan Sponsor Relations
 - Church Relations
 - Information Technology



Source: UMNS

Why All the Effort?—Mission

Wespath's and the UMC's

“

Wespath's General Conference priorities are grounded in our mission of caring for those who serve. We're focused on taking care of you in a way that is sustainable for the long term.

”



Andy Hendren
Wespath General Secretary

Questions Comments Feedback





Wespath

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