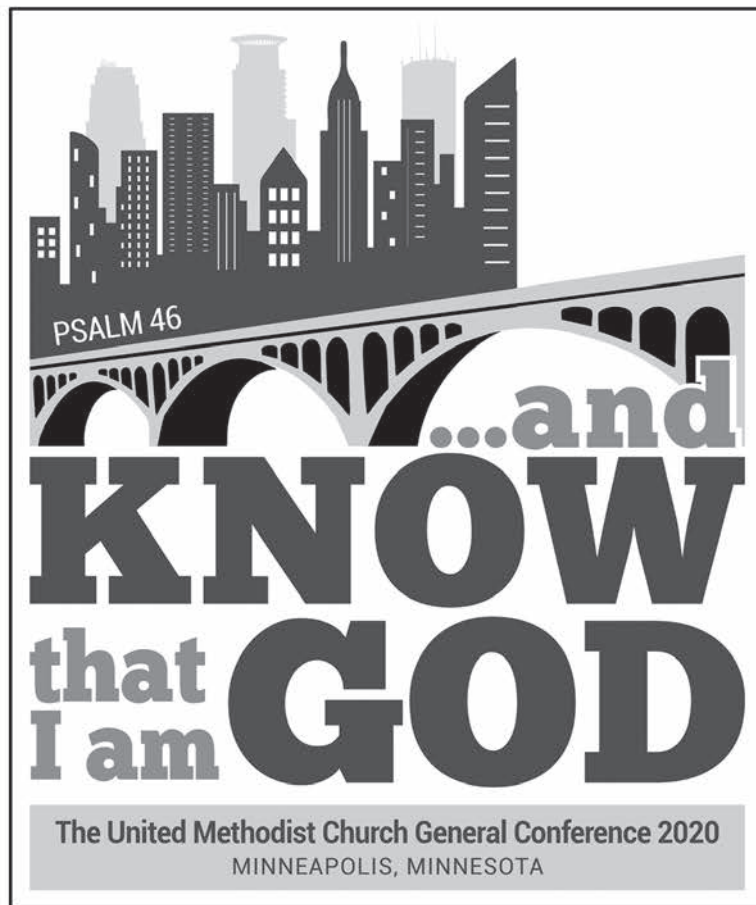


Daily Christian **Advocate**



Volume 2, Section 2 Reports and Proposed Legislation

Authorized by the Commission on the General Conference.
Printed and distributed by The United Methodist Publishing House.

Contents

Volume 1

Handbook for Delegates

Letter from the Commission on the General Conference Chair	4
---	---

Volume 2, Section 1

Church and Society Legislative Committee

Report of the General Board of Church and Society	125
Quadrennial Report of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee	129
General Board of Church and Society Report on Social Principles Revision	130
Revised United Methodist Social Principles	133
Proposed Legislation Committee 1	156
Proposed Legislation Committee 2	198
Proposed Legislation Committee 3	263

Conferences Legislative Committee

Jurisdictional Study Committee Report	297
Proposed Legislation	304

Discipleship Legislative Committee

Report of the General Board of Discipleship (Discipleship Ministries)	379
Services for the Ordering of Ministry in The United Methodist Church	384
Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century	385
Native American Comprehensive Plan	390
Proposed Legislation	394

Financial Administration Legislative Committee

Reports of the General Council on Finance and Administration	427
Reports of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)	468
Summary of Report One: Overview	468
Report One: Agency Overview	470
Report Two: Changes in Response to Local Law Changes	474
Summary of Report Three: Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination	475
Report Three: Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination	477
Summary of Report Four: Referrals from General Conference 2016	487

Report Four: Referrals from General Conference 2016	489
The United Methodist Publishing House Summary Report	492
The United Methodist Publishing House Quadrennial Report	494
United Methodist Hymnal Report	502
Proposed Legislation	504

Volume 2, Section 2

Faith and Order Legislative Committee

Sent in Love: A United Methodist Understanding of the Church	589
Proposed Legislation	616

General Administration Legislative Committee

Summary Report to General Conference by the Connectional Table	629
A Report to General Conference by the Connectional Table	631
Proposed Legislation	636

Global Ministries Legislative Committee

Summary Report of the General Board of Global Ministries	661
Report of the General Board of Global Ministries	663
Report on the Asian American Language Ministry Plan	682
Report on the Korean Ministry Plan	687
Report on the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry	692
Report on the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan	700
Proposed Legislation	703

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Report of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters	725
Draft of a <i>General Book of Discipline</i> 2020	731
Proposed Legislation	815

Independent Commission Legislative Committee

The Council of Bishops' Leadership in Ecumenical and Interreligious Ministries	825
Addendum A: Report of the Pan-Methodist Commission	830
Addendum B: The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church: A Proposal for Full Communion	835

Report of the General Commission on Archives and History	842	Higher Education/Superintendency Legislation Committee	
Report of the African American Methodist Heritage Center	844	Report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry	949
Report of the General Commission on Religion and Race	846	Report of the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools	952
Report of the General Commission on United Methodist Communication (United Methodist Communications)	849	Report of Africa University	954
Report of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.	851	Report of the Central Conference Theological Education Fund	956
Report of United Methodist Women	853	Proposed Legislation	958
Report of the General Commission on United Methodist Men	856	Ordained Ministry Legislative Committee	
Report of the JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation	858	Study of Ministry Commission Report	1003
Proposed Legislation	859	A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The UMC	1005
		Proposed Legislation	1020
Judicial Administration Legislative Committee		<i>Volume 3</i>	
Proposed Legislation	915	Report of the General Council on Finance and Administration	1065
Local Church Legislative Committee			
Proposed Legislation	941		

Scripture quotations marked CEB are from the Common English Bible. Copyright © 2011 by the Common English Bible. All rights reserved. Used by permission. www.CommonEnglishBible.com.

Scripture quotations marked NRSV are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from *THE MESSAGE*, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NRSVA are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (CEV) are from the Contemporary English Version Copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society, Used by Permission.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from The Authorized (King James) Version. Rights in the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom are vested in the Crown. Reproduced by permission of the Crown’s patentee, Cambridge University Press.

Faith and Order

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Sent in Love A United Methodist Understanding of the Church

Preface

A Note from the Committee on Faith and Order to the General Conference and All the Members and Clergy of The United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Committee on Faith and Order was established by General Conference action in 2008 as “a visible expression of the commitment of The United Methodist Church to carry on informed theological reflection for the present time in dynamic continuity with the historic Christian faith, our common heritage as Christians grounded in the apostolic witness, and our distinctive Wesleyan heritage.” Among its responsibilities is “to prepare and provide resources and study materials to The United Methodist Church as deemed appropriate” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 444).

As its first task the committee received a request from the Council of Bishops to prepare a new theological teaching document on ecclesiology—that is, on a theological understanding of the church itself. The present document is a response to that request. It is intended to assist all of us in The United Methodist Church in gaining a clearer, more comprehensive vision of the reality of the church and to place our life and work as United Methodists within the context of that vision. It is rooted in the scriptural witness and engages the common Christian tradition, our Wesleyan heritage, and the contemporary ecumenical discussion.

As a part of the process leading to this current document, the General Conference in 2016 received an initial document entitled *Wonder, Love and Praise: Sharing a Vision of the Church*, and commended it to the whole church for study and feedback. The Committee on Faith and Order received feedback from a wide range of individuals and study groups throughout 2017. The comments we received from United Methodist pastors, teachers, and laity have been instrumental in the production of this new statement.

This document is meant to take a place alongside such official theological statements of the church as *By Water and the Spirit* and *This Holy Mystery*. These documents have set a precedent in relating United Methodist

teaching to the growing ecumenical convergence on the topics with which they deal—respectively, baptism and Holy Communion—and the present document provides a similar constructive synthesis.

It is the hope of the Committee on Faith and Order that this document might speak into the current context and serve as a resource for The United Methodist Church in all parts of the world. Our current global situation and changing local contexts present many challenges, but they are also ripe with new possibilities. The present challenges include responses to the decisions and consequences of the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference. The discussions on the place and role of LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of the church showed our deep divisions as we struggle to grow into a worldwide connection. Will a document on the theological roots of the nature and life of The United Methodist Church help in such a situation?

As we seek to engage our changing mission fields with creativity and resilience, we hope this document might serve as theological grounding and as a springboard for contemporary reflection on the nature and mission of the church. It is intended to serve as a teaching document in different contexts within the church and beyond. Together with a forthcoming study guide, it is meant to be used in Wesley classes, small group discussions, Sunday schools, and other educational settings within The United Methodist Church and in ecumenical encounters. In addition, it should be useful for the training of elders, deacons, and other coworkers in the church as well as for the continuous education of ministers. May it serve both as doctrinal orientation and as inspiration for a continuous conversation about the place of The United Methodist Church within the wider Christian fellowship. May it guide us as we join in mission with Christians from many traditions as together we seek the transformation of the world.

In Christ,

The Members of the United Methodist Committee on Faith and Order (2017-2020):

Bishop Scott J. Jones, Chair
Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, Vice Chair
Bishop B. Michael Watson, Ecumenical Officer
Rev. Dr. Rena Yocom, Secretary
Dr. Sondra Wheeler
Rev. Dr. Edgardo Colón-Emeric
Rev. Patricia Farris
Betty Spiwe Katiyo
Rev. Dr. Esther Chung-Kim

Bishop David Yemba
Rev. Matthew Laferty
Dr. Gladys Mangiduyos
Rev. Dr. Michael Nausner
Dr. Hendrik Pieterse
Rev. Dr. F. Douglas Powe
Rev. Dr. Russell Richey
Rev. Dr. Samuel Royappa
Staff: Rev. Dr. Kyle R. Tau

Contents

<i>Part One: Introduction</i>	592
A Renewed Vision of the Church in Ecumenical Perspective.	592
Lessons from the History of The United Methodist Church.	593
The Classical Marks of the Church as the Foundation for Renewal.	595
<i>Part Two: The Mission of the Triune God and the Church</i>	596
The Triune God Who Is Love	596
The Sending of Jesus Christ	597
The Sending of the Holy Spirit	597
The Triune God Who Calls, Sends, Accompanies, and Transforms	597
The Church of the Triune God	598
<i>Part Three: The Marks of The United Methodist Church</i>	600
Introduction.	600
Called to Be Apostolic—The Saving Love of God Empowers a Missional Community	601
United Methodists and the Missiological Imperative.	601
Connectionalism and Ministry	602
Called to Be Catholic—The Saving Love of God Is Meant for All People	603
Universal Grace and a Catholic Spirit	604
Universal Grace Exceeding Ecclesial Boundaries	605
Universal Grace, Difference, and Ecclesial Discernment.	606
Called to Be Holy—The Saving Love of God Is Transformative.	607
The Nature of Holiness.	607
The Dimensions of Holiness	608
Holiness and the Means of Grace in Methodism	608
Called to Be One—God’s Saving Love Creates Community	609
Unity, Division, and Ecumenical Commitment	610
Polity, Connectionalism, and Unity	610
Community and Conference.	611
Unity, Diversity, and Conflict.	611
<i>Part Four: Conclusion—Sent in Love</i>	612
<i>Endnotes</i>	613
 <i>*All Scripture quotations in this document, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version.</i>	

Sent in Love

A United Methodist Understanding of the Church

Part One: Introduction¹

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

(Charles Wesley, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," stanzas 1 & 4)

1. Jesus Christ is calling United Methodists together with all Christians to live a new form of life. This new life is empowered by God's grace and perfected in love. As Christians experience the saving love of God, we are drawn together into a new community of praise and thanksgiving, mutual care, and spiritual support. We are entrusted with a radical mission of prophetic witness and loving service in the world. In this new community, Christians are restored by divine love and formed into the "redeemed and redeeming fellowship" we call the church (2016 *BOD*, "Preamble" to the Constitution). Our life together as United Methodists is caught up in the wider drama of God's saving action in the world. We are joined together with other Christians in the one body of Christ and called and sent in love with all Christians to participate in the one saving mission of God.

2. With our fellow Christians everywhere, United Methodists witness a rapidly changing church, both within our denomination and in the larger Christian movement around the world. The growing presence and contribution of United Methodists in Africa and Asia, as well as in Europe, challenge the adequacy of a polity that has been essentially U.S.-centric, deepen the range of cultural differences to be found within the church, and expand the scope of issues that the church now faces in carrying out its mission. Add to that push and pull of globalizing forces that are reconfiguring the face of Christianity, as well as

the larger religious make-up of the human family. In both cases, old customs and certainties are being challenged and a yet-unclear future beckons. United Methodists wish to enter that future with joy, resilience, grace, and hope.

3. The challenges presented by such rapid change are matched by exciting new opportunities for mission. In such times, we are invited to reimagine the place and role of the church in responding to the material needs and deep spiritual hunger of the world. We are confronted each day with new possibilities for proclaiming the gospel to our neighbors in word and deed. If United Methodists are to respond courageously and faithfully to these new possibilities, we ought to begin with two basic questions: *what is the Church?* and *who are United Methodists within the wider body of Christ?* In answering these questions, we draw from the deep well of Scripture, the common Christian tradition, the unique gifts and graces of our own Wesleyan heritage, and the shared wisdom derived from our ecumenical relationships. We acknowledge our commitment to theological reflection as the task of the whole church. As the *Book of Discipline* states, our theological work must be "both critical and constructive, both individual and communal, contextual and incarnational, and essentially practical" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 105).

A Renewed Vision of the Church in Ecumenical Perspective

4. The great issues facing the body of Christ in the twenty-first century cut across lines of tradition and denomination. We ask how all Christians can make the love of God tangible in the world by joining together in worship, witness, and mission. All Christians need to ask questions about unity in diversity. These are necessarily missional questions about what it means to be called and sent in love by Jesus Christ. Toward that end, United Methodists are assisted by the larger ecumenical dialogue. In 2013 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches released the document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCV)*. Like the earlier landmark ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (BEM)* (1982), *TCV* aims to represent the extent to which long-separated Christian communities are finding common ground in their ecclesial understanding and practice.

5. Many leading themes in these consensus documents resonate with our United Methodist heritage. We have learned a great deal from our own participation in the ecumenical discussions that produced them, and con-

tinued attention to these documents can assist us in bringing our own ecclesiology to fuller expression. As United Methodists, we find our considerable ecclesial affirmations drawn from resources throughout the broader Christian tradition, our hymnody and liturgy, and our statements of doctrine and polity. However, until now these affirmations and references have remained scattered and isolated from one another. The present document seeks to address this shortcoming. Documents like *TCV* and *BEM* can be important models and conversation partners in our effort to compile and formulate a renewed United Methodist ecclesial vision.

6. The United Methodist Church affirms itself to be truly the church, but it also acknowledges that is not the whole church. We have perspectives to contribute to a wider common Christian understanding of the church. We also learn about ourselves from other Christians and churches. United Methodists are graced with substantial learnings from many years of bilateral and multilateral dialogue at the national and international levels. These dialogues have advanced our mutual understanding and have sometimes led to new formal relationships between The United Methodist Church and other churches. As we undertake to realize a renewed ecclesial vision for The United Methodist Church, we are committed to continue doing this work in an ecumenical context.

Lessons from the History of The United Methodist Church

7. The United Methodist Church traces its origins to certain movements of Christian renewal and revitalization within the established churches of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Methodism, or the Wesleyan Revival, was the most prominent and durable of a number of such movements in eighteenth-century Britain. Its leader John Wesley was an ordained minister in the Church of England. His aim was not to create a new church separate from the Church of England, but to help the Church of England toward a recovery of its spiritual vitality and its mission. On the continent of Europe another movement known as Pietism had been underway within the churches of the Protestant Reformation. Like Wesley and his people, the Pietists were intent upon realizing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and upon the spread of the gospel. Wesley was inspired in part by various streams of pietism, including the Moravians whom he encountered in England and colonial America. He and the early Methodists adopted some unconventional ways of bringing the gospel of Christ to many groups of people who were not being reached, or were not being reached effectively, by the established church. Wesley traveled to

where the people were and preached—in an open field if necessary—wherever and whenever a group of hearers could be gathered. He commissioned and trained lay preachers to do likewise. Those who responded to the preaching were organized into small groups for mutual support and growth in grace. This organizing effort led to the emergence of a “connection” of people across Britain and Ireland that eventually (and only after Wesley’s death) took on the full identity of a distinct manifestation of the Christian church.

8. From the time of their independence as churches, the array of Wesleyan and Pietist denominations have lived and prospered with an operative, visionary, and evangelistic ecclesiology that nevertheless has remained largely undefined. John Wesley provided the outlines of a practical ecclesiology in his provisions for the church-organizing 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, which founded the Methodist Episcopal Church. Methodist ecclesiology was ordered for mission and ministry through Wesley’s revision of the British *Large Minutes*, constituting the new church’s first *Discipline*. Methodist ecclesiology was operative in Wesley’s *Sunday Service of the Methodists*, his revision of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. From baptism to burial, Communion to ordination, it guided and provided text for Methodist spiritual and communal life and included the revised Articles of Religion. Methodist ecclesiology was performed and celebrated using the *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* and given further expression in John Wesley’s *Standard Sermons* and *Notes Upon the New Testament*.² In weekly class meetings, through quarterly and annual conferences, and in itinerant preaching, Methodists enacted and lived into an ecclesiology, a missionary mandate, and a vision of the kingdom of God.

9. Our founders relied on these expressions of ecclesiology without developing formal doctrines of the church. As participants in both the Methodist movement and varieties of Pietism (which would help shape the Church of the United Brethren and the Evangelical Association) established themselves in North America, they struggled with their relationships to the churches from which they came. Eventually declaring their independence as distinct churches, they retained much of their inherited official doctrine without conscious elaboration. However, they did adapt that doctrine into a lived practice of being the church that fit their new social/political context and expressed their new missional self-understanding.

10. Our Methodist forebears came closest to articulating an operative ecclesiology beginning with the 1787 *Discipline*. After addressing two questions that traced the rise of Methodism in Europe and America, it continued:

Quest. 3. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design, in raising up the preachers called Methodists in America?

Ans. To reform the continent and spread scriptural holiness over these lands. As a proof hereof, we have seen in the course of fifteen years a great and glorious work of God, from New-York through the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia; as also the extremities of the Western Settlements.

The United Brethren would frame their first *Discipline* in very similar evangelistic and missional terms. This impulse would be the lifeblood of Methodism's lived ecclesiology.

11. During and after the American Revolution, Methodists sought independence from the Church of England. This reordering would authorize their self-governance and sacramental authority. Passionately ministering across ecclesial, ethnic, and racial lines from its start, Methodism numbered both slaves and freed persons of African descent as members and preachers. The first *Discipline* courageously mandated that its adherents free any slaves they held. The 1784 Conference also prefigured in a symbolic way the new church's eventual ministry across numerous ethnic and linguistic boundaries. William Otterbein—pastor of Baltimore's Evangelical Reformed Church (which helped to host the conference), whose itinerant revivalism preceded that of the Methodists by several decades, and who led in founding the United Brethren denomination—participated along with the Anglican Thomas Coke in the ordination of Francis Asbury. Later, Jacob Albright worshiped with the Methodists before leading other German-speaking converts in forming the Evangelical Association. This missional impulse also stimulated international boundary-crossing almost from the beginning. The Methodist Episcopal Church launched its missionary society as early as April 5, 1819. In desire, if not in practice, the church has been “global” from the start.

12. There has followed a complex and often ambiguous history of accomplishments and failures, growth and loss, separations and unions. As Methodists would want to testify, God has been steadily at work both within and despite human plans, decisions, and actions. The early commitment to the elimination of slavery was soon compromised, and the ensuing tensions led to several separations of the denomination in the years prior to the American Civil War. Racism in the United States significantly affected the institutional shape of the 1939 reunion of the several Methodist branches that came together to form

The Methodist Church. In the American context, Black Methodist conferences were segregated into a separate judicatory body called the Central Jurisdiction. While these racist policies were eventually dismantled with the creation of The United Methodist Church in 1968, their legacy continues into our own time. A heritage of racism, colonialism, sexism, and classism has affected our common life and our efforts at mission in both overt and subtle ways throughout our history. A lingering U.S.-centric mindset and old habits of paternalism, U.S. normativity, and racism continue to mark our struggles to be a worldwide church. At the same time, many of our core convictions have offered a constant challenge to these evils. The United Methodist Church is an heir to, and itself a part of, this history with its burden and its promise.

13. Like its predecessor bodies The United Methodist Church continues to reflect on its identity and calling as church. Originating in movements that became denominations by default, The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church joined in 1968 with a strong awareness of the temporary and problematic character of any such denominational arrangements. Our church remains an imperfect and pilgrim church and continues to seek the guidance of God to live into the reality to which it is called. At its founding, The United Methodist Church committed itself to the ongoing quest for Christian unity. The preamble to its new Constitution declared that “[t]he Church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in that world.” Our Constitution described the new body as “part of the Church Universal,” affirmed that “the Lord of the Church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity,” and committed The United Methodist Church to “seek, and work for, unity at all levels of church life.”³ The formation of the new church was to be understood not as an end in itself but as a relatively modest step on the way to fuller visible unity among Christians.

14. Created by the union of churches with distinct traditions, The United Methodist Church is ecumenical in its very nature. The historical statement in the *Book of Discipline* rightly indicates that United Methodism is heir to the lived theological self-understandings gifted to us by the several reformations (2016 *BOD*, “A Brief History of The United Methodist Church”). United Methodists celebrate our inheritance from the great ecclesial richness of the four Protestant strands of the Reformation—Lutheran (Jacob Albright, Evangelical Associations), Anabaptist (Martin Boehm, United Brethren), Reformed (William Otterbein, United Brethren), and Anglican (John and Charles Wesley, Anglican/Methodist).

15. Later, in the revised statement on “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” adopted in 1988,

the commitments of The United Methodist Church were renewed and given some further elaboration:

With other Christians, we declare the essential oneness of the church in Christ Jesus. This rich heritage of shared Christian belief finds expression in our hymnody and liturgies. Our unity is affirmed in the historic creeds as we confess one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. It is also experienced in joint ventures of ministry and in various forms of ecumenical cooperation.

Nourished by common roots of this shared Christian heritage, the branches of Christ's church have developed diverse traditions that enlarge our store of shared understandings. (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 102)

Thus, the birth and development of The United Methodist Church have been shaped both by a concern for denominational integrity and a strong commitment to ecumenical fellowship. Our self-understanding and vision as a church are formulated in continuous conversation with our ecumenical partners.

The Classical Marks of the Church as the Foundation for Renewal

16. The communities of Christian faith that came together in 1968 to create The United Methodist Church shared some distinctive convictions that continue to energize and guide its life and witness. Among these are the convictions that the saving love of God 1) empowers a missional community; 2) is meant for all people, not just for a favored few; 3) is transformative; 4) and creates community. These convictions are not exclusive to the Methodist tradition or The United Methodist Church. However, the unique manner in which they have been emphasized and held together in our history accounts for our particular United Methodist ways of being the church within the larger body of Christ.

17. These four convictions regarding God's saving love provide a promising guide to the main elements of a renewed ecclesial vision for The United Methodist Church. These convictions also offer a constructive Methodist reflection on the classical creedal marks of the church and provide the structural backbone of part three in this document. We begin with the affirmation that the church is first of all God's creation and not ours. Our participation helps shape the church. However, the church originates in the mission of the triune God to the world (*Missio Dei*) and it exists for the sake of this mission. As a sent community of witness and mission, the church is called to be apostolic—the saving love of God empowers

a missional community. From this point, we move second to consider the implications for the life of the church that *the saving love of God is meant for all people* (the church is called to be catholic), third to a consideration of what it is to affirm and realize that *the saving love of God is transformative* (the church is called to be holy), and finally to a consideration of the conviction that *the saving love of God creates community* (the church is called to be one).

18. We believe that a renewed understanding of the church grows out of a faithfulness to the church's vocation from the beginning. We must carefully look back to move forward in a fruitful way. Since the second ecumenical council in the fourth century CE, the Christian church has understood itself to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These marks of the church or attributes of the church have provided orientation for the church through the centuries. A United Methodist understanding of the church is firmly rooted in these marks formulated in late antiquity, long before the Methodist movement began.

19. The four marks mirror an experienced reality that the church is called to actualize in every time and place. To say that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic is a way of expressing God's love to the world through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This means, as we have already affirmed, that the church is God's creation not ours. The church originates in the self-gift to us of the triune God. God's mission to and in the world—the *Missio Dei*—calls the church into being. Thus, our examination of the nature and purpose of the church begins by exploring first *who is the God* that brings this community into being (Part Two).

20. Grounded in the life and being of the "missionary God" the church is called to participate in this mission as a community of believers bearing the marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity (Part Three). From a United Methodist perspective, we begin with mission itself and the mark of *apostolicity*. The church does not exist for its own sake. As an expression of God's activity in the world, it is sent out to share the apostolic faith with others and to be there for the good of others. *Being with and for others* was key to Methodist self-understanding from the beginning. Apostolicity also means faithfulness to and acknowledgment of those sent out by Jesus Christ through the ages. The call to apostolicity frees the church to overcome its bent toward self-protection and empowers it to become a leaven in all its various historical and cultural contexts.

21. *Catholicity* has been a mark of the church since its inception and a vital part of Methodist self-understanding. One of the earliest expressions of Methodism's commitment to catholicity is John Wesley's sermon *Catholic Spirit* in which he leaves no doubt that God's love embraces all of humanity. United Methodists are called to

understand the fullness of the church as a participation in God's love for all. The church must resist divisions along lines of age, nationality, and race.

22. The mark of *holiness* is wholeheartedly embraced by The United Methodist Church. John Wesley defined the essential task of the Methodist movement as the spread of "scriptural holiness over the land."⁴ Holiness is not merely an individual state of being, but entails a transformation both of individuals and of communities by the love of God. United Methodists understand holiness as a gift of sanctifying grace and as a call to embody God's unpromising love for the world.

23. The *oneness* of the church has its origin in the oneness of God. When United Methodists follow the calling to oneness as a gift from God, it becomes visible in the creation of inclusive communities as a testimony against all the polarizing forces in the world. These forces want us to believe that people need to lead separated lives. In a world where ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions plague humanity, the church's oneness rooted in the love of God in Christ can serve as a reconciling and healing presence.

Part Two: The Mission of the Triune God and the Church

24. From the beginning of salvation history, the God of the church is a missionary God. God "desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). God sends angels and prophets to God's people as bearers of the news of salvation. "In these last days," God has "spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2). To be in mission means to be sent. The Father commissions the Son and the Holy Spirit by sending them to the world with a saving purpose. Mission begins with God and not the church. Thus, at its best, all thinking on the church is outward facing. The question "what is the church?" cannot be answered apart from the question "what is the church for?" Our affirmation "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" makes a strong, brief statement about the nature and mission of the church and even more significantly *about the God of the church*. When disciples of Jesus Christ are made, we participate in the mission of the triune God who is at work transforming the world.

The Triune God Who Is Love

25. The power of God was shown when God created heaven and earth out of nothing and made human beings, both male and female, in God's own image (cf. Genesis 1:26-28). We do not call God Father because God is male. God is beyond the distinctions and limitations of creature-

ly existence, including gender. We call God Father because this is how Jesus taught us to call the one who sent him (cf. John 20:17). Our profession of faith in the Father commits us to love and obey the God of Jesus Christ. We live in a world where many false gods and idols fight for our attention and allegiance. Yet, the apostle Paul writes, "for us there is one God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:6). As members of God's covenant people, Christians affirm that "the LORD is our God, the LORD alone" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The God of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam is the God of the church.

26. The God of the church is triune. By God, we mean the eternal *koinonia* of three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, the Greek term *koinonia* can be translated in a variety of ways, expressing the many aspects of divine fellowship. The "communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:13), the "sharing in the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:16), our "fellowship . . . with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3), and the hope that we may "become participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) involve this reality of divine *koinonia*. We believe that the *koinonia* of the disciples of Jesus Christ is "a visible reflection of the eternal *koinonia* or communion of the Triune God who is the source, meaning, purpose and destiny of the Church."⁵ Another name for this divine *koinonia* is love. The God of the church is love (1 John 4:8). The eternal love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is poured out for us, decisively in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The God who is love gives of God's very own life to us: "for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Love opens the communion of the triune God to all creation and this communion is the source, means, and goal of the church's mission to the world.

27. The *Missio Dei*—mission of God—reaches out to all creation for reconciliation, redemption, and renewal. Through Christ, God intends "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Colossians 1:20). God loves all creatures and comes into the world as redeemer. The mission of God intends the renewal of all creation. God is at work "making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). When God crowns the new creation, there will be, as John Wesley described, "a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God; a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God, and of all the creatures in him!"⁶ The final goal of the mission of God is the enjoyment of all creation in the fellowship and participation in God's very being which is love. The *koinonia* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the reason for the sending of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, God's divine

missionaries. All church mission derives from the sending of these divine persons. The church becomes God's instrument for the redemption and renewal of the human and natural world only as it participates in the mission of God.

The Sending of Jesus Christ

28. At the core of the mission of Jesus Christ is the salvation of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Scripture proclaims that "when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law" (Galatians 4:4-5). The name *Jesus* means "The Lord saves." Everything that he does is for our salvation.

29. Jesus is fully and truly human. In his humanity, Jesus was like humankind in every way but "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). The Hispanic Creed tells us, "God made flesh in a person for all humanity, God made flesh in an age for all the ages, God made flesh in one culture for all cultures, God made flesh in love and grace for all creation."⁷ When preaching his first sermon to a non-Jewish audience, Peter says that Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). In his ministry he "healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners" (The Great Thanksgiving, *UMH*, p. 9).

30. Jesus is fully and truly God. Jesus is, in the words of the Nicene Creed, "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, . . . of one Being with the Father." In Christ "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1:19). It is from the fullness of Jesus Christ that humanity receives grace upon grace: as our Methodist tradition would describe it, convincing grace upon prevenient grace, justifying grace upon convincing grace, sanctifying grace upon justifying grace, glorifying grace upon sanctifying grace.

31. Jesus shares his mission with others and invites us to join him in fulfilling the will of the Father. When the church attends to the needs of the socially marginalized, it participates in the mission of Jesus Christ whom God anointed with the Spirit "to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). The church's service in the world may resemble the work done by governmental and nonprofit agencies with which it can collaborate. However, the church may not forget that its mission is fundamentally the mission of Jesus Christ. God has made Christ the head of all things for the church (cf. Ephesians 1:22). As Lord of the church, the living and active Christ is the ultimate norm for its doctrine and life.

The Sending of the Holy Spirit

32. The presence of the Holy Spirit has the power to transform ordinary things into saving instruments. When United Methodists gather around the Lord's Table, we

call upon God to send the Holy Spirit saying, "pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood" (*UMH*, p. 10).

33. The Holy Spirit is "the Lord, the Giver of life," who hovers over the waters at creation (Genesis 1). Where the Spirit is present, there is freedom (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:17). At creation humankind receives this animating Spirit of freedom (Genesis 2:7). Through life in the Spirit we are meant "to know, to love, and to enjoy [our] Creator to all eternity."⁸ Yet in our present state, we are unable rightly to exercise those capacities for knowledge, love, and happiness. Thus, what we need is nothing less than a regeneration of those capacities. We need to be set free from our bondage to ignorance, lovelessness, and hopelessness, from our captivity to lies and distortions, and from misguided loves and misplaced hopes. We need to be born again and nourished in a new life in "the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). This is the possibility that Christ brings to us, and that the Holy Spirit empowers within us.

34. The Holy Spirit is leading the church into all truth as one of its missionary objectives (John 16:13). While many spirits in the present age seek to exclude, to set truth and love against each other, the mission of the Holy Spirit opens new possibilities. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit "searches everything, even the depths of God" and helps the church understand truths that transcend human knowledge (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:10). The Spirit of truth is also the Spirit of love, which empowers the church to speak the truth in love (cf. Ephesians 4:15). The Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and minds of individual believers and communities to affect their renewal and reformation in accordance with God's holy love.

35. The Holy Spirit preserves the communion of the church over time and space, binding the communities of the apostles with the disciples of Christ today. United Methodists join the early Christian writer Irenaeus of Lyon in stating that: "where the church is, there also is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and all grace."⁹ As the soul animates the body, "from generation to generation, the Spirit is the living continuity of the Church."¹⁰

The Triune God Who Calls, Sends, Accompanies, and Transforms

36. The God of the church is the God who calls. All humanity is invited into loving communion with the triune

God. The call of God is fundamentally affirming because Jesus came into the world that we “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Paradoxically, responding to this call requires dying. Paul poses this challenge in the form of a question—“do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). Jesus is more direct, saying, “if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). The risen Lord calls each person by name to take up the cross and follow him. All must die to be raised again and transfigured by God’s grace. The call of God in its universality leaves no realm of human existence untouched. With Christians from all over the world, we believe that “the whole people of God is called to be a prophetic people, bearing witness to God’s word; a priestly people, offering the sacrifice of a life lived in discipleship; and a royal people, serving as instruments for the establishment of God’s reign.”¹¹

37. Those whom God calls in love, God also sends in love. We are gathered in order to be scattered as God’s good seed. The dynamic of self-denial present in the call is carried over into the commission. Jesus says that “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John 12:24). Vocation and mission are inseparable. The disciples learned this important truth in the upper room on the evening of the Resurrection. When Jesus appears before them, in spite of their locked doors, he assures them that “as the Father has sent me, so I send you.” He then breathed on them and instructed them to “receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22). The church is sent in love as a community of witness that announces Christ’s death, resurrection, and return. The church is a community of service that sows seeds of the kingdom of God throughout the entire world, especially in the most broken places on earth.¹² The church is a community of worship that teaches faithful obedience to what Jesus taught and baptizes people from every nation in the name of the Holy Trinity.¹³

38. God accompanies those whom God calls and sends. When the Hebrew people left their bondage in Egypt, they discovered that God accompanied them as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (cf. Exodus 13:21-22). Prophets like Elijah discovered God’s companionship and providence when they faced resistance, threats, and violence (1 Kings 17:4). The risen Jesus promises his disciples that he would be with them always, “to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). God accompanies the church with the active presence of divine love as it journeys through history.

39. God transforms those whom God calls, sends, and accompanies. When God says, “be holy, for I am holy”

(Leviticus 11:44), God does not command the impossible. God sends the Holy Spirit to make us holy by conforming us to the image of Christ. The touch of God’s hand transforms us into a new people.¹⁴ When Jesus visits Zacchaeus, the tax collector is transformed from a self-serving, self-centered life to one of hospitality, humility, and holiness.¹⁵ Salvation comes to Zacchaeus and his entire house (cf. Luke 19:1-10). God’s work of salvation is both deeply personal and intrinsically social. For this reason, God uses the church as the chief instrument for announcing and enacting God’s loving plan for the world.

The Church of the Triune God

40. God is love and the church is born of love and for love (cf. 1 John 4:8). The abounding love of the creator God gathers the disciples of the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit in the visible community that we call the church.¹⁶ The church of God bears the image of the God of the church. The life of the church is a sharing in the love of the triune God. The mission of the church is to communicate that possibility to a world ravaged by sin and in need of salvation. Salvation is “a present thing,” Wesley declared. The term rightly embraces “the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.”¹⁷ Human beings are “created in the image of God, and designed to know, to love, and to enjoy [their] Creator to all eternity.”¹⁸ Wesley’s understanding of our fallen state involves the distortion or loss of those capacities for knowledge, love, and joy—in short, for communion with God and with one another—and salvation involves their recovery and their eventual fulfillment in glory, when (as his brother Charles wrote) we will be “lost in wonder, love, and praise” (*UMH*, p. 384). To the extent that these Wesleyan themes still inform our witness, hymnody, and common life, we have ample reason to make our own the affirmation that communion is indeed “the gift by which the Church lives,” and the gift that it is called to offer the world.¹⁹

41. The Bible does not set forth one normative model or understanding of the church. There is no blueprint in the New Testament to be followed. However, Scripture does offer abundant resources, images, and concepts for thinking about the ways God works to establish or restore communion with and among humankind. Three of the more prominent ones—“people of God,” “body of Christ,” and “temple of the Holy Spirit”—have been frequently cited and explored in contemporary ecumenical discussion. Together, they help make the point that *koinonia* is the gift of the triune God and our responses to that gift may take different forms. The richness and variety of images, metaphors, and ideas that the biblical writers used

all contribute to a full description of the new community God is creating.

42. *Ekklesia* is one term most frequently used in the New Testament to designate the Christian community. In New Testament times, *ekklesia* was a common Greek term for an assembly, such as the meeting of voting citizens in a Greek city-state. It is also the word normally used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures—the Septuagint—to translate the Hebrew term *qahal*. *Qahal* is a generic Hebrew term for assembly or gathering. The term could be applied to a religious assembly or to an army ready for battle. Two significant uses of *qahal/ekklesia* are the assembly of the people at Sinai at the giving of the Torah (“the day of the assembly,” Deuteronomy 18:16) and with the anticipation of an ultimate joyous and redemptive gathering of all the people of God as described for instance in Isaiah 25:6-9. New Testament writers like Paul use *ekklesia* to refer to a particular local community of Christians, the collective sum of such local communities, or the whole people of God in all times and places (the “church universal”).

43. The standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church contain authorized teachings on the church, along with other material relevant to the subject. Our Articles of Religion, inherited from the Church of England and revised by John Wesley, state that “the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men [*sic*] in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 104). This article identifies the church as a “congregation of faithful” people assembled by Christ’s ordinance for Word and Sacrament. According to this doctrine, there are two essential characteristics of the church—authentic proclamation of the Word and the proper administration of the sacraments. Implicitly, however, a third characteristic is included in this definition, namely the faithful lives of discipleship within the gathered congregation.

44. Our Confession of Faith that we inherited from The Evangelical United Brethren Church contains the basic ecclesiological affirmations found in the Articles of Religion but enriches them in several ways. It reads as follows:

We believe the Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. We believe it is one, holy, apostolic and catholic. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by men [*sic*] divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ’s own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit

it the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world. (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 104)

This statement makes more explicit our location as United Methodists within the church universal. Through our faithful response to the divine call, we are incorporated by Word and Sacrament into a “redemptive fellowship” that spans the globe and the centuries. The edification of believers involves forming them for faithful discipleship and sanctification. We recognize ourselves as full members of this universal fellowship as we accept Christ’s appointment to work “under the discipline of the Holy Spirit” for “the redemption of the world.” The confession also affirms the marks from the Nicene Creed (though in a unique ordering) and identifies us as belonging to the church that is “one, holy, apostolic and catholic.”

45. A noteworthy feature of our ecclesiological definition contained in the Articles of Religion is that it offers a definition of the *visible* church. A distinction between the “visible church” and the “invisible church” was common at the time of the Protestant Reformation. The visible church is an actual community—a local congregation of professing Christians or a larger body incorporating many local congregations—who hear and affirm the Word rightly preached, partake of the sacraments, and support the church’s ministry. The invisible church is the totality of persons who are actually saved, on their way to salvation, or already among the great cloud of witnesses. This company is “invisible” because only God knows with certainty who is ultimately included. With a few exceptions, the members of the invisible church—the truly saved—were also assumed to be professing Christians and members of the visible church. However, this conviction that the work of God’s grace extends beyond the walls of the *visible* church has important implications for how the church understands itself in relation to its non-Christian neighbors.

46. Another noteworthy feature of the two articles is their emphasis on Word, Sacrament, and, implicitly, Order. These terms help underscore the missional nature of the church. Through its proclamation of the Word, the church declares the good news of Jesus Christ to a world in desperate need of truth, goodness, and beauty. The church is a herald who prepares the way of the Lord. The centrality of proclamation for the United Methodist understanding of the church is evident in the importance given to the reading of the Bible in Christian life. John Wesley considered himself a *homo unius libri*—a man of one book—because he believed that the Bible was “the way to heaven” and to true life.²⁰ The *Book of Discipline* aptly describes Wesley’s way of reading Scripture: “Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was

revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 105). The Bible is given a place of honor in United Methodist sanctuaries and worship spaces, testifying to the centrality of preaching in the United Methodist understanding of church. At the same time, John Wesley’s desire to preach in plain language to all people and to preach beyond the church buildings in the fields testifies to the Methodist missionary impulse. The proclamation of the Word of God for the people of God is meant to be heard by all peoples. The Holy Spirit’s invocation in worship empowers the preached Word so that it might be fruitfully received by those that hear it. When the Spirit of the Lord energizes the words of the preacher in the hearing of the congregation, the people feel like they are living through a “new Pentecost” and that the church is almost born again.²¹

47. The United Methodist doctrinal definitions of the church also call attention to the importance of the sacraments. The church preaches the need for repentance, the possibility of justification, and the hope of sanctification. The sacraments are instruments through which God graciously acts to convert, forgive, and regenerate. The grace of God as God’s favor and gift can come to us in many ways. Even so, “United Methodists affirm that God has designated certain channels through which grace is surely and readily available.”²² Methodists, along with other traditions, refer to these as the means of grace. Among these means of grace, The United Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments—baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper have been instituted by God as privileged places of encounter with the grace of Jesus Christ: “in baptism we receive our identity and mission as Christians. Holy Communion is the sacrament that sustains and nourishes us in our journey of salvation” (*THM*, p. 7). The grace that we receive through the sacraments illumines and empowers us for God’s mission in the world. There is an important connection between our sacramental celebrations and our life in the world. The material elements of our sacramental practice (water, bread, wine) continually return us to thanksgiving for the goodness of creation and call us to care for a fragile planet marred by human sin and greed.²³ Furthermore, “the issues of safe and suitable work environments and just wages are at the heart of the church’s social justice concerns as derived from our Eucharistic practice” because our sacramental practice depends upon processes of human production in growing, harvesting, and manufacturing.²⁴

48. In ecumenical dialogues, United Methodists have learned to speak of the sacramental nature of the church itself. The church is sacramental in that sacraments and other means of grace are found within her; the church as a di-

vine and human reality is like “an outward sign of inward grace” (cf. *THM*, p. 7). As the body of Christ, the church is Christ’s visible, material instrument to make known the love of God for the world and announce the coming of the Kingdom. In union with Christ, the church is both human and divine, visible and invisible, militant and triumphant, a pilgrim church in history and a church at rest in the Kingdom. In its journey through history, the church is a community of weak and vulnerable human beings who often fail and fall, alone and together. Hence, the church is in constant need of renewal and reform. The church is also a communion of saints called to glory. The humanity of the church is to be understood in distinction but not in opposition to the depths of divine love at work within it. In and through the creaturely reality of the church, God continues to raise up witnesses and saints, perfecting the body through the grace of its divine Head.

49. The sacramental nature of the church warrants speaking of the church as a mystery. The Greek word *mysterion* is the term used by the church for what is commonly called the sacraments. The church is a visible and tangible community. Its visibility is not to be lamented as an unfortunate temporary condition but welcomed as a precious gift that allows it to accomplish its mission in the world. The church is sent to human beings and it bears the good news in human, embodied ways. At the same time, “there is more to the Church than meets the eye, and only the eye of faith can discern its deepest reality, its invisible mystery.”²⁵ The mystery of the church of God at the heart of its nature and mission is the invisible indwelling of the triune God, the God who is Holy Love.²⁶ The mystery of God’s love is the source of the mystery of the church. Through the mystery of the church, God heals humanity’s blindness and deafness to the supernatural and discloses what eyes have not seen and ears have not heard (cf. Isaiah 64:4).

Part Three: The Marks of The United Methodist Church

Introduction

50. The United Methodist Church understands itself to be “part of the church universal” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 4, cf. ¶ 102), joint members with other Christians in the communion of the triune God, sent by this God on a mission to the world. We affirm with many Christians throughout the ages that the church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 104). United with all other Christians by faith in Christ’s redeeming life, death, and resurrection, and knit together by a common baptism, The United Methodist Church seeks to embody the marks of unity,

holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity as genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit in our common life.

51. Speaking of the Christian church as a whole, *TCV* offers a helpful brief account of ecumenical convergence on how the four Nicene marks cited in our Confession of Faith may be understood. “The Church is one because God is one (cf. John 17:11, 1 Tim. 2:5). . . . The Church is holy because God is holy (cf. Is. 6:3; Lev. 11:44-45).” The Church is catholic because God intends it for all people, the whole world. The church is apostolic because of its origins in witnesses sent (an apostle is “one who is sent”) by the triune God and its call “to be ever faithful to those apostolic origins.”²⁷

52. These marks are at once a gift and a vocation—a calling, a task. As gift, the body of Christ receives them by grace through faith, trusting that the one who began a good work among us will bring it to completion (Philippians 1:6). As vocation, these marks beckon us to ongoing self-reflection, renewal, and reform in order that our life together as church might be worthy of the calling to which we have been called (Ephesians 4:1). Every historical church in every place has sometimes more perfectly and sometimes less perfectly lived into the vocation of these marks. United Methodists bring to this vocation a wealth of gifts and challenges that are at once shaped and informed by the wider Christian tradition, while also offering to the wider tradition our own distinctive set of characteristics and emphases.

53. The four convictions regarding God’s saving love described in the introduction provide the backbone for our constructive depiction of how we as the people called United Methodist seek to embody the gift and vocation of these classical marks. We begin with the conviction that *the saving love of God empowers a missional community* (called to be apostolic). We then take up in order the convictions that *the saving love of God is meant for all people* (called to be catholic), that *the saving love of God is transformative* (called to be holy), and finally that *the saving love of God creates community* (called to be one).

Called to Be Apostolic—The Saving Love of God Empowers a Missional Community

“Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (“A Service of Word and Table I,” *BOW*, p. 39)

54. Being sent by God in the strength of the Spirit, Methodists have been a people on the move, crossing lines of convention, geography, race, class, gender, and language. In its earliest expression Methodism was char-

acterized by a movement outside the walls of conventional ecclesial life, and into the streets and fields where its preachers encountered people hungry for the gospel. In the eighteenth-century context, Methodism resonated with marginalized and economically displaced persons in British society who were themselves on the move to new centers of production and mining in the budding industrial revolution. Methodism owes its presence on the American continent to people on the move. Immigrants to the continent carried the Methodist mission and ethos with them, starting new communities through their grassroots spiritual leadership. Methodism was held together and expanded by traveling and itinerant leadership. From John Wesley to his lay preachers in England, from Bishop Francis Asbury to the circuit-riding ordained ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist ministerial leadership was and is expressed through movement. Methodism expanded across the continent as laypeople on the frontier started new communities, attended annual camp meetings, established Sunday schools, and built Methodism from the ground up. Throughout the nineteenth century Methodist missionaries, clergy and lay, men and women, were on the move taking the gospel to the far reaches of the world in word and service. Today, as members of a global denomination United Methodists continue to follow the movement of the Spirit as God calls and sends disciples into mission “from everywhere to everywhere.”²⁸

United Methodists and the Missiological Imperative

55. The church has its origins in the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) and in the sending of the Son and Spirit into the world to call and empower a “redeemed and redeeming fellowship” of disciples and witnesses (2016 *BOD*, “Preamble” to the Constitution). The sending God in the person of Jesus Christ sends forth a community of followers with the apostolic commission to go into all the world (Matthew 28:18-20). In describing the apostolic character of the church, United Methodists emphasize first its *missional nature as a sent community*, a community on the move.²⁹ Called into being by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, the church exists in order to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 120). For United Methodists this missiological imperative is the foundation of our self-understanding and of our understanding of what it means to be the church.

56. The United Methodist Church shares in the ecumenical recognition of the various ways the church is called to be apostolic in its teaching, maintenance of worship, and transmission of ministerial leadership and oversight (*episkopé*).³⁰ In affirming all of this, we emphasize

another convergence in the ecumenical discussion, namely that each of these components of the apostolic life of the church is intended to empower and send the whole church into the whole world in witness, service, and mission.³¹ The apostolic community exists not for its own sake, but as a means of grace for the whole world, an instrument of God's transforming and redeeming love. Starting with the sent character of the church should guard against an inward-looking and self-protective stance for the church toward the world. Maintaining the apostolicity of the church requires that a concern for continuity in the essentials of faith and practice be matched by an equal concern for an outward reaching missional perspective. From this perspective we are mindful that encountering the world with the gospel calls the church to ongoing reform and renewal of its life, a "traditioned innovation" that allows the church to express the life-giving truth of the gospel in fresh ways as the faithful encounter new people in new places.³²

57. The historical willingness among Methodists to transgress boundaries of convention, class, and culture in pursuit of God's gift of community illumines the essentially missional character of our "connectional" form of life together. From the beginning, connectionalism stood in service of mission, tuning every aspect of Methodist communal life—from structure to polity to discipline—to an "evangelizing and reforming" purpose.³³ Connectionalism, affirms the United Methodist mission document *Grace upon Grace*, "expresses our missional life. . . . [It is United Methodism's] means of discovering mission and supporting mission; in this bonding we seek to understand and enact our life of service."³⁴

58. The connectional pattern of sent and traveling preachers (itineracy) and of expanding networks of small groups (classes) with significant lay leadership would remain the norm in Methodist life. This was true even after the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 added to this pattern the basic aspects of ecclesial life: a confession of faith (Articles of Religion), liturgy and sacraments (Sunday Service), and ordained ministries. Thus, traditional ecclesiological characteristics were added to the connectional structure of Methodist society life, transforming the connection into an explicit sacramental fellowship and giving rise to a distinct kind of missional ecclesiology.

Connectionalism and Ministry

59. Connectionalism emerged as a missiological principle to empower and mobilize the apostolic witness, service, and leadership of every Christian. All Christians, by virtue of their baptism and the bestowal of diverse gifts by

the Spirit, are called to a life of ministry rooted in the very ministry of Christ himself. All ministry in the church is derived from the servant ministry of Christ, is empowered by his living presence to the church, and is to be modeled on his life and teaching (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 126).

60. The ministry of the laity is indispensable to carrying out the church's God-given mission (2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 127, 301.1). The Methodist tradition has depended heavily upon the ministry of the laity from the very beginning. Methodist laypeople have always been at the forefront of founding new worshiping communities, beginning new organizations for the support of educational and missionary endeavors, and responding to injustice in society through acts of compassionate service, healing, and prophetic advocacy. Today the ministry of the laity is encouraged at every level of church life. A host of leadership roles, commissioned offices, and lay-led organizations exist in The United Methodist Church for empowering the genuine exercise of apostolic ministry by the laity. Thus, The United Methodist Church joins the wider ecumenical community in affirming that all those baptized into Christ "share in his priestly, prophetic, and royal office, together as a communion and individually each in their own way."³⁵

61. Because the pattern of Christ's prophetic, priestly, and royal ministry informs the life and mission of the whole people of God, this pattern also shapes ordained ministry. Accordingly, The United Methodist Church at its uniting conference in 1968 adopted an account of the ordained ministry that describes it as a "specialized ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order."³⁶ In the 1980s The United Methodist Church began placing additional emphasis in the *Book of Discipline* on the overarching theme of Christ's servanthood as a model for ministry. Drawing upon other biblical images of Christ as shepherd (John 10:1-18) and suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Philippians 2:5-11), The United Methodist Church situates the ministry of the whole church under the rubric of "servant ministry" and "servant leadership" (2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 133-139) and has added the ministries of "Service, . . . Compassion, and Justice" as specific tasks of the ordained ministry (¶ 303.2).

62. Noting that, "In ordination, the church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.1), The United Methodist Church recognizes two orders of ordained ministry, deacons and elders. Deacons embody in their life and ministry the "primary form" of Christ's own ministry and that of the whole church in service (*diakonia*). Called to Word, service, compassion, and justice, deacons "personify or focus the servanthood to which all Christians are called," and lead "the community's service in the world

for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 305).

63. Elders in The United Methodist Church are those called to ministries of "Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service." The unique gifts of Word and service that characterize the ordination of deacons are included here among those exercised by elders in their own distinct ministry, establishing a profound connection between the character of Christ's servant ministry, the ministry of deacons, and that of elders. Elders are also authorized by virtue of their ordination to administer the sacraments and "order the life of the Church for service in mission and ministry" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 332).

64. In the ecumenical journey toward Christian unity, much has been made of the pattern of a "threefold" ministry in deacons, presbyters/elders, and bishops.³⁷ The United Methodist Church structures the ministry of the ordained in a threefold pattern that is distinctive to our tradition. For instance, we ordain deacons and elders; we do not ordain bishops, who are elected from among the elders to exercise a special supervisory role (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 402). Furthermore, our history as a church focused on mission and ministry has shaped a many-layered model of church leadership and service. Alongside the threefold pattern for those exercising ordained ministry, we have many who are appointed or commissioned to serve local communities or special ministries without ordination. The latter include licensed local pastors who are publicly authorized by bishops to preach, lead, and perform the sacraments in their specific ministry setting. All forms of leadership, whether ordained or otherwise, are understood to be in support of the ministry of all the baptized. Our church remains open to a diversity of usage and interpretation in the structures of ministry in the universal church. We affirm that no single pattern of ministry can be derived from the New Testament witness or can lay exclusive claim to the apostolic shape of ministry in the church, even as we continue to renew and enrich our own ministries through dialogue with the wider Christian family.³⁸

65. Bishops within The United Methodist Church occupy a set-apart, distinct, and consecrated ministerial *office* of oversight (*episkopé*), even though they do not constitute a separate order of ministry. In concert with John Wesley's understanding of the unity of order between bishops and presbyters,³⁹ this distinct office of oversight in The United Methodist Church is exercised within the order of elders as a unique aspect of the call to order the life of the church. Nevertheless, bishops are consecrated to this office through the laying on of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit (*BOW*, pp.704-705). Our church affirms the apostolic roots of delegating certain persons among the ordained for the distinct superintending role

(2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 401). Such persons are charged to "guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically" (¶ 414.3). Bishops in The United Methodist Church exercise distinct ministries of teaching, ordination, mission, and unity that share similarities with episcopal ministries of other churches even as these are exercised in ways unique to our church.

66. A distinctive and crucial feature of the episcopacy in The United Methodist Church is the role of the bishop in setting the appointments of clergy within the annual conference. This peculiar exercise of oversight marks the episcopacy as "an integral part of the system of an itinerant ministry" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 401). The significance of the itinerant form of ministry looms large within the self-understanding of The United Methodist Church. From its earliest expression the sent and traveling character of ministry within the Methodist tradition was understood as the recovery of a distinctly biblical and apostolic pattern. In annotating the *Discipline* in 1798, Bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury located their own itineracy as bishops within the witness of the New Testament, claiming that "Timothy and Titus were traveling bishops." They would further claim that "every candid person, who is thoroughly acquainted with the New Testament, must allow, that whatever excellencies other plans may have, this is the primitive and *apostolic plan*."⁴⁰

67. While the practice of itineracy has undergone drastic transformation in the more than two centuries since the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, it remains true that our current system of an appointive and itinerant ministry is a distinctive feature of United Methodist practice and identity, and one interpreted through the lens of a biblical and apostolic pattern. Modeled on the ministry of Paul, grounded in Jesus' commissioning and sending of disciples into the world (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-3), and rooted in Jesus' own self-understanding ("As the Father has sent me, I send you," John 20:21), the practice of itineracy carries within it "profound understandings of the gospel, of church and of the ministry."⁴¹ "Itinerancy—and the next move, and the next one after that—have to do fundamentally with how Methodists understand God to work in the world. God works by sending. Itinerancy is a biblical and apostolic form of ministry."⁴²

Called to Be Catholic—The Saving Love of God Is Meant for All People

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him

as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races?

I do.

(“Baptismal Covenant I,” *BOW*, p. 88)

68. “God our Savior . . . desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4). John Wesley’s comment on this statement from 1 Timothy in his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* emphasizes the “everyone”: *all* of humankind is included in this desire—“Not a part only, much less the smallest part.” He also notes another implication of the statement: “They are not compelled.” The grace of God extended to all does not override human freedom but empowers it, so that our salvation, while entirely a gift, involves our free participation. This conviction regarding the universality of God’s saving intentions for the world, and thus God’s universal offer of grace to all people of every age, nation, and race, remains a vital part of United Methodist witness today. When we as United Methodists affirm that the church of God is “catholic,” we mean to affirm that God’s saving love has a universal intention, and wherever this saving intention draws people together in Christian fellowship, there the fullness of the church is present. By using the term *catholic* we recognize both that the church is spread across the whole face of the globe and that the whole church is present in every place where faithful persons are gathered.

69. Central to this affirmation is the conviction that God’s grace “goes before” and empowers every human response of love, good will, and saving faith in Christ. Despite the universal sinfulness of humankind, God demonstrates a desire that all might be saved by giving every person a measure of that “preventing grace . . . which waiteth not for the call of man [*sic*].”⁴³ Every impulse toward good, every stirring of human conscience, every genuine act of repentance, reconciliation, and love among humankind has its source in this universally bestowed prevenient grace of God.

70. Wesley combines this conviction regarding the wideness of God’s grace with an equal conviction of the limits of human perception regarding God’s work. God’s grace does work in order to bring persons to a unifying love of God and neighbor through faith in Jesus Christ. Yet Wesley recognizes that Christians in different times and places will come to different conclusions regarding practices, modes of worship, or opinions enjoined by the Christian faith. He further acknowledges that God’s grace is mysteriously at work even beyond the bounds of visible Christian community in ways that exceed our comprehension.

Universal Grace and a Catholic Spirit

71. Wesley encourages all Christians to exhibit what he calls a “catholic spirit.” Recognizing that genuine love of God and neighbor, a saving faith in Jesus Christ, and the pure desire to serve God in the world are consistent with a diversity of practices and opinions, Wesley argues that the truest mark of the Christian community is a “catholic love” that binds Christians together across such differences.⁴⁴ Stated negatively, this catholic spirit is necessary given that we are assured that we will be mistaken in some of our practices and opinions without knowing which ones. As Wesley writes, “*humanum est errare et nescire*—to be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity.”⁴⁵ Such a natural limitation requires humility on the part of the faithful so that diversity of practice does not engender animosity between Christians.

72. Stated more positively, however, the catholic spirit enjoined by Wesley recognizes that God’s grace at work in every place and every time comes to each one within their peculiar historical, cultural, social, and even ecclesial circumstances. The catholicity of the church means that God’s saving love is universal, but also that in every local and specific situation in which God’s love draws people together in Christian community, there the fullness of the church is present. It is in and through one’s connection to this or that local and finite community that one’s faith in Christ is kindled and one’s affections are sanctified by the Spirit through receiving the means of grace, joining in public prayer, hearing the proclamation of the gospel, and being schooled in the concrete love of one’s neighbor.⁴⁶

73. Wesley himself would not have been attuned to the kind of questions that characterize much of our ecclesial discernment today, related as they are to our own contexts and variety of cultures. However, his emphasis on the universal presence of God’s empowering grace, and his identification of the catholic spirit with universal or catholic love, have important implications for the expression of United Methodist identity and practice today. We affirm that no single cultural expression of the gospel is fit for all times and places. A catholic love rooted in the essentials of faith in Jesus Christ, worship of the triune God, and holiness of heart and life must find itself enculturated in ways appropriate to their time and place. This theological truth is captured beautifully in the story of Pentecost, where the Spirit calls the church into being by empowering people of every nation to hear and receive the saving deeds of God in their very own languages (Acts 2).

74. At times the church has sinned against this Spirit of Pentecost and the catholic or universal scope of God’s saving intention by serving, whether unwittingly or de-

liberately, as the instrument of an ideology of national, racial, ethnic, or gender superiority. The witness of the church has at times been allied to programs of violent colonization, exploitation, and tribal conflict. In recent years, The United Methodist Church has been brought to a new awareness that its own history is not free of involvements in events of this sort. We acknowledge that our own history with regard to race and the treatment of indigenous populations demonstrates past complicity with cultural ideologies that have marred the witness of the church. Recent acts of repentance and remembrance adopted by the General Conference give witness to the ways Methodists have repeatedly failed to resist sinful divisions within the human family.⁴⁷ Such acts of repentance are not an end in themselves, but are best understood as a first step on the long journey toward racial justice and reconciliation.

75. Our conviction that God's love extends to all of God's creatures, and not just to some, illumines our ongoing attempts to more fully express the catholicity of the church. The line from 1 Timothy 2:4, cited previously, could be a United Methodist motto: The God revealed in Christ "desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God's grace is available to all, and that *in equal measure*. Among other things, this accounts for the emphasis placed in The United Methodist Church upon full inclusivity in membership and ministry, as well as its constitutional commitment to racial justice, so that the church might be a faithful sign of the truly universal scope of God's grace (2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 4-5).

76. In the same vein, one gift The United Methodist Church can offer the universal church, along with many other communions, is our commitment to the full and equal inclusion of women in all forms of ministry in the life of the church. We affirm that women are called to participate in all offices of leadership and ministry in the church. We believe men and women are equally created in the image of God, are addressed and called by the same universal saving intention of God, and are endowed with an equal measure of the authority of the Holy Spirit.

77. Women were often the first to open new initiatives for ministries of compassion, healing, and justice, which prompted the creation of the lay order of deaconesses in the late nineteenth century. While it took many decades for churches in the Methodist tradition to finally grant lay women representation at conferences and open offices of ordained ministry to women, the Methodist movement has depended heavily upon the ministry and leadership of its women from the very beginning. Women were class leaders, preachers, and educators in their homes and communities. Through the women's mission societies, laywomen led the church in massively scaled efforts in mission and advocacy, work that continues to-

day through United Methodist Women and other women's organizations in conferences outside the United States. One recognized expression of *diakonia* (service) in our denomination today continues in the ongoing witness of the lay order of Deaconess and Home Missioner (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 1914). The continued presence of this order in our denomination offers the church a vital witness to prophetic ministry among the marginalized.

78. Through great endurance and persistence, women were eventually granted entrance into ordained ministry and a share in the episcopal oversight of the church. Women were first granted full clergy rights in The Methodist Church in 1956. The first woman bishop in The United Methodist Church was not elected until 1980. While our church has much more progress to make to empower the full and equal participation of women in ministry, we affirm that the leadership and ministry of women in our denomination express both our apostolic mission and the catholic or universal nature of God's saving grace.

79. Finally, the church is truly catholic when the universal love of God as the foundational truth of the gospel is put into practice in local communities of discipleship, worship, and mission. Recognizing that human responses to God's universal offer of saving grace will be expressed in a variety of legitimate cultural forms in different times and places, The United Methodist Church acknowledges the need for a variety of practice within its own global polity. While much of our ecclesiastical expression has been and remains centered in the culture of the United States, The United Methodist Church continues to strive to more fully live into its global nature, celebrating the remarkable growth of its churches in many conferences outside the United States. Central conferences, which exist to carry out the work of The United Methodist Church outside the United States, were first organized in the 1880s. In recognition that many specific cultural presuppositions mark our current institutional structure, these central conferences are given latitude to adapt the regulations of the *Book of Discipline* in contextually specific and culturally appropriate ways, even while we maintain a core of shared practice and conviction (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 101). In this way we seek to express the catholicity of the church as we relate a global connection to a wide variety of distinct local contexts.⁴⁸

Universal Grace Exceeding Ecclesial Boundaries

80. Wesley's description of the catholic spirit describes universal love as a central aspect of the visible church, an aspect that is to characterize life within distinct Christian churches and across lines of denominational difference. But the universal character of God's saving inten-

tions for the world also carries important implications for those outside the bounds of the visible Christian church. The perspective of many Christians and of many Christian communities on this matter has shifted in more recent years. For instance, *TCV* affirms “that God reaches out to those who are not explicit members of the Church, in ways that may not be immediately evident to human eyes.”⁴⁹ Thus, persons who are not explicit or visible members of the church are yet recipients of God’s grace and may be responding to this grace in a greater or lesser degree. The statement does not suggest that all persons are, in fact, responding to the love of God in such a way, nor does it imply that those who do so respond are therefore “really Christians” without knowing it. It does, however, imply that God’s saving love may be encountered in other forms and other places.

81. John Wesley lamented the fact that many professing Christians of his day seemed at best to have “the form of godliness, but not the power thereof” (cf. 2 Timothy 3:5). This was not because God had decreed their exclusion from salvation, but because they were refusing to use the grace they were given by the God who “wants all people to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4 NIV). At the same time, Wesley was unwilling to believe that the multitudes of people who were *not* professing Christians—for example, the large numbers of the poor in England who were alienated from the church and felt excluded by it, or the millions around the world who had never heard the gospel—were utterly deprived of God’s grace on that account, for reasons beyond their control. On the contrary, he was convinced that Christ died for all, that the guilt of “inbeing sin” that may have been incurred through the fall of our first parents had been cancelled for all, and that grace was available to all.⁵⁰ A lesson we might learn from Wesley is that we need to exercise a realistically self-critical capacity when it comes to the quality of our own life and witness as Christians and Christian communities, to be alert to the dangers of self-deception and aware of our own permanent need for repentance and renewal. Additionally, we need to be open to the presence of God in our neighbors, including our non-Christian neighbors, and open to the love of God that may come to us through them. Such a stance is, in fact, reflected in United Methodist teaching concerning our relations to those of other religious traditions.⁵¹

82. Our recognition that God’s saving work extends beyond the bounds of the visible church leads us to affirm that there is no time and place, no culture or society that is utterly bereft of the presence of God’s life-giving grace. While sin has marred all forms of human community, God’s universal grace continues to empower persons to live together in love, to seek peace and justice

among peoples, and to pursue many expressions of truth, beauty, and goodness. As the church engages the world through its explicit witness to Jesus Christ, it does so in the recognition that the “Spirit of life” precedes it in its mission in every instance.⁵² Wherever the church finds an affirmation of abundant life for all creatures, wherever the church encounters truth-telling, wherever the church discerns neighborly love and sacrificial care for the other, and wherever the church discovers a genuine longing for spiritual life, there is the Spirit of life at work. Faithful evangelism and witness to Christ is not only consistent with such affirmations but requires that the people of God engage in such “discerning of the spirits,” speaking words of prophetic critique in the midst of our cultural settings as well as pointing to incognito signs of God’s grace at work among our communities.

Universal Grace, Difference, and Ecclesial Discernment

83. No reference to “the church” in the singular should be taken to imply that differences have no place in the Christian community. The fact that the triune God is the source of our communion should be enough to remind us that we seek a dynamic, relational unity and not a monolithic uniformity. The gifts of the Spirit differ in character (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) and are exercised in different ways for the common good. Also, human beings and their cultures differ from one another in manifold ways, and these differences enrich our fellowship (*koinonia*). Such differences are of the essence of the catholic nature of the church, which has been “opened to people of all ages, nations and races.” Particular churches—within and across traditions—have their own ways of being church. They are free to differ, and to some extent they must differ, in order to relate to the situations in which they find themselves and in order to realize their particular gifts.

84. How such Spirit-filled diversity may be distinguished from differences that “strike at the root of Christianity”⁵³ is a question still seeking a clear answer both in the ecumenical context and within The United Methodist Church. We recognize that celebrating diversity, inclusivity, and local distinctiveness should not engender an ecclesiology that lacks conviction on the essentials of faith. We are bound together by a shared faith and global covenant for mission (2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 125, 132). Nevertheless, we know all too well that discerning those things that are of the essence of the Christian faith and thus universally applicable, and those things that ought to be open to a variety of usage, expression, and local adaptation, is often a fraught and challenging process. A church that finds itself in the midst of such challenges may need to ask itself

the same question currently being posed in the ecumenical conversation to all the churches together: What positive steps can be taken to make common discernment possible?⁵⁴ We will return to this question when we take up the question of the unity of the church.

Called to Be Holy—The Saving Love of God Is Transformative

Q. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?

A. To reform the nation and, in particular, the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

(The "Large" Minutes (1763), §4)

85. The pursuit and spread of "scriptural holiness" have been foundational aspects of the Methodist movement from its beginning. Scriptural holiness has been understood to include the renewal of persons in the image of God, having the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and ultimately the perfect love of God and neighbor ruling in the heart. The mission to "spread scriptural holiness" is grounded in the first instance in the experience of God's transforming grace that alone empowers a faithful human response. From its earliest expression Methodist community life was marked by a common pursuit of holiness as members committed to "watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation" in response to God's grace ("The General Rules of The Methodist Church," 2016 *BOD*, ¶ 104, p. 78). The Methodist movement and the churches that came into being through it sought to participate in the work of the Spirit in spreading scriptural holiness by drawing people into communities of care, exhortation, and mutual accountability, empowering them to live by the discipline of holy love. In the context of disciplined community Methodists have pursued holiness of heart and life by 1) doing no harm and avoiding evil, 2) doing good "of every possible sort" and 3) attending upon the ordinances of God. These "general rules" for the pursuit of holy life and holy community give concrete shape to the mission and purpose of The United Methodist Church "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

The Nature of Holiness

86. The life of discipleship, which is none other than the life of holiness, is only possible by the transforming power of God's saving love. Christian holiness is ultimately rooted in the very holiness of God (Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; cf. Leviticus 11:44) and is realized in this life

as persons are given a share in God's holiness by grace (2 Peter 1:3-4). Apart from this grace, held captive to sinful distortions of human existence, we stand in need of a regeneration of our capacities to order our lives according to the knowledge and love of this holy God. To use the language familiar to Wesley and his contemporaries, as God's grace is accepted in faith, it brings both "justification," the restoration of a right relationship with God, and "sanctification," the renewal of our very being. There is a new birth. Grace leads, as Wesley said, to a "real change" within the recipient. "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Being born anew, receiving faith "filled with the energy of love" (as Wesley would render Galatians 5:6), means having "God's love . . . poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). The love of God *for* us becomes the love of God *in* us. In the words of the apostle Paul, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1), and being "called to freedom," we are to "live by the Spirit," which means living by the love of God that empowers us to put aside "the works of the flesh" and to bear "the fruit of the Spirit . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:13, 16, 19, 22-23). A hallmark of John Wesley's preaching, and of the preaching and testimony of the people called Methodist through the years, is the declaration that such an experienced, here-and-now sanctification of human life by the power of the Holy Spirit is real.

87. The goal of God's saving purposes for humankind in this life is perfect holiness. Wesley used a range of images to describe Christian perfection or entire sanctification, including the circumcision of the heart, purity of intention, having the mind that was in Christ, entire devotion to God, and the full renewal of the soul in the image of God.⁵⁵ These images find their ultimate expression in perfect love which is "the sum of Christian sanctification."⁵⁶ It is "pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions."⁵⁷ It is the Methodist conviction that this full measure of love reigning in the soul of a believer is to be expected in this life by grace through faith. One place this conviction gains concrete expression is in the historic examination of persons presented for ordination as elders and deacons, who are asked the following questions: "(1) Have you faith in Christ? (2) Are you going on to perfection? (3) Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? (4) Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love? (5) Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 330.5.d.1-5). To such questions the candidates are expected to answer "Yes, by God's grace."

88. Wesley wanted his preachers and his people to pursue this comprehensive vision of the full renewal of

the image of God in every believer. He did not want Christians to settle for reductionist, one-dimensional accounts of salvation. The realization of the *koinonia* (communion, fellowship) for which we are created, and of which the church is to be both sign and servant, involves being freed from those sinful conditions (both external and internal) that make us miserable and entering into the harmony of knowledge, love, and joy with the triune God and with all creation.

The Dimensions of Holiness

89. The experience of such renewal in the everyday life of Christian community was for the early Methodists, and has been for their spiritual descendants, a central feature of their proclamation, practice, and identity. In one of John Wesley's own short descriptions of the transforming power of God's saving love, he noted that salvation is much more than just "going to heaven" but includes a "present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity."⁵⁸ The pinnacle of this present "renewal of our souls after the image of God" is the perfect love of God and neighbor "ruling the whole life, animating all our tempers and passions, directing all our thoughts, words, and actions."⁵⁹

90. Holiness is deeply personal and yet has inseparable public and social dimensions. It is as intimate as each person's inner experience of the pardoning and sanctifying grace of God, and as all-encompassing as God's will for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Personal renewal leads to an ongoing commitment to transformation through a life of prayer, devotion, and service, an interior life of the soul formed in community. This life takes the practical shape of holy love. Thus, it cannot help but express itself in social forms, both in continued commitment to Christian community and through concrete concern for the well-being of all one's neighbors. As Wesley would famously write:

The gospel of Christ knows no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness. "Faith working by love" is the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian perfection. "This commandment we have from Christ, that he who loves God, love his brother also;" and that we manifest our love "by doing good unto all men; especially them that are of the family of faith."⁶⁰

United Methodists are at our best when we realize the integral relationship between the personal and social dimensions of holiness, and at something less than our best when we play them off against each other.

91. Thus, the vivid experiential realities wrought by the saving love of God lead to new personal and social

consequences. As that love is absorbed in personal renewal it is expressed not only in direct and explicit witness to the gospel, but also in community-building (*koinonia* activity, we might say) in a great variety of ways. Such community-building might range from fostering personal relationships to the founding of hospitals and universities, from the outreach ministries of local congregations to participation in large-scale efforts for social amelioration and reform. While John Wesley's own conviction that "there is no holiness but social holiness" found principal expression in Christian community formation, acts of charity and mercy, and an emphasis on the ethics of love, he also evinced a growing realization that such emphases have important political and societal implications. Wesley was a fierce opponent of the political institution of slavery and would venture an intervention into the shape of the political economy on behalf of the poor in late eighteenth-century England.⁶¹

92. The Methodist tradition has developed these implications further, drawing a direct connection between "social holiness" and the work of social justice in the society and creation at large. This development would lead various Methodist bodies to adopt several forms of a "social creed" in the early twentieth century. Today this emphasis finds continued expression in the United Methodist heritage in our Social Principles (2016 *BOD*, Part V) and in occasional resolutions of the General Conference gathered together in the *Book of Resolutions*. Such statements call the church to support and advocate for institutions and practices that foster human well-being, and to challenge those that do not. In a 2009 pastoral letter, United Methodist bishops connected this calling to social holiness with environmental stewardship, writing:

Through social holiness we make ourselves channels of God's blessing in the world. Because God's blessing, care, and promise of renewal extend to all of creation, we can speak today of "environmental holiness" as well. We practice social and environmental holiness by caring for God's people and God's planet and by challenging those whose policies and practices neglect the poor, exploit the weak, hasten global warming, and produce more weapons.⁶²

United Methodists today understand this promotion of justice, mercy, and truth throughout the social order and on behalf of all creation as one concrete expression of their call to "spread scriptural holiness" across the land.

Holiness and the Means of Grace in Methodism

93. The encounter with the transforming love of God leads United Methodists to believe that the holiness of the

church should be reflected in the character of its communion, practice, and witness to the world. Just as God's grace transforms the very being of the individual through sanctification, this grace calls into being a transformed community whose intrinsic character is to be oriented toward the love of God and neighbor through its worship, disciplined living, mission, and witness. As a community of persons dedicated to watching over one another in love and disposed toward the world with hearts that "burn with love to all [humankind], to friends and enemies, neighbors and strangers . . . to every soul which God hath made,"⁶³ the church exists as a means of grace, a channel by which the love of God in Christ is made tangible in the world. Thus, for United Methodists there is a kind of sacramental quality to the life of the church. Through its life the mysterious and invisible grace of God is made known through tangible, historical, and embodied acts of love and witness.

94. John Wesley defined the means of grace as "outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God . . . to be the *ordinary* channels whereby [God] might convey to [persons], preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace."⁶⁴ While God's grace cannot be limited by such visible means, as we have discussed above, nevertheless God has promised to be present in the life of the gathered community (Matthew 18:20) and to meet the faithful in a variety of tangible means or practices. Among these means are prayer, searching the Scriptures whether by reading or hearing the proclaimed word, public worship and the sacraments, fasting, Christian fellowship, acts of compassion and mercy toward those who suffer or are in need, and acts of public witness to Christ. The church is a means of grace in part because it has been empowered by the Spirit to be the guardian and shepherd of these practices through which God has promised to meet humankind with the transforming power of grace. By "faithfully attending upon these ordinances of God," the church embodies in its own life that "continuing environment of grace in and by which all Christians live, God's self-giving love in Jesus Christ" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 105).

95. If these are the means, the end is the transformation of persons by God's grace and the knitting together of a new fellowship of persons oriented toward the pure love of God and neighbor. As each person is made a new creature in Christ and joined together in the community of the new creation, they witness in their very being God's design for the renewal of the entire created order (Romans 8:22; Revelation 21:1). The holiness of the church is a sign of this final work of transformation for which we wait in hope. As the holiness of the church is intrinsically tied to the dynamic and unfolding journey of sanctification among its members, and as the church is but a pilgrim

community that awaits the final consummation of God's redemption, the church as a community is not yet free from sin. It stands in need of continued critical self-reflection, humility, and regular repentance.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the church remains confident in the promises of God that, in the midst of our weakness, God's grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9), that the work of holiness begun in the life of the church will be carried to completion in the end (Philippians 1:6), and that God will not cease to be present in its life and work (Matthew 28:20).⁶⁶

Called to Be One—God's Saving Love Creates Community

"By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet."

("A Service of Word and Table I," *BOW*, p. 38)

96. There is an intimate connection between holiness in the church, the shedding abroad of the Spirit in our hearts (Romans 5:5), and the unity of the church. The transformation described above is by its very nature a transformation of our relationships with others. It is through others that we experience the love of God; it is with others that the pattern of new life that God gives is both learned and lived out. Much of the language in the New Testament descriptive of the church originates in the early Christian experience of the community-forming power of the Spirit. The church does not come into being because isolated individuals experience God's saving love and then take the initiative to seek out other individuals with whom to form a group. The church comes into being because the Spirit of God leads us into community—perhaps with persons with whom we would least expect to associate—as the very matrix of our salvation. That Spirit-formed community becomes the context within which we enter into the new life God offers us, and it is a community whose reach is constantly being extended as its members, in the power of the Spirit, offer the gift of community to others, and likewise receive it from them.

97. This community-forming power of the Spirit calls all Christians to live together in unity. The unity of the church is not of our own making, but is a gift we receive as we are joined together in one body, united by our mutual sharing (one of the several meanings of *koinonia*) in the one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:4-6; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). At our best United Methodists have learned to celebrate the multifaceted ways God establishes and enlivens the communion of the church through proclamation, personal experience of the Spirit, and sacramental worship.

98. Empowered and sent in love by the Spirit, the Methodist movement has its roots in the evangelical proclamation of traveling preachers. These preachers invited hearers into Christian community through personal conversion of heart and life and faith in Jesus Christ. As “faith comes from hearing” (Romans 10:17 NIV) so Christian fellowship in that faith begins with the Spirit-empowered human response to the proclamation of the gospel. Worship and communal life in the Methodist tradition has often been characterized by extraordinary outpourings of the Holy Spirit. A crucial experience of Methodist community has been shared testimony to the experiential power of the “witness of the Spirit:” to the gifts, renewal of life, and assurance of faith the Spirit imparts as a “common privilege of all believers” (Acts 1:8; 2:1-35; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:22-23).⁶⁷

99. Finally, United Methodists affirm that the saving love of God draws us into communion as we are corporately united with Christ by the power of the Spirit through sacramental worship. By the waters of baptism, through the agency of the Spirit, we are “incorporated . . . into God’s new creation” and made “one in Christ Jesus” (“The Baptismal Covenant I,” *BOW*, p. 92). “Baptism brings us into union with Christ, with each other, and with the Church in every time and place” (*BWS*, 29). In baptism “our equality in Christ is made manifest (Galatians 3:27-28)” and we celebrate together the “basic bond of unity in the many communions that make up the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6)” (*BWS*, 29; cf. Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

100. United to Christ and to one another in baptism, Christian communion is sustained by the gift of Christ’s abiding presence in the Eucharist. Feasting on Christ’s eucharistic body by the power of the Spirit, Christians themselves become the body of Christ in the world (“A Service of Word and Table I,” *BOW*, p. 38). As we approach the table, United Methodists claim the promises of Scripture: “Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ” (*BOW*, p. 39; 1 Corinthians 10:17). Everywhere the supper of the Lord is celebrated, there the one body of Christ is made manifest. “Communing with others in our congregations is a sign of community and mutual love between Christians throughout the church universal” (*THM*, p. 36). As the Spirit makes “us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world” by this meal, our table fellowship becomes an eschatological sign of that final unity of all God’s people who will join together in perfect *koinonia* (fellowship, mutual sharing, communion) when we feast at Christ’s heavenly banquet (*UMH*, p. 10).

Unity, Division, and Ecumenical Commitment

101. In a world torn apart by sinful divisions of many kinds, unity among Christian believers is a powerful witness to the work of the reconciling God who tears down dividing walls of hostility and entrusts the church with a ministry of reconciliation (Ephesians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; cf. Galatians 3:28). Together with other Christians, United Methodists “declare the essential oneness of the church in Christ Jesus” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 102) even as we lament the sinful divisions that continue to mark its pilgrimage through history. Trusting in the community-creating power of God’s love, United Methodists have expressed a constitutional commitment to overcome these divisions by praying, seeking, and working for unity “at all levels of church life” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 6), both within our own denomination and within the church universal.

102. The search for Christian unity is a prayerful quest to realize Jesus’ own prayer when he asks the Father that those to whom “eternal life” is given “may all be one . . . that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:20-23). Here mission and unity are inextricably connected. “The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world,” states the preamble to the constitution of The United Methodist Church, “and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in that world” (Preamble to Constitution, 2016 *BOD*). At stake, then, in the search for Christian unity is the integrity of the mission of the body of Christ as a whole. At stake, by implication, is the integrity of our United Methodist mission as part of the church universal.

103. Thus, The United Methodist Church remains committed to seeking the unity of Christ’s body within its own life and within the one universal church. We do this by continuing our long-standing commitment to ecumenical dialogue and through our participation in and support of ecumenical bodies. We seek to join our hearts and hands with fellow Christians in acts of service and justice, witness and worship that strengthen the mission of Christ’s one body. Our commitment to this work reflects our theological conviction that Christ’s church is by its very nature one, that our ongoing divisions reflect a situation of human sinfulness, and that such divisions are a stumbling block to our mission and witness in the world.

Polity, Connectionalism, and Unity

104. The way the church orders its own life is itself an aspect of its witness to the world. When its polity enables and manifests an openness to the community-forming power of the Holy Spirit, when it serves the church’s

mandate “to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) with such power and clarity as to bring to humankind a new understanding of the possibilities for fruitful life together, then it has fulfilled its purpose.

105. One crucial way United Methodists seek to embody the community-creating power of God’s love in our own denominational polity goes by the name of “*connectionalism*.” Our itinerant ministry, the superintendency (bishops and district superintendents), and the system of conferences are instruments of connectionalism. By these means United Methodists are linked together through a network of personal and pastoral relationships, and shared participation in district, annual, central, jurisdictional, and general conferences. Likewise, apportioned giving from local churches to support ministries across the connection through churchwide boards and agencies expresses our conviction that the mission and ministry of the church is enhanced when our efforts and resources are joined together. All of these are intended to foster an ethos and practice of mutual support and mutual accountability, of shared oversight, and of the strengthening of all by the gifts of all. As such, our connectional polity recognizes our interdependence and embodies our unity in practical ways. “Connectionalism in the United Methodist tradition is multi-leveled, global in scope, and local in thrust,” joining United Methodists together in “a vital web of interactive relationships” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 132). The underlying principles of connectionalism are rooted in some of the deepest insights of ancient Christian tradition regarding the sustaining of communion in and among Christian communities.

Community and Conference

106. In United Methodism, the community formed by God’s saving love is lived out in a series of practices we have called *conference*. *Conference*, in this usage, refers first of all to a practice that Christians are to be engaged in. The class meeting and other small groups have been an important practice in helping Christians experience the transforming power of God’s love. In one instance, John Wesley referred to Christian conference as a “means of grace,” that is, as a practice incumbent upon Christians and meant to foster our growth in “holiness of heart and life.”⁶⁸ It is one of the ways God helps us help one another toward maturity in faith, hope, and love. It involves elements of prayerful, honest self-examination, of “speaking the truth in love” to one another, of mutual accountability and support, and of careful deliberation as to how we are to conduct ourselves in the future. Charles Wesley’s hymn “Jesus, United by Thy Grace” refers to the unity of God’s

people and caring for each other with the same mind that was in Christ (*UMH*, 561). The practice of Christian conference goes on under many forms, including one-on-one conversations between Christians, small group meetings of various kinds and for various purposes, and even larger events such as those gatherings officially designated as “Conferences” in United Methodist governance.

107. United Methodist polity is characterized by a network of such governing conferences, from local churches to districts to annual conference, jurisdictional and central conferences, and the General Conference. Clergy and laity gather in these meetings and all are marked by multiple purposes. They are often composed of a combination of powerful worship, important teaching, significant fellowship, and crucial decision-making about how best to fulfill United Methodism’s mission. The practice of Christian conferencing that includes mutual support, watching over one another in love, speaking the truth in love, worship and prayer, and common discernment should be evident at all levels of church life, including our system of governing conferences. When our time together in conference becomes a means of grace in these ways, our polity bears significant witness to the community-forming power of God’s saving love.

Unity, Diversity, and Conflict

108. It is God who brings us to the church, or who brings the church to us, creating church in our midst by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, God is the very source of Christian community. As God meets humanity with saving grace in a variety of times and places, diversity in the church is wholly consistent with its unity and is in fact an intrinsic and necessary feature of its life. Unity in the body of Christ does not mean a blanket uniformity in all things. The church is both one and catholic, as it includes people from the wide variety of this world’s cultures, nations, and peoples. We are brought together in the first instance by grace, not because we share the same views, customs, cultural practices, or even moral convictions. Through our encounters with others in Christian community, we may of course discover or come to agreement on many things over time. But overcoming or erasing differences is not necessarily the best outcome. Some differences are part of the good diversity of creation, the diversity that is “a gift from the Lord” and should be honored as such. Furthermore, some differences within the church aid the church in its mission to a diverse and rapidly changing world. When such differences are held in the midst of a deeper and richer unity, they do not threaten the fellowship God intends, but instead enhance it.

109. At the same time, such differences often give rise to conflicts related to the appropriate boundaries of faithful Christian belief and practice. Modern denominational conflicts, including the current travails within The United Methodist Church itself surrounding the place and role of LGBTQ persons in the life of the church, demonstrate this challenge with particular force in the contemporary setting. In such cases the problem is not conflict itself. Problems arise in the way we sometimes deal with conflict. Conflict is a given in the church. A church without conflict is very likely to be a church that is failing to be the church. Conflict is to be expected as diverse groups of Christians seek to make judgments together about (to use the Wesleyan language) “what to teach, how to teach, and what to do.”⁶⁹ When a conflict surrounding crucial matters can be resolved through discussion or negotiation, through a process in which all involved are treated with respect, the whole process can be a powerful witness to the gospel. As the church, we are not called to avoid conflict, nor to banish it, but rather to deal with it redemptively.

110. Aspects of our United Methodist heritage might encourage us to ponder features of a redemptive approach to conflict. Wesley’s sermon “Catholic Spirit” reminds its readers that everyone can be sure they are mistaken in some of what they think they know. Such a realization should prevent us from seeking too readily to resolve our deeper divisions through the winner-take-all instrument of a simple majority vote.

111. In the Preface to his “Standard Sermons,” John Wesley describes a situation in which he and a hypothetical conversation partner do not see eye to eye. He implores his conversation partner to “treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances” by showing patience, by not using harsh methods or insults to seek to change his mind and to avoid anger. Harsh words and anger only serve to push the conversation partner away and provoke anger in them which “dim(s) the eyes” of the soul and makes it impossible for anyone to see clearly. He goes on to say, “Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell, much less blow it up into a flame. If we could discern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loss rather than gain? For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love?”⁷⁰

112. Wesley is addressing situations in which we may become vulnerable to a spirit of fear, and thus of hostility and divisiveness; a spirit destructive of the communion that is God’s will for us. In face of this temptation to yield to fear and hostility, it is important for Christians not to succumb to the familiar rhetoric of polarization, but to recognize it (whether in our own discourse, or in that

of others), to refuse it, and to counter it constructively. An abiding confidence that God’s intention is to gather up all things together in Christ (Ephesians 1:10) undergirds whatever we do. To this confidence we must add our earnest prayer that we do not stand in the way of that intention.

113. The relevance of these resources to questions of United Methodist ecclesiology are clear. We need forms of polity and collective discernment that are consistent with all of the core convictions we have explored to this point: that is, forms that empower a community sent in love for mission and witness, forms that honor the radically inclusive scope of God’s saving grace, forms that recognize and build upon the transformative character of that grace, and forms that will serve, rather than subvert, the growth of genuine community. We must work diligently to embody more fully a truly catholic spirit.

Part Four: Conclusion—Sent in Love

114. The very purpose of the church as the body of Christ is to be a community sent in love in accordance with Jesus Christ’s mission in this world. From the beginning of the Methodist movement, Methodist preachers, pastors, and laypeople have been devoted to mission. As a community sent in love, The United Methodist Church endeavors by the power of the Spirit to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 120). We understand ourselves as a community participating in God’s redemption and renewal of all creation. Therefore, matters of faith and order in The United Methodist Church are not primarily concerned with ecclesial consolidation or institutional survival, but instead with the transformation of the world in accordance with the will of God. Being sent in love for the transformation of the world implies also attention to and care for those who are not part of the church’s community, and it includes stewardship of creation.

115. The ancient marks of the church form the doctrinal core of United Methodist ecclesiology. At the same time we are committed to embodying that identity in the contemporary world. As Charles Wesley wrote in “A Charge to Keep I Have”: “To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill . . .” (*UMH*, 413). United Methodists have practiced a form of “practical divinity,” seeking to embody the truths of the gospel in ways that are relevant to an ever-changing world. A central task of the church is to creatively correlate the commitment to the marks of the church with the contextual challenges at hand.

116. May the God of the apostles continually enliven in the church a readiness to be sent in love with the gospel message to a world in need of redemption! May the

God of all ages, races, and nations inspire in the church a radical openness to God's universal saving will, which reaches across all dividing lines to empower the fullness of divine and human fellowship in every time and place! May the God of holiness transform the church and each

of its members to creatively embody a new life of love, peace, and justice! May the God who is One create among us, again and again, communities of mutual trust, solidarity, and a spirit of unity in reconciled diversity! May it be so. Thanks be to God!

Endnotes

1. The following abbreviations are used throughout the document: *BWS* (By Water and the Spirit), *THM* (This Holy Mystery), *TCV* (WCC Statement, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*), *TDL* (UMC-USCCB statement *Through Divine Love*), *HEFG* (UMC-USCCB statement, *Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory*), *UMH* for *United Methodist Hymnal*, *BOD* for *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, *MV* for *Mil Voces Para Celebrar* (*United Methodist Hymnal* in Spanish). Place names will be used for documents from the International Methodist-Catholic Dialogues (e.g., Seoul 2006, for the report presented at the WMC that gathered in Seoul in 2006) followed by the paragraph number. International Methodist-Catholic Dialogue documents, with corresponding place names, can be found online here: <http://worldmethodistcouncil.org/resources/ecumenical-dialogues/>. WCC documents can be found at www.oikoumene.org.
2. The writings of John Wesley hold a significant place in the official doctrine and teaching office of United Methodism. Both the *Standard Sermons* and his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* are listed among the doctrinal standards of The United Methodist Church (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 104).
3. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 1968 (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1968), pp. 16-18. (With slight alterations in typography, these statements were retained in the 2012 *Book of Discipline*. An amendment adopted in 2012 and ratified subsequently has made explicit a crucial commitment, namely, a sharing in Christ's prayer for the unity of the church. The line now reads ". . . and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life.")
4. John Wesley, "The 'Large' Minutes," *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, edited by Henry D. Rack, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), p. 845.
5. Seoul (2006), 53.
6. John Wesley, "The New Creation," *Sermons II*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 510.
7. *MV*, p.70.
8. John Wesley, "God's Approbation of His Works," *Sermons II*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 397.
9. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* III, 24, 1, cited in Boris Bobrinskoy, *Le mystère de l'Église: Cours de théologie dogmatique* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), p. 14.
10. Seoul (2006), 59.
11. *TCV*, 19.
12. Cf. *TCV*, 2.
13. Cf. *TCV*, 2.
14. Cf. Seoul (2006), 57.
15. Cf. Houston (2016), Prologue.
16. Cf. Seoul (2006), 53.
17. John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," *Sermons II*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 156.
18. John Wesley, "God's Approbation of His Works," *Sermons II*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 397. In a wonderful line from one of Charles Wesley's hymns, we are "ordained to be / transcripts of the Trinity" ("Sinners, Turn: Why Will You Die," *The United Methodist Hymnal* [Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989], 346).
19. Cf. *TCV*, 1.
20. John Wesley, "Preface," *Sermons I*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 105.
21. Cf. Paris (1991), 31.
22. *TDL*, 35.
23. *HEFG*, 28.
24. *HEFG*, 26.
25. Seoul (2006), 47.
26. Cf. Seoul (2006), 49.
27. *TCV*, 22 (pp. 13-14).
28. This phrase was formulated in an ecumenical context in *The Uppsala Report 1968: Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches* and has been widely used by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.
29. Seoul (2006), 17.
30. On the ecumenical convergence see *BEM*, 34. For United Methodist affirmations on the apostolicity of its teaching, maintenance of worship, orderly transmission of ministries and episcopacy see 2016 *BOD*, ¶¶ 102, 104; ¶ 104, Article V of "The Confession of Faith"; ¶¶ 302-303, ¶¶ 401-403 respectively.

31. *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2012), 58. Hereafter *TTL*.
32. *United Methodist Doctrine and Teaching on the Nature, Mission, and Faithfulness of the Church*, p. 35. available at http://www.gbhem.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/DOM_Nature_Mission_Faithfulness_of_Church.pdf.
33. Russell E. Richey, with Dennis M. Campbell and William B. Lawrence, *Marks of Methodism: Theology in Ecclesial Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), pp. 31-32.
34. *Grace Upon Grace: The Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Graded Press, 1990), 36. A link to an electronic version of this document may be found on the blog site UM & Global, <http://www.umglobal.org/>.
35. Brighton (2001), 36. On this point see also *TCV*, 19 and Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*, 31.
36. *Book of Discipline 1968*, ¶ 302 (p. 107). Cf. *TCV*, 19.
37. Cf. *BEM*, 25; *TCV*, 47.
38. Cf. *IAW*, 69-74; *TCV*, 46.
39. See Wesley's letter to "Our Brethren in America" (1784), in *John Wesley* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1964), ed. Albert Outler, pp. 82-84.
40. Asbury/Coke, *Discipline* (1798), pp. 35-36.
41. Asbury/Coke, p. 65.
42. Asbury/Coke, p. 65.
43. John Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," *Sermons III*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 207.
44. John Wesley, "The Catholic Spirit," *Sermons II*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 94.
45. John Wesley, "The Catholic Spirit," p. 84.
46. John Wesley, "The Catholic Spirit," pp. 93-94.
47. See for instance Resolution 3323, "Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons," *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2012*, pp. 419-420; Resolution 3324, "Trail of Repentance and Healing," *Book of Resolutions, 2016*, pp. 332-334; and Resolution 3372, "Act of Repentance for Racism," *Book of Resolutions, 2008*, pp. 464-465.
48. Oddly enough, this model still presumes in a certain sense that the U.S. context is the "normative" one, from which non-U.S. bodies may deviate if they wish. Despite this current imperfection, The United Methodist Church remains committed to ongoing reform in its global polity in recognition of the genuinely catholic character of Christ's church.
49. *TCV*, 25.
50. See "On Living Without God," *Sermons IV*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 2 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), pp. 174-175. See also his comment on Acts 10:34-35, *Notes on the New Testament*.
51. Cf. "Called to be Neighbors and Witnesses: Guidelines for Interreligious Relationships," *Book of Resolutions, 2016*, pp. 293-297.
52. See for instance the "Theology of Mission" statement of GBGM (<https://www.umcmmission.org/Learn-About-Us/About-Global-Ministries/Theology-of-Mission>, last accessed July 30, 2019) and *TTL*, ¶¶ 12-18.
53. John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist*, in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, edited by Rupert E. Davies, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 9 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), p. 34.
54. *TCV*, 30.
55. John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1766), in *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, ed. by Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 13 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), p. 190.
56. John Wesley, "On Patience," *Sermons III*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 175.
57. John Wesley, *Thoughts on Christian Perfection* (1760), in *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, ed. by Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 13 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), p. 73.
58. John Wesley, *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part I*, in *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, ed. by Gerald R. Cragg, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), p. 106.
59. John Wesley, "The Important Question," *Sermons III*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 189; cf. "Scripture Way of Salvation," I.9 and *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Q. 33.
60. John Wesley, The Preface to "Hymns and Sacred Poems" (1739), in *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, ed. by Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 13 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), p. 39.
61. See for instance his *Thoughts Upon Slavery* and "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions."
62. "God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action, The Pastoral Letter," © 2009 Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, p. 1; <http://hopeandaction.org/main/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Pastoral-Letter-Eng-Handout-2-col.pdf>.
63. John Wesley, "A Word to a Protestant," *Works* (Jackson) 11:191, quoted in David N. Field, *Bid Our Jarring Conflicts Cease: A Wesleyan Theology and Praxis of Church Unity* (Nashville: Foundry Books, 2017), p. 9.
64. John Wesley, "The Means of Grace," *Sermons I*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 381.

65. See for instance the various “Acts of Repentance” undertaken by the General Conference for past participation of the institutional church in acts of racism and violence against indigenous persons (see note 47). Here the General Conference assumes the need for the institutional church itself to repent, and thus confesses the ongoing presence of sin in the life of the church itself.

66. For a helpful discussion of the relationship between Methodist conviction and the “indefectibility” of the church in Roman Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiology, see the ecclesiological statement of the Methodist Church in Britain *Called to Love and Praise* (1999), 2.4.12. For a further rich conversation on sin in the life of the church across Protestant and Roman Catholic lines, see *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry, and Eucharist* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2015), pp. 78-81.

67. John Wesley, “Awake, Thou That sleepest,” *Sermons I*, edited

by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 155; cf. “The Witness of the Spirit I” and “The Witness of the Spirit II.”

68. See “The ‘Large’ Minutes” of 1763, in *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, edited by Henry D. Rack, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), pp. 855-858.

69. *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, edited by Henry D. Rack, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), p. 778.

70. John Wesley, “The Preface” to *Sermons on Several Occasions*, volume 1 (1746), in *Sermons I*, edited by Albert C. Outler, *The Works of John Wesley*, volume 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), p. 107. The Greek for “like a puff of smoke” has been transliterated here.

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶101.

Petition Number: 20157-FO-¶101-\$-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Revision of 101 for General Conference 2020

Amend ¶ 101 as follows:

¶ 101. The *General Book of Discipline* reflects our Wesleyan way of serving Christ through doctrine and disciplined Christian life. We are a worldwide denomination united by doctrine, discipline, and mission through our connectional covenant. The *General Book of Discipline* expresses that unity. Each central conference may make changes and adaptations to the *General Book of Discipline*, to more fruitfully accomplish our mission in various contexts. However, some portions of the *General Book of Discipline* are not subject to adaptation. The following parts and paragraphs are not subject to change or adaptation except by action of the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters has primary responsibility for proposing to General Conference revisions to this paragraph.

Parts I - V

I. Constitution ¶¶ 1-61

II. *General Book of Discipline* ¶ 101

III. Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task ¶¶ 102-105

IV. The Ministry of All Christians ¶¶ 120-143

V. Social Principles Preface, Preamble, and ¶¶160-166

The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, in consultation with the

Committee on Faith and Order, will bring legislation to the ~~2020-2024~~ General Conference to change the structure of the *General Book of Discipline* to include a Part VI, General Organization and Administration not subject to change or adaptation by central conferences, and such Part VI may include the creation of new material particularly on theological and missional components, and a Part VII, Additional Organization and Administration, is adaptable by central conferences according to ¶ 31.5. This new part VII may also include the creation of new material especially language to enable the paragraphs to flow together. The content of Part VI, of the ~~2016~~ 2020 *Book of Discipline* will be included in either Part VI or Part VII of the 2024 *General Book of Discipline*. For the work on Part VI, Chapter 2 (The Ministry of the Ordained) and Chapter 3 (The Superintendency) of the ~~2016~~ 2020 *Book*

of Discipline, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters will work in consultation with the Commission for the Study of Ministry, if such commission is created for the 2020-2024 quadrennium, and for Part VI, Chapter 5 (Administrative Order) of the ~~2016-2020~~ *Book of Discipline*, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters will work also in consultation with the Connectional Table: for creating a new Part VI that reflects the theological and missional components of agency and expresses what is essential wherever United Methodism exists, and a new Part VII accordingly. In accordance with BOD ¶ 905.4-5, the Connectional Table will support the collaborative efforts of the general agencies as they develop disciplinary language that specifically describes the agencies' work in a way that reflects the theological and missional components of agency. This collaborative effort of the Connectional Table will be carried out in partnership with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, which will submit legislation on Part VI and Part VII to the 2024 General Conference.

The Commission on the General Conference is directed to set aside adequate time in the first three days of the ~~2020~~ 2024 General Conference for plenary consideration and action on Part VI, General Administration and Organization, submitted by the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Subsequent changes to Part VI shall be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters for submission to General Conference.

Rationale:

The *Book of Discipline* was primarily shaped in the U.S. culture and context. It needs to be relevant across diverse global contexts. The ability to create some new content will allow realities outside of the United States to help shape our identity, work, and relevance

¶101.

Petition Number: 20158-FO-¶101-!-G; Maxwell, Robert Andrew - Forsyth, IN, USA.

Petition for the Re-organization of The United Methodist Church

Amend ¶ 101:

“The *General Book of Discipline* reflects our Wesleyan way of serving Christ through doctrine and disciplined Christian life. We have sought to be a worldwide denomination united by doctrine, discipline, and mission through

our connectional covenant. In reality we have become a denomination with three very different beliefs of doctrine and practice of discipline, commonly referred to as Traditional, Progressive, and Uniting. The General Book of Discipline no longer expresses that unity and it has become necessary to form three separate expressions of United Methodist doctrines and practices. These expressions will be recognized as individual denominations reflecting the three major theological expressions of Traditional, Progressive, and Uniting. Each central conference may make changes and adaptations . . .

Rationale:

The current division within our United Methodist denomination is hurting our witness, our ability to make disciples for Jesus Christ, and our ability to survive in many areas. To survive we must divide into separate groups.

¶104.

Petition Number: 20159-FO-¶104-G; Coleman, Tami - Crestwood, KY, USA for Kentucky Annual Conference.

Add Nicene Creed to Doctrinal Standards

In order to implement the constitutional amendments in similarly titled petitions, amend ¶ 104 accordingly:

¶104. SECTION 3 – OUR DOCTRINAL STANDARDS AND GENERAL RULES

THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

...

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

...

THE STANDARD SERMONS OF WESLEY

...

THE EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON THE NEW TESTAMENT

...

THE GENERAL RULES OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

...

THE NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and

the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son*, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Some church communions do not include “and the Son”

Rationale:

Implementing legislation for amendments to ¶¶ 3 and 17. The Doctrinal Standards affirm the Nicene Creed. Including the creed further strengthens ecumenical conversation, giving a theological framework for dialogue and discernment within United Methodism. Also, it professes our theological connection and heritage with the greater church of Jesus Christ.

¶105.

Petition Number: 20160-FO-¶105-G; Arnold, Bill - Lexington, KY, USA.

Revision of Our Theological Task

Amend ¶ 105 as follows:

¶ 105. SECTION 4—OUR THEOLOGICAL TASK

Theological Guidelines: Sources and Criteria

...

In practice, theological reflection may also find its point of departure in tradition, experience, or rational analysis. ~~What matters most is that all four~~ Yet these three guidelines must be brought to bear in faithful, ~~serious~~; theological consideration upon the living core of the Christian faith as revealed in Scripture, our primary authority. We turn to these three in the process of interpreting Scripture (a process known as hermeneutics), but not as independent sources of truth. Insights arising from serious study of the Scriptures and tradition enrich contemporary experience. Imaginative and critical thought enables us to understand better the Bible and our common Christian history.

Scripture

United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace. We are convinced that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God in our midst whom we trust in life and death. The biblical authors, illumined by the Holy Spirit, bear witness that in Christ the world is reconciled to God. The Bible bears authentic testimony to God's self-disclosure in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as in God's work of creation, in the pilgrimage of God's covenant relationship with ancient Israel, and in the Holy Spirit's ongoing activity in human history.

As we open our minds and hearts to the Word of God through the words of human beings inspired by the Holy Spirit, faith is born and nourished, our understanding is deepened, and the possibilities for transforming the world become apparent to us.

The Bible is sacred canon for Christian people, formally acknowledged as such by historic ecumenical councils of the church. Our doctrinal standards identify as canonical thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

Our standards affirm the Bible as the source of all that is "necessary" and "sufficient" unto salvation (Articles of Religion) and "is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice" (Confession of Faith).

We properly read Scripture within the believing community, informed by the tradition of that community.

We interpret individual texts in light of their place in the Bible as a whole.

We are aided by scholarly inquiry and personal insight, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we work with each text, we take into account what we have been able to learn about the original context and intention of that text. In this understanding we draw upon the careful historical, literary, and textual studies of recent years, which have enriched our understanding of the Bible.

Through this faithful reading of Scripture, we may come to know the truth of the biblical message in its bearing on our own lives and the life of the world. Thus, the Bible serves both as a source of our faith and as the basic criterion by which the truth and fidelity of any interpretation of faith is measured. As the primary source and criterion, Scripture therefore holds a privileged position among the other sources in the theological task.

While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve we do not minimize the contributions of tradition, experience, and reason in that reflection. Like

Scripture, these may become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the Church. They These three sources quicken our faith, open our eyes to the wonder of God's love, and clarify our understanding.

The Wesleyan heritage, reflecting its origins in the catholic and reformed ethos of English Christianity, directs us to a self-conscious use of these three sources in interpreting Scripture and in formulating faith statements based on the biblical witness. These sources are, along with Scripture therefore, indispensable to our theological task.

The close relationship of tradition, experience, and reason appears in the Bible itself. Scripture witnesses to a variety of diverse traditions, some of which reflect tensions in interpretation within the early Judeo-Christian heritage. However, these traditions are woven together in the Bible in a manner that expresses the fundamental unity of God's revelation as received and experienced by people in the diversity of their own lives.

The developing communities of faith judged them, therefore, to be an authoritative witness to that revelation. In recognizing Thus, while we recognize the interrelationship and inseparability of the four basic resources for theological understanding reflection, we are following a model that is present in the biblical text itself emphasize that tradition, experience, and reason—taken singly or in combination—cannot be interpreted to contravene Scripture as the primary source and criterion for doctrine.

Tradition

The theological task does not start anew in each age or each person. Christianity does not leap from New Testament times to the present as though nothing were to be learned from that great cloud of witnesses in between. For centuries Christians have sought to interpret the truth of the gospel for their time.

In these attempts, tradition, understood both in terms of process and form, has played an important role. The passing on and receiving of the gospel among persons, regions, and generations constitutes a dynamic element of Christian history. The formulations and practices that grew out of specific circumstances historical contexts constitute the legacy of the corporate experience of earlier Christian communities.

Wesley believed that doctrines should be proved first by Scripture and reason, and then by Christian antiquity if need be. He understood Christian antiquity to be the "primitive church," a pristine age of Christianity, which he generally took to be the first three or four centuries of Christian history. These traditions are found in many cultures around the globe. But the history of Christianity includes a mixture of ignorance, misguided zeal, and sin. Thus, we United Methodists are heirs of a great heritage,

which includes the Apostles' Creed and the ecumenical creeds framed at Nicaea and Chalcedon (and preserved partly in our Doctrinal Standards, ¶104). In addition to antiquity, Wesley relied on the liturgy, articles of religion, and homilies of the Church of England, in which he was an ordained priest. Yet Scripture remained the norm by which all traditions are were to be judged.

The story of the church reflects the most basic sense of tradition, the continuing activity of God's Spirit transforming human life. ~~Tradition is the history of that continuing environment of grace in and by which all Christians live, God's self-giving love in Jesus Christ. As such, tradition transcends the story of particular traditions. In this deeper sense of tradition, all Christians share a common history. Within that history, Christian tradition precedes Scripture, and yet Scripture comes to be the focal expression of the tradition. As United Methodists, we pursue our theological task in openness to the richness of both the form and power of tradition.~~

~~The multiplicity of traditions furnishes a richly varied source for theological reflection and construction. For United Methodists, certain strands of tradition have special importance as the historic foundation of our doctrinal heritage and the distinctive expressions of our communal existence.~~

~~We are now~~ Today, we are challenged by traditions from around the world that accent dimensions of Christian understanding that grow out of the sufferings and victories of the downtrodden. These traditions help us rediscover the biblical witness to God's special commitment to the poor, the disabled, the imprisoned, the oppressed, the outcast. In these persons we encounter the living presence of Jesus Christ.

These traditions underscore the equality of all persons in Jesus Christ. They display the capacity of the gospel to free us to embrace the diversity of human cultures and appreciate their values. They reinforce our traditional understanding of the inseparability of personal salvation and social justice. They deepen our commitment to global peace.

A critical appreciation of these traditions ~~can~~ compels us to think about God in ~~new ways~~ ways that are both ancient and modern, enlarges our vision of shalom, and enhances our confidence in God's ~~provident~~ redeeming love.

Tradition acts as a measure of validity and propriety for a community's faith insofar as it represents a consensus of faith. The various traditions that presently make claims upon us may contain conflicting images and insights of truth and validity. We examine such conflicts in light of Scripture, reflecting critically upon the doctrinal stance of our church.

It is by the discerning use of our doctrinal standards and in openness to emerging diverse forms of Christian identity tradition that we attempt to maintain fidelity to the apostolic faith. ~~At the same time~~ In this process, we ~~continue to~~ draw on the broad ecumenical Christian tradition as an expression of the history of divine grace with-in which Christians are able to recognize and welcome one another in love.

Experience

In our theological task, we follow Wesley's practice of examining experience, both individual and corporate, for confirmations of the realities of God's grace attested in Scripture.

Our experience interacts with Scripture in this confirming role. We read Scripture in light of the conditions and events that help shape who we are, and we interpret our experience in terms of Scripture. As with tradition, Scripture remains the norm by which all experiences are judged.

~~All religious experience affects all human experience; all human experience affects our understanding of religious experience.~~

On the personal level, experience is ~~to the individual as tradition is to the church~~. It is the personal appropriation of God's forgiving and empowering grace. Experience authenticates in our own lives the truths revealed in Scripture and illumined in tradition, enabling us to claim the Christian witness as our own.

Wesley described faith and its assurance as "a sure trust and confidence" in the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a steadfast hope of all good things to be received at God's hand. Such assurance is God's gracious gift through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

This "new life in Christ" is what we as United Methodists mean when we speak of "Christian experience;," which is not the ordinary experience of the unbeliever. Rather, it is the unique experience of the believer, and corporately, the church, in the task of reflecting upon Scripture and the realities of Christian living. Christian experience gives us new eyes to see the living truth in Scripture, confirming the biblical message for our present. Therefore, experience does not contravene Scripture as the primary source and criterion for doctrine. It confirms the biblical message for our present. It Christian experience illumines our understanding of God and creation and motivates us to make sensitive moral judgments.

Although profoundly personal, Christian experience is also corporate; our theological task is informed by the experience of the global church and by the common experiences of all humanity. In our attempts to understand the biblical message, we recognize that God's gift of liberating love embraces the whole of creation.

Some facets of human experience tax our theological understanding. Many of God's people live in terror, hunger, loneliness, and degradation. Everyday experiences of birth and death, of growth and life in the created world, and of an awareness of wider social relations also belong to serious theological reflection.

A new awareness of such experiences can inform our appropriation of scriptural truths and sharpen our appreciation of the good news of the kingdom of God.

As a source for theological reflection, experience, like tradition, is richly varied, challenging our efforts to put into words the totality of the promises of the gospel. We interpret experience in the light of scriptural norms, just as our experience informs vivifies our reading of the biblical message. In this respect, Scripture remains central in our efforts to be faithful in making our Christian witness. . . .

Reason . . .

In theological reflection, the resources of tradition, experience, and reason are integral to our study of Scripture without displacing Scripture's primacy for faith and practice. These four sources—~~each making distinctive contributions, yet all finally working together—together~~ guide our quest as United Methodists for a vital and appropriate Christian witness.

Rationale:

These changes clarify our roots in Mr. Wesley's understanding of Scripture, and the confirmatory roles of reason, the traditions of Christian antiquity together with those of the Church of England, and Christian experience, in order to make clear that tradition and experience are untrustworthy whenever they deviate from Scripture.

¶105.

Petition Number: 20161-FO-¶105-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Affirming the Primacy and Diversity of Scriptural Interpretation Regarding Human Sexuality

Amend ¶105, to be inserted as the last paragraph in the section titled "The present challenge to Theology in the Church"

While we agree that Scripture is the primary source of revelation, doctrine, and the criteria for Christian living, we also recognize that United Methodists do not agree on the best interpretation of Scripture regarding human sexuality. We grieve the harm that this debate has caused people within The United Methodist Church and beyond.

We acknowledge that the body of Christ is called toward unity without uniformity. Our task is to discern Scripture, respect all people as children of God, and affirm those persons who faithfully arrive at interpretations that differ from our own. We affirm those who maintain that Scripture does not condone the practice of homosexuality, and those who maintain that Scripture approves of same-sex relations within marriage.

Rationale:

Amend the Theological Task so it affirms a variety of valid scriptural interpretations on human sexuality and tasks the church with respecting different viewpoints.

¶120.

Petition Number: 20162-FO-¶120-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Mission of the Church

Amend by Addition:

¶ 120. *The Mission*—The mission of the church . . . through which disciple-making occurs. By means of all its expressions, including business meetings, personnel matters, study classes, program and outreach activities, and planning sessions as well as worship services, whenever any of the church gathers at all levels of the denomination, the church shall seek to perfect its love of God and neighbor.

Rationale:

It's by our fruits that we will be known (Matthew 7:20). "They will know we are Christians by our love." We need to say it out loud to remind ourselves that's why we're here, to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 28:14).

¶120.

Petition Number: 20163-FO-¶120-G; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Mission Reform A

¶120. *The Mission*—The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the world. ~~Local churches and extension ministries of the Church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs.~~ reflect the light and love of Jesus Christ through the entire world so that disciples are made and the world may be transformed.

¶121.

Petition Number: 20164-FO-¶121-G; Hodge, Jeffrey
- Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual
Conference.

Mission Reform B

¶121. *Rationale for Our Mission*—The mission of the church is to ~~make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world~~ reflect the light and love of Jesus Christ through the entire world so that disciples are made and the world may be transformed by proclaiming the good news of God's grace and by exemplifying Jesus' command to love God and neighbor, thus seeking the fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world. The fulfillment of God's reign and realm in the world is the vision Scripture holds before us. The United Methodist Church affirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of all. As we make disciples, we respect persons of all religious faiths and we defend religious freedom for all persons. Jesus' words in Matthew John provide the church with our mission: ~~"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you" (28:19-20) and "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. . . . You must love your neighbor as you love yourself" (22:37, 39): "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (15:5, 12-13 NRSV).~~ . . .

John Wesley, Phillip Otterbein, Jacob Albright, and our other spiritual forebears understood this mission in this way. Whenever United Methodism has had a clear sense of mission, God has used our church to save persons, heal relationships, transform social structures, and spread scriptural holiness, thereby changing the world. In order to be truly alive, we embrace Jesus' mandate to love God ~~and to love our neighbor one another~~ and to ~~make disciples of all peoples~~ reflect Christ's life throughout the whole world.

¶122.

Petition Number: 20165-FO-¶122-G; Hodge, Jeffrey
- Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual
Conference.

Mission Reform C

¶122. *The Process for Carrying Out Our Mission*—~~We make disciples as we:~~ We reflect the light and love of Christ as we:

—proclaim the gospel, seek, and welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ;

—lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ;

—nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley's Christian conferencing;

—send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; and

—continue the mission of seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.

¶123.

Petition Number: 20166-FO-¶123-G; Hodge, Jeffrey
- Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual
Conference.

Mission Reform D

¶123. *The Global Nature of Our Mission*—The church seeks to fulfill its global mission through the Spirit-given servant ministries of all Christians, both lay and clergy. Faithfulness and effectiveness demand that all ministries in the church be shaped by the mission of ~~making disciples of Jesus Christ~~ reflecting the light and love of Jesus Christ through the entire world.

¶129.

Petition Number: 20167-FO-¶129-G; Henry, Katharine -
La Cañada Flintridge, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Expansive Ministry Contexts

Amend ¶ 129 as follows:

¶ 129. *Ministry as Gift and Task*—This ministry of all Christians in Christ's name and spirit is both a gift and a task. The gift is God's unmerited grace; the task is un-stinting service. Entrance into the church is acknowledged in baptism and may include persons of all ages. In baptism, water is administered in the name of the triune God

(specified in the ritual as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) by an authorized person, and the Holy Spirit is invoked with the laying on of hands, ordinarily in the presence of the congregation. In this sacrament the church claims God's promise and the seal of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). Baptism is followed by nurture and the consequent awareness by the baptized of the claim to ministry in Christ placed upon their lives by the church. Such a ministry is confirmed by the church when the pledges of baptism are accepted through profession of faith and renewed for life and mission. Entrance into and acceptance of ministry begin in a local church or extension ministry, but the impulse to minister always moves one beyond the congregation toward the whole human community. God's gifts are richly diverse for a variety of services; yet all have dignity and worth.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, we affirm the importance of extension ministries, as well as local churches, as places where all people are welcomed into ministry. Adding "or extension ministry" reflects our mission (§120, *The Book of Discipline* 2016).

¶129.

Petition Number: 20168-FO-¶129-G; Henry, Katharine - La Cañada Flintridge, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Biblical Language

Amend ¶ 129 as follows:

129. *Ministry as Gift and Task*—This ministry of all Christians in Christ's name and spirit is both a gift and a task. The gift is God's unmerited grace; the task is unstinting service. Entrance into the church is acknowledged in baptism and may include persons of all ages. In baptism, water is administered in the name of the triune God (~~specified in the ritual as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit~~) by an authorized person, and the Holy Spirit is invoked with the laying on of hands, ordinarily in the presence of the congregation. In this sacrament the church claims God's promise and the seal of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). Baptism is followed by nurture and the consequent awareness by the baptized of the claim to ministry in Christ placed upon their lives by the church. Such a ministry is confirmed by the church when the pledges of baptism are accepted through profession of faith, and renewed for life and mission. Entrance into and acceptance of ministry begin in a local church, but the impulse to minister always moves one beyond the congregation toward the whole human community.

God's gifts are richly diverse for a variety of services; yet all have dignity and worth.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ and are made in God's image, we affirm the use of a multiplicity of biblical language. United Methodists are "encouraged to use diverse biblical images and titles for God" (Res. 8011, *The Book of Resolutions*, 2016), including gender-neutral and masculine/feminine

¶140.

Petition Number: 20169-FO-¶140-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #2- Inclusiveness—Amend 140

Amend ¶ 140 as follows:

We recognize that God made all creation and saw that it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidences of God's grace to the unity of the church and to society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons.

Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community, and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination and rejects every type of barrier that serves to divide and separate us as members of the body of Christ. The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world.

In The United Methodist Church inclusiveness means the full involvement and participation of all persons who seek to follow in the way of Jesus by serving God and neighbor in all that they do. Accordingly, the services of worship of every local church of The United Methodist Church shall be open to all persons. Additionally, participation and leadership opportunities shall be open to anyone, whether clergy and lay, who meets the requirements of The United Methodist Book of Discipline pertaining to membership and leadership within the church.

~~The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world.~~

A further mark of inclusiveness is the setting of church activities in facilities accessible to persons with

disabilities. ~~In The United Methodist Church inclusive-~~
ness means the freedom for the total involvement of all
persons who meet the requirements of The United Meth-
odist *Book of Discipline* in the membership and lead-
ership of the Church at any level and in every place. In
the spirit of this declaration, United Methodist boards,
agencies, congregations, camps, seminaries, and other
organizations will begin or continue are challenged to
improve access to facilities, to information and com-
munication, and to appropriate support services, and
Further, we must make appropriate accommodations as
delineated by the United Nations' Standard Rules on the
Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabil-
ities and applicable World Council of Churches guide-
lines.

Acknowledging that the church has been divided for
too long on the basis of perceived differences, we commit
ourselves to the removal of every barrier that separates
one from another within the body of Christ, including
ableism, heterosexism, racism, sexism, misogyny, tribal-
ism, and all other forms of xenophobia. By the power of
Christ's redeeming and sanctifying love, we commit our-
selves to grow in love and understanding until all of the
walls that divide us are finally cast down.

Rationale:

This petition builds on statements on inclusiveness
found in ¶ 4. Article IV of the United Methodist Con-
stitution. By expanding the scope of the existing ¶ 140, we
hope to further enshrine the principles of equal participa-
tion and nondiscrimination within church law and offer
greater protections for historically marginalized groups.

¶304.2.

Petition Number: 20173-FO-¶304.2-G; Eckert, Jerry -
Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

"Chastity" instead of "Celibacy"

Amend by substitution ¶ 304.2 in the following man-
ner:

... To this end they agree to exercise ... fidelity in
marriage and ~~celibacy~~ chastity in singleness ...

Rationale:

"Celibacy" means simply to be single or unmarried.
The traditional meaning does not relate to whether the
celibate person has conjugal relations. Our relationships
with those churches that know what these words mean are
harmful by leaving the incorrect term in place.

¶304.3.

Petition Number: 20170-FO-¶304.3-G; Thaarup, Jorgen -
Copenhagen, Denmark.

Ecumenical Contextual

Amend ¶ 304. 3:

¶ 304. 3. While persons set apart by the church for or-
dained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human
condition and the pressures of society, they are required to
maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world.
In countries where the ecumenical context holds the po-
sition that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible
with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing
homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, or-
dained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United
Methodist Church.

Rationale:

The UMC should follow the position of other main-
line Protestant denominations that we have ecumenical
agreements with, in the context of the countries and cul-
tures of the church.

¶304.3.

Petition Number: 20174-FO-¶304.3-G; Temple, Chappell
- Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Ordination Qualifications

Amend ¶ 304.3 by substitution of the following:

~~While persons set apart by the Church for ordained~~
~~ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human con-~~
~~dition and the pressures of society, they are required to~~
~~maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world.~~
~~The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with~~
~~Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing ho-~~
~~mosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained~~
~~as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Meth-~~
~~odist Church.~~

Ordination within The United Methodist Church
is understood not to be a civil right, but a privilege and
gift granted by the church to individuals who have pre-
pared themselves for servant ministry by meeting all of
the requirements defined by the church, and by voluntari-
ly committing to hold themselves accountable to and in
compliance with the church's polity and practices. Those
who are certified as candidates, licensed, commissioned,
or ordained as ministers, elected as bishops or appointed
or assigned to serve in The United Methodist Church are
required to live in accordance with our understanding that
sexual relations are to be affirmed only when practiced

within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman.

¶304.3.

Petition Number: 20175-FO-¶304.3-G; Merrick, Tracy - Wexford, PA, USA. Reaves, Susan - Fort Defiance, VA, USA for Virginia Annual Conference. 8 Similar Petitions

Amend Qualifications for Ordination

[Also submitted as:

Next Generation UMC #5, A Fully Inclusive Way Forward Part 3 of 8]

Amend ¶ 304.3 as follows:

¶ 304. Qualifications for Ordination

3. While persons set apart by the church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.²

1. "Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual; 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. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020, 1341.

2. See Judicial Council Decisions 984, 985, 1027, 1028.

Rationale:

LGBTQIA+ clergy, both single and partnered, have maintained the highest standards of holy living and have served our church in all levels of ordained ministry since our denomination's formation. The original language promotes secrecy, prevents clergy from fulfilling their call to ministry, and creates a barrier to retaining qualified clergy.

¶304.3.

Petition Number: 20177-FO-¶304.3-G; Morrison, Grace - Topeka, KS, USA for Moving Ahead. Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 7 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #3

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Honoring the Calling and Gifting of the Holy Spirit]

¶ 304.3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

Amend footnote 1 to ¶ 304.3 as follows:

1. "Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual; 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. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020, 1341.

¶304.3.

Petition Number: 20706-FO-¶304.3-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

3. While persons set apart by the church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergy session of an annual conference shall determine how standards of holy living apply to certification and ordination. The bishop may seek the non-binding advice of the clergy session of an annual conference to inform the Board of Ministry on matters of human sexuality.

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candidates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶304.5.

Petition Number: 20171-FO-¶304.5-G; Hassmer, Sarah - Silver Spring, MD, USA.

Nondiscrimination Protections in Qualifications for Ordination

Amend ¶ 304.5 as follows:

¶ 304.5 In all votes regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, the requirements set forth herein are minimum requirements. Each person voting is expected to vote prayerfully based on personal judgment of the applicant's gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness for the mission of the church. The district committee on ordained ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall not deny any person an approval or recommendation for candidacy, licensing, commissioning, or ordination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, tribal affiliation, social status, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, or economic condition. ~~approve or recommend any person for candidacy, licensing, commissioning, or ordination who does not meet the qualifications of ¶ 304.1-3, based on the full examination and thorough inquiry into the person's fitness by the committee and board (see Judicial Council Decisions 1343 and 1344). The bishop presiding in the clergy session shall rule any such unqualified candidate out of order and not eligible to be acted upon.~~

Rationale:

Deacons and elders must be willing to be in ministry with all persons. In keeping with the Methodist rules to do no harm and to do good, these nondiscrimination protections affirm that candidates should be assessed solely on their gifts, graces, and readiness to serve in this sacred calling.

¶304.5.

Petition Number: 20172-FO-¶304.5-G; Pridgeon, Jeremy - Panama City, FL, USA.

Qualifications for Ordination

Amend ¶ 304.5

5. In all votes regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, the requirements set forth herein are recommended as minimum requirements. Each person voting is expected to vote prayerfully based on personal judgment of the applicant's gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness for the mission of the church. ~~The district committee on ordained ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall not approve~~

~~or recommend any person for candidacy, licensing, commissioning, or ordination who does not meet the qualifications of ¶ 304.1-3, based on the full examination and thorough inquiry into the person's fitness by the committee and board (see Judicial Council Decisions 1343 and 1344). The bishop presiding in the clergy session shall rule any such unqualified candidate out of order and not eligible to be acted upon.~~

Rationale:

The right to vote on *all* matters (including requirements and qualifications) relating to the character and conference relations of clergy members, and the ordination of clergy is reserved by the annual conference in the Constitution in ¶ 33 and has *not* been delegated to the General Conference to

¶304.5.

Petition Number: 20176-FO-¶304.5-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 6 Similar Petitions

Next Generation UMC #6— Amend Qualifications for Ordination 304.5

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Restore Conciliar Authority for Determining Eligibility]

Amend ¶ 304.5 as follows:

¶ 304.5. In all votes regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, the requirements set forth herein are minimum requirements. Each person voting is expected to vote prayerfully based on personal judgment of the applicant's gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness for the mission of the church. ~~The district committee on ordained ministry and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall not approve or recommend any person for candidacy, licensing, commissioning, or ordination who does not meet the qualifications of ¶ 304.1-3, based on the full examination and thorough inquiry into the person's fitness by the committee and board (see Judicial Council Decisions 1343 and 1344). The bishop presiding in the clergy session shall rule any such unqualified candidate out of order and not eligible to be acted upon.~~

Rationale:

Affirms the role of boards of ordained ministry to evaluate all candidates based on their fitness and readiness for ordained ministry. Removes language that discriminates against a particular class of people, a practice profoundly at odds with the principle of inclusiveness in Article IV of the Constitution.

¶447.4.

Petition Number: 20178-FO-¶447.4-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 447.4

4. The composition of the committee, and all subcommittees and teams, shall attend to lay and clergy status, racial/ethnic, person with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity, and regional representation. It shall model effective representation of the theological diversity of The United Methodist Church. The Council of Bishops shall exercise oversight in the

nomination and election of members with regard to inclusiveness, diversity, and representation. Vacancies occurring during any quadrennium shall be filled by the CFO Executive Committee in consultation with the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

This petition is seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶4 Article IV of Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that reflects God's heart.

Proposed Resolutions

R9999.

Petition Number: 20643-FO-R9999; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA for Committee on Faith and Order.

Resolution to Adopt the Report from the Committee on Faith and Order Entitled *Sent in Love: A United Methodist Understanding of the Church*

Adopt Resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, the Council of Bishops sent a request to the Committee on Faith and Order (CFO) to prepare a theological teaching document on United Methodist ecclesiology in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the General Conference in 2016 received the initial report on ecclesiology from the CFO entitled *Wonder, Love, and Praise: Sharing a Vision of the Church* and commended the report to the whole church for study and feedback to guide the preparation of a final report; and

WHEREAS, in developing the final report entitled *Sent in Love: A United Methodist Understanding of the Church* the Committee on Faith and Order took intentional steps to heed our United Methodist heritage and history, remain sensitive to the ecumenical church, and hear the voices of United Methodists from around the global connection; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church needs an authoritative contemporary statement of its understanding of the nature and mission of the church, both for strengthening the theological and missional self-understanding of its own members and clergy, and for clarity in its ecumenical conversations with other denominations;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the 2020 General Conference approve *Sent in Love: A United Methodist Understanding of the Church* as an official interpretive statement of theology and practice in The United Methodist Church; and

Be it further resolved, that *Sent in Love* be used by the Council of Bishops, Church School Publications of The United Methodist Publishing House, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Board of Discipleship as a guide for teaching and formation of both clergy and laity in relation to United Methodist ecclesiology; and

Be it further resolved, that *Sent in Love* be used by the Council of Bishops in interpreting United Methodist understandings and practices in ecumenical dialogue; and

Be it further resolved, that *Sent in Love* be published in the *Book of Resolutions*, and that the Committee on Faith and Order prepare a study and leader's guide to aid reception of its teaching throughout the church.

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference position *Sent in Love* along with *By Water and the Spirit* and *This Holy Mystery* among the first statements in the *Book of Resolutions* in a section appropriately labeled to identify the three texts as ingredient to the teaching office for United Methodism.

Rationale:

Sent in Love is submitted by the CFO at the request of the Council of Bishops and the General Conference of 2016. It was drafted after significant churchwide study and careful discernment by the CFO. The full draft can be found in the ADCA.

General Administration

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Summary Report to General Conference by the Connectional Table

The purpose of the Connectional Table (CT) is for the discernment and articulation of the vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church as determined by the actions of the General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops. (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 904)

The Connectional Table (CT) has accomplished much during the 2017-2020 quadrennium, including fulfilling its General Conference mandates, more deeply engaging its purpose, and moving toward a new, adaptive leadership approach. The CT organized its work into three areas: creating vital congregations through the Four Areas of Focus, supporting the worldwide nature of the church, and working toward missional effectiveness.

Vital Congregations Through the Four Areas of Focus

A New Messaging Strategy

To place sustained emphasis on the mission of The United Methodist Church and upon the Four Areas of Focus, our Strategic Team—a collaboration between the Connectional Table and the Council of Bishops (COB)—sought ways to connect the missional strategies of the agencies and the ministries in annual conferences. The Strategic Team worked closely with United Methodist Communications (UMCOM) to develop a new messaging strategy to lead us into the new quadrennium. The taglines—**Making New Disciples in New Places, Leading Where God Calls, Overcoming Poverty Together, Seeking Health and Wholeness for All**—stay true to the legacy of the Four Areas of Focus while introducing language that is more accessible to people in the pews and the world.

Worldwide Nature of the Church

Agency Structure and Mandates for a General Book of Discipline

The CT's Chapter 5 Advisory Group worked alongside the Standing Committee on Central Conference Mat-

ters, the Committee on Faith and Order, and the general agencies to draft a new Chapter 5 (Administrative Order) for the *General Book of Discipline*. The Standing Committee will seek a broader mandate from the 2020 General Conference to better facilitate this work and offer legislation for the *General Book of Discipline* in 2024. The CT's Chapter 5 Advisory Group will, therefore, continue this work into the next quadrennium as the groups discern together how agency might be expressed in our worldwide connection.

Creating a U.S. Regional Conference

With the goal of easing the burden of U.S. legislation on the General Conference and giving churches in the U.S. parity with the central conferences, the CT approved in April 2019 bringing a legislative proposal to the 2020 General Conference to create a United States Regional Conference comprising the current U.S. jurisdictional conferences and the geographical boundaries congruent with the territory of U.S. annual conferences [20722, 20723, 20724, 20725, 20726]. Creating a U.S. Regional Conference provides an organizational structure for the U.S. to have parity with existing central conferences for doing work on the adaptable portions of the *Book of Discipline*. Equally important, a regional conference will offer the U.S. the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the church in the U.S. context.

Creating the U.S. Regional Conference will be done in two stages. Stage I forms a committee of the General Conference, with legislative function, to deal with U.S. region—adaptable disciplinary provisions, U.S.-related resolutions, and non-disciplinary petitions concerning U.S. matters. Stage II forms the U.S. Regional Conference, after which the Stage I committee will end its work.

A More Global Leadership Body for the General Church

The CT created a General Church Council working group to respond to legislation proposed during the 2013-2016 quadrennium that requested the CT reorganize to

better serve our global church (Petition 60815-GA-Non-Dis-G in the 2016 ADCA). Working in light of the creation of a *General Book of Discipline*, the group convened conversations and developed a legislative proposal to move the CT toward better global representation, updated mandates and a new leadership paradigm grounded in trust. The group will continue this work into the next quadrennium with the intent of offering legislation at the 2024 General Conference.

Working Toward Missional Effectiveness

A Values-Based Quadrennial Budget

For the first time in three quadrennia, the Connectional Table implemented a new values-based process to allocate the denomination's budget. Facing steep cuts within the connection, the CT sought to allocate the budget according to values that could better focus the budget missionally and help each agency maintain its core mission and continue to thrive. Our values included a holistic focus on The UMC's mission; agencies' core missions; missional priorities; emerging missional priorities; stewardship; transparency; fairness and justice; and equity. Guided by these values and equipped with a full understanding of the agencies' finances, programming, priorities, and capacity, the CT developed a budget proposal to allocate the \$358,579,025 determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) and the CT. The CT's budget proposal was approved by the CT and GCFA jointly at the April 2019 meeting and will be presented by both groups at General Conference 2020.

Agency Evaluation

Our Agency Evaluation Advisory Group implemented strategies to help understand and celebrate the ways in

which agency work aligns with the Four Areas of Focus. Each agency completed Logic Model evaluations and the group hosted a series of dialogue sessions: one dialogue with each agency receiving apportioned funds and one for each of the Four Areas of Focus. The sessions revealed many inspiring examples of the missional faithfulness and fruitfulness of our agencies.

Looking Forward: 2021-2024 Values

As The United Methodist Church anticipates great and unprecedented change, the Connectional Table is preparing for the new things God is doing. The 2021-2024 quadrennium will provide opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and discovery, and the CT will continue its vital work in fostering new, deep conversations between people and groups from around our global connection as we work together to discern what is emerging in the life of our church. During this time, the CT will emphasize key themes—**Vital, Worldwide and Contextual, Affirming and Inclusive, Effective, and Connectional**—and organize our work in specific ways.

The CT will continue to build upon the inroads it has made and clarify its responsibility to the mission of The United Methodist Church. The CT also will continue to seek to increase the capacity of the United Methodist connection by supporting new and improved collaboration, bringing together the abundance of resources within The UMC and increasing efficiency as stewards of the resources generously given. As God's emerging work is revealed to us, relationship building and collaboration will be especially important as we deal with the inevitable loss associated with change and as we seek ways forward that are sustainable yet faithful to our mission.

Bringing Missional Adaptation and Focus

A Report to General Conference by the Connectional Table

Our Purpose

The Connectional Table (CT) is “where ministry and money are brought to the same table to coordinate the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church” (*BOD* ¶ 901).

“The purpose of the Connectional Table (CT) is for the discernment and articulation of the vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church as determined by the actions of the General Conference and in consultation with the Council of Bishops.” (*BOD* ¶ 904)

Bringing Missional Adaptation and Focus

Don't remember the prior things;
don't ponder ancient history.
Look! I am doing a new thing;
now it sprouts up; don't you recognize it?
I'm making a way in the desert,
paths in the wilderness. (Isaiah 43:18-19 CEB)

As The United Methodist Church anticipates great and unprecedented change, the CT is preparing for the new things God is doing. It may be that unity and mission within our connection will be expressed in different ways in the future, and we realize that such changes will take time. The 2021-2024 quadrennium will provide opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and discovery, and the CT will continue its vital work in fostering new, deep conversations between people and groups from around our global connection as we work together to discern what is emerging in the life of our church. During this time, the CT will emphasize key themes—**Vital, Worldwide and Contextual, Affirming and Inclusive, Effective, and Connectional**—and organize our work in specific ways.

We Are Vital

“Whenever United Methodism has had a clear sense of mission, God has used our Church to save persons, heal relationships, transform social structures, and spread scriptural holiness, thereby changing the world. In order to be truly alive, we embrace Jesus’

mandate to love God and to love our neighbor and to make disciples of all peoples.” (*BOD* ¶ 121)

The Connectional Table will continue to collaborate with and support the Council of Bishops (COB) and the agencies in bringing vitality and purpose to the connection by strengthening ministries in the Four Areas of Focus.

A New Messaging Strategy

To place sustained emphasis on the mission of The United Methodist Church and upon the Four Areas of Focus, our Strategic Team (a collaboration between the Connectional Table and the COB) sought ways to connect the missional strategies of the agencies and the ministries in annual conferences.

The Strategic Team worked closely with United Methodist Communications (UMCOM) to develop a new messaging strategy to lead us into the new quadrennium. The taglines—**Making New Disciples in New Places, Leading Where God Calls, Overcoming Poverty Together, Seeking Health and Wholeness for All**—stay true to the legacy of the Four Areas of Focus while introducing language that is more accessible to people in the pews and the world. A full rollout of the new messaging will be evident during the 2020 annual conference season and will help lead our whole connection into a new era of United Methodist missional work.

Connecting Missional Strategies

The Connectional Table also piloted a new connectional assessment tool to gather data and facilitate conversations of mission and ministry that seek to identify areas of mutual accountability and support as we live out our connectional covenant, as stated in ¶ 125 in the *BOD*. The data and conversations centered on strengthening relationships and connecting missional strategies among annual conferences, general church program agencies, the CT, GCFA, and the COB. More specifically, the tool was developed to help us achieve the following four objectives: articulate and celebrate fruitfulness; continuously improve; build capacity; and communicate ministry impact.

After testing the tool in the Arkansas, California-Pacific, Northern Illinois, South Carolina, Upper New York, and Liberia annual conferences, the CT obtained deep knowledge of annual conference activities in the

Four Areas of Focus, strengths in ministries, strategic directions, and opportunities for capacity-building. Our learnings from the tool will inform the state of the denomination as we look to what is emerging.

We Are Worldwide and Contextual

A key culture shift for our connection that the Connectional Table will increasingly engage is the shift from a U.S.-centered denomination to one that is truly worldwide. As we seek to understand new ways in which United Methodism will express itself in the future, it is important that these conversations continue and include voices and perspectives from all parts of our connection.

Specifically, the CT will continue to engage with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the Committee on Faith and Order on Chapter 5 (Administrative Order) of a *General Book of Discipline*. In addition, the CT will offer new legislation to create a U.S. Regional Conference to unburden the General Conference from inordinate time spent on U.S.-only matters. And, the CT will continue to look at its own makeup and mandates, in consultation with the COB, so that the CT itself can more effectively reflect the worldwide nature of the church.

Agency Structure and Mandates for a General Book of Discipline

Throughout the quadrennium, the Connectional Table's Chapter 5 Advisory Group worked alongside the Standing Committee, the Committee on Faith and Order, and the general agencies to draft a new Chapter 5 (Administrative Order) for the *General Book of Discipline*. These chapters in the *BOD* address agency structure and mandates. The intent of the work is to reflect an understanding of agency that is more congruent with a worldwide church.

The Standing Committee will seek a broader mandate from the 2020 General Conference to better facilitate this work and offer legislation for the *General Book of Discipline* in 2024. The CT's Chapter 5 Advisory Group will, therefore, continue this work with the Standing Committee, the Committee on Faith and Order, and the agencies into the next quadrennium as the groups discern together how agency might be expressed in our worldwide connection.

Creating a U.S. Regional Conference

With the goal of easing the burden of U.S. legislation on the General Conference and giving churches in the U.S. parity with the central conferences, the Connectional

Table began deep work on a U.S. structure as it worked alongside the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters on the *General Book of Discipline*. As the global church responds to the 2019 Special Session, new legislative proposals for a U.S. structure have been brought forth. None of them predate the CT's work or have the same missional focus.

In April 2019, the CT approved bringing a legislative proposal to the 2020 General Conference to create a United States Regional Conference comprising the current U.S. jurisdictional conferences and the geographical boundaries congruent with the territory of U.S. annual conferences [20722, 20723, 20724, 20725, 20726]. Naming this new structure for U.S. governance a "regional conference" rather than a "central conference" acknowledges the painful, racist history and still existing wound associated with the former Central Jurisdiction in the U.S.

Currently, many General Conference petitions pertain mostly or exclusively to The UMC in the U.S. Yet, the U.S. church currently has no venue other than General Conference for considering this legislation. As a result, these U.S.-specific petitions dominate General Conference time, burden central conference delegates with matters that are outside their purview, and materially impact the efficiency of the legislative process.

Creating a U.S. Regional Conference provides an organizational structure for the U.S. to have parity with existing central conferences for doing work on the adaptable portions of the *Book of Discipline*. Equally important, a regional conference will offer the U.S. the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the church in the U.S. context.

Creating the U.S. Regional Conference will be done in two stages:

- Stage I forms a committee of the General Conference, with legislative function, to deal with a U.S. region—adaptable disciplinary provisions, U.S.-related resolutions, and non-disciplinary petitions concerning U.S. matters.
- Stage II forms the U.S. Regional Conference, after which the Stage I committee will end its work.

Because the regional conference is a new body and different from a central conference, the proposed legislation will add a new ¶ 11. Article IV.—"There shall be a regional conference for the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, privileges, and limitations as are hereinafter set forth." Also, a new Section VI. Regional Conferences in the Constitution would be added.

It is important to note that this proposal is consistent with and complementary to the work on a *General Book of Discipline*. The *General Book of Discipline* currently in design would allow only General Conference to work on non-adaptable sections, while continuing to allow central conferences to work on adaptable sections. It is also important to note that the U.S. proposal would not change the role and authority of U.S. jurisdictional conferences, including the election of bishops.

Proposals for the U.S. to have a structure similar to a central conference began as early as 1924, with a formal proposal by the Board of Foreign Missions coming to General Conference in 1928. The CT began work on this issue in 2005, when a joint task force on the Global Nature of the Church was established with the COB.

When the work on the *General Book of Discipline* began at General Conference 2012, the need for the churches in the U.S. to have a place to do adaptable work took on a greater sense of urgency. The CT began working alongside the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters in 2013, when it formed a Worldwide Nature Collaboration Group.

A More Global Leadership Body for the General Church

The Connectional Table created a General Church Council working group to respond to legislation proposed during the 2013-2016 quadrennium that requested the CT reorganize to better serve our global church (Petition 60815-GA-NonDis-G in the 2016 *ADCA*). The group, led by a CT member and a representative of the COB, grounded its work in the goals expressed in ¶ 125 of the *BOD*:

“Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining ‘a vital web of interactive relationships.’”

Working in light of the creation of a *General Book of Discipline*, the group convened conversations and developed a legislative proposal to move the CT toward better global representation, updated mandates, and a new leadership paradigm grounded in trust. However, in light of the outcomes of Special Session 2019 and the Standing Committee’s decision to postpone a *General Book of Discipline*, the group will continue this work into the next quadrennium with the intent of offering legislation at the 2024 General Conference.

We Are Affirming and Inclusive

“Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the Church, the community, and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination.” (*BOD* ¶ 140)

As our church continues to grapple with what it means to be an affirming and inclusive church in terms of gender/ gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, culture, and other factors, the Connectional Table will seek to listen, support, and come alongside groups engaging these conversations. The CT will continue its work on giving theological, missiological, and ecclesiological undergirding to such conversations in a variety of ways, including through an online anthology project.

Emerging Anthology Project

Bishop Christian Alsted, Chair of the CT, and Rev. Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai, Chief Connectional Ministries Officer of the CT, gave a statement, “For the Sake of the Church,” in April 2019 addressing the outcome of the 2019 Special Session. The statement included a call to action, pleading with the church to enter into reflection, conversation, and prayer about the state of our church. The Emerging project, an online anthology of writings about the state of our denomination, is the natural outcome of this statement.

Emerging is grounded in Isaiah 43:18-19. It raises the questions: What is God doing new in and through God’s people called Methodists? Might we, through our best thinking and reflection, be better able to perceive the new thing God is doing?

This project is helping us explore these questions through an open-ended conversation about what is emerging in Methodism. By creating a highly accessible, web-based dialogue, we are engaging United Methodists with a diversity of perspectives from across our worldwide connection.

Through this forum, we are curating and crowdsourcing our best thinking about theology, ecclesiology, missiology, polity, history, and leadership from scholars, pastors, and lay folk alike. We are asking questions such as: How do we understand what it means to be the church in mission? How are we living out what it means to be church across the world? What does our history have to teach us at this time in the life of our connection? How might our polity inform us, or how does it constrain us? What kinds of leadership do we need to grapple with the challenges we face?

The CT will continue to engage such questions and be a vehicle that enables “the flow of information and communication . . . listen[s] to the expression of needs... [and that] address[es] emerging issues” facing our denomination at such a time as this (*BOD* ¶ 905.2, 3). For more information about Emerging, go to www.emergingmethodism.com.

We Are Effective

The Connectional Table work will build on the foundations laid during the current quadrennium and on the learnings from the budgeting allocations and agency evaluation processes to increase effectiveness and accountability throughout our connection. Toward this end, the CT will continue working with the agencies even as it engages conversations about how “agency” might take new forms.

The CT also will continue and extend its work with agencies and GCFA in shaping a values-based quadrennial budget in ways that are missionally focused, equitable, and sustainable. In addition, the CT will monitor its own effectiveness through active engagement with internal processes of budgeting and evaluation as well as human resource management.

A Values-Based Quadrennial Budget

For the first time in three quadrennia, the Connectional Table implemented a new values-based process to allocate the denomination’s budget. Facing steep cuts within the connection, the CT sought to allocate the budget according to values that could better focus the budget missionally and help each agency maintain its core mission and continue to thrive.

Our values included:

- a holistic focus on The UMC’s mission,
- an agency’s core mission,
- missional priorities,
- emerging missional priorities,
- stewardship,
- transparency,
- fairness and justice,
- and equity.

Guided by these values and equipped with a full understanding of the agencies’ finances, programming, priorities and capacity, the CT developed a budget proposal to allocate the \$358,579,025 determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) and the CT. The CT’s budget proposal was approved by the CT and GCFA jointly at the April 2019 meeting and will be presented by both groups at General Conference 2020.

Agency Evaluation

Our Agency Evaluation Advisory Group also implemented strategies to help understand and celebrate the ways in which agency work aligns with the Four Areas of Focus. The group began by having each agency complete Logic Model evaluations to demonstrate the relationship between the organization’s resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts as it relates to the Four Areas of Focus. Next, the advisory group hosted a series of dialogue sessions: one dialogue with each agency receiving apportioned funds and one for each of the Four Areas of Focus. The sessions were rich learning opportunities and revealed many inspiring examples of the missional faithfulness and fruitfulness of our agencies. It became clear that this approach opened conversations and fostered relationship-building in a new and much-needed way.

We Are Connectional

In the face of our impasse over how to be in ministry with our LGBTQIA+ siblings and the inevitable changes that will come, the Connectional Table is committed to developing our understanding of connectionalism and how it might look different in varying contexts. The CT is also committed to ensuring that connectionalism remains central to the conversation about what is emerging in our worldwide church. As our *Book of Discipline* notes, “Only when we commit ourselves to interdependent worldwide partnerships in prayer, mission, and worship can connectionalism as the Wesleyan ecclesial vision be fully embodied” (¶ 125). The CT will work with our general agencies, the COB, and others to explore ways in which such worldwide missional partnerships can embody our developing vision of connectionalism, even as those partnerships take different forms.

Conclusion

The Connectional Table has accomplished much during the 2016-2020 quadrennium, including fulfilling its General Conference mandates, more deeply engaging its purpose, and moving toward a new leadership approach. Grounded in adaptive leadership concepts that challenge us to move beyond technical work and toward adaptive approaches, the CT has worked to build its capacity to deal with the rapid changes facing our connection. The CT will continue to build upon the inroads it has made and clarify its responsibility to the mission of The United Methodist Church. The CT also will continue to seek to increase the capacity of the United Methodist connection by supporting new and improved collaboration, bringing together the abundance of resources within

The UMC, and increasing efficiency as stewards of the resources generously given. As God's emerging work is revealed to us, relationship building and collaboration will be especially important as we deal with the inevitable loss associated with change and as we seek ways forward that are sustainable yet faithful to our mission.

Bishop Christian Alsted
Chair of the Connectional Table

Rev. Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai
Chief Connectional Ministries Officer

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶3.

Petition Number: 20239-GA-¶3-C-G; Coleman, Tami - Crestwood, KY, USA for Kentucky Annual Conference.

Add Nicene Creed to Doctrinal Standards

Amend ¶ 3 accordingly:

¶ 3. **Article III.** *Articles of Religion, and the Confession of Faith*, and the Nicene Creed—

The Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith of The United Methodist Church are those held by The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, respectively, at the time of their uniting.³ The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed that is part of the church's doctrinal standards is the version that is printed under the heading, "The Nicene Creed," in the 1989 edition of *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

Rationale:

The Doctrinal Standards affirm the Nicene Creed. Including the creed further strengthens ecumenical conversation, giving a theological framework for dialogue and discernment within United Methodism. Also, it professes our theological connection and heritage with the greater church of Jesus Christ

¶4.

Petition Number: 20001-GA-¶4-C; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 4. *Article IV*

Inclusiveness of the Church—The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth and that we are in ministry to all. All persons ~~without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition,~~ shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, and upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and All persons, upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith and relationship with Jesus Christ, shall be eligible to become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church

~~because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.~~

¶4.

Petition Number: 20240-GA-¶4-C-G; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Amend Paragraph 4

Amend ¶ 4. *Article IV*:

¶ 4. *Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church*—The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the church because of race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition

Rationale:

Adding "gender" to the membership portion of the Constitution to match what is already stated in ¶ 16.1. It reinforces The UMC's commitment to gender equity throughout our worldwide connection. It affirms that women cannot be discriminated in membership.

¶4.

Petition Number: 20241-GA-¶4-C-G; Henry, Katharine - La Cañada Flintridge, CA, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

ALL BELONG: Ensuring Inclusive Welcome

Amend ¶ 4 as follows:

Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church—The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship, ability, national origin,

status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church, no conference or other organizational unit of the church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the church because of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship, ability, national origin, status, or economic condition, nor shall any member be denied access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of the church because of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, relationship, ability, national origin, status, or economic condition.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit calls and includes all persons into the life of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit, transcending the limitations of our categories. We are called to overcome the divisions of our human communities.

¶4.

Petition Number: 20242-GA-¶4-C-G; Burk, William - Fort Wayne, IN, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

Inclusiveness of the Church

Amend ¶ 4 Article IV by deletion such that ¶ 4 will read:

The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth.

All persons ~~without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition~~, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the church. ~~because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.~~

Rationale:

Whereas, the motto of The United Methodist Church “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” is intended to indicate that all are welcome, there are many who also

read the *Book of Discipline* and feel that in fact not all are welcome. We believe all should be welcome.

¶17.

Petition Number: 20243-GA-¶17-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Delete Restrictive Rule 1

Delete ¶ 17.

This amendment will be certifiable if and when the Council of Bishops certifies the amendment of ¶ 59, which removes the requirement of a three-fourths majority of the members of the annual conferences to change Restrictive Rule 1.

Rationale:

The Articles of Religion are of tremendous historical significance, but they should be relegated to historical status and not continue to be treated as formal doctrinal statements of the church.

¶17.

Petition Number: 20244-GA-¶17-C-G; Coleman, Tami - Crestwood, KY, USA for Kentucky Annual Conference.

Add Nicene Creed to Doctrinal Standards

Amend ¶ 17 accordingly:

¶ 17. **Article I**—The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine, except to affirm the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as printed under the heading, “The Nicene Creed,” in the 1989 edition of *The United Methodist Hymnal*, as a part of our doctrinal standards.⁴⁰

Rationale:

The Doctrinal Standards affirm the Nicene Creed. Including the creed further strengthens ecumenical conversation, giving a theological framework for dialogue and discernment within United Methodism. Also, it professes our theological connection and heritage with the greater church of Jesus Christ.

¶18.

Petition Number: 20245-GA-¶18-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Delete Restrictive Rule 2

Delete ¶ 18.

This amendment will be certifiable if and when the Council of Bishops certifies the amendment of ¶ 59, which removes the requirement of a three-fourths majority of the members of the annual conferences to change Restrictive Rule 2.

Rationale:

The Confession of Faith is of tremendous historical significance, but it should be relegated to historical status and not continue to be treated as a formal doctrinal statement of the church.

¶21.

Petition Number: 20246-GA-¶21-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Delete Restrictive Rule 5

Delete ¶ 21.

Rationale:

The General Rules are of tremendous historical significance, but they should be relegated to historical status and not continue to be treated as formal doctrinal statements of the church.

¶59.

Petition Number: 20247-GA-¶59-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Revision of Process for Amending Restrictive Rules 1 and 2

Amend ¶ 59 as indicated.

¶ 59. *Article I.*—Amendments to the Constitution shall be made upon a two-thirds majority of the General Conference present and voting and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting, ~~except in the case of the first and second Restrictive Rules, which shall require a three-fourths majority of all the members of the annual conferences present and voting.~~

Rationale:

This first step should be taken in providing the church with the ability to keep its doctrine in step with its theology and practice. The next step should be the deletion of Restrictive Rules 1, 2, and 5, which are ¶¶ 17, 18, and 21.

¶61.

Petition Number: 20248-GA-¶61-C-G; Brown, Curtis - Springfield, IL, USA.

Calling a Constituting Conference

Amend the Constitution of The United Methodist Church by adding a new division following ¶ 61 as follows:

Division Six—Constituting Conference

Article I.—A Constituting Conference may be called by a two-thirds majority of the General Conference present and voting. The purpose of the Constituting Conference shall be to draft and propose a new Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Upon ratification, this new Constitution shall supersede all previous petitions, resolutions, or General Conference actions, including all sections of the Book of Discipline.

Article II.—The Constituting Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the General Conference, shall be organized in such manner as the General Conference will prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such a Constituting Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors, except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so.

Article III.—A two-thirds majority of the Constituting Conference present and voting may propose a new Constitution of The United Methodist Church. The Constitution shall be ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of two-thirds of the annual and missionary conferences. The vote, after being completed, shall be canvassed by the Council of Bishops, and the Constitution shall become effective upon their announcement of its having received the required majority.

Article IV.—In the event that the Constituting Conference adopts a new Constitution, the Constituting Conference may immediately adopt enabling legislation that shall be contingent on ratification and contemporaneously with the new Constitution, unless said legislation provides for a later effective date. In the same manner, a central, jurisdictional, provisional, missionary, or annual conference may approve legislation in anticipation of such a change in the Constitution that would likewise become effective upon ratification, unless said legislation provides for a later effective date.

Rationale:

This petition would add a process for The United Methodist Church to adopt a new constitution as a whole instead of through individual amendments.

¶262.

Petition Number: 20249-GA-¶262-G; Moffitt, Stephanie
- Boulder, CO, USA.

ALL BELONG: Establish LGTBQI Special Sunday

Amend ¶ 262 and ¶ 263 as follows:

¶ 262:

~~Six~~ Seven churchwide special Sundays provide for churchwide offerings to express our commitment: Human Relations Day, UMCOR Sunday, World Communion Sunday, United Methodist Student Day, Peace with Justice Sunday, ~~and~~ Native American Ministries Sunday, and LGBTQI Sunday. Five special Sundays . . .

¶ 263:

~~Six~~ Seven churchwide special Sundays with offerings shall be celebrated in each United Methodist Church.

Add new ¶ 263.7

7. LGBTQI Sunday—Historically, Pride Month has been celebrated in June. Congregations are to observe LGBTQI Sunday on the first Sunday in June or on another date appropriate to the local church. LGBTQI Sunday recognizes the radical inclusivity of a church “in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world” (¶ 140). LGBTQI Sunday calls the church to affirm that the LGBTQI community (including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) have all rights of full membership in our church; to rejoice in the gift of diversity and our efforts toward full inclusion; and to respond to our calling to be faithful to the example of Jesus’ ministry to all persons. The purpose of the day is to increase our ministerial efforts of education and awareness of LGBTQI issues and persons and to actively condemn acts of discrimination, hatred, and violence toward the LGBTQI community.

In connection with LGBTQI Sunday, the General Commission on Communication shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Church and Society.

1. The annual conference treasurer shall retain 50 percent of the receipts for LGBTQI ministries in the annual conference, to be administered by the annual conference Board of Reconciling Ministries, or if no such structure exists, the annual conference board of church and society.

2. The annual conference treasurer shall remit the remaining 50 percent of the receipts to the General Council on Finance and Administration. Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be distributed by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Admin-

istration to the administering agency for LGBTQI ministries.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, establishing this special Sunday will guide efforts to overcome homophobia and transphobia and provide opportunities for awareness, education, celebration, and honoring of LGBTQI persons in the life of the church.

¶263.4.

Petition Number: 20250-GA-¶263.4-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Proposed Changes for United Methodist Student Day

Amend ¶ 263.4:

¶ 263.4. United Methodist Student Day

4. United Methodist Student Day—Historically, United Methodist Student Day has been celebrated with an offering on the last Sunday in November. Congregations are to observe United Methodist Student Day on any Sunday in the month of May this date or on another date appropriate to the local church to celebrate high school graduates or active students in higher education. United Methodist Student Day calls the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The offering supports United Methodist scholarships ~~and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund~~. In connection . . .

Rationale:

Moving the observation time frame for United Methodist Student Day to May encourages promotional alignment with student graduation celebrations. United Methodist Student Day no longer supports the UM Student Loan Fund.

¶263.6c.

Petition Number: 20251-GA-¶263.6c; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Proposed Changes for Native American Ministries Sunday

Amend ¶ 263.6 c):

¶ 263.6. Native American Ministries Sunday

. . .

c) Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be distributed by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the administering agencies: (1) Scholarships for Native Americans attending ~~United Methodist schools of theology and schools of theology approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church~~ University Senate-approved theological schools or approved Course of Study programs, or the recruitment and education of Native Americans who are pursuing ordained or licensed ministry: 50 percent (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry). . . .

Rationale:

Broadens the support available for Native Americans pursuing licensed or ordained ministry and helps ensure that more students and potential candidates are eligible to be supported by this fund.

¶265.4.

Petition Number: 20252-GA-¶265.4-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Regarding Disability Awareness Sunday

Amend the last sentence of ¶ 265.4 as follows:

The observance of Disability Awareness Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board ~~Commission on of Global Ministries~~ Religion and Race.

Rationale:

The work of Disabilities Ministries committee of The United Methodist Church is now under the auspices of The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) which is overseeing Disability Awareness Sunday. This amendment will make the work consistent to the current practice.

¶600.

Petition Number: 20688-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #8—Creating New Expressions of Methodism through Gracious Affiliation

ADD NEW ¶ 673 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict with in The United Methodist Church, the Plain Grace Plan is adopted. It is the intent of the Plain Grace Plan to multiply new Wesleyan expressions consistent with the common core of The United Methodist Church and to allow

the diverse members of The United Methodist Church to be able to live into their preferred expression of Methodism while offering grace to all of God's children. It is the further intent of the Plain Grace Plan to create a Full Communion Relationship with such newly created Wesleyan expressions. The Plain Grace Plan consists of the following paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline*: ¶¶ 248A, 431A-F, 673-680, 725, 1510, and 2553-2555.

2. All provisions of Plain Grace Plan shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020. Each provision of the Plain Grace Plan shall set forth its expiration date. The provisions of the Plain Grace Plan adopted as part of the *Book of Discipline* shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph addresses two issues.

¶600.

Petition Number: 20689-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #9-Annual Conference Gracious Affiliation and Gracious Reaffiliation Agreements

ADD NEW ¶ 674 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. On or before January 1, 2022, the Conference Board of Trustees for each annual conference shall adopt a recommended standardized form Gracious Affiliation Agreement to be used in those circumstances where a local church joins a Full Communion Expression. The Conference Board of Trustees may use a standardized form prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration but shall not be required to do so; however, any form adopted by the annual conference shall incorporate the processes and procedures set forth in ¶¶ 431F, 1510, 2554, and 2555 to the extent those processes and procedures apply to an annual conference or local church. The Gracious Affiliation Agreement shall establish the terms and conditions under which a local church may join a Full Communion Expression. In addition, each standardized Gracious Affiliation Agreement shall include (a) a provision binding the local church to

agree to the arbitration agreement existing between the local church's Full Communion Expression and The United Methodist Church and (b) a provision releasing the Trust Clause pursuant to the terms established by ¶ 2555. Such form agreements shall be submitted to the annual conference on or before December 31, 2022, for approval and adoption by a simple majority. The effect of an annual conference approving and adopting such agreement shall be to approve any local church joining a Full Communion Expression by executing such an approved standardized agreement without further vote or action by the annual conference; however, such affiliation or reaffiliation shall only be effective during the time periods set forth in ¶ 248A.

2. On or before January 1, 2022, the Conference Board of Trustees for each annual conference shall adopt a recommended standardized form Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement to be used in those circumstances where a local church has joined a Full Communion Expression. The Conference Board of Trustees may use a standardized form prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration but shall not be required to do so; however, any form adopted by the annual conference shall incorporate the processes and procedures set forth in ¶¶ 431F, 1510, 2554, and 2555 to the extent those processes and procedures apply to an annual conference or local church. The Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement shall establish the terms and conditions under which a local church may join or rejoin the annual conference. In addition each standardized Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement shall include (a) a provision binding the local church to agree to the arbitration agreement existing between the local church's Full Communion Expression and The United Methodist Church. Such form agreements shall be submitted to the annual conference on or before December 31, 2022, for approval and adoption by a simple majority. The effect of an annual conference approving and adopting such agreement shall be to approve any local church that was previously a member of The United Methodist Church to join or rejoin the annual conference by executing such an approved agreement without further vote or action by the annual conference; however, such reaffiliation shall only be effective during the time periods set forth in ¶ 248A.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph authorizes and directs

¶600.

Petition Number: 20690-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #10—First Called Special Conference for Gracious Affiliation

ADD NEW ¶ 675 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. Each annual conference shall hold a First Called Special Conference during the time period between August 15 and November 15, 2021, for the sole business purpose of electing representatives to the Organizing Conferences of entities that have become Qualified New Expressions under ¶ 431B. The delegates to the First Called Special Conference shall be those delegates serving as annual conference delegates for 2021. It is the duty of the annual conference to elect representatives eligible to attend Qualified New Expressions' Organizing Conferences. An annual conference may select representatives equal in number to the annual conference's delegates to General Conference to attend each Qualified New Expression's Organizing Conference. No representative may attend more than one Organizing Conference. The annual conference shall exercise autonomous control over the agenda, business, discussion, and vote on the question of considering Qualified New Expressions; however, such control shall be exercised in a procedure that is fair, equitable and consistent with the Constitution and the principle of legality. The procedures set forth in subparagraphs (a) through (d) may be employed by the annual conference and are hereby deemed procedures that are fair and equitable and consistent with the Constitution and the principle of legality.

a) The Called Special Conference shall identify all Qualified New Expressions and by a fair and equitable process, determined solely by the annual conference, provide to the delegates information concerning each Qualified New Expression. Written materials concerning a proposed Qualified New Expression may be submitted to the delegates prior to the Called Special Conference by the annual conference or the Qualified New Expression.

b) After receiving information concerning each Qualified New Expression, each delegate shall self-select no more than one Qualified New Expression caucus in which to participate. Each delegate may participate in one, but only one, caucus. A delegate may choose not to participate in any caucus.

c) Each caucus shall elect persons to serve as qualified representatives at the Qualified New Expression's Organizing Conference. The total number of representatives elected by each caucus shall be equal to the number of General Conference delegates allocated to the annual

conference. There shall be no requirement that the clergy/laity representative be equal in number and it is expressly understood that such result may not occur. Under no circumstances are the persons elected to be considered delegates as that term is used in the Constitution or *Book of Discipline*; such persons are representatives of the caucus and shall perform their duties as representatives of the New Expression, not delegates of The United Methodist Church.

d) If a caucus group has fewer persons participating in the caucus than the number of General Conference delegates allocated to the annual conference, each person participating in the caucus shall be deemed elected; however, no additional persons shall be eligible to serve as caucus representatives from the annual conference. If no delegate chooses to participate in a Qualified New Expression's caucus group, the annual conference shall not select a representative to attend that Qualified New Expression's Organizing Conference.

2. Persons elected as representatives shall be responsible for their own expenses to attend a Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference. No annual conference representative shall be required to attend a Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference; attendance shall be voluntary. No annual conference shall reimburse or pay the expenses for any representative to attend a Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference unless it pays or reimburses expenses for all representatives to each Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference. Nothing in this provision shall prohibit Qualified New Expressions, local churches, or individuals from contributing to, or reimbursing, the actual travel, housing, and per diem meal expenses on behalf of representatives to a Qualified New Expression Organizing Conferences; such reimbursement shall be calculated and paid on the same basis that the annual conference reimburses such expenses in the normal course of its activities.

3. A presiding bishop of an annual conference may attend any Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference and shall not be limited to attending a single Organizing Conference. The presiding bishop's role will be limited to that of a non-voting observer. A Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference may, in its sole discretion, allow a bishop attending an Organizing Conference to participate in any worship service and have a voice during the business sessions of the Organizing Conference. A bishop attending an Organizing Conference may, in their sole discretion, decline to participate in any one or more worship or business activities of the Organizing Conference. An annual conference may reimburse a presiding bishop's actual travel, housing, and per diem meal expenses for attendance at a Qualified New Expression

Organizing Conference; such reimbursement shall be calculated and paid on the same basis that the annual conference reimburses such expenses in the normal course of its activities.

4. On or before December 31, 2021, the annual conference shall notify each Qualified New Expression of the identity of the persons selected by the annual conference to be representatives to its Organizing Conference.

5. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2022. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions which consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph outlines the procedure

¶600.

Petition Number: 20691-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #11—Full Communion Expression's Invitation to Annual Conferences

ADD NEW ¶ 676 to the *Discipline* as follows:

Between August 15, 2022, and September 15, 2022, a Full Communion Expression may invite any annual conference of The United Methodist Church to join it. A Full Communion Expression's invitation may be in simple form, signed by an authorized representative of the Full Communion Expression with no additional formalities required. A Full Communion Expression shall not be required to issue an invitation for any annual conference to join; however, failure to invite an annual conference to join it before September 15, 2022, shall bar that Full Communion Expression from submitting an invitation to that annual conference before January 1, 2026. A Full Communion Expression may issue an invitation for a local church to join it even within the time frames outlined in ¶¶ 678-680 even if it has not invited the annual conference to join it. The invitation shall be delivered to the office of the presiding bishop for the annual conference with a copy delivered to the office of the executive sec-

retary for the Council of Bishops. The invitation may be delivered in person, by mail, or by electronic means. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2023. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph establishes a simple

¶600.

Petition Number: 20692-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #12—Second Called Special Conference for Gracious Affiliation

ADD NEW ¶ 677 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. An annual conference that has not received a timely invitation from any Full Communion Expression shall not hold a Second Called Special Conference.

2. If an annual conference has received an invitation from a Full Communion Expression, the annual conference shall hold a Second Called Special Conference during the time period between October 15 and November 15, 2022, for the sole business purpose of considering whether to affiliate with each Full Communion Expression that has issued a timely invitation to the annual conference in compliance with ¶ 676. The delegates to the Second Called Special Conference shall be those delegates serving as annual conference delegates for 2022. The annual conference may determine fair and equitable procedures for each inviting Full Communion Expression to present itself as a candidate for affiliation. The annual conference shall exercise autonomous control over the agenda, business, discussion, and vote on the question of joining a Full Communion Expression but such control shall be exercised in a procedure that is fair, equitable, and consistent with the Constitution and the principle of legality. The procedures set forth in subparagraphs a) and b) may be employed by the annual conference and are deemed procedures that are fair and equitable and consistent with the Constitution and the principle of legality.

a) An annual conference's Second Called Special Conference will determine, as an initial matter, whether one-third of the delegates desire to consider the question of affiliating with one or more Full Communion Expressions. If a one-third favorable vote is not received, the annual conference shall take no further action on the question of joining a Full Communion Expression before 2026. If one third of the delegates vote to consider the question of affiliating with one or more Full Communion Expressions, the annual conference shall vote to determine its Preferred Full Communion Expression. All Full Communion Expressions that have issued a timely invitation to the annual conference shall be included on the initial preference ballot. Any Full Communion Expression receiving a simple majority of the delegates voting on the preference ballot shall be considered the annual conference's preferred Full Communion Expression. In the event no Full Communion Expression receives a simple majority in the first preference ballot, the Full Communion Expression receiving the fewest votes shall be eliminated, and an additional ballot shall be taken that includes the remaining Full Communion Expressions. Additional preference ballots shall be taken following this procedure until one Full Communion Expression receives a simple majority of the delegates voting on the preference ballot.

b) After selecting a preferred Full Communion Expression, the annual conference shall vote on whether to join the preferred Full Communion Expression. An annual conference may choose to join a Full Communion Expression by a simple majority.

3. An annual conference shall notify the president of its College of Bishops of its decision within thirty (30) days of adjournment of its called special conference. If an annual conference votes to join a Full Communion Expression, the jurisdictional or central conference shall reallocate the territory of the former annual conference among the remaining annual conferences or create a new annual conference.

4. After November 15, 2022, no annual conference may conduct an additional vote to join a Full Communion Expression on or before December 31, 2025.

5. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total para-

graphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph outlines the procedure for the

¶600.

Petition Number: 20693-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #13—Procedure where Annual Conference Remains in Connection with the United Methodist Church

ADD NEW ¶ 678 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. If a Second Called Special Conference is not held or if an annual conference declines to join a Full Communion Expression during the period from November 15, 2022, through March 31, 2023, local churches, clergy, and bishops may join a Full Communion Expression by following the procedures set forth in this paragraph.

2. After a church conference vote taken in compliance with ¶ 248A, a local church may join any Full Communion Expression by executing the Gracious Affiliation Agreement and Dispute Resolution Agreement approved by the annual conference. An Affiliation Agreement will authorize a local church to affiliate with any Full Communion Expression in those circumstances where the local church's annual conference did not vote, as an annual conference, to join the Full Communion Expression selected by the local church.

3. Clergy of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement the clergyperson shall provide a copy of the agreement to the clergyperson's United Methodist Church district superintendent. Such notice shall transfer the clergyperson's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any clergyperson. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed by the General Conference to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program such that an active clergy participant who transfers to a Full Communion Expression under ¶¶ 678 or 680 of the *Book of Discipline* will be treated as a terminated vested participant under the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transferring clergy's accrued pension benefits shall be secured and

protected from future disruptions by converting such benefits to an actuarially equivalent account balance, using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such converted benefits, along with all other retirement account balances, shall be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed, authorized, and empowered to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference and in the manner described above. The transfer shall not otherwise affect the clergyperson's vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program.

4. A presiding bishop of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement the bishop shall provide a copy of the agreement to the Council of Bishops. Such notice shall transfer the bishop's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any bishop. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed by the General Conference to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program such that an active bishop who transfers to a Full Communion Expression under ¶¶ 678 or 680 of the *Book of Discipline* will be treated as a terminated vested participant under the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transferring bishop's accrued pension benefits shall be secured and protected from future disruptions by converting such benefits to an actuarially equivalent account balance, using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such converted benefits, along with all other retirement account balances, shall be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed, authorized, and empowered to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference and in the manner described above. The transfer shall not otherwise affect the clergyperson's vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transfer shall not otherwise

affect the bishop's vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program or other pension plan sponsored by The United Methodist Church.

5. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph establishes procedures for

¶600.

Petition Number: 20694-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #14—Procedure where an Annual Conference Joins a Full Communion Expression

ADD NEW ¶ 679 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. The decision by an annual conference to join a Full Communion Expression shall not transfer clergy or a presiding bishop to the Full Communion Expression. The presiding bishop, district superintendents, and clergy shall continue to serve until such time as replacements are appointed by the Full Communion Expression. The Full Communion Expression shall be responsible for reimbursing The United Methodist Church for actual salary, benefits, and reasonable and necessary expenses paid to bishops by The United Methodist Church until a replacement is appointed. Reimbursement payments shall be made within sixty (60) days of The United Methodist Church invoicing the Full Communion Expression. Salary, pension, and insurance payments to clergy made by local churches of Full Communion Expressions or the annual conference shall be treated as payments by the Full Communion Expression and shall not be invoiced to, nor reimbursed by, the Full Communion Expression.

2. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, all property, except cash and cash equivalent property, owned by the annual conference shall continue to be held in trust for The United Methodist Church pursuant to ¶ 2501 until the

property is released by operation of ¶¶ 2554 and 2555. All cash and cash equivalent property shall be retained by the annual conference for use as a Full Communion Expression; however, such cash or cash equivalents shall be used to satisfy the annual conference's per diem apportionment liability for 2022. Such cash or cash equivalents may be used to reimburse The United Methodist Church for actual salary, benefits, and reasonable and necessary expenses paid to bishops and clergy until a replacement is appointed.

3. In this circumstance where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, and cash and cash equivalents are transferred to the Full Communion Expression annual conference, the Full Communion Expression annual conference shall pay to The United Methodist Church a *per diem* amount to satisfy its unpaid apportionment obligations for 2022 based on a per diem calculation; the total amount of this liability is referred to as the "unpaid per diem apportionment liability." The unpaid per diem apportionment liability shall equal the conference's actual total of 2022 apportionments paid before joining the Full Communion Expression, divided by the number of days in 2022 before the annual conference joined the Full Communion Expression. The unpaid apportionment liability shall equal three hundred sixty-five minus the number of days in 2022 before the annual conference joined the Full Communion Expression, multiplied by the per diem amount, with such unpaid apportionment liability being capped at the annual conference's total apportionment amount for 2022. If the total apportionments paid by the annual conference to The United Methodist Church for fiscal year 2022 (calculated by adding the annual conference's apportionments paid plus the unpaid per diem apportionment liability) are less than the apportionments paid in the prior fiscal year, then the difference shall be added to the unpaid *per diem* apportionment liability and become a 2022 apportionment liability of the annual conference. All fiscal year 2022 apportionment liabilities of an annual conference owing to The United Methodist Church shall be paid no later than January 31, 2023.

4. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression as a result of action taken at the Second Special Called Conference, during the period from November 15, 2022, through March 31, 2023, a local church may reaffiliate with The United Methodist Church or join a Full Communion Expression other than the Full Communion Expression joined by its annual conference by following the procedures set forth in this paragraph.

5. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, after a church conference vote taken in compliance with ¶ 248A, a lo-

cal church may reaffiliate with The United Methodist Church by notifying the College of Bishops for its jurisdiction or central conference. If such reaffiliation occurs in the time period between November 15, 2022, and March 31, 2023, the reaffiliation shall relate back to the date of the annual conference vote at the Second Special Called Conference and the local church shall be deemed to have been a member of The United Methodist Church continuously and shall not be considered to have joined a Full Communion Expression. If such reaffiliation occurs after March 31, 2023, the local church will be treated as having been a member of the Full Communion Expression until the date of such reaffiliation and the local church's professing membership shall be included in the calculation of the Missional Resource Allocation Formula during the time it was a member of the Full Communion Expression.

6. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, during the period from November 15, 2022, through March 31, 2023, after a church conference vote taken in compliance with ¶ 248A, a local church may join any Full Communion Expression other than the one joined by its annual conference by executing the Gracious Affiliation Agreement and Dispute Resolution Agreement approved by the annual conference.

7. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, clergy of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement the clergyperson shall provide a copy of the agreement to the clergyperson's United Methodist Church district superintendent. Such notice shall transfer the clergyperson's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any clergyperson. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed by the General Conference to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program such that an active clergy participant who transfers to a Full Communion Expression under ¶¶ 679 or 680 of the *Book of Discipline* will be treated as a terminated vested participant under the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transferring clergy's accrued pension benefits shall be secured and protected from future disruptions by converting such benefits to an actuarially equivalent account balance, using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contri-

butions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such converted benefits, along with all other retirement account balances, shall be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed, authorized, and empowered to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference and in the manner described above. The transfer shall not otherwise affect the clergypersons vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program.

8. In those circumstances where an annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, a presiding bishop of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement the bishop shall provide a copy of the agreement to the Council of Bishops. Such notice shall transfer the bishop's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any bishop. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed by the General Conference to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program such that an active bishop who transfers to a Full Communion Expression under ¶¶ 679 or 680 of the *Book of Discipline* will be treated as a terminated vested participant under the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transferring Bishop's accrued pension benefits shall be secured and protected from future disruptions by converting such benefits to an actuarially equivalent account balance, using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such converted benefits, along with all other retirement account balances, shall be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed, authorized, and empowered to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference and in the manner described above. The transfer shall not otherwise affect the clergypersons vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The transfer shall not otherwise affect the bishop's vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program.

ment Security Program or other pension plan sponsored by The United Methodist Church.

9. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph is similar to

¶600.

Petition Number: 20695-GA-¶600-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #15—Additional Time Periods for Joining a Full Communion Expression or Reaffiliating with the United Methodist Church

ADD NEW ¶ 680 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. The following procedures for joining a Full Communion Expression or Reaffiliating with The United Methodist Church shall be available for local churches during the periods from (a) January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, and (b) January 1, 2027, through March 31, 2027.

2. A Full Communion Expression may invite any annual conference of The United Methodist Church or another Full Communion Expression wholly or partially within its geographic boundaries to join it. An invitation to join may be issued during the periods from (a) January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, and (b) January 1, 2027, through March 31, 2027. A Full Communion Expression's invitation may be in simple form, signed by an authorized representative of the Full Communion Expression with no additional formalities required. A Full Communion Expression shall not be required to issue an invitation for any annual conference to join. The invitation shall be delivered to the office of the presiding bishop for the annual conference with a copy delivered to the office of the executive secretary for the Council of Bishops. If an invitation is issued during either of the time periods set forth in this subparagraph, the question of joining a Full Communion Expression shall be taken up as a regular item of business at the annual conference's next regularly scheduled an-

nual conference. If an invitation is issued, the processes set forth in ¶ 677 may be used to vote upon joining a Full Communion Expression.

3. An annual conference of The United Methodist Church may invite any annual conference of any Full Communion Expression to reaffiliate with it. An invitation to join may be issued during the periods from (a) January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, and (b) January 1, 2027, through March 31, 2027. An annual conference's invitation may be in simple form, signed by an authorized representative of the annual conference with no additional formalities required. An annual conference shall not be required to issue an invitation for an annual conference of a Full Communion Expression to reaffiliate. The invitation shall be delivered to the office of bishop, or its equivalent, for the annual conference for the Full Communion Expression with a copy delivered to the office of the executive secretary for the Council of Bishops. If an invitation is issued during the time periods set forth in this subparagraph, the question of an annual conference reaffiliating with The United Methodist Church shall be taken up as a regular item of business at the Full Communion Expression's annual conference's next regularly scheduled annual conference. If an invitation is issued, the processes set forth in ¶ 677 shall be used by the Full Communion Expression's annual conference to decide upon reaffiliation.

4. During the periods from (a) January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, and (b) January 1, 2027, through March 31, 2027, after a church conference vote taken in compliance with ¶ 248A, a local church of an annual conference of The United Methodist Church may join any Full Communion Expression by executing the Gracious Affiliation Agreement and Dispute Resolution Agreement approved by its annual conference.

5. During the periods from (a) January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, and (b) January 1, 2027, through March 31, 2027, after a church conference vote taken in compliance with ¶ 248A, a local church of a Full Communion Expression may reaffiliate with an annual conference of The United Methodist Church by executing the Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement prepared by the annual conference board of trustees and previously approved by the annual conference. A local church reaffiliating with The United Methodist Church shall remain bound by its previously executed Dispute Resolution Agreement.

6. Clergy of a Full Communion Expression who were previously clergy in The United Methodist Church may transfer to an annual conference of The United Methodist Church on terms and conditions established by an annual conference of The United Methodist Church by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the annual conference after an invitation to join has been is-

sued by the annual conference. Any such invitation, including the terms and conditions of such invitation, shall be approved in advance by a three-fourths majority of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Promptly upon executing such agreement, the clergyperson shall provide a copy of the agreement to the presiding bishop of the annual conference. Such notice shall transfer the clergyperson's membership from the Full Communion Expression to The United Methodist Church, subject to the terms and conditions established by the annual conference. The terms and conditions established by the annual conference shall be consistent with the terms of the *Book of Discipline*. No annual conference of The United Methodist Church is under any obligation to issue such an invitation to any clergyperson.

7. Clergy of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement, the clergyperson shall provide a copy of the agreement to the clergyperson's United Methodist Church district superintendent. Such notice shall transfer the clergyperson's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any clergyperson.

8. A bishop of an annual conference may transfer to a Full Communion Expression on terms and conditions established by the Full Communion Expression by executing an Affiliation Agreement in a form provided by the Full Communion Expression after an invitation to join has been issued by the Full Communion Expression. Promptly upon executing such agreement the bishop shall provide a copy of the agreement to the Council of Bishops. Such notice shall transfer the bishop's membership from The United Methodist Church to the Full Communion Expression. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join to any bishop. The transfer shall not affect the bishop's vested pension rights under any plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program or other pension plan sponsored by The United Methodist Church; however, if provided in the benefit plan, transfer may terminate the bishop's rights to continued contributions under the plan. In the event of any conflict between an applicable plan of the Clergy Retirement Security Program or other pension plan sponsored by The United Methodist Church and this paragraph, the terms of the plan shall govern.

9. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Confer-

ence for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph allows two additional

¶700.

Petition Number: 20696-GA-¶700-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #16—Proposed Operational Plans for Agencies and Institutions

ADD NEW ¶ 725 to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. No later than May 1, 2023, the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Commission on Communication, United Methodist Women, General Commission on Religion and Race, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, General Commission on United Methodist Men shall prepare and publicly disseminate a proposed operational plan to be submitted for review and action by the General Conference in 2024. Each operational plan shall evaluate any and all structural and financial changes necessary for effective ministry and service through December 31, 2028. Such plans may include proposed structural or governance changes. Such plans may include a proposal for the board or commission to transfer to a Full Communion Expression and establish the proposed financial terms for such transfer. Such plans may include proposed methods to provide services to Full Communion Expressions and to denominations in the Wesleyan tradition. Such operational plans may include proposed disposition of assets, merger, or cessation as an ongoing entity. Such proposed operational plan shall identify any contemplated disposition of assets reasonably anticipated to occur before December 31, 2028. Such operational plan shall also identify any assets that the entity proposes to accept from The United Methodist Church by means of purchase or other transfer and the estimated fair market value of such assets. Any petitions required to implement the proposed operational plan shall be submit-

ted on behalf of the agency in time for consideration by General Conference in 2024.

2. No later than May 1, 2023, those agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church other than those listed in subparagraph 1 may prepare and publicly disseminate a proposed operational plan to be submitted for review and action by the General Conference in 2024. Each operational plan shall evaluate any and all structural and financial changes necessary for effective ministry and service through December 31, 2028. Such plans may include proposed structural or governance changes. Such plans may include a proposal for the institution to transfer to a Full Communion Expression and establish the proposed financial terms for such transfer. Any petitions required to implement the proposed operational plan shall be submitted on behalf of the institution in time for consideration by General Conference in 2024. For purposes of this subparagraph, the phrase “agencies and institutions” shall refer to those agencies and institutions identified in ¶ 2501 of the *Book of Discipline*.

3. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2024. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673-680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph requires those agencies

¶701.

Petition Number: 20253-GA-¶701; Allen, Emily - Mountain View, CA, USA.

General Agency Relationships with Formerly United Methodist Bodies

Amend ¶ 701.2:

¶ 701. 2. We experience this connection in many ways, including our systems of episcopacy, itineracy, property, and mutual cooperation and support. Our connectional system performs at least three essential tasks: embracing God’s mission for the church as making disciples for Jesus Christ; organizing our whole church to enable local congregations, the primary arena for mission, faithfully and fruitfully to make disciples for Jesus Christ;

and ensuring that all components in the connection carry out their appropriate responsibilities in ways that enable The ~~whole~~ United Methodist Church and other offshoot or successor expressions of Methodism to be faithful in ~~its~~ their mission. General agencies may form relationships with formerly United Methodist churches and organizations to provide services and engage in common ministry while maintaining commitment to the agencies’ missions. The term *agency*, wherever it appears in the *Book of Discipline*, is a term used to describe the various councils, boards, commissions, committees, divisions, or other units constituted within the various levels of church organization (general, jurisdictional, central, annual, district, and charge conferences) under authority granted by the *Book of Discipline*; the term does not and is not meant to imply a master-servant or principal-agent relationship between these bodies and the conference or other body that creates them, except where the authority is specifically granted.

Rationale:

This amendment enhances the value of connectionalism stated in ¶ 701.1 by giving explicit permission to general agencies to work with churches and other bodies that separate from The United Methodist Church, if such work is appropriate to the mission of the general agency.

¶702.

Petition Number: 20254-GA-¶702; Evans, Cashar - Kitty Hawk, NC, USA.

Administrative Agency

¶ 702. *Amenability and Program Accountability*—

1. All the general agencies of The United Methodist Church that have been constituted by the General Conference are amenable to the General Conference, except as otherwise provided. . . .

3. Between sessions of the General Conference, the following general agencies are accountable to the Connectional Table for those functions that are outlined in the 900 ¶¶s: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on United Methodist Men.; ~~and the General Commission on Communication in matters pertaining to their program responsibilities.~~

Rationale:

This revision aligns this paragraph with ¶ 703.5, which identifies the program-related general agencies. UCom is included in ¶ 703.6 as an administrative agency.

¶702.1.

Petition Number: 20255-GA-¶702.1-G; Allen, Emily - Mountain View, CA, USA.

General Agency Financial Relationships with Formerly United Methodist Bodies

Add a new subparagraph after ¶ 702.1:

¶ 702. *Amenability and Program Accountability*—1. All the general agencies of The United Methodist Church that have been constituted by the General Conference are amenable to the General Conference, except as otherwise provided.

2. All general agencies shall be permitted to engage with formerly United Methodist bodies and organizations in order to provide their services, resources, and leadership to churches and organizations that wish to continue a relationship with one or more general agencies. These services may be provided on a fee-for-service basis, apportionment basis, or other financial model, as determined by the agency's directors or general secretary. Funds generated from these relationships must still be accounted for and reported under the provisions of ¶ 704.

Rationale:

This new subparagraph provides for the financial relationship between general agencies and new offshoot or successor bodies from The United Methodist Church, as well as for the accountability of any generated funds through the regular oversight process for general agencies.

¶703.

Petition Number: 20256-GA-¶703; Evans, Cashar - Kitty Hawk, NC, USA.

Administrative Agency

¶ 703. Definitions, Structures, and Titles

6. *Administrative General Agencies*—The general boards and commissions that have primarily administrative and service functions shall be designated as administrative general agencies. These agencies are the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, The United Methodist Publishing House, the General Commission on Communication, and the General Commission on Archives and History, ~~and General Commission on Commu-~~

nication, the last two of which also carry program-related responsibilities for which ~~they are~~ it is accountable to the Connectional Table.

Rationale:

This more clearly identifies UCom as an administrative agency distinct from the program agencies listed in ¶ 703.5. The work of communications enables the ministry, mission, and programming of the church at every level.

¶705.

Petition Number: 20258-GA-¶705-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 705:

General Agency and Connectional Table Membership—The people of God are called to faithful discipleship in the name of Jesus Christ. “He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. His purpose was to equip God’s people for the work of serving and building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12). In response to God’s call, some are called forth from local congregations to fulfill the common mission of The United Methodist Church as an expression of the church made visible in the world. This call includes the invitation to some to be in ministry with others who together seek to fulfill the vision for the church as members of general church bodies. Such persons come to this ministry as servants of the whole church.

The following provisions shall govern the nomination and election of the voting membership of those general church bodies to which the jurisdictional conferences elect and central conferences nominate members. All lay voting members of general agencies and the Connectional Table shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church and active in local churches unless otherwise specified by the *Book of Discipline*. All provisions pertaining to the nomination and election of general agency and Connectional Table members shall take effect immediately upon the adjournment of the General Conference that enacts them. The secretary of the General Conference shall coordinate the processes pertaining to nominations and elections of general agency and Connectional Table members.

1. *Nominations by Conferences*—a) Each annual and missionary conference in the United States, upon recommendation from a committee composed of the bishop and the General and jurisdictional conference delegation,

and having allowed opportunity for nominations from the floor, shall elect persons to be submitted to a jurisdictional pool. The jurisdictional nominating committee shall select persons for election to the following general church bodies: Connectional Table; General Board of Church and Society; General Board of Discipleship; General Board of Global Ministries; General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; The United Methodist Publishing House; Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships; General Commission on Communication; General Commission on Religion and Race; and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Jurisdictional conferences may decide that persons elected by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States for inclusion in the jurisdictional pool shall not serve as members of the jurisdictional nominating committee.

b) Each annual and missionary conference in the United States shall nominate the persons most recently elected as delegates to the General Conference to the jurisdictional pool. In addition, it may nominate at least fifteen and not more than forty-five persons to the jurisdictional pool, including, where available, at least two racial and ethnic persons from each of the ethnic groups Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Pacific Islanders; and where available at least one and not more than five persons in each of the following ~~seven~~ eight categories: (1) clergy (including at least one woman), (2) laywomen, (3) laymen, (4) youth (§ 710.3), (5) young adults (§ 710.3), (6) older adults, ~~and~~ (7) persons with disabilities, ~~(8) LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) persons.~~ Elected members of General and jurisdictional delegations, and others nominated by their annual conference shall list all of the categories for which they qualify, i.e., nationality, age, gender, ethnicity ~~origin~~, etc., and shall be eligible to be nominated by the jurisdictional nominating committee to a general church body in any one of the categories for which a delegate is qualified.

c) Each central conference or a body authorized by it shall nominate to each general program board membership at least one person from each of the following three categories: (1) clergy, (2) laymen, and (3) laywomen to form a pool from which each board is to elect the additional members that are to come from the central conferences pursuant to § 705.4c. These lists shall be sent to the Connectional Table for use by the general agencies in electing additional members.

d) All nominees shall list one to three preferences for membership. In addition all nominees shall prepare an up to one-hundred-word biographical statement listing experience, gifts, training, and other qualifications for gen-

eral agency membership. Biographical statements for all persons in the central and jurisdictional conference pools shall be available to the nominating committee members in the meeting at which they make their nominations. Names and biographical data of all persons nominated by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States or the central conferences, but not elected, shall be forwarded by the jurisdictional or central conference secretary to the Connectional Table to be used by the general agencies as a pool from which additional members may be elected (§§ 4e, 5b).

2. *Additional Nominations*—In addition to the foregoing provisions (§ 705.1), the Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship shall nominate ten youth and ten young adults (§ 710.3) to each jurisdictional pool, inclusive of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, size of church, and persons with disabilities.

3. Members of the general agencies and the Connectional Table shall be elected using the following provisions:

a) Each jurisdiction shall elect members of the general agencies and the Connectional Table as provided in §§ 705.4, 705.5, and 906.1. Persons within any jurisdiction elected by the United Methodist Women's national organization to serve as members of the General Board of Global Ministries (§ 1906) shall be counted in, and not be additional to, the total number of members allocated to each jurisdiction for purposes of determining proportional distribution, but United Methodist Women members are additional to the membership prescribed in § 1311.1. The secretary of the General Conference shall offer to each jurisdiction a suggested fair and equitable allocation of members to the annual and missionary conferences within each jurisdiction; however, each jurisdiction shall determine for itself how members will be allocated among the annual and missionary conferences of the jurisdiction.

b) Each general agency may elect at least one member with vote and voice from among the member churches of the Pan-Methodist Commission. In addition, each general agency is permitted to elect at least one member with voice but not vote from among our Full Communion Ecumenical Partners. These members would be in addition to those otherwise specified in § 705.3a above. The Council of Bishops shall assist general agencies if they choose to elect such representatives.

c) It is recommended that, to the extent possible, at least 10 percent of the voting membership of each general agency be youth and young adults (§ 256.3), and that the number of youth be equal to the number of young adults. Youth and young adult members of general agencies shall serve with vote except when local laws prohibit them

from voting on corporate matters under consideration (see ¶ 2506.1) in which case and for which purpose youth and young adult members shall serve as non-director representatives with voice, but not vote, until they reach the legal age to serve as voting members for this purpose, at which time they shall become voting members for all purposes. The youth and young adult membership of each general board, agency, and the Connectional Table shall be inclusive (consistent with ¶¶ 705.3d and 2506.1).

d) It is recommended that the membership of each of the general agencies seeks to be inclusive based on gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic persons, age, persons with disabilities, economic condition, and size of church. In order to ensure adequate representation of racial and ethnic persons (Asian American, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders), it is recommended that a jurisdiction's membership on each general agency be at least 30 percent racial and ethnic persons and incorporate one-third clergy, one-third laymen, and one-third laywomen (except as provided in ¶¶ 1105, 1311). The episcopal members shall not be counted in the computation of the clergy membership.

e) The membership of the General Commission on United Methodist Men shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 537 and ¶ 2303.3. Other paragraphs of the *Discipline* notwithstanding, members of the commission holding membership by virtue of office may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

4. *General Program Board Membership*—a) Each general program board shall have the number of members specified in ¶¶ 1006, 1105, 1311, and 1407.

b) *Jurisdictional Membership*—Each jurisdiction shall elect the number of persons listed in the specific legislation for membership on each of the four general program boards. In the jurisdictional nominating process for membership on those boards, special attention shall be given to the inclusion of clergywomen, youth (¶ 256.3), young adults, older adults, people with disabilities, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) persons, and persons from small membership churches. In order to ensure adequate representation of racial and ethnic persons (Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders), it is recommended that at least 30 percent of a jurisdiction's membership on each general program board be racial and ethnic persons. It is further recommended that the jurisdiction membership on each program board incorporate one-third clergy, one-third laymen, and one-third laywomen (except as provided in ¶¶ 1105.1, 1311.2; see also ¶¶ 1311.6, 1407). The episcopal members shall not be counted in the computation of the clergy membership.

c) *Central Conference Membership*—The total central conference membership, including central conference bishops, in general church bodies shall be allocated as follows: four members on the General Commission on Religion and Race; three each (one from each region: Philippines, Europe, Africa) on the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Communication, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and The United Methodist Publishing House; three each on the General Council on Finance and Administration; seven each (one from each central conference) on the Connectional Table, and the General Board of Church and Society; three on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; four (at least one from each region from the Philippines, Europe, and Africa) on the General Board of Discipleship and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women; and eleven on the General Board of Global Ministries, only two of whom shall be bishops. It is recommended that the aggregate central conference membership on the program boards be composed of one-third clergy (half of whom shall be women), one-third laymen, and one-third laywomen. The central conference membership, excluding episcopal members, shall be elected by the Council of Bishops, except that central conference membership (except bishops) to the Global Ministries board of directors shall be nominated and elected by the central conferences as provided in ¶¶ 1311.1 and 1311.5b).

d) *Episcopal Membership*—The episcopal membership of the general program boards shall be nominated by the Council of Bishops and elected by the General Conference. At least one of the episcopal members of each general agency, with the exception of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, shall be a central conference bishop and, in the case of the General Board of Global Ministries, two central conference bishops (from two of three regions: Africa, Europe, Philippines). (See ¶ 1311.6.)

e) *Additional Membership*—Additional members shall be elected by each general program board in order to bring into the board persons with special knowledge or background that will aid in the work of the agency, to consider differing theological perspectives, and to perfect the representation of racial and ethnic persons, youth (¶ 710.3), young adults (¶ 710.3), older adults, women and men, people with disabilities, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) persons, and persons from small-membership churches. After the election of central conference members as provided in ¶ 705.4c, and with the exception of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (¶ 2104.1b), the remaining number of additional members shall be allocated by the secretary of the

General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that membership of each board reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership, excluding episcopal members. In the determination of proportionate allocation, minor fractions shall be rounded down and major fractions rounded up to the nearest integer, and there shall be no minimum number of additional members assigned to any jurisdiction. Insofar as possible, the nominating committee shall select from the jurisdictional nominating pool for the election of persons to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions insuring diversity as otherwise provided in the *Book of Discipline* (§ 705.4b). Each general program board shall elect additional members as specified in general program board membership paragraphs. Insofar as possible, no more than one person shall be elected from each episcopal area. It is recommended that such additional membership shall maintain the one-third laymen, one-third laywomen, and one-third clergy balance.

f) *Liaison Representatives*—The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico (Iglesia Metodista Autónoma Afiliada de Puerto Rico) will have one liaison representative, at its own expense, to each of the general program agencies of The United Methodist Church.

g) *Status of Liaison Representatives*—Because of the special nature of the relationship between the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico and the general agencies of The United Methodist Church as established in the concordat between the two churches, the liaison representatives of the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico to the general agencies of The United Methodist Church will serve with voice and vote and be afforded the same status on those agencies as though they were members, except as provided in § 705.4f).

2. *Other General Agencies*—a) Each jurisdictional conference shall elect members from the jurisdictional pool nominated by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States (§ 705.1) in accordance with the specific membership provisions of those agencies as set forth in the *Book of Discipline*: General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (§ 1502.1a), The United Methodist Publishing House (§ 1602), Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (§ 437), General Commission on Communication (§ 1807), General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (§ 2104), and General Commission on Religion and Race (§ 2003). With the exception of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (§ 1502.1) and The United Methodist Publishing House (§ 1602.1) the number of additional members to be elected shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that membership

of each agency reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership, excluding episcopal members. In the determination of proportionate allocation, minor fractions shall be rounded down and major fractions rounded up to the nearest integer, and there shall be no minimum number of additional members assigned to any jurisdiction. Insofar as possible the nominating committee shall select from the jurisdictional nominating pool for the election of persons to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions insuring diversity as otherwise provided in the *Book of Discipline* (§ 705.4b).

b) Episcopal and additional members, if any, of the general agencies listed in § 705.5a shall be nominated and elected by the procedures specified in the paragraphs listed in §§ 705.1b, 705.1d, and 705.4e. The agencies shall consider names forwarded to them by the Connectional Table as having been nominated by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States or in the central conferences, but not elected by these conferences to general agency membership. Additional names may be considered in order to perfect the representation as provided in § 705.4e.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of § 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶705.

Petition Number: 20263-GA-¶705-G; Nelson, Muriel - Monrovia, Liberia.

Fair Selection of Central Conference Members for COSROW

Amend § 705.3 as follows:

¶ 705. . . .

4. General Program Board Membership— . . .

c) *Central Conference Membership*—The total central conference membership, including central conference bishops, in general church bodies shall be allocated as follows: four members on the General Commission on Religion and Race; three each (one from each region: Philippines, Europe, Africa) on the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Communication, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and The United Methodist Publishing House;

three each on the General Council on Finance and Administration; seven each (one from each central conference) on the Connectional Table, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and the General Board of Church and Society; three on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; four (at least one from each region from the Philippines, Europe, and Africa) on the General Board of Discipleship ~~and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women~~; and eleven on the General Board of Global Ministries, only one of whom shall be a bishop. It is recommended that the aggregate central conference membership on the program boards be composed of one-third clergy (half of whom shall be women), one-third laymen, and one-third laywomen. The central conference membership, excluding episcopal members, shall be ~~elected by the Council of Bishops~~ selected by the bishops of the central conferences, except that central conference membership (except bishops) to the Global Ministries board of directors shall be nominated and elected by the central conferences as provided in ¶¶ 1311.1 and 1311.5b).

Rationale:

We must ensure that gender issues in central conferences are given the attention they need. And the central conferences' own leaders should select their representatives, as Americans pick their own. Having a USA-majority Council of Bishops select central conference representatives is unfair. Central conference leaders best understand their members.

¶705.1.

Petition Number: 20260-GA-¶705.1-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Conflict of Interest in Jurisdictional Nominations

Amend ¶ 705 as follows:

¶ 705.1. *Nominations by Conferences—*a) . . . Jurisdictional conferences may decide that persons elected by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States for inclusion in the jurisdictional pool shall not serve as members of the jurisdictional nominating committee.

b) Each annual and missionary conference in the United States shall nominate the persons most recently elected as delegates to the General Conference to the jurisdictional pool, however this provision conveys no right to serve as a member of the jurisdictional nominating committee if the jurisdictional conference has exercised

its authority to exclude persons included in the jurisdictional pool from service on the nominating committee as provided in ¶ 705.1.a) above.

Rationale:

This will preserve the right of a jurisdictional conference to preclude conflicts of interest in the nominations process and reverse the effect of Judicial Council Decision 1095.

¶705.3.

Petition Number: 20257-GA-¶705.3-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Seeking Inclusive Representation

Amend ¶ 705.3.d as follows:

¶ 705.3.d) "It is recommended that the membership of each of the general agencies seeks to be inclusive based on gender, racial and ethnic persons, age, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, and size of church. In order to ensure adequate representation of racial and ethnic persons (Asian American, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders), it is recommended that a jurisdiction's membership on each general agency be at least 30 percent racial and ethnic persons."

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, this petition seeks to reflect this value by including all persons in the membership of general agencies

¶705.3.

Petition Number: 20262-GA-¶705.3-G; Masamba, Re-member - Harare, Zimbabwe.

GBCS Membership

Amend ¶ 705.3 as follows:

¶ 705. . . .

4. *General Program Board Membership—* . . .

c) *Central Conference Membership—*The total central conference membership, including central conference bishops, in general church bodies shall be allocated as follows: four members on the General Commission on Religion and Race; three each (one from each region: Philippines, Europe, Africa) on the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Communication, the General Commission on United

Methodist Men, and The United Methodist Publishing House; three each on the General Council on Finance and Administration; seven each (one from each central conference) on the Connectional Table; ~~and the General Board of Church and Society; members on the General Board of Church and Society whose number will be in accordance with ¶ 1006;~~ three on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; four (at least one from each region from the Philippines, Europe, and Africa) on the General Board of Discipleship and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women; and eleven on the General Board of Global Ministries, only one of whom shall be a bishop. It is recommended that the aggregate central conference membership on the program boards be composed of one-third clergy (half of whom shall be women), one-third laymen, and one-third laywomen. The central conference membership, excluding episcopal members, shall be elected by the Council of Bishops, except that central conference membership (except bishops) to the Global Ministries board of directors shall be nominated and elected by the central conferences as provided in ¶¶ 1311.1 and 1311.5b).

...

Rationale:

This helps ensure consistency, as well as a greater degree of clarity and simplicity, in adjustments to the membership of the General Board of Church and Society.

¶705.3b.

Petition Number: 20259-GA-¶705.3b-G; Allen, Emily - Mountain View, CA, USA.

General Agency Representation from Formerly United Methodist Bodies

Amend ¶ 705.3b:

¶ 705. 3. b) Each general agency may elect at least one member with vote and voice from among the member churches of the Pan-Methodist Commission. Each general agency may also elect at least one member with vote and voice from among the member churches of an offshoot or successor denomination that has left The United Methodist Church, if the new denomination contains at least fifty (50) churches and provides regular funding to the agency; the travel expenses of such members will be funded by the sending denomination. In addition, each general agency is permitted to elect at least one member with voice but not vote from among our Full Communion Ecumenical Partners. These members would be in addition to those otherwise specified in ¶ 705.3a above. The Council of Bishops

shall assist general agencies if they choose to elect such representatives.

Rationale:

This amendment allows the election of general agency board members from new offshoot or successor bodies of The United Methodist Church that establish a funding relationship with the general agency.

¶705.4c.

Petition Number: 20261-GA-¶705.4c-\$-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

General Agency and Connectional Table Central Conference

Amend ¶ 705.4.c as follows:

¶ 705. *General Agency and Connectional Table Membership*— . . .

4.c. *Central Conference*

Membership—The total central conference membership, including central conference bishops, in general church bodies shall be allocated as follows: four members on the General Commission on Religion and Race; three each (one from each region:

Philippines, Europe, Africa) on the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Communication, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and The United Methodist Publishing House; three each on the General Council on Finance and Administration; ~~seven~~ eight each (one from each central conference) on the Connectional Table, and the General Board of Church and Society; . . .

Rationale:

The amendment adjusts membership based on the addition of a central conference in Africa. It is dependent upon the creation of an additional central conference in Africa.

¶715.

Petition Number: 20264-GA-¶715-G; Baumgardner, Karl - Huntington Beach, CA, USA.

Avoid Conflicts of Interests

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 715, *Provisions Pertaining to Staff*, by ADDING a new Section #10 as follows:

10. All elected staff persons of general councils, general boards, and general agencies shall agree, as long as

they hold their positions, to not serve as delegates to the General, jurisdictional, or central conferences.

Rationale:

This is commonsense good governance. Accountability of agencies to General Conference is undermined, and conflicts of interest are created, if the most senior staff simultaneously can serve as full voting members of General Conference and of jurisdictional nominating committees. Separating senior staff from divisive elections is key for fostering trust.

¶715.4d.

Petition Number: 20265-GA-¶715.4d; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

General Agency Benefit Funding Plan Reporting

Amend ¶ 715.4.d) as follows:

d) ~~On or before December 31, 2013, and then annually thereafter,~~ each general agency must develop and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan for funding its ~~annual benefit obligations relating to its annual retirement, welfare and health plan~~ employee benefit plans obligations (including those obligations of the General Council on Finance and Administration [GCFA] for bishops), ~~including, but not limited to, as well as its projected pension and retiree medical liabilities (including those obligations of GCFA for bishops).~~ The funding plan or plans shall be submitted to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for review ~~and be published along with a favorable written opinion of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits in an addendum to the agency's annual financial report.~~ In addition, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall include general agency benefits and benefits for bishops in its quadrennial report to General Conference concerning the long-term benefit liabilities of the denomination. Therefore, annually each general agency shall provide its comprehensive benefit funding plan to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits ~~information periodically requested.~~ Each general agency shall document in writing its policy regarding the portability of retiree health care eligibility, coverage, cost-sharing, and benefits and communicate the policy to its clergy and lay employees and incoming clergy and lay employees from annual conferences or other general agencies. For the purpose of this paragraph, portability encompasses credit given for service outside the general agency within the denomination to clergy and lay employ-

ees toward (i) eligibility for health care coverage in retirement and (ii) accrual of employer subsidies toward or employer cost-sharing of the cost of health care coverage.

Rationale:

Because many general agencies do not publish annual financial reports, remove the requirement that agencies publish benefit funding plans in financial reports; also make clarifying and technical corrections, e.g., that funding plans are submitted annually and that they apply to total obligations not only to annual costs.

¶717.

Petition Number: 20266-GA-¶717; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments

Amend ¶ 717 as follows:

¶ 717. *Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments*—In the investment of money, it shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church that all general boards and agencies, including the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and all administrative agencies and institutions, including hospitals, homes, educational institutions, annual conferences, foundations, and local churches, make a conscious effort to invest in the securities of institutions, companies, corporations, or in funds with policies and practices that are socially responsible, consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles. All United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to seek investments in the securities of institutions, companies, corporations, or in funds that promote racial and gender justice, protect human rights, prevent the use of sweatshop or forced labor, avoid human suffering, and preserve the natural world, including mitigating the effects of climate change. In addition, United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to avoid investments in companies engaged in core business activities that are not aligned with the Social Principles through their direct or indirect involvement with the production of anti-personnel weapons and armaments (both nuclear and conventional weapons), alcoholic beverages or tobacco; or that are involved in privately operated correctional facilities, gambling, pornography or other forms of exploitative adult entertainment. The boards and agencies are to give careful consideration to environmental, social, and governance factors when making investment decisions and actively exercise their responsibility as owners of the companies and sovereign

securities in which they invest. This includes engaging with companies, governments (to the extent reasonable, safe, and permitted by law), intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organization, and other policymakers, to create positive change and hold companies and governments them accountable for their actions, while also considering exclusion if companies and governments fail to act responsibly.

Rationale:

UMC investors that hold government issued securities should engage governmental bodies, to the extent reasonable and legal, and policymakers in supporting and improving sustainability and social responsibility, just as they are encouraged to engage similarly with companies whose securities they hold; and consider risk-justified exclusion only as a last resort.

¶717.

Petition Number: 20267-GA-¶717-G; Blackadar, John - Bow, NH, USA for New England Annual Conference. Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investment

Amend ¶ 717:

In the investment of money, it shall be the policy of The United Methodist Church that all general boards and agencies, including the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and all administrative agencies and institutions, including hospitals, homes, educational institutions, annual conferences, foundations, and local churches, make a conscious effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, governments, or funds with policies and practices that are socially responsible, consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles. All United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to seek investments in institutions, companies, corporations, governments, or funds that promote racial and gender justice, protect human rights, prevent the use of sweatshop or forced labor, avoid human suffering, and preserve the natural world, including mitigating the effects of climate change. In addition, United Methodist institutions shall endeavor to avoid investments in companies engaged in core business activities that are not aligned with the Social Principles through their direct or indirect involvement with the production of anti-personnel weapons and armaments (both nuclear and conventional weapons), alcoholic beverages or tobacco; or that are involved in privately operated correctional facilities, gambling, pornography or other forms of exploit-

ative adult entertainment. United Methodist institutions should similarly not hold sovereign or government debt in states conducting prolonged military occupations as they violate international law and human rights standards. The boards and agencies are to give careful consideration to environmental, social, and governance factors when making investment decisions and actively exercise their responsibility as owners of the companies in which they invest. This includes engaging with companies to create positive change and hold them accountable for their actions, while also considering exclusion if companies fail to act responsibly.

Rationale:

When we buy sovereign debt (government bonds) we are lending our funds to governments without any formal mechanism for advocacy. Governments conducting prolonged military occupations are violating international law and human rights standards. Such investments are morally wrong and financially risky.

¶718.

Petition Number: 20647-GA-¶718; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Investment Management Services

Insert a new ¶ 718 and renumber subsequent paragraphs as necessary:

¶ 718. *Investment Management Services*—To help assure transparency, availability of timely information for investors, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, agencies (and their related corporations) that make investment funds available to United Methodist or United Methodist-related entities shall, for the benefit of investors and prospective investors:

1. publish and update annually a prospectus or similar formal disclosure document that provides material information regarding the investment funds, including, but not limited to, fund objectives, benchmarks, risks, management, and purchase and redemption rights; fees, and performance;

2. publish, within 30 days of the close of each quarter, the investment performance of funds relative to their benchmarks;

3. publish, within six months of the close of each fiscal year, the report of an independent audit firm for the financial audit of the agency and its funds for fiscal year just ended; and

4. publish monthly reports of fund performance, or provide timely on-demand investor access to such information.

Nothing in this paragraph shall require the public disclosure of the agency's confidential proprietary information or processes.

Rationale:

To help assure transparency, availability of information for potential and current investors, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, Wespath and GCFA, and their related companies, are encouraged, as church fiduciaries, to strive to meet investment adviser best practices in disclosure and reporting to the extent practicable.

¶905.

Petition Number: 20268-GA-¶905-G; Brewer, Scott - Topeka, KS, USA.

Focus Essential Functions of Connectional Table

Amend ¶ 905

¶ 905. *Objectives*—The essential functions of the Connectional Table are:

1. To provide a forum for the understanding and implementation of the vision, mission, and ministries of the global church as determined in consultation with the Council of Bishops and/or the actions of the General Conference.

2. To enable the flow of information and communication among annual conferences, jurisdictions, central conferences, general agencies, and the Council of Bishops.

3. Consistent with actions of the General Conference, to coordinate the program life of the church with the mandates of the gospel, the mission of the church, and the needs of the global community by listening to the expression of needs, addressing emerging issues, and determining the most effective, cooperative, and efficient way to provide optimum stewardship of ministries, personnel, and resources.

4. To review and evaluate the missional effectiveness of general program-related agencies and connectional structures of the church as they collectively seek to aid annual conferences and local churches as they fulfill the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

5. To recommend to the General Conference such changes and implementing legislation as may be appropriate to ensure effectiveness of the general agencies.

6. To provide leadership in planning and research, assisting all levels of the church to evaluate needs and plan strategies to carry out the mission of the church.

7. In order to be accountable, along with the General Council on Finance and Administration, to The United Methodist Church through the General Conference, the Connectional Table shall have the authority and responsibility in the following matters:

a) To collaborate with the General Council on Finance and Administration in the preparation of budgets for the apportioned funds as provided for in ¶¶ 806.1 and 810.1.

b) To receive from the General Council on Finance and Administration and approve all general agency budget reviews.

c) To review and approve special offerings and churchwide appeals.

Rationale:

The church needs a group to focus primarily on the evaluation of agencies. As denominational structure develops, other groups will be responsible for communicating and implementing the church's mission and vision. This deletion keeps general church funds from being spent on work duplicated elsewhere and reduces Connectional Table expenses.

¶906.

Petition Number: 20269-GA-¶906-\$-G; Thomas, Wilton Odongo - Nairobi, Kenya for Nairobi, Kenya-Ethiopia Conference.

Fair Representation at Connectional Table

¶ 906. *Organization of the Connectional Table*—

1. *Membership*—The voting members of the Connectional Table shall consist of 49 persons as follows:

a) Twenty-eight persons elected through jurisdictional and central conferences, one from each of the central conferences by their own nomination processes and 21 from the jurisdictional conferences elected by the jurisdictional nomination process, who shall be chosen in the following manner, other provisions of the *Discipline* notwithstanding: Jurisdictional membership These members shall include one person from each jurisdiction and central conference, and the balance of the jurisdictional and central members shall be allocated by the Secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that the members represent the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions global church based upon the combined clergy and lay membership.

Members from the jurisdictional conferences shall be elected by the jurisdictional nomination process. Members from the central conferences shall be elected by each central conference's own nomination process. It is recommended that for every Connectional Table member to which a central conference is entitled under this paragraph, the central conference shall elect at least two alternates, in designated priority order, who shall be available to replace any of that central conference's Connectional Table members who in the course of the quadrennial may become unable to participate in meetings due to visa challenges or other reasons.

...

h) Except as otherwise provided for in this paragraph, vacancies of members elected from central and jurisdictional conferences occurring between sessions of the general conference shall be filled by the College of Bishops where the vacancy occurred, in so far as possible from the same Annual conference.

Rationale:

The seven central conferences make up 45 percent of our global membership. The current distribution of 21 out of 28 members of the Connectional Table to the five jurisdictions while one member is allotted to each of the seven central conferences is not a just and fair distribution.

¶906.

Petition Number: 20270-GA-¶906-G; Kulah, Jerry - Monrovia, Liberia.

Justice in CT Membership

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 906.1 as follows:

¶ 906. Organization of the Connectional Table—1. Membership—The voting members of the Connectional Table shall consist of 49 persons as follows:

a) ~~Twenty-eight persons elected through jurisdictional and central conferences, one from each of the central conferences by their own nomination processes and 21 from the jurisdictional conferences elected by the jurisdictional nomination process, who shall be chosen in the following manner, other provisions of the *Discipline* notwithstanding: Jurisdictional membership~~ These members shall include one person from each jurisdiction and central conference, and the balance of the jurisdictional and central members shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that the members represent the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions global church based upon the combined clergy and lay membership. Members from

the jurisdictional conferences shall be elected by the jurisdictional nomination process. Members from the central conferences shall be elected by each central conference's own nomination process. It is recommended that for every Connectional Table member to which a central conference is entitled under this paragraph, the central conference shall elect at least two alternates, in designated priority order, who shall be available to replace any of that central conference's Connectional Table members who in the course of the quadrennium may become unable to participate in meetings due to visa challenges or other reasons.

b) An effective bishop, selected by the Council of Bishops, serves as the chair of the Connectional Table.

c) The ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops and the presidents of the following agencies: General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Commission on Religion and Race, General Commission on Status and Role of Women, General Commission on United Methodist Men, General Commission on Communication, and General Commission on Archives and History, program-related agencies that are accountable to the Connectional Table (as expressed in ¶ 702.3). The chairperson of the Commission on the General Conference, the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and the president of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall also sit with voice and vote on the Connectional Table.

d) One youth and one young adult elected by the Connectional Table upon nomination by the membership of the Division on Ministries with Young People from among its members shall serve on the Connectional Table.

e) One member from each of the racial/ethnic caucuses as elected by the Connectional Table upon nomination from: Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Methodists Associated to Represent Hispanic Americans, Native American International Caucus, National Federation of Asian American United Methodists, and Pacific Islanders National Caucus United Methodist.

f) The general secretaries of the above-named agencies and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the United Methodist Women, the publisher of The United Methodist Publishing House, and the secretary of General Conference shall sit at the Table and have the right of voice but no vote.

g) Jurisdictional, central conferences, and other groups involved in the nominating and election of persons to the Connectional Table shall ensure the diversity objectives of, insofar as possible, 50 percent clergy, 50 percent laity, 50 percent female, 50 percent male, not less than 30 percent members of racial/ethnic groups (excluding cen-

tral conference members), and not less than 10 percent youth and young adults, ensuring diversity as otherwise provided in ¶ 705.4b.

h) Except as otherwise provided for in this paragraph, ~~Vacancies~~ vacancies of members elected from central and jurisdictional conferences occurring between sessions of the general conference shall be filled by the College of Bishops where the vacancy occurred, in so far as possible from the same annual conference.

i) Members shall meet all the membership qualifications as expressed in ¶ 710.

Rationale:

The seven central conferences make up 45 percent of our global membership. The current distribution of 21 out of 28 members of the Connectional Table to the five jurisdictions while one member is allotted to each of the seven central conferences is not a just and fair distribution.

¶906.1.

Petition Number: 20271-GA-¶906.1-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Connectional Table Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 906.1 as follows:

¶ 906 *Organization of the Connectional Table—*

1. *Membership*—The voting members of the Connectional Table shall consist of 49 persons as follows: *a)* Twenty-eight persons elected through jurisdictional and central conferences, one from each of the central conferences by their own nomination processes and ~~21~~ 20 from the jurisdictional conferences elected by the jurisdictional nomination process. Jurisdictional membership shall include one person from each jurisdiction and the balance of the jurisdictional members shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that the members represent the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership.

Rationale:

With the addition of a central conference member, the number of members from jurisdictional conferences is reduced from 21 to 20. The budget increase is the difference in airfare for one international vs one U.S. airfare. This petition is dependent upon the petition adding one central conference in

Global Ministries

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Remembering, Serving, Preparing: A Mission Anniversary Quadrennium

Report of the General Board of Global Ministries to the 2020 General Conference

Summary

The 2017-20 quadrennium was a time of celebrating the Methodist mission heritage, carrying out present-day commitments, and preparing for our role in God's mission tomorrow. The year 2019 marked the 200th anniversary of the formation of the first missionary organization in Global Ministries' lineage, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the same year, Global Ministries joined in observing the 150th anniversary of United Methodist Women's first missionary organization, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. A bicentennial world conference in April 2019 was entitled "Answering the Call: Hearing God's Voice in Methodist Mission Past, Present, and Future." Especially rewarding was the rediscovery of the role Native American ministries played in the founding of the first missionary society.

The bicentennial quadrennium opened with Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) settling into a new regional operational model with new headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2018, both Global Ministries and UMCOR finalized transfer of their incorporations from the state of New York to Georgia. A new strategic plan developed by directors put the focus on four functional priorities: 1) missionary service; 2) evangelism and church growth; 3) disaster response; and 4) global health. A new unit, Mission Engagement, aligns communications, marketing, designated giving—including The Advance—and constituent relations, and is intent on forging stronger ties with annual conferences, congregations, and individual supporters.

In 2017, The United Methodist Church had a vital, palpable sense of unity in mission. Enthusiasm for the priorities within the connection was obvious in the support for missionaries and Global Mission Fellows from everywhere to everywhere, interest in global church extension, and high levels of giving to UMCOR and health ministries. As the quadrennium began closing, Global

Ministries renewed its encouragement of the church to lean further into mission to preserve the unity, as well as the global nature, of the church. Disunity in the denomination had begun threatening the framework at the very heart of the church's life: participation in God's mission, the *Missio Dei*. In response to a deep sense of uneasiness, Global Ministries' directors initiated an invitation for unity in God's mission following their April 2019 meeting. "United in God's Mission" beckons all to join in God's mission of saving, healing, and transforming, regardless of the form their church takes in the future.

Along with mission history, mission theology was an important quadrennial emphasis. A staff director of mission theology was named and a mission theologian in residence continued. Both positions enlarge Global Ministries' capacity in staff professional education, relationships to seminaries and ecumenical partners, and community involvement. Global Ministries had a prominent role in planning and implementing the 2018 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania, on the theme "Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship." Such periodic events are sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The United Methodist Church had a delegation of eight at Arusha; two Global Ministries missionaries were seconded for conference staff roles.

New World Outlook ceased publication as the United Methodist mission magazine, yielding to the increasing cost of print publications and new online opportunities. The magazine in its print form served God's mission for well over a century, providing a lasting record of vigorous Methodist mission. The last issue in the fall of 2018 marked the mission bicentennial.

Global Ministries' detailed quadrennial report to the 2020 General Conference includes descriptions of mission highlights, including:

- The Mission Bicentennial Celebration;
- Call for Unity in Mission;
- Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula;
- Native American and Indigenous Ministries;
- Migration;
- Creation Care;
- “Let Them Leave” (missionaries detained in the Philippines);
- Strategic Plan.

Four following sections correspond to the denomination’s current Four Areas of Focus and cover various programmatic activities within them:

- **Leadership Development:** Missionaries, Scholarships, Volunteers, Mission Roundtables, Mission Ambassadors’ Summit;
- **Congregational Development:** Mission Initiatives (in Cambodia, Cameroon/Senegal, Central African Republic, Honduras, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, Viet Nam), Racial/Ethnic Local Church Support, School of Congregational Development, Regional Offices, and Reconciliation and Reunification in Burundi;
- **Ministry with the Poor:** Agriculture in Africa, Community Developers Program, and Ministries in the Middle East;

- **Global Health:** Abundant Health Campaign, Maternal and Newborn Health, Obstetrics Training, Substance Abuse Prevention and Recovery, HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Insect-borne Diseases, Better Nutrition, Health Systems Strengthening, Local Church Health Ministries, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and Disability Ministries.

Then follows the report from UMCOR, which is the means through which United Methodists collectively pray, act, and give for the relief of suffering without regard to religion, race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. It is funded entirely by designated giving and special offerings. From the start of 2017 through mid-2019, UMCOR’s International Disaster Response team made grants totaling \$17.2 million; U.S. disaster grants, including Puerto Rico, for the same period totaled \$49.4 million. Additional support went to sustainable development projects.

Appended are self-assessments as submitted by the four ethnic/language ministries in the U.S. supported by General Conference allocations and administered at Global Ministries.

Global Ministries prays that The United Methodist Church will gather at the 2020 General Conference united in mission.

Remembering, Serving, Preparing: A Mission Anniversary Quadrennium

Report of the General Board of Global Ministries to the 2020 General Conference

I. Introduction

The 2017-20 quadrennium was a time of celebrating the Methodist mission heritage, carrying out present-day commitments, and preparing for our role in God's mission tomorrow. Global Ministries marked the bicentennial in 2019 of the formation of the first missionary organization, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in our legacy and joined United Methodist Women in observing the 150th anniversary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, the first organized expression in its lineage.

Along with remembering, anniversaries are occasions for validating allegiances, for projecting promises, and for assessing potential for the future. These observances focused especially on the diversity of people and places central to our past mission story, current reality, and emerging possibilities. A bicentennial world conference in April 2019 was entitled, "Answering the Call: Hearing God's Voice in Methodist Mission Past, Present, and Future."

Especially rewarding in the bicentennial quadrennium was the rediscovery of the role Native American ministries played in the founding of the first missionary society and the consequent return of land (scheduled for September 2019) left in trust to that society when the Wyandotte People were expelled from Ohio in the 1840s (see additional information under **II. Highlights**, Bicentennial of Methodist Mission, and **IV. Areas of Focus**, First Area of Focus).

The bicentennial quadrennium opened with Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) settling into a new regional operational model with new headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2018, both Global Ministries and UMCOR finalized transfer of their incorporations from the state of New York to Georgia. A new strategic plan developed by directors (see additional information under **II. Highlights**, Strategic Plan) put our focus on four functional priorities: 1) missionary service, 2) church growth and development, 3) disaster response, and 4) global health. A new unit, Mission Engagement, aligns communications, marketing, designated giving—including The Advance—and constituent relations, and is intent on forging stronger ties with annual conferences, congregations, and individual supporters.

Enthusiasm for the priorities within the connection was obvious in the support for missionaries and Global Mission Fellows from everywhere to everywhere (see additional information under **IV. Areas of Focus**, First Area of Focus), interest in global church extension, and high levels of giving to UMCOR and health ministries. In 2017, The United Methodist Church had a vital, palpable sense of unity in mission. As the quadrennium began closing, Global Ministries renewed its encouragement of the church to lean further into mission to preserve the unity, as well as the global nature, of the church. Disunity in the denomination had begun threatening the framework at the very heart of the church's life: participation in God's mission, the *Missio Dei*. In response to a deep sense of uneasiness, Global Ministries' directors initiated an invitation for unity in God's mission following their April 2019 meeting. "United in God's Mission" beckons all to join in God's mission of saving, healing, and transforming, regardless of the form their church takes in the future (see additional information under **II. Highlights**, Call for Unity in Mission).

Along with mission history, mission theology was an important quadrennial emphasis. We named a staff director of mission theology and continued a mission theologian in residence. Both positions enlarge our capacity in staff professional education, relationships to seminaries and ecumenical partners, and community involvement.

Global Ministries had a prominent role in planning and implementing the 2018 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania, on the theme "Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship." Such periodic events are sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The United Methodist Church had a delegation of eight at Arusha and two of our missionaries were seconded for central conference roles, one as primary administrator and the other as coordinator of young adult participation.

We celebrated the continuation at a new home of the fifty-year old United Methodist Development Fund (UMDF), which has received investments and over the decades made loans of more than \$500 million for sanctuaries, parsonages, and other local church buildings. The move to the Texas Methodist Foundation retains the UMDF identity and objectives.

With great reluctance, we said farewell to *New World Outlook* as the United Methodist mission magazine, a victim of the enormous cost of producing a high-quality print publication in the age of the internet. Under several imprints, the magazine served God's mission and the church for well over a century, providing a lasting record of vigorous and inspiring Methodist mission. The last issue came off press in the fall of 2018, its content marking the mission bicentennial.

The ensuing report begins with a series of mission highlights starting in 2017, followed by four sections that correspond to the denomination's four current Focus Areas. That part of our budget supported by General Conference-approved apportionments is organized around these areas. Then comes the report of UMCOR, which is funded entirely by designated giving and special offerings. Finally, the report includes the accounts of the work of four ethnic/language ministries supported by General Conference allocations and administered by Global Ministries. The ethnic/language ministries' reports were reviewed and approved by their respective constituencies so that Global Ministries could include them here.

May we gather at the 2020 General Conference as United Methodists connected in mission.

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, President, Board of Directors, Global Ministries

Thomas G. Kemper, General Secretary, Global Ministries

II. Highlights

Bicentennial of Methodist Mission

In 2019, United Methodists celebrated Methodism's mission heritage and looked to the future of mission, from everywhere to everywhere, among the people called United Methodists. The celebrations included a bicentennial recognition of the Methodist mission as it emerged from the United States. The bicentennial included a world conference, April 8-10, "Answering the Call: Hearing God's Voice in Methodist Mission Past, Present, and Future." Sponsored by Global Ministries, in collaboration with Candler School of Theology of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, the conference coincided closely with the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest forerunner of Global Ministries, on April 5, 1819.

During the conference, participants honored the memory of John Stewart, whose mission with the Wyandotte Native Americans of Ohio helped inspire the formation of the Missionary Society. The conference also recognized the emergence of the mission societies that followed. No-

tably, in 1869, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church formed the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, becoming one of the most significant women's denominational mission societies globally and the forerunner to United Methodist Women. The conference also highlighted the long-standing participation in mission by Methodists from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as North America.

The conference attracted 250 participants, including United Methodists from 16 countries and representatives from at least 21 other Methodist-related communions. Participants representing 35 countries included current missionaries, students, mission volunteers, deans and professors, laity, clergy, bishops, and staff from general agencies. Speakers remarked on the varieties of mission and its role in addressing contemporary challenges, such as serving as a tool of peacemaking in places where war and violation of humanity prevail. The conference included recognition of mission's challenge in and readiness to attract new generations and respond to young peoples' desires for transformation.

Leading into the bicentennial year, Global Ministries solicited mission stories from around the world to help reveal, make available, and memorialize the history of mission in all its forms. The stories about mission came from churches, conferences, and individuals, and reflected the diversity of mission voices and the range of people worldwide who have devoted their lives to mission. Global Ministries launched a website, www.methodistmission200.org, to make these stories perpetually accessible. This online catalogue of mission service includes that of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and its predecessors.

A key purpose for gathering mission stories was not only to reflect the diversity of mission undertaken by Methodists over the last two hundred years, but also to honor mission in the current life of the church, draw today's church further into God's mission, and enable the church to reflect collectively on the calling of Methodist mission for the sake of moving forward together. The collecting of mission stories and the bicentennial conference helped promote key questions facing mission and The United Methodist Church. What have we learned from our past in mission? How is God moving among Methodists today? Where is God calling Methodists to go in mission in the future?

For the bicentennial preparation, a steering committee included members from all global regions of The United Methodist Church and the participation and invaluable contributions from the General Commission on Archives and History, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and United Methodist Women. Acknowledging the role of the New York Conference in the founding of the

Missionary Society in 1819, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton served as chair of the steering committee.

Call for Unity in Mission

Considering the disunity experienced by The United Methodist Church following the February 2019 Special Session of the General Conference, Global Ministries' directors issued an invitation for unity in God's mission following their April meeting that year. "United in God's Mission" beckons all to join in God's mission of saving, healing, and transforming regardless of the form their church takes in the future. It was unanimously issued by the thirty-two voting directors who represent a broad range of theological and cultural perspectives but are one in commitment to what the statement calls "God's work."

The statement says in part:

We acknowledge and lament the deep division in our United Methodist Church and the conflict between peoples and places. We do not yet know how to overcome that division, but as Global Ministries and UMCOR, we believe that the work God has called us to do represents what is right with the global church. We believe we have an opportunity to work for healing, peace and reconciliation—no matter what form the future of United Methodism takes.

It also states:

The work of Global Ministries and UMCOR has always connected United Methodist churches, people and partners in God's mission—not our mission—in a variety of settings, countries and cultures. As United Methodists celebrate 200 years of mission, we are also learning from that past and have claimed a theology of mission emphasizing the *Missio Dei*. We are learning to confess the harm and the toxic nature of colonial rule and are in mission to witness to what God has done and is doing and to learn from what God is doing in every land where disciples gather in the name of Jesus Christ.

When a storm or conflict destroys a community, it does so without regard for sexual orientation, theological perspective, race, class, gender or religion. And when UMCOR shows up to respond, build resiliency, rebuild homes and empower people, it does so because every person in that community is our neighbor and we have been called by God to live out the good news of Jesus Christ. Global Ministries brings sight to the blind, heals the sick, seeks release for the prisoner and justice for the oppressed, builds peace where there is conflict, invites people to be transformed and perfect-

ed by God's love and starts new faith communities in various contexts around the world. . . .

We remain committed to the *Missio Dei*. And we invite you to join in and continue to participate in what God is already doing in saving, healing and transforming the lives of all people, everywhere in this world.

Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

On behalf of Methodism worldwide, Global Ministries hosted in 2018 a Roundtable for Peace on the Korean Peninsula. South Korean president Jae In Moon sent his personal greetings recognizing the event's importance for not only the church but also world peace.

Joined by former United States president Jimmy Carter, the one hundred participants attending the Roundtable in Atlanta reaffirmed the global church's strong, ongoing commitment to peace on the Korean Peninsula. President Carter had in 1994 put his faith in dialogue for peace as jointly envisioned by then North Korean president Kim Il-sung, and in that light reflected on the current opportunities.

Another speaker was James T. Laney, former United States ambassador to South Korea, retired president of Emory University, and former Methodist missionary. Participants came from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Europe, and Latin America, as well as from North America. They represented the Korean Methodist Church, The United Methodist Church, and the World Methodist Council, as well as the international ecumenical community, including the World Council of Churches.

An "Atlanta Statement" issued at the conclusion of the Roundtable and submitted to the South Korean and United States governments pledged participants to work collectively and within their respective churches to encourage progress toward peace.

The statement specifically urged the United States and the international community to respect Korean self-determination, including supporting a step-by-step approach to achieve denuclearization. As an essential first step toward total peace on the Korean Peninsula, the statement encouraged an immediate and official end of the Korean War by the approval of a formal peace treaty.

Funding for the Roundtable from the Korean Ministry Plan, the Asian American Language Ministry Plan, the Korean Methodist Church, and the World Methodist Council supplemented support from Global Ministries.

In addition to the Roundtable in Atlanta, there have been two previous Roundtables. The Roundtable was initially proposed in 2016 at the World Methodist Conference in Houston, in the hope of engaging in meaningful dialogue for peace in Korea and recognizing the mutu-

al concern and efforts of the Korean Methodist Church, The United Methodist Church, and the World Methodist Council.

Native American and Indigenous Ministries

Global Ministries reinforced its long-standing commitment to Native American and Indigenous Peoples, undergirded by the United Methodist Act of Repentance with Native Peoples. At their annual meeting in October 2018, Global Ministries directors reaffirmed this commitment by holding a series of activities, inaugurated by the board's hosting with Native American leaders a sacred ceremony, welcomed by the Atlanta mayor, at the site of what was once the region's largest Native American community.

Across the quadrennium, additional opportunities motivated further demonstration of commitment:

- The move of the agency's headquarters to Atlanta—where the major league baseball club appropriates images and expressions considered offensive to Native Americans and are opposed by The United Methodist Church—resulted in Global Ministries developing a new working group supporting Native American interests. Activities were developed and launched to improve education about and understanding of Native American history and culture. These activities incorporated information revealing the ways various organizations, when appropriating Native American images and expressions, can negatively shape perception of and behavior toward Native people. Educational outreach was directed in 2018 to Atlanta-area schools, resulting in a teacher training workshop on Native American history and culture for K-12 teachers in one of Georgia's largest school systems. The event addressed the negative effects of Native American sports mascots. In 2019, consultations began with a large regional Christian-based youth development program, which incorporates Native American culture and expressions, reaching more than 14,000 young people. Global Ministries also hosted or organized local events and took public stands in solidarity with Native Americans, including a film screening depicting the current Native American experience in American society. Additionally, dialogue began with curators of city-owned exhibit space about venues where Global Ministries can establish new exhibitions on contemporary Native American identity and experience. Some of the spaces under discussion, for example at the airport, attract more than 250,000 visitors per day.

- UMCOR, through its various programs, assisted 17 unique projects among 10 tribes/nations in seven U.S. states from early 2017 to mid-2019. The total funding for these projects was \$2.28 million, benefiting 35,592 persons. An additional \$1.5 million in grants was committed through the end of 2019.
- The mission bicentennial observance in 2019 gave occasion to celebrate the historical importance of Native American contributions to the formation of the oldest organizational predecessor of Global Ministries, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The society was inspired in large part by the work of an African American lay preacher, John Stewart, among the Wyandotte People of Ohio. As part of the anniversary, a Wyandotte graveyard, left to the mission society in trust when the tribe was expelled from Ohio, was set to be returned to the Wyandotte in September 2019 (see additional information under **II. Highlights**, Bicentennial of Methodist Mission).

Migration

With 70 million migrants, asylees, and refugees on the move and homeless because of natural disasters, wars, poverty, and intolerance around the world, migration grew during the quadrennium as a major concern of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Altogether during the quadrennium, Global Ministries and UMCOR assisted migrants in or from Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Iraq, Jordan, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United States.

The work incorporated a justice- and mercy-based approach to migration, with emphasis on human rights, alleviating human suffering, and addressing the causes of migration in all its forms. The approach seeks to reach the most vulnerable and provide food, water, shelter, clothing, and health care without discrimination, honoring migrants' right to stay, safe passage, welcome, and/or return with dignity.

Supporting this work, a churchwide Global Migration Sunday and offering on December 3, 2017, emerged from an interagency seminar and collaboration between Global Ministries and the United Methodist Immigration Task Force. The Global Migration Advance Fund for migration and refugee ministries (Advance No. 3022144) received more than \$3 million from early 2017 to mid-2019.

Following the 2019 news about children neglected and living in unsanitary conditions in United States government holding facilities along the United States-

Mexico border, UMCOR received many requests to respond. Although the facilities unfortunately prevented UMCOR from responding directly, UMCOR distributed tens of thousands of hygiene kits at nearby transitional shelters. Global Ministries declared June 30, 2019, A Sunday of Solidarity for Suffering Children and asked United Methodists to pray for the children, make UMCOR hygiene kits, contact lawmakers, and give to the Global Migration Advance.

UMCOR also supports National Justice for Our Neighbors (NJFON). The history of UMCOR's commitment includes its role founding NJFON, as well as its continuing role providing leadership on the NJFON board of directors. UMCOR also provides core budgetary funding to NJFON and grants for special projects. Through its twenty affiliates in the United States, NJFON provides free or low-cost immigration legal assistance. In 2019, through the JFON in San Antonio, Texas, UMCOR supported legal assistance in transitional shelters along the border.

Various Global Ministries missionaries are involved in welcoming and assisting migrant populations around the world. Missionary pastors lead multicultural congregations as places of welcome and worship for migrants. Church and Community Workers serve as lawyers in JFON offices. Missionaries with the national and racial/ethnic plan ministries provide welcome in the United States. Some missionaries specifically address the needs of migrants as foreign temporary workers in places such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, providing pastoral care or other kinds of counseling.

Creation Care and Earthkeepers

In support of God's creation, Global Ministries established in the quadrennium a new program to recruit, train, and deploy United Methodists as volunteer Earthkeepers. These individuals recognize the growing urgency of the world's environmental crisis, feel a deep sense of God's call to take bold action, and want to join a broader community of United Methodists engaged in environmental ministries.

The Earthkeepers program has trained two hundred laity and clergy, students, part-time and full-time workers, and retirees since inception in 2017. Training includes classes on eco-theology and strategies for social change. Participants develop a project plan to take back to their communities. Earthkeeper projects range widely: from community gardens, solar campaigns, and water management to curriculum and resource development, church green teams, and fossil fuel infrastructure advocacy campaigns.

Let Them Leave

Through a campaign of prayer, petitioning, and media saturation, Global Ministries, assisted by other United Methodist and ecumenical partners, won the release of three young missionaries prohibited by government from leaving the Philippines in the summer of 2018. "Let Them Leave" garnered via internet petitions more than 18,500 signatures from 110 countries on behalf of missionaries Tawanda Chandiwana of Zimbabwe, Miracle Osman of Malawi, and Adam Shaw of the United States. Chandiwana had been incarcerated for eight weeks, while Osman and Shaw were prohibited from leaving by intentional government visa and passport red tapes. Chandiwana and Osman were Global Mission Fellows while Shaw was a Global Missionary. All three worked on the island of Mindanao and came under surveillance when they took part in February in an international investigation of alleged human rights violations on the island. They and United Methodist leaders in the Philippines denied any wrongdoing.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops, the church's leaders in the Philippines, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and United Methodist Women played major roles in the successful campaign for their release.

Strategic Plan

To guide its leadership in mission across the connection, Global Ministries put in place a Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2021. Consolidating in one place and drawing from other strategic documents and reports regularly submitted to the Connectional Table and other general church bodies, Global Ministries' Strategic Plan describes goals associated with engaging annual conferences and congregations and exploring with them new ways to serve and support their work in mission, as well as other strategic directions.

The Plan also serves well Global Ministries' goals for articulating its work to external audiences, including philanthropic donors interested in supporting the church.

Together, the components of the plan harmonize with the Global Ministries' historical, long-standing mission goals and vision, and demonstrate accountability and responsiveness to the current Four Areas of Focus of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*, and the *Book of Resolutions*.

Concurrently, Global Ministries further strengthened its structures and tools to monitor and evaluate its progress and its commitment to report results regularly to the United Methodist Connectional Table, in its role reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of general agencies.

III. The Advance

Celebrating its 70th anniversary during the quadrennium, the Advance for Christ and His Church is the designated mission giving channel of The United Methodist Church through which donors may direct charitable gifts.

Since 1948, The Advance has gratefully welcomed gifts from individuals and charitable organizations and from United Methodist conferences, districts, and churches. Over time, The Advance has channeled \$1.7 billion to mission. In 2017 and 2018 alone, Advance gifts totaled \$117.9 million, including \$92.3 million for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, for projects in more than one hundred countries. Through the Advance, the immense capacity of The United Methodist Church is evident, illustrating the hope and healing afforded when we are together in mission.

Advance gifts currently provide support for 422 long-standing ministries worldwide. The Advance celebrates how these many commitments vary widely in purpose, goals, and location. Building on this history, with an eye on enhancing how the Advance reflects the church's growing missional priorities worldwide, Advance projects with increasing importance and emphasis include:

- Abundant Health
- Evangelism and Church Growth
- Global Mission Fellows
- Missionaries Around the World
- International Disaster Response and Recovery
- U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery
- Sustainable Development

For United Methodists, giving through The Advance has long represented “second-mile giving,” complementing World Service apportionment dollars. For example, missionaries receive 55 percent of missionary funding through the World Service Fund. To date, Advance giving has made up 16 percent of the funding and ensures the continued training, commissioning, and sending of additional missionaries on behalf of the church. Endowment and other funding sources provide the remaining 29 percent.

Looking toward the future and responding to structural and other changes underway in the church, as well as changes in the mission field, The Advance Committee has begun study of how to make its work more effective and efficient. In an effort to strengthen existing ministries and ensure the support directed through The Advance, studies have included a review of how The Advance's policies can be reshaped to ensure that gifts support the total costs of mission, especially as apportionment dollars are anticipated to decline further in the years ahead.

IV. Areas of Focus

First Area of Focus: Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World

Goals: To deepen the strategic leadership capacity of clergy and laity so that they may have a positive impact on the priority needs of their churches and communities and to enhance their ability to connect disciples to lives engaged in God's mission.

Accentuating the importance of this area of focus, the mission field is always changing. In pursuing its work in this area, Global Ministries continually seeks to strengthen capacity for mission and expand the church's opportunities for mission service.

Selected activities from the quadrennium include:

1. Missionaries

During the quadrennium, 650 persons served as missionaries in 76 countries in roles such as evangelists, church planters, doctors, nurses, social workers, and teachers.

Global Ministries commissioned 75 new Global Missionaries, joining a community of 350 active missionaries serving around the world, including Church and Community Workers, ethnic plan missionaries, and Mission Advocates in the U.S.

Global Ministries commissioned 260 young adults to serve two-year missionary assignments as Global Mission Fellows (ages 20-30). These, plus others whose service overlapped from the previous quadrennium, brought the total number of GMFs to 300 for the four years. The impact of the program extends beyond the two years of active mission service, especially in equipping young leadership for the church. For example, one mission fellow who worked with a health board in Zimbabwe returned home to Nigeria to serve with the United Methodist health board there.

Almost half of all missionaries originated in countries outside the United States, further extending a global demographic trend among missionaries serving The United Methodist Church in the twenty-first century from everywhere to everywhere. Quadrennial regional missionary gatherings allow mission personnel to share with one another and build supportive relationships.

Most U.S.-based missionaries focus on the social injustices of poverty, racism, and domestic violence. Specific roles include nurses in a free health clinic, contractors working with volunteers to provide affordable housing and home repairs, leaders and economic developers, and immigration attorneys.

Additional to missionaries, approximately 300 Nationals in Mission served annually in their home countries with financial support from their communities and Global Ministries. These Nationals in Mission supported emerging, innovative ministries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eurasia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on themes such as evangelism and church growth; advocacy and justice for the poor and oppressed; women, children, and youth; and community development and health care.

2. Leadership Development Scholarships

Supporting students through scholarships not only ensures the future of the church in mission but also strengthens the social and civic communities globally.

During the quadrennium, Global Ministries awarded World Communion Scholarships totaling \$1,310,407, enabling 167 scholarships supporting 89 United Methodist and other students completing master's or doctoral studies at 51 universities or seminaries. Similarly, Global Ministries provided Leadership Development Grants (LDG) totaling \$1,759,170, enabling 326 scholarships supporting 171 students at 91 institutions. The LDG students complete higher and continuing education degree programs at all levels, from certificate and bachelor's degree programs to master's and doctoral studies.

In collaboration with Kenya-based CORAT (Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa), Global Ministries launched a training course on "Project Cycle Management" for project managers from all episcopal areas in Africa. Originating in the 1970s with Anglican encouragement, CORAT today provides capacity enhancement to individuals, churches, and other organizations.

Additionally, Global Ministries celebrated continuation of its long-standing partnership with the Japan-based Asian Rural Institute (ARI). During the quadrennium, seven students from Ghana and Tanzania received Global Ministries support enabling them to receive ARI training, work in agricultural programs in their home countries, and use their new skills to further refine sustainable agriculture globally.

Since fundraising remains crucial for all leadership scholarship and related programs, Global Ministries worked across the quadrennium to reaffirm Methodists' individual philanthropic support for education, including in the Philippines through Harris Memorial College in Rizal. Recalling the nineteenth-century founding support from the Harris family of Chicago, beginning with forebear Norman Wait "N.W." Harris, Global Ministries orchestrated a 2018 reunion between the college and

present-day members of the Harris family who continue to support the institution. Their philanthropic support ensures the college will remain, in the words of current Harris College leadership who participated in the 2018 reunion, "a center for deaconess training and formation not only for the Philippines, but also for Asia."

3. Volunteers

More than 125,000 mission volunteers each year give their time and talent to build churches, other mission facilities, and houses; respond to disasters; participate in community health programs; and take part in leadership training.

This remarkable grassroots movement (collectively UMVIM, or United Methodist Volunteers in Mission) benefits from the leadership of jurisdictional UMVIM coordinators and their network of global volunteer opportunities and the mission expertise of Global Ministries' Mission Volunteer Office.

Volunteers serve in six programs: 1. Short-term teams; 2. Early-response and long-term recovery teams, in partnership with UMCOR conference disaster management coordinators; 3. Long-term mission service for individuals and couples (Mission Volunteers who serve for two months to two years); 4. PrimeTimers, including educational forums, cross-cultural exposure, and spiritual journey renewal; 5. NOMADS (Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service) for individuals and couples with recreational vehicles sharing their gifts, time, and skills; and 6. Health Volunteers, working alongside medical staff to respond to medical challenges and build capacity.

The Mission Volunteer Office (MVO) provides a range of mission volunteer trainings in the United States and has co-led training around the world with partners such as the Korean Methodist Church. Among other activities in the quadrennium, the MVO printed 5,000 additional copies of its popular guidebook, *A Mission Journey: A Handbook for Volunteers*, bringing the total to 10,000 issued in cooperation with Discipleship Ministries and the Upper Room. MVO staff also collaborated with UMCOR to promote among conferences and local churches the range of volunteer opportunities; served ex officio on jurisdictional UMVIM governing boards and on the board of NOMADS; and supported UMVIM teams to Cuba.

4. Mission Roundtables

Mission Roundtables draw together networks of partners engaged in a particular expression of God's mission. They may focus on a geographical area, topic, or enterprise. Global Ministries organized or co-organized

on behalf of The United Methodist Church, autonomous Methodist churches, or ecumenical churches a series of roundtables across the quadrennium: two in Africa, two in Asia, and four in the Americas, including Latin America and the Caribbean.

In several cases, these events included other general program agencies, U.S. annual conferences, and various other UMC entities. For example, in the fall of 2017, Global Ministries co-organized a Mission Roundtable for its host the Baguio Episcopal Area in the Philippines. The Roundtable included participation of leaders from the Greater Northwest Episcopal Area, the Connectional Table, and general agencies including Discipleship Ministries, the General Board of Church and Society, the General Commission on Religion and Race, and United Methodist Communications.

Mission Roundtables emphasize “mutuality in mission” and strategies for capacity building so that local communities can play a leading role in decisions and implementation of mission projects. To encourage vital congregations, the Mission Roundtables of the quadrennium often focused on strategies for enabling local leadership.

The value of Mission Roundtables was affirmed by churches and partners, notably from Latin America, taking part in Global Ministries’ April 2019 Mission Bicentennial Conference in Atlanta. In fact, the roundtable model was pioneered in that region. For two decades, Methodist mission partners in a broad range of Latin American countries have met in periodic roundtables to form multilateral partnerships, strengthening cooperation and networks of churches, and sharing learnings. Their consultations have improved mission outcomes.

To celebrate the success of Mission Roundtables and encourage their expansion as a key strategy for the church in its global regions, Global Ministries compiled an online manual for the planning and conduct of Roundtables.

5. Mission Ambassadors Summit

In December 2018, Global Ministries hosted a Mission Ambassadors Summit for the denomination’s U.S. mission leaders. Two hundred participants representing every United States annual conference took part.

The summit gathered conference disaster response coordinators, conference secretaries of global ministries, and other conference mission staff, as well as health ambassadors, In Mission Together coordinators, and other mission ambassadors and volunteers. The objective was to build stronger connections in mission throughout the church. The program covered “mission across the street and around the world.” It sought to bring clarity to mission priorities, share effective mission strategies, and develop

stronger networking among different groups and partners within annual conferences and jurisdictions.

The summit provided a big picture of United Methodist mission. Participants heard from missionaries and staff who provided first-person accounts of ministries in action. Global Ministries staff members gained a better understanding of their annual conference partners, while conference representatives gained a better understanding of how the agency can serve them more fully.

Second Area of Focus: Starting New Congregations and Renewing Existing Ones

Goals: To plan, establish, and strengthen Christian congregations in areas where opportunities and needs are found, in cooperation with partner churches and conferences.

Recognizing that the church in mission is always being formed and re-formed everywhere, Global Ministries seeks to develop and expand the United Methodist presence through new congregations in diverse places and to strengthen existing churches through more active participation in God’s mission.

Selected activities from the quadrennium include:

1. Mission Initiatives

During the quadrennium, Global Ministries continued to provide guidance to Mission Initiatives in Africa, Asia, Eurasia, and Central America, nine in total, some beginning in the last century and others of more recent origin.

Local, indigenous leadership is pivotal in shaping the vision of each Mission Initiative, as is local-led strategic planning. Systematic evaluation is gradually being introduced in each locale, emphasizing responsibility and accountability. Several initiatives hosted professional evaluation teams from Global Ministries. These teams studied and assessed a range of factors influencing the Mission Initiatives’ status and long-range self-sufficiency. Global Ministries celebrated several Mission Initiatives as they made progress toward new relationships within the global United Methodist connectional structure.

Cambodia Mission Initiative

Global Ministries’ work began in the early 1990s, and in 2018 the Methodist Church in Cambodia (MCC) celebrated its first Provisional Annual Conference. The MCC is an inspiring story of pan-Methodist mission collaboration, creative missionary activity, and indigenous leadership development. The United Methodist mission began when Cambodian refugees became United Methodists in the United States. In 1998, four Cambodian

Americans were deployed as Global Ministries missionaries to Cambodia, joining other Methodist bodies such as the Korean Methodist Church, the World Federation of Chinese Methodists, United Methodists in France/Switzerland, and the Singapore Methodist Church in developing active missions. In 2004, the leadership of these Methodist bodies agreed to join to form one church and mission, working with local representatives in shaping the outreach. The Cambodian Initiative is focused on new church plants, particularly in the provinces of Kratie, Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Steung Treng, and in the capital city of Phnom Penh. Goals of these church starts include the empowering of women to engage in Christian education, ministries with street children and youth, economic development, and community health services. Additionally, the work encompasses microfinance projects through the Community Health and Agricultural Development Program (CHAD), and scholarship programs for children and youth. There are 142 Methodist faith communities with 62 clergy members and 70 active lay leaders. The Rev. Lun Sophy was elected as the first president of the Methodist Church of Cambodia.

Cameroon and Senegal Mission Initiatives

In July 2019, the Côte d'Ivoire Annual Conference approved the Cameroon and Senegal Mission Initiatives as new districts within it. This momentous step attracted celebration throughout the region following many years of hard work by the two initiatives and the communities they serve. The work in each country began in the mid-1990s. At the time of the 2019 transition, the initiative in Senegal had twenty-one parishes and preaching posts. Nine ordained pastors and thirty-one lay preachers oversee the spiritual life of the people. The Cameroon Initiative had twelve churches. In addition to evangelism, major mission projects have covered Christian education, health, prison ministry, literacy, agriculture, and women's activities. Recognizing that mission is everywhere, Cameroon United Methodists have sent three young adults to serve as Global Mission Fellows.

Central African Republic Mission Initiative

This initiative has eight churches in the capital city, Bangui, and three in the city of Bangasou. Places of worship are the greatest need, and growth plans include acquiring land and buildings with funds raised by existing congregations. Global Ministries encourages these efforts and a missionary provides leadership in church planting. Overall, the Central African Republic Mission Initiative faces uncertainties owing to security issues in the country. United Nations forces are in place to help minimize risks;

however, conducting the work of the church remains challenging. Beyond church planting, concerns include agriculture, empowerment of women, and children's well-being. To address these, the initiative has developed a partnership with World Vision, which operates an office in the country.

Honduras Mission Initiative

The Mission Initiative in Honduras, the only United Methodist ecclesiastical body in Latin America and the Caribbean, continues to grow steadily in mission and ministry. Fifteen years since its inception, it includes 21 congregations and 86 small groups with a total approximate membership of 1,871. Mission work in rural and urban areas has focused on community health, ministries with the poor and migrants, youth and children's ministries, and church and leadership development. A notable mission effort, the John Wesley School in Ciudad España offers to 345 children and youth high-level, bilingual education based on Christian values. Previously, there was no secondary education in Ciudad España. Students had to either travel forty-five minutes by bus to Tegucigalpa (oftentimes a dangerous trip) or sacrifice educational opportunities past the seventh grade. This led to teens joining gangs or settling for manual labor. With support of the Council of Bishops, the Mission Initiative is taking the necessary steps toward becoming a Provisional Annual Conference.

Laos Mission Initiative

Laos is one of the least developed countries in Southeast Asia. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. Currently, there are no railroads and just over 2000 kilometers (1,243 miles) of paved highways. This lack of infrastructure makes disaster relief difficult, particularly when there is flooding, which is very common. Two significant problems facing the nation are deforestation and its impact on the environment, and oppression of the minority Hmong population. Global Ministries' work in Laos was built on foundations laid by leaders of Hmong United Methodist churches in the United States. In 2005, a Global Ministries missionary couple was deployed to Laos. Since then, the Mission Initiative has grown steadily, and the church has established a significant presence in eight out of seventeen provinces. There are currently eighty faith communities with fifty-two clergy members and thirty-three active lay leaders. Indigenous lay leaders support the work of various groups such as youth, women, and men. Global Ministries assisted the Mission Initiative in its registration as The United Methodist Church in Laos.

Mongolia Mission Initiative

Global Ministries' Mission Initiative in Mongolia began with a hospice ministry in 2002. Most of the mission activity is concentrated around the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, which is home to two churches that serve as the base for United Methodist ministries in Mongolia. These "center churches" each have a membership of more than two hundred people and serve local communities through various outreach ministries, including after-school programs for children, daycare programs for preschoolers, job training, detention center ministry, and ministry to people on the street. The two center churches have raised local pastors who now serve churches in other areas. Currently there are twenty-six faith communities with seven clergy members and thirteen active lay leaders.

Thailand Mission Initiative

In 2009, the Mission Initiative began social outreach ministries for children with HIV/AIDS in Chiang Mai. The approach to church development in Thailand is that of "center-churches." Compared to the goals set for other countries in Southeast Asia, the scope of the mission initiative in Thailand is small. There are currently five faith communities with three clergy members and five active lay leaders.

Vietnam Mission Initiative

United Methodist mission work in Vietnam began in 2002 with the placement of a missionary couple who had left as refugees years earlier. The United Methodist community grew steadily from the Mekong Delta region south of Ho Chi Minh City to the Central and Northern Highland regions of the country. However, upon retirement at the end of 2018, the missionary pastor organized an independent Methodist group, necessitating the reformulation of the United Methodist Mission, led by a new executive committee of local leaders. Leadership training for the new committee has been carried out in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. There are forty-two active faith communities with twenty-nine clergy members and twenty-three active lay leaders.

2. Racial/Ethnic Local Church Support

From January 2017 through mid-2019, more than 70 Racial/Ethnic Local Church (RELC) grants totaling \$526,525 were made to churches and annual conferences in the United States. The awards cover the four focus areas: 1) leadership development; 2) congregation growth and development; 3) ministry with the poor; and 4) health ministries.

RELC grants provide pastoral support such as at Amigo Ministries; Sterling United Methodist Church, Sterling, Virginia; the Samoan Mission at Medford United Methodist Church in Oregon; and the Kansas City Native American Fellowship; community revitalization such as at New St. James Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and education, such as at Freedom Schools at Grace Church, Dayton, Ohio.

In 2017, the RELC program supported the New Talent Project, a musical leadership and development ministry for youth at Vida Neuva Church, Porterville, California. Another grant that year assisted the community literacy ministry of County Line Church, Ellenwood, Georgia. A grant to First United Methodist Church, Johnson City, Tennessee made possible expanded ministries to growing numbers of multiethnic children and youth.

3. School of Congregational Development

Global Ministries joined with Discipleship Ministries and Path One in sponsoring Schools of Congregational Development (SCD) in 2017 and 2018, premier events for equipping conference leaders, clergy, and laity to lead vital, dynamic, life-changing congregations. The 2017 school was in Atlanta with the North Georgia Annual Conference as co-host, and the 2018 in San Diego with the California-Pacific Annual Conference as co-host.

SCD priorities during the quadrennium included the inclusion of more leaders, both clergy and laypersons, from racial/ethnic, small, and rural churches, acknowledging current denominational demographics. Although ethnic minorities continue growing in number, the denomination counts only 8 percent among its members. Approximately 75 percent of churches in the United States remain small, with memberships of 150 or fewer members.

For the 2017 and 2018 SCDs, the design team adopted intentional steps to make the events more inclusive by offering scholarships within a Racial Ethnic Track and a Small Church Membership Track.

The schools in Atlanta and San Diego together attracted 1,462 participants including those who registered for the SCD's Online Teaching Events produced by GNTV Media Ministry. This consisted of live streaming of the plenary speeches and live online workshops in English and Spanish.

4. Regional Offices

Global Ministries' second regional office opened in March 2017 in Seoul, South Korea. It serves congregations and supports mission collaboration in Asia and the Pacific. (The first regional office opened during the last

quadrennium in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to serve Latin America and the Caribbean.)

The office in Seoul played a significant role in helping form the new Asia Methodist Mission Platform, which promotes the concept and practice of Methodists across the region “doing mission together.” Participants at the first meeting in Hong Kong in June 2018 affirmed that “west to the east” no longer prevails, not only because mission continues to emerge from “everywhere to everywhere,” but also because mission in the region continues to grow as a multi-church, inter-church, indigenous endeavor.

Other activities of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office included:

- Supporting training programs for Global Mission Fellows in Cambodia, Japan, and Korea
- Organizing mission roundtables, including with United Methodist partners, such as those held 2017-2019 in the Philippines in the Baguio and Davao episcopal areas (see additional information below under **VI. United Methodist Committee on Relief**, 1. International Disaster Response)
- Supporting the 2018 Pan-Asian Health Forum in Manila and assisting additional related meetings
- Planning regional missionary enrichment gatherings, including in Siem Reap, Cambodia
- Sponsoring a Global Migration Forum and related migration programs
- Hosting an Inter-Agency Consultation in Asia
- Evaluating the Community Health Agriculture Development (CHAD) program in Cambodia for possible introduction in Laos and Vietnam

The regional office in Buenos Aires, since its opening in the last quadrennium, has strengthened relationships in the Latin American and Caribbean region, particularly with autonomous Methodist churches, ecumenical partners, and grassroots organizations.

In partnership with GBHEM and *El Aposento Alto* (*The Upper Room*), the office facilitated consultations on theological and missionary education for heads of churches, theological advisers, and leaders of theological training institutions, recognizing the special importance of theological formation of pastors in the Methodist theological and doctrinal tradition. Additionally, in cooperation with the World Methodist Evangelism Institute, the office helped coordinate an evangelism seminar, “Jesus, Life to Discover and Share.”

The year 2019 saw a milestone in the history of the Encuentro con Cristo Fund (Encounter with Christ), celebrating the distribution of \$1 million since its founding in 1992.

Other activities included:

- Facilitating mission roundtables in Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela
- Trainings for Volunteers In Mission coordinators and heads of churches, with sites selected for proximity to partners in South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean area
- Coordinating and strengthening Methodist communications in the region, an inter-agency effort including Hispanic/Latino Communications of United Methodist Communications
- Trainings for treasurers and accountants of churches and ecumenical organizations
- Creating and implementing ministries in solidarity and support for migrants
- Developing with church partners policies to protect children and adolescents
- Establishing a Methodist presence and a missionary placement in French Guyana

5. Reconciliation and Reunification in Burundi

Following long-standing encouragement from Global Ministries, two United Methodist groups in Burundi, apart since 2005, held in February 2018 a successful reunification annual conference.

To prepare for the annual conference, representatives of the two groups attended the Comprehensive Africa Task Force meeting of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters in Harare, Zimbabwe, and there declared their intention to reconcile and reunite as one church.

Following the annual conference, the church in Burundi adopted three goals: 1) Double membership from 200,000 to 400,000 over the next five years; 2) Expand areas of service to include health ministries, education, and programs that address food security; and 3) Strengthen structural and operational realities, involving human resources, financial reporting, and institutional accountability.

To assist the Burundian church’s efforts toward doubling membership, Global Ministries in partnership with GBHEM helped establish a new pastors’ school. In 2018, the Burundian United Methodist Church launched the new school emphasizing theological education and formation to help 195 local pastors further strengthen their capacities to establish or grow the church’s congregations. Financial support was provided by Global Ministries, the Burundi Annual Conference, churches and conferences in the United States.

The reconciliation in Burundi stands as a remarkable act of unity for The United Methodist Church. Division occurred following twelve long years of civil war and deep discord in the country after violent coups erupted in 1993 and 1994, igniting civil unrest. As fighting escalated, many fled the country, finding refuge in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, and Rwanda. Tens of thousands lost their lives.

Today, a measure of stability in the country has facilitated the return of a significant portion of the displaced population. At the 2017 Harare meeting, Bishop Gregory Palmer, who chairs the Comprehensive Africa Task Force, said, “There was expression of readiness and overtures of reaching out to one another because, in some cases, people in the same household were aligned to the different groups in the church. The Lord was at work because people in the two groups had been talking, and they said they were 98 percent toward reconciling.”

Third Area of Focus: Engaging in Ministry with the Poor

Goals: To inspire and resource church leaders to deepen their personal spiritual journey through building relationships with the poor; to cross boundaries and build authentic, mutual sustained relationships with people living in poverty; to understand and respond to systems that perpetuate poverty around the world; and to develop appropriate ministries with the poor and marginalized.

Global Ministries works to encourage, accompany, and resource church leaders to deepen their personal journey in Christ by building relationships with the poor, including the elderly, persecuted, unreached, and vulnerable, and with them establish authentic, mutually sustaining relationships.

Selected activities from the quadrennium include:

1. The Church and Agriculture in Africa

Global Ministries facilitated an Africa agriculture summit, “Multiplying the Loaves: The Church and Agriculture in Africa,” in Johannesburg in January 2019, connecting The United Methodist Church and partners in the region. The summit focused on new strategies and projects to help make United Methodist land in Africa more productive, a key goal of the Africa College of Bishops. In addition to bishops and other church leaders, the eighty-plus participants included farm managers and agronomists.

Responding to an Africa College of Bishops call at its 2018 meeting in Accra, Ghana, the summit recognized that Africa has the potential of becoming self-sustaining if it develops its vast land into viable commercial enterpris-

es and large-scale farming projects. Viable commercial farming enterprises bringing new economic and employment opportunities can help ensure empowerment and transformation, as well as food security, for the church and its people.

In his president’s address to the College of Bishops in Accra, Bishop John K. Yambasu noted “the importance of agriculture as a conduit for raising the funds needed to support the various ministries of the church.” Given the opportunity, he said, “The United Methodist Church can lead our nations into providing sufficient food, especially our staples such as rice, cassava, plantains, beans, maize, and meat products to feed our nations’ populations.” He encouraged “every episcopal area to establish robust agricultural development projects in every district within the episcopal area.”

In Johannesburg, the participants interacted with representatives from successful farming ventures such as the Songhai Centre in Benin, Nuru (Kenya), an organization that trains agriculture cooperatives, and the successful Community Health and Agriculture Development program in Cambodia. Agriculture and business experts presented data on the design and evaluation of successful agricultural projects. Report topics also included information on innovations in crop cultivation, ploughing, and fish-farming from United Methodist agriculture projects in Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, and Zambia, and educational opportunities available through Africa University’s agriculture program and extension services. Issues of gender equality and justice in agriculture were also considered.

2. Community Developers Program

Since 1968, the Community Developers Program has had a rich history of advancing the church’s capacity to be in empowering mission through partnerships with the communities where they are located. Historically focused on African American programming, the Community Developers Program now serves all racial/ethnic congregations and communities.

Sites within the Community Developers Program network address community concerns such as lack of affordable housing, health and wellness, school-age academic support, food insecurities, and children and youth development.

During the quadrennium, the Community Developers Program (CDP) recognized that new leaders must be identified and trained for the future and vitality of the program and its goals for community development. Accordingly, action steps were taken to begin a leadership pipeline to create a cadre of lay and clergy community

developers. The CDP office will work directly with annual conferences, the racial/ethnic national plan leaders, general agencies, and external partners to provide focused training opportunities.

The Community Developers Program also took steps toward enhancing how it works directly with annual conferences to identify future potential CDP sites. It is the hope of the CDP Office that through focused programming and partnerships to develop future community developers and sites, the program will continue to expand throughout the United States.

3. Ministry in the Middle East

Global Ministries and the General Board of Church and Society continued to take action during the quadrennium to form a United Methodist Task Force on Israel and Palestine. Additionally, Global Ministries collaborated with partners, including The Methodist Church in Britain and the World Methodist Council, to further the work of the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem, founded by the three partners in 2012. It engages the world Methodist family in Christ's ministry of peace, truth, justice, and mercy among all peoples living in the land, in partnership with the Palestinian Christian community.

Actions of the Task Force, chaired by Bishop Hope Morgan Ward with seventeen representatives from across the connection, included completion of reports by three working groups to help guide actions of the church. The Children and Advocacy Working Group received reports in March 2019 indicating that in Gaza alone 33 percent of children under five suffer anemia, while as many as 13 percent of all children in the region suffer some level of malnutrition. The working group encouraged churches and others engaging in mission trips to include time with partner organizations working with Palestinian children. The Investments Working Group evaluated companies benefiting from United Methodist investment and doing work in Israel and the Palestinian Territories that affect activities defining the lives of people in the region, such as Israeli settlements and military occupation. The group recommended assisting investors in making decisions and assessing business activities contributing to human rights violations. The Pilgrimage Working Group developed tour guidelines, "Come and See: Pilgrimage to Palestine and Israel," building on the General Conference resolution, "Holy Land Tours," to help tour groups, especially from the United States, include exposure to both Palestinian and Israeli faith communities.

In July 2019, the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem received representatives of Global Ministries and its partners who visited to demonstrate concern for the

critical situation of the Palestinian people under military occupation. The "bitter fruits" of the occupation were described by the delegation: "We heard stories of family separation, the denial of basic human rights, inequality of treatment, and the need for the Palestinians to have a voice in the process of governing their own lives and futures. In Gaza, the lack of provision of basic services such as electricity and clean water have reached a point of crisis."

"We have seen the suffering of the indigenous Christian community," the delegation statement said. "We join their call to everyone to act decisively to support nonviolent actions for peace and justice for all—Palestinians and Israelis. We will continue to pray for all people in the region, and to remain there, through our Methodist Liaison Office, in order to walk in solidarity with those of all faiths who seek justice, peace and equal rights through nonviolent actions." The delegation also reasserted the commitment of the three founding partners to retain the Jerusalem office, acknowledging the long-term challenges and needs of the region.

Other actions by the Task Force included meetings with the United States Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) and Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP). The Task Force recommended that United Methodist general agencies continue membership in both groups recognizing their commitment to equal rights for all, international law, nonviolence, and rights of refugees.

Fourth Area of Focus: Improving Health Globally

Goals: To scale up existing programs on community health education; to improve the quality of health care services through church-supported hospitals and clinics; to increase the scope of such programs; and to increase mission service opportunities in health.

Global Ministries promotes abundant health for all with emphasis on life-saving and health-promoting measures to aid the economically vulnerable. This work recognizes how we are called to follow Jesus who was sent so that we all may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10 NRSV).

New Churchwide Campaign—Abundant Health

Following its role in the last quadrennium as the implementing arm of The United Methodist Church's Imagine No Malaria campaign, alongside the communications and fund-raising support of United Methodist Communications, Global Ministries launched at the 2016 Portland General Conference, a new denominational signature health initiative, Abundant Health, with a goal of

reaching one million children with lifesaving interventions by 2020.

The motivation for Abundant Health emerged from a survey of persons in fifty-nine countries. The results identified several top health challenges, including maternal and child health, hunger and nutrition, and access to health care. For all areas, the most vulnerable include underserved, minority, and low-income populations.

The Abundant Health Initiative has reshaped United Methodist health ministries in all regions. Toward the promise of reaching one million children, Global Ministries reported in mid-2019 that 615,605 children had received lifesaving interventions.

Abundant Health responds also to the United Nations' Every Woman Every Child Initiative, which seeks to reach 15 million children by 2020. The United Methodist Church is a major partner in this effort.

Alongside children's health, Abundant Health includes a range of additional ministries including those with pregnant women, mothers, people with disabilities, people suffering with noncommunicable diseases, people with HIV/AIDS, people needing improved access to health care, and students needing scholarships for health training.

Global Ministries' Global Health Unit (GHU) administers the Abundant Health Initiative on behalf of the global church. GHU connects to and accompanies health partners around the world. Local congregations, small faith-based organizations, and other nonprofits form the partnership base for activity in the United States, Latin and Central America, and Asia, while United Methodist Health Boards attached to episcopal areas continue to serve as the primary implementing entities for most programs in sub-Saharan Africa. Health Boards also exist in the Philippines and Peru.

Global Health organizes its work under key programmatic themes. Selected activities from the quadrennium include:

1. Maternal and Newborn Child Health

This work represents a major emphasis of the Abundant Health Initiative. GHU provides grants to help increase access to quality prenatal care; ensure that pregnant women can deliver at well-equipped health facilities with the assistance of skilled birth attendants; offer effective postnatal care; and support careful and close follow-up on young patients. GHU selects countries with the highest maternal and infant mortality rates and where communities and health facilities remain difficult to reach. In countries evidencing severe problems with malnutrition, GHU helps communities establish or expand local sources for

high-protein, high-energy porridge. In other countries, projects include development of mobile, quick-response health clinics via motorbikes. For patients who need an ambulance and transportation to on-site care in an established clinic, grants help pay the costs of the various necessary (and often the only available) modes of transport: bicycle, taxi, or airplane.

2. Obstetric Training

Medical research indicates that the maternal mortality rate following caesarian section in sub-Saharan Africa remains fifty times higher than in developed countries. In response, GHU supports a range of projects, especially those with long-range, lasting impact. For example, in 2019, fourteen surgeons and midwives from United Methodist hospitals in English-speaking Africa attended a training course at Mary Johnston Hospital (Manila) to update their skills. Such trainings promise long-standing positive change over many decades into the future.

3. Substance Abuse Prevention and Recovery

Addiction to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco prevails worldwide in rich and poor countries alike. Drug addiction alone affects 247 million people worldwide. In the United States, opioid abuse takes an average of five lives every hour across the country. To help address these problems, GHU supports programs that focus on prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies for children and youth, adults, and families in vulnerable communities. For example, Healthy Youth USA in Dunwoody, Georgia, USA, provides full and partial scholarships for after-school and summer enrichment programming to students from low-income families. For congregations interested in learning more about and combating substance abuse, GHU provides many resources on the Abundant Health website: <<https://umcabundanthealth.org>>.

4. HIV/AIDS

In 2017 HIV affected about 37 million people, including 1.8 million children, predominantly in low- and middle-income countries or communities. In Africa, where HIV remains especially prevalent, Global Ministries focuses on two areas: 1) preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, with emphasis on protecting newborn babies from HIV infection, by promoting and funding early HIV counseling and testing of pregnant women, including their partners; and 2) reaching adolescents, especially teenage girls, by offering HIV counseling and testing and referral to treatment services. Building awareness in Sierra Leone, one of the areas in Africa experiencing

disproportionately high rates of HIV, staff from the United Methodist General Hospital Kissy on World AIDS Day 2017 joined a march through the capital city, Freetown, to promote awareness about HIV infection especially among young people. Two United Methodist secondary schools paraded with banners, and several testing sites were set up along the way. The mayor of Freetown encouraged people to embrace those living with HIV: “Stigma must stop. When stigma is reduced, there will surely be a reduction in HIV transmission.”

Within the United States, where more than one million are living with HIV, Global Ministries focuses where HIV rates remain high. In the southeast, for example, GHU supports in Atlanta, the epicenter of Georgia’s HIV crisis, organizations such as Lost N Found Youth and Someone Cares, both of which provide HIV counseling and testing for at-risk individuals and those living with HIV.

Global Ministries continues as a member of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee, which plays a vital role in advocacy and awareness inside and outside the church.

5. Malaria and Other Insect-Borne Diseases

Building on Imagine No Malaria, Global Ministries continues to maintain a focus on malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, and continues to reach thousands of people each year through community and facility-based interventions. GHU supports thirteen Imagine No Malaria partners in Africa and supplies more than two hundred health facilities. During the quadrennium, United Methodist Health Boards in Africa received training in ways to keep health facilities supplied with malaria nets, rapid test kits, and medicines. By bus and motorbike, as well as by cell phone and email, health system workers helped communicate patient data and information on medicine stocks. Measuring the work, continually innovating data-collecting tools, and keeping shelves stocked help ensure patients receive effective treatment, especially important for at-risk pregnant women and children under five. In addition to malaria programs, GHU supports the prevention and control of other diseases similarly transmitted by biting insects. In Sri Lanka, Global Health supported a countrywide program to prevent dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease. GHU supplied twelve districts with well covers and larvae-eating fish, significantly reducing dengue fever in the country over the past two years.

6. Better Nutrition

In many countries, fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as clean water and safe places for physical activity, remain unavailable or inaccessible, negatively affecting health

and nutrition. In the U.S., GHU emphasizes programs to encourage both good nutrition and physical activity, such as G.R.O.W. Harrisburg (Growing R Own Wellness) in Augusta, Georgia, USA. The program recognizes that inaccessible healthy foods and grocery stores to provide them contribute to obesity, hypertension, and other chronic illnesses. In places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, and Sierra Leone, GHU supports nutrition projects focused on maternal, newborn, and child health. Community leaders, community health workers, and health facility workers help educate mothers, screen children, and make available nutrient-dense food from local products such as peanuts, soy, and green vegetables.

7. Health Systems Strengthening

To build and expand local capacities for health care, GHU works to strengthen health systems, especially the Health Boards in sub-Saharan Africa. GHU follows the World Health Organization’s Health System Framework, which highlights key areas: service delivery, health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, and financing, leadership and governance. This strengthened infrastructure leads to improved health and equity, access and coverage, quality of care, and health worker patient and community safety. In 2018, GHU provided technical support for 15 health offices in Africa, Peru, and the Philippines, and 299 Methodist health facilities received assistance for essential medications, medical equipment, and staffing. GHU supported the training of 372 health professionals globally and helped revitalize 45 United Methodist mission hospitals and clinics.

8. Local Church Health Ministries

John Wesley advocated preventive care and healthy living. In turn, Methodist churches worldwide have long engaged in ministries that support mind, body, and spirit. GHU encourages churches to build on these traditions and create or expand ministries that promote life-changing interventions appropriate for their communities. A good example is Haywood Street United Methodist Church in Asheville, North Carolina, USA, and its decision to focus on the five hundred homeless people who on any given night had no place to sleep. The church understood homeless individuals are hospitalized more frequently, require longer inpatient stays, and are more likely to be readmitted to the hospital than individuals with housing. A respite center was established to provide a safe place for homeless adults to stay on a short-term basis, after a hospital stay, to continue healing and connect with needed services. In 2018, Haywood Street Respite Center served over two hundred individuals.

9. Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Ministries

In 1992, the General Conference recognized the need for a ministry among those who are deaf, deafened, or deaf/blind. Since that time Global Ministries has provided coordination and administration for several committees, task forces, and international programs working in this arena. Support for grants and resources come through The Advance and other funds. One goal is to expand the network of churches and conferences providing sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, and captioning. One example of this vital work is the Deaf Ministry Boot Camp, an exciting and interactive workshop presented by Deaf & Hard of Hearing Ministries at Mount Pisgah UMC in Johns Creek, Georgia, USA. Participants learn basic sign phrases, share ministry ideas, improve communication access, and consider ways to begin a ministry for the deaf.

10. Disability Ministries

Global Ministries is committed to supporting programs that seek to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Recognizing that there are over 1 billion people in the world living with disabilities, Global Ministries continues to explore ways to expand outreach around the world. GHU has programs in Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Portugal, and Zambia, as well as in several states within the United States, such as Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee, and Virginia. Abundant Health paid tuition fees for disabled children from United Methodist families enrolled in schools in Nigeria and the eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. GHU partners with the Prosthesis Program in Sierra Leone to assist amputees impacted by civil conflict. Another partner is Emory and Henry College's Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Clinics in southwestern Virginia. GHU funded equipment to implement physical and occupational therapy clinics serving uninsured and underinsured residents who face obstacles in affording such services.

Over the years, Global Ministries has provided support to the United Methodist Disability Committee and United Methodist Ministers with Disabilities Committee. GHU has aided in their mission to promote disability awareness and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of the church.

V. Accountability and Stewardship

During the quadrennium, with attention to sound accountability and stewardship, Global Ministries enhanced its strategies and tools supporting Monitoring and Evalu-

ation and Internal Audit. This work ensured that Global Ministries' programs would function cost-effectively and deliver the greatest possible value to the church and its constituents. As the church continues to progress, Global Ministries' relationships with conferences and congregations, as well as other partners worldwide, depend more than ever on efficient, effective, nimble, responsive, and transparent operations and finance.

Global Ministries' Monitoring and Evaluation team built a robust system at the agency level that provides support for all programs within the agency. Agencywide performance indicators were developed. Data are collected on a quarterly basis from all Global Ministries' departments to show departmental performance trends. Analysis generated from the data informs the agency's decisions on resource allocation and strategic programmatic troubleshooting.

The Monitoring and Evaluation team also conducted evaluations of mission programs in fifteen countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, South America, and North America. Ten macro-level and twenty-five micro-level evaluations were conducted. Aligning its work with the general church, Global Ministries' Monitoring and Evaluation team organized its data collection in accord with the Connectional Table's "values for evaluation" and The United Methodist Church's Four Areas of Focus.

Internal Audit, meanwhile, played a crucial role communicating information about data integrity and reporting, accountability, stewardship, and transparency. Internal Audit provides independent assurance that recipients of church funds have the necessary internal controls, governance, and risk management to ensure that they operate effectively. Oversight of the audits is performed by an independent Audit Committee, meeting twice per year. Global Ministries outsourced the auditing activity to BDO LLP, a highly qualified global accounting firm based in London.

By mid-2019, Internal Audit had completed one hundred audits related to programs and projects supported by funds released by Global Ministries totaling approximately \$52 million. Training workshops were held in six countries with seventy-three participants, including treasurers and accountants from forty-three countries or regions, in order to enhance the capacity of the conferences' treasuries.

VI. United Methodist Committee on Relief

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is the means through which United Methodists collectively pray, act, and give for the relief of suffering without regard to religion, race, nationality, gender, or sexual

orientation. Founded in 1940 to care for war refugees in Asia and Europe, the agency has grown to include ministries responding to persons, families, and communities affected by armed conflict, climate change, homelessness, intolerance, migration, and natural disasters. It also provides support for numerous global health ministries and projects addressing poverty (see additional information under **IV. Areas of Focus**, Third Area of Focus and Fourth Area of Focus).

UMCOR administers its work through four program areas: International Disaster Response, United States Disaster Response, Sustainable Development, and Global Migration. Work with migrants is the oldest component of UMCOR (see additional information under **II. Highlights**, Migration). Earthkeepers is a new UMCOR program developed during the quadrennium, as a part of the church's ongoing commitment to the care of God's creation. The objective is to recruit, train, and deploy United Methodists as volunteers with a deep sense of God's call to engage in environmental ministries (see additional information under **IV. Areas of Focus**, First Area of Focus).

UMCOR has a small administrative staff. For work in the United States and its territories, the UMCOR staff coordinates and depends on a network of annual conference-based volunteers trained in disaster response and on grant partners. Outside the United States, the staff coordinates with partners and an emerging cohort of disaster management coordinators.

Selected activities from the quadrennium include:

1. International Disaster Response

From the start of 2017 through mid-2019, UMCOR's International Disaster Response team made grants totaling \$17.2 million. These grants supported:

- Storm recovery in Africa, including Cyclone Dineo in Mozambique in 2017 and Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi in 2019 (Cyclone Idai was one of the worst storms on record in Africa and the Southern Hemisphere)
- Cyclone recovery in the Philippines
- Assistance to families displaced by conflict in Ukraine
- Land mine clearance in Laos, Lebanon, and the Nineveh region of Iraq
- Shelter provisions in conflicted areas of Iraq
- Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh
- Earthquake relief in Ecuador
- Flood recovery in Bangladesh and Côte d'Ivoire
- Syrian refugee services in Lebanon

- Water "harvesting" technology in conflict-torn Yemen
- Emergency protection measures in war-torn South Sudan
- Drought relief in Somaliland

The team also expanded the cohort of Disaster Management Coordinators (DMC) in international relief. DMCs operate through the episcopal areas of central conferences.

Two episcopal areas in the Philippines—Manila and Davao—completed by mid-2019 phase three of their DMC preparations, having carried out district assessments and sensitization of church leaders and members; disaster management volunteer identification; selection, training, and implementation of community-based contingency planning workshops in identified and prioritized high-risk communities; and short-listing and project design of potential mitigation projects.

All five episcopal areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique were in phase one in mid-2019. The first in-person DMC orientation event was in November 2017 with a second in June 2019. The first group of eight DMCs includes six men and two women.

2. United States Disaster Response

From the start of 2017 through mid-2019, UMCOR's United States Disaster Response team made grants in the United States and Puerto Rico totaling \$49.4 million. Major grants supported:

- Hurricane and tropical storm recovery—immediate and long term—in the following annual conferences: Alabama-West Florida (2019), Florida (2017, 2018), Louisiana (2017, 2018), North Carolina (2017, 2019), Rio Texas (2017, 2018), South Carolina (2017, 2019), South Georgia (2019), Texas (2017, 2018), and Virginia (2017) in response to Hurricanes and Storms Matthew, Bonnie, and Hermine in 2016; Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in 2017; and Hurricanes Florence and Michael in 2018
- Hurricane recovery—immediate and long term—in Puerto Rico in response to Hurricane Maria (see below)
- Flood damage in the Louisiana (2017), Mississippi (2018), Rio Texas (2018), West Virginia (2018), and Wisconsin annual conferences (see below)
- Tornado recovery in Mississippi (2017, 2018) and Arkansas (2018)

- Recovery from Spring 2019 blizzards on the Pine Ridge Lakota Reservation in South Dakota
- The work of Church World Service responding to the refugee crisis
- National Justice for Our Neighbors, an UMCOR-initiated, separately incorporated network of legal clinics for migrants in the United States
- Response to wildfires in California, notably in 2018 when more than 1.8 million acres burned in California because of 8,054 wildfires, according to news reports

Following Hurricane Maria's devastation of Puerto Rico, UMCOR in the spring of 2018 allocated more than \$15 million received from donors to support recovery on the island and \$1 million to rebuild and equip churches, working in partnership with the autonomous Methodist Church of Puerto Rico, with which the denomination has a special relationship. A year later, the agency gave an additional \$1 million to the church restoration effort.

In response to storm and flood damage in the Upper Midwest United States, UMCOR approved \$1 million in 2019 to the Winding River United Methodist Church in Juneau County, Wisconsin, to bolster its leadership in long-term storm recovery in the area.

Gifts and grant-making made possible by donations kept pace with the increase in the numbers, scope, and scale of disasters in the United States and its territories during the quadrennium. In addition, UMCOR worked with its partners to further strengthen their capacities for accountability.

Part of UMCOR's commitment is to prepare United Methodists in the United States to respond to disasters. Toward that objective, UMCOR:

- Revised and made available through the connection and beyond the "Connecting Neighbors: A Ready Congregations Curriculum of The United Methodist Church"
- Provided opportunities for members to engage in disaster ministries such that more than 13,000 volunteers are currently listed as Early Response Team members (this program was successfully centralized for training, online background checks, and badging)
- Equipped people of The United Methodist Church and their partners to alleviate human suffering, with an emphasis on long-term recovery

3. Sustainable Development

UMCOR's Sustainable Development program complements and extends its work in disaster relief, especially

with regard for communities seeking to strengthen agriculture and food security and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The work is conducted in collaboration "with" those whom it affects, multiplying their assets and fulfilling their aspirations. Most often, the people and communities involved exist on the economic margins. Accordingly, Sustainable Development aligns with The United Methodist Church focus on Ministry with the Poor (see additional information under **IV. Areas of Focus**, Third Area of Focus).

Examples of Sustainable Development ministries receiving support during the quadrennium include:

- Food production and market access education programs at historic Cambine Mission in Mozambique
- Cassava cultivation by the development agency of the Côte d'Ivoire Conference
- Food production and family security in three villages on La Gonav Island, a part of Haiti, in partnership with Beyond Borders, a nonprofit organization that helps people build movements to liberate themselves from oppression and isolation
- Women's economic empowerment in Haiti in partnership with Prosperity Catalyst, which develops and strengthens women-led businesses in distressed regions
- Food security for small-scale olive farmers in Gaza in collaboration with the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association
- Suicide reduction and recovery among farmers in India's Maharashtra state, a serious problem being addressed by CASA, the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action, an Indian ecumenical agency
- Agricultural start-up projects in several annual conferences or episcopal areas as follow up to the Africa agriculture summit, "Multiplying the Loaves: The Church and Agriculture in Africa," held in Johannesburg in January 2019 (see additional information under **IV. Areas of Focus**, Third Area of Focus)
- Village savings and loan project in Tanzania

The WASH program made forty-four grants totaling \$4.54 million to projects in twenty-five countries with 605,705 beneficiaries from the start of 2017 to mid-2019. Projects included:

- Pure Water for the World, a community project in Darbonne, Leogane
- Assessment of water and sanitation infrastructure damages on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota
- Rongai Clean Water Project in Kenya

- Ganta Mission Station Hospital in Liberia
- Clean water programs in Ecuador through Engineers in Action
- Clean water development in Côte d'Ivoire

A grant of \$943,057 went to the National Tribal Water Center for the Newtok-Metarvik Community WASH Relocation Project, which is moving the entire southwest Alaska village of Newtok to the new site of Mertarvik, nine miles downriver on Nelson Island. In the planning for years, the relocation will preserve the sustainability and safety of the community, which is at risk owing to frequent storm erosion. The National Tribal Water Center helps develop capacity so that services are safe and properly operated to inspire the confidence of the community and provide maximum health benefits.

The objectives of WASH include: the provision of improved water infrastructure and sanitation facilities available year-round, eradication of open-defecation, education for schools and their surrounding communities, menstrual hygiene management and gender inclusion, cholera mitigation (conforming to the World Health Organization's Global Roadmap to 2030), investment in new technologies and baseline research, human rights to water and sanitation, and respect for the sacred beliefs and sovereign water rights of Native and Indigenous Peoples.

4. Global Migration

UMCOR has been assisting displaced persons since its inception in 1940. UMCOR further emphasized its work in this area during the period 2017-2019. Grants supporting displaced persons, made possible by gifts to the Global Migration Advance, increased dramatically during the quadrennium (see additional information under **II. Highlights, Migration**).

In addition to grantmaking, UMCOR works intentionally at collaborating with a variety of international

and ecumenical agencies, so that real and lasting change may be made to migration policies on a global scale. UMCOR's goal is that migration policies become universally dignified, transparent, and predictable. Migration will always be with us, but how governments and humanitarian organizations work with this phenomenon influences the decisions of humanitarian assistance agencies and collective goals for avoiding death and suffering.

5. Relief Supplies

UMCOR distributed large quantities of relief supplies from 2016 to the second quarter of 2019 to recipients throughout the world. Such supplies included hygiene, school, layette, sewing, bedding, birthing kits, and cleaning buckets. During that time, 1,017,286 kits were distributed in the United States and to countries including Haiti, Lebanon, Syria, and Ukraine. The kits were valued at \$21,155,966 million. A total of 13,019 volunteers served as the hands and feet of Christ at UMCOR depots, and their 326,547 hours of time were valued at \$5,547,063.

Beginning in January 2018, UMCOR began distributing hygiene and school kits and cleaning buckets only in the United States. While there has been long-standing support for shipping these items internationally to communities in crisis, UMCOR and its global partners recognized:

- There are faster, more effective ways to respond to disasters than international shipping
- Grants are the most effective way to quickly support places in acute need during a crisis
- Purchase of kit items locally helps stimulate the economy
- Using funds locally helps increase employment
- Providing funds for local purchases helps ensure that items are culturally appropriate

Quadrennial Report of the Asian American Language Ministry Plan of the General Board of Global Ministries

The 1996 General Conference authorized the creation of the Asian American Language Ministry (AALM) Study, which in turn became the body that led the development of resources for ministry with twelve different Asian American communities in the United States. Successive General Conferences maintained the support for this work, and the group adapted to include the significant populations of Asian Americans migrating and settling in communities across the country. AALM's ministry is especially important today because the Asian community has the fastest growth rate of all racial or ethnic groups, according to a 2017 Pew Research Study. This same study projected that by 2055, Asian Americans will become the largest immigrant group, surpassing Hispanics. The twelve ethnic subgroups who have been officially recognized by the Asian American Language Ministry committee over this past quadrennium are: Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Formosan, Hmong, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Lao/Thai, Middle East, Pakistani, and Vietnamese. There are two emerging Asian groups: Karenni and Mongolian.

The formal mission statement of the Asian American Language Ministry continues to be in line with the denomination's mission statement and contextualized for the focus of AALM's work. The mission statement is:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in a cultural and sensitive language relevant to the Asian American social context.

AALM submitted a strategy with specific benchmarks in the Four Areas of Focus in 2016 to General Conference. Below is a snapshot of the results of the work over the last quadrennium. Unfortunately, AALM has had a series of sizable staff transitions in this last quadrennium. This has greatly hampered AALM's ability to spend down some of the funding. However most of the reserves are earmarked toward well-deserved projects, many of which promise to make disciples of Christ and start new churches. The table below reflects a glimpse of what the Asian American communities in the U.S. look like and how each sub-ethnic group is engaged.

Sub-Ethnic Groups	U.S. Population (mostly from 2010 Census)	# of UMC Churches	# New Church Starts	# of Ldr Training Activities	# of Grants Received	Primary Annual Conference Partnerships
Cambodian	276,667	1	8	6	7	Cal-Pac, Cal-Nev
Chinese	3,347,229	30	2	3	5	Cal-Pac, Cal-Nev
Filipino	2,555,923	37	1	3	4	Multiple
Formosan	193,642	2	0	0	0	N/A
Hmong	260,073	16	6	3	9	Cal-Nev
Indian	2,843,391	3	1	0	1	N. Illinois
Japanese	763,325	28	0	1	1	Cal-Pac
Korean	1,548,449	275	0	0	0	N/A
Lao/Thai	437,639	5	2	2	4	Upper New York
Middle East	3,437,512	10	1	1	2	N. Illinois
Pakistani	363,699	1	1	0	0	N/A
Vietnamese	1,548,449	21	18	6	24	Multiple
Pan-Asian	UNK	UNK	2	4	6	Multiple

2016-2019 Objectives and Results

Leadership Development

AALM set three particular objectives in this area of focus:

1. Training and recruiting clergy and lay leadership by identifying, recruiting, and cultivating people who can offer pastoral leadership and community organization.
2. Develop youth leadership by identifying, recruiting, and encouraging young leaders on a regular basis.
3. Develop young adult leadership by reaching out to them with programs and mission opportunities that are aimed at encouraging them to contribute to the church.

To date AALM has held thirty-nine training sessions for clergy and lay leadership, distributed over \$50,000 in youth development programs, including sending a group of Asian American high school students to the Duke Youth Academy for spiritual formation and development. In addition to those accomplishments, over two hundred young adults were reached through leadership development and training activities supported by the sub-ethnic caucus groups. AALM also joined the other five plans in hosting the first multiethnic Young Adult Leadership Gathering in Chicago, Illinois, in the summer of 2019.

Church Growth

AALM focused on two objectives in this area of focus:

1. Develop new and existing language ministries through partnering with annual conferences to see the larger picture and realize the importance of ministries among Asian Americans to assist with resources (financial, human, technical, and so on) for a fruitful and productive ministry.
2. Develop multiracial, next generation ministries by directly assisting in the development of several new intentional multiracial/cultural, next generation church starts.

AALM was able to help launch forty-two new faith communities in the quadrennium, partnering with annual conferences and sub-ethnic caucuses to reach this goal. We also supported the planting of three innovative experiments seeking to reach multiracial, next generation ministries. We are still gathering the information from these

experiments and hope they can be used to continue to develop new church start models for the Asian American community.

Ministry with the Poor

Following the four areas of focus that were relevant to the work of AALM, the objective in this area was to:

1. Develop community outreach ministries by partnering with districts and annual conferences in responding to ministry with the poor in their respective Asian American areas.

This was one area where we have not had much success. Two grants were disbursed in 2017-2018. AALM would like to help sub-ethnic communities and annual conferences understand more about these resources by offering training, information, and accompaniment opportunities for churches starting or developing community outreach ministries.

Language Resources

Because many of the newer sub-ethnic groups have English as a second language, resources in native languages are particularly important as we seek to accompany disciples on their faith journey. This objective continues to be critical for the mission.

1. Develop relevant resources, culturally sensitive written materials, and audiovisual resources that are needed for particular Asian language groups.

In total, we offered \$63,000 between 2016-2018 in grants to several sub-ethnic groups requesting support for the development of culturally sensitive and relevant resources for these Asian American communities. The languages in which resources were translated include: Lao, Karenni, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, Hindi, and Urdu. Three out of the six languages had documents developed. There is still a need for resources translated in Cambodian, Chinese, and Hmong in the near future.

2021-2024 AALM Goals and Organizational Structure— Total Budget: \$1,210,000

Leadership Development

AALM financial resources supplement opportunities for Leadership Development amongst the sub-ethnic groups, by collaborating, connecting, and engaging with

other partners like annual conferences, caucuses, and local churches to expand the reach of churches serving these communities. The Asian American Language Ministry Plan will continue to develop principled Christian United Methodist leaders by focusing on specific measurable goals between 2021 and 2024. The goals are:

1. Train and recruit clergy by identifying, recruiting, and cultivating people who can offer pastoral leadership and community organization.

Output Indicators:

Currently there are 1,426 Asian American clergy in The UMC. This number has stayed relatively stagnant since 2011 while the Asian American membership in The United Methodist Church has grown tremendously. Through partnership with each of the twelve sub-ethnic Asian American communities, we would like to increase the number of trained clergy by offering the following:

- ten scholarships for seminary training;
- ten sub-ethnic clergy training grants; and
- five community development training grants in collaboration with Community Developers Program (CDP) at GBGM. These could include 50 percent matching grants with CDP.

2. Develop new lay leaders and strengthen existing leadership through lay leadership development and training.

Output Indicators:

- ten lay leadership development: trainings, programs, and grants

3. Develop youth leadership by identifying, recruiting, and encouraging young leaders on a regular basis. We will support sub-ethnic group youth events aimed at educating, strengthening, and sustaining mission and ministry that is culturally relevant for first and second generation youth.

Output Indicators:

- ten grants offered for sub-ethnic youth events/activities with intentional training opportunities;
- eleven sub-ethnic groups hosting these youth events/activities;
- two hundred fifty youth participants between twelve and eighteen years of age participating in these youth events/activities.

4. Develop young adult leadership by reaching out to them with programs and mission opportunities that are

aimed at encouraging them to contribute to the church through leadership development and mission service.

Output Indicators:

- ten leadership development programs/trainings offered by AALM and/or sub-ethnic groups aimed at reaching young adults (eighteen to thirty years of age);
- two hundred young adult participants reached through these programs/trainings

Church Growth

New Places for Worship & Revitalizing Existing Congregations

AALM will continue to resource annual conferences by partnering with them as they identify areas with the greatest potential for reaching underserved Asian American populations within their boundaries. Since annual conferences are the primary body of the connection, AALM plans to work collaboratively with other program agencies, the five other ethnic plans, and the annual conference cabinets to strengthen and enhance the annual conferences' strategy to bring resources together to reach these underserved Asian American communities. The goal for 2021-2024 in this area of focus will be to:

1. Accompany U.S. annual conferences in developing a strategy for strengthening and enhancing Asian American Ministries.

Output Indicators:

- ten annual conferences will develop a strategy in Asian American ministries;
- two hundred Asian American participants in these trainings;
- five consultants deployed to the annual conferences;
- twenty seed grants contributing to annual conference strategy for increasing churches serving Asian American communities.

2. Develop a cadre of leaders, at least two to three per sub-ethnic group, trained in equipping, supporting, and strengthening the work annual conferences are doing in growing churches and revitalizing churches in densely populated Asian American communities.

Output Indicators:

- thirty leaders participating in conference strategist trainings and committed to being available as a conference strategist;
- six trainings offered for conference strategist (at least one per year);
- ten annual conferences using conference strategist and AALM constituents for reaching sub-ethnic communities.

Ministry with the Poor

One of the key areas of need in engaging with Asian American communities is accompanying first-generation migrants as they move to U.S. cities throughout the country. According to the 2010 census, U.S. residents who identified as Asian grew by 43 percent between 2000 and 2010. With the population changes already shifting, the census predicts that nearly 40.6 million Americans will identify themselves as Asian or of Asian descent. Churches who seek to accompany Asian American communities will need to look at a holistic approach for changing people's lives and through them, transforming the world.

1. The primary goal in this area of focus for AALM over the next quadrennium will be to accompany local churches serving these communities well by working strategically with their annual conferences and collaborating with GBCS and GCORR. The output indicators that will help us measure our progress in this area are below.

Output Indicators:

- twelve churches assisted in developing programs addressing racial justice concerns including immigration, job-skill development, and so on, through trainings, programs, and grants;
- ten trainings supported by AALM grants in areas of justice, equity, peace, and outreach;
- two hundred participants in trainings;
- ten trainings aimed at developing family care support programs through annual conferences for local church ministries in Asian American populations. (Specific targeted populations include elderly women and young, single mothers.)

Language Resources and Materials

Although many Asian American immigrants and migrants have learned English in the U.S. and their second and third generation children have mastered English as a second language, many first-generation migrants still prefer to worship in their native languages. If we are to

accompany these communities well, The United Methodist Church cannot neglect their role and responsibility in providing discipleship and worship materials that are culturally and contextually relevant for these communities. We hope to partner with Discipleship Ministries and UMCOM to translate specific United Methodist resources so that Asian American churches can use them to educate new community members and youth about The United Methodist Church's core values and beliefs.

1. The goal for equipping and educating Asian American communities through Christian education and evangelism for this quadrennium will be to translate *The United Methodist Church Handbook* into a total of ten different Asian languages before 2024.

Output Indicators:

- completed translations for *UMC Handbook* into: Chinese/Formosan, Cambodian, Gujarat, Vietnamese; and an additional six Asian languages;
- *UMC Handbook* translated and 1,250 printed copies distributed to these communities;
- Additional Languages—*UMC Handbook* translated into a total of ten different languages, accessed and downloaded from the website.

2. The second goal for this area of focus will be to develop a video in partnership with UMCOM aimed at equipping youth from Asian American communities on what it means to be a United Methodist Christian.

Output Indicators:

- Completed two-to-three-minute video or video series about being a United Methodist;
- ten events/activities where video is shared;
- six hundred participants at events/activities where video is shared.

Unified Plans Collaborative Programs

In an effort to continue to strengthen and enhance the collaborative efforts across all six racial/ethnic plans, we will set aside 5 percent of the programmatic budget to create and develop activities and programs that are planned across all six racial/ethnic plans.

Structures and Resources***General Agencies Partnership***

AALM will continue to be administratively located within Global Ministries. The agency will provide AALM with:

- staff support, staff evaluation, and supervision;
- administrative support and oversight through personnel policies, financial accountability processes, financial policies, and other administrative policies adopted by the Global Ministries Board of Directors;
- avenue for representing AALM's work to General Conference through reports and legislation.

This collaborative relationship allows the AALM committee to focus their time and energy on programmatic matters related to the mission of AALM.

AALM will continue to work collaboratively with the other general agencies and invite the three other program boards to the committee meetings in order to connect, collaborate, and even align work geared toward reaching Asian American communities in the U.S.

AALM Staff

A full-time executive staff member will be assigned to the AALM committee. The AALM staff will be accountable to the AALM committee for all programmatic work of AALM. As noted above, all other administrative accountabilities will come under the HR hiring, evaluating, and releasing policies and procedures of Global Ministries. The funding for the staff members of AALM will be out of the AALM budget.

Committee Members Organization

Each member of the Committee on Asian American Language Ministry is to establish and maintain regular two-way communication with the constituencies they represent, and this shall include at least one annual written report to such constituencies.

AALM Committee Members	#	SOURCE OF FUND
Council of Bishops	1	Council of Bishops
NFAAUM Caucus Chair	1	AALM
12 – Sub-ethnic Caucus Representatives (Chair of each caucus + 1 additional clergy/lay—depending on status of the chair)	24	AALM
Young Adult	1	AALM
Youth	1	AALM
Agency Staff Resource Persons (Voice/No Vote): GBGM, GBOD, GBHEM, GBSC, UMCOR	5	Paid by Agency
AALM Staff (Program Manager/Program Assistant [Voice/No Vote])	2	AALM
Total Voting Members:	28	
Total Members:	35	

Functions and Responsibilities

The Plan recommends that the committee be charged:

1. To determine direction of programmatic ministry as reported and supported by General Conference.
2. To lead the church in the development of guidelines for grants and programs for Asian American ministries with the general agencies, seminaries, annual conferences, training centers, and others responsible for implementing components of the Plan.
3. To coordinate responses to the Plan of all the general agencies and annual conferences and facilitate interagency collaboration.
4. To undertake program initiatives in response to identified needs in collaboration with the general program agencies, seminaries, training centers, and annual conferences, and to provide final approval of the distribution of grant funds allocated to the AALM.
5. To promote and support the necessary ongoing research on issues affecting Asian American communities and the mission of The United Methodist Church in these communities as a base for the implementation of programs.
6. To monitor and assist in the evaluation of programs in Asian American Ministries by the general agencies and annual conferences.
7. To have a representative in the UM Immigration Task Force.
8. To make a written report to the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Report on the Korean Ministry Plan: Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Koreans

“Our vision is to integrate Wesleyan tradition and Korean spirituality to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

The Korean Ministry Plan, entitled, “Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Korean Americans,” represents the first comprehensive nationwide mission initiative of The United Methodist Church to develop and vitalize Korean American ministries in North America. After a comprehensive four-year study on the issues, needs, and mission opportunities of the Korean American United Methodist community, the 2000 General Conference enthusiastically approved what was initially called the Korean American National Plan, as did consecutive General Conferences of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. During the last quadrennium, the name was changed to the Korean Ministry Plan: Advancing United Methodist Ministries Among Koreans. For the coming quadrennium, it is expected that the Plan will continue to reflect the global nature of The United Methodist Church and its ministry.

“The growth of Korean American United Methodist churches means growth for the whole United Methodist Church!” This statement expresses the core spirit of the Korean Ministry Plan. The Plan’s intention is that the Korean churches and ministries will be active and integral parts of the connectional life of The United Methodist Church and will make important contributions to the life, mission, and ministry of the entire denomination for the glory of God.

The Korean Ministry Plan for the 2017-2020 quadrennium aimed to create, nurture, and enable communities of faith in disciple-making ministries, to build bridges in cross-cultural/racial and cross-generational ministries, and to be agents of social justice in the global context. Pursuit of this vision focused on five main areas:

- Congregational Development and New Church Starts
- Leadership Formation
- Next Generation Ministries
- Justice-related Ministries
- International Missions

I. Korean Ministry Plan for 2017-2020:

Achievements of the Current Quadrennium

Based on these five vision areas, the following specific ministries were implemented during the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

A. Congregational Development and New Church Starts

In the early years of the Plan, much of the energy and resources were focused on planting new congregations and enabling the existing mission congregations to become self-supporting. In the last quadrennium there was a shift not only to revitalization and congregational development, but to launching a number of restart projects through the implementation of effective ministry strategies. The Plan, however, continued to promote and assist new church starts. During the quadrennium it:

1. Developed fourteen new Korean-language churches in full partnership with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean mission directors/superintendents, and local Korean UMC congregations with the goal of becoming chartered and self-supporting in the subsequent three to five years.
2. Nurtured both existing and recently launched mission churches to grow in their life and mission.
3. Continued implementation of the \$1 million “Matching Fund Campaign” among Korean American United Methodist congregations for new church starts.
4. Collaborated with the “Nehemiah Campaign” of the Korean Association of The UMC.

B. Leadership Formation

The Korean United Methodist Church realizes that leadership formation for clergy and laity is a vital part of a congregation’s sustainability and growth. However, leadership formation needs to be broad in scope since the leadership of the Korean Ministry has become increasingly diverse in terms of age, ethnic make-up, background, leadership style, and cultural orientation. In this quadrennium, there has also been a gradual shift from focusing on “revival and growth” in leadership training to “spirituality and the healthy church.” Listed below are goals implemented in leadership formation:

1. Continued to implement a comprehensive small-group leader training module for pastors and laity, utilizing the Korean language resource, “Longing to Meet You,” and further utilized this resource in collaboration with the School for Congregational Development.

2. Created a task force on “confliction transformation” in collaboration with regional Korean caucus for twelve regional training events.
3. Launched three “Korean Academy of Spiritual Formation” programs in collaboration with the Upper Room of Discipleship Ministries (formerly GBOD).
4. Supported leadership development for Korean clergy, including clergywomen, serving in cross-cultural/racial appointments. A key program for this is ‘Madang.’
5. Supported future next generation clergy by offering a “United Methodist Seminarians and Ministerial Candidates Information and Mentoring Session” in partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

C. Next Generation Ministries

Ministries serving second- and third-generation Korean Americans require new strategies for reaching out to an immigrant community that continues to diversify in age, culture, and ethnicity (through interracial marriages). The Korean Ministry Plan provides critical support in recruiting and developing new church leaders—clergy and laity—from the community. In this regard, the following strategies were effectively implemented:

1. Developed six new English-language congregations in full partnership with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean mission directors/superintendents, and local Korean congregations.
2. Supported fully the Nexus, a new Next Generation caucus, for Korean American English-speaking clergy, laity, and missionaries.
3. Strengthened leadership development through the Korean American United Methodist Youth Initiative, College Initiative, and the Children’s Ministry Initiative.
4. Utilized the English edition of the small-group training resource, “Longing to Meet You,” organized training events in English for Next Generation clergy and laity.

D. Justice-related Ministries

The Plan enlarged its areas of focus to include justice ministry. In the current quadrennium, it provided support for changes in immigration policy, recognizing the needs of the immigrant community and their struggles. The Plan was also active in efforts for peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula. It supported and helped organize an

international peace conference for the Korean peninsula hosted by the General Board of Global Ministries.

E. International Missions: Global Partnerships

The Korean Ministry Plan worked to develop new partnerships with central conferences, autonomous Methodist denominations, and other global organizations. In particular, the Plan collaborated with Global Ministries and the Korean Association of The UMC in a mission project in Japan and Mongolia. A team visited these countries to train clergy and laity in small-group ministry utilizing the English edition of “Longing to Meet You.” A similar project focused on the Korean diaspora in Europe.

II. Korean Ministry Plan Goals for 2021-2024:

The United Methodist Council on Korean Ministries

Across the past quadrennia, the Korean American National Plan faithfully served The United Methodist Church in strengthening Korean American ministries. Now, Korean ministries are important and influential not only in the national church, but also globally, a fact reflected in the change of the name to “Korean Ministry Plan.”

The Korean Ministry Plan goals for 2017-2020 reflect three of the four focus areas of The United Methodist Church: leadership development, congregational development, and ministry with the poor. Following are eight specific goals of the Plan for the next quadrennium.

III. Focus Area: Leadership Formation

Leadership formation of clergy and laity is a vital part of the church’s sustainability and growth. The objective is to identify, recruit, and train both current and upcoming leaders. National and regional clergy and lay leadership training events and projects are supported by direct funding and leadership resources, in addition to collaboration with various ministry groups in the national Korean American community and general program agencies.

Goal 1: Next Generation Ministries

To build, support, and strengthen the leadership capacity of the Next Generation Ministries; to be achieved through the support and nurture of:

1. The Youth Initiative (YI) — a national leadership conference for Korean American United Methodist youth, the training of campus ministers and college leaders through the College Initiative

(CI), and training of children's ministry pastors and teachers through the Children's Ministry Initiative (CMI).

2. The Nexus Ministry and the Nexus Internship Program, a national coordinating caucus for Next Generation clergy and laity, which also administers the internship program for college students and seminarians.
3. National and regional network groups for the Next Generation pastors and seminarians, as well as campus ministries such as the Flagship Next Generation Churches Project.

Goal 2: Effective Leadership for Clergy and Laity

To nurture effective clergy and laity leadership through existing national networks, to be achieved by:

1. Further development of training for clergywomen and clergy serving in cross-racial appointments (National Association of Korean American United Methodist Clergywomen and National Association of Korean American United Methodist Pastors Serving Cross-Racial Appointments) and implementation of mentoring/coaching programs for such newly ordained pastors.
2. Development of Korean female lay leadership through collaboration with the National Network of Korean United Methodist Women.

Goal 3: Transformational Leadership

To develop effective leadership in the Korean church through clergy and laity leadership training programs that nurture spiritual growth and enable healthy church development, including:

1. An effective mentoring/coaching program for young Korean pastors and new mission congregations.
2. A "Conflict Transformation" training course to encourage ministries of reconciliation.
3. An "Academy for Spiritual Formation" in partnership with the Upper Room.

IV. Focus Area: Congregational Development

The primary focus of this area is to launch new viable congregations and nurture them to become self-sustaining churches, which are key signs of a vital congregation. A new strategy of church "restarts" will continue to help

to spur new growth in existing congregations, and small-group ministries will be encouraged.

Goal 4: Plant New Korean-speaking Congregations

To plant twelve (12) new (and restart) Korean Ministry congregations that will become sustaining within three to five years, relying on:

1. Partnerships with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean mission directors/superintendents, Path One, the "Nehemiah Campaign," and local congregations to locate sites, raise funds, and identify pastors.
2. Direct support to new congregations as they develop innovative methods to grow in both their congregational life and mission, including daily devotional and small-group training materials and clergy and lay training.

Goal 5: Plant New English-speaking Congregations

To plant five (5) new English-speaking Korean American congregations to become self-sustaining within three to five years, relying on:

1. Partnerships with annual conferences, jurisdictional Korean mission directors/superintendents, and local congregations to locate sites, raise funds, and identify pastors for each church.
2. Consultation teams to provide support for the newly launched next generation churches, and English small-group training materials for clergy and laity.

Goal 6: Small-group Ministry

To implement a comprehensive small-group ministry strategy for pastors and laity through:

1. Promotion and distribution of the Korean and English publications of "Longing to Meet You" small-group leadership training materials and publish its Spanish version in collaboration with the National Plan for Hispanic and Latino Ministry.
2. Development of a new small-group ministry resources website with documents, videos, and networking materials.
3. Direct funding and leadership resources for national and regional small-group ministry training based on "Longing to Meet You."

4. Specialized small-group ministry resources and training for specific contexts, including clergy-women and cross-racial appointments.

V. Focus Area: Ministry with the Poor

The Korean Ministry Plan, in partnership with other agencies and organizations, will focus on support for justice ministry in the context of emerging needs. As immigrants, the Korean American church understands the importance of being connected to the global community especially in the area of Korean diaspora. The Plan will also work on fostering global partnerships for international missions.

Goal 7: Justice Ministry in the Context of Emerging Needs

To engage the church in justice-related ministries such as the peace movement of the Korean peninsula and immigration reform, seeking to achieve this goal through:

1. Collaboration with other agencies and organizations, such as Global Ministries and Church and Society, which focus on ministries with immigrants, global migration, and peace issues.
2. Building awareness in the Korean community of peace efforts for the purpose of the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.
3. Supporting local congregations that have immigrant-focused ministries and collecting and sharing resources available to assist non-documented immigrants, especially within the Korean American community.

Goal 8: Global Partnerships

To develop new relationships with organizations globally, expanding the work of the Korean Ministry Plan beyond the United States, achieving this goal through:

1. Developing and sustaining relationships with global and ecumenical organizations, especially with autonomous Methodist denominations.
2. Help planting new churches and starting new mission projects internationally through partnerships with global ecumenical organizations and autonomous Methodist denominations in Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa.
3. Collaborating with central conferences and existing Korean congregations, building relationships and providing resources to strengthen Korean United Methodist faith communities throughout the world.

To fulfill the work described above, a national office shall be continued with one full-time, executive staff person and an additional staff in Los Angeles as needed and financially possible, with administration placed within Global Ministries under the direction of the United Methodist Council on Korean Ministries. The Executive Committee of the United Methodist Council on Korean Ministries will provide supervision for the executive of the Plan within the personnel policies of Global Ministries.

Appendix I — New Church Starts (2017-2020)

New Korean Church Plants (14)

- **Korean UMC of Prattville** (Prattville, Alabama)
- **Johns Creek Korean UMC** (John's Creek Georgia)
- **Good Shepherd Korean UMC** (Bayside, New York)
- **Hope Korean UMC** (San Diego, California)
- **Madison Korean UMC** (Madison, Wisconsin)
- **Joosarang Korean UMC** (Brea, California)
- **St. Peter's UMC/Korean Worship** (Houston/Katy, Texas)
- **Woodbridge UMC Korean Worship** (Woodbridge, New Jersey)
- **The Lord's Church (restart)** (Palisades Park, New Jersey)
- **Torrance Korean UMC (restart)** (Torrance, California)
- **Crescenta Valley Korean UMC (restart)** (Montrose, California)
- **Christ Korean UMC** (North Wales, Pennsylvania)
- **Metropolitan Korean UMC (restart)** (New York, New York)
- **Eau Claire Korean UMC** (Eau Claire, Wisconsin)

New English Ministry Church Plants (7)

- **Good News Community Korean UMC** (Hopkins, Minnesota)
- **Green House Church Satellite** (East Brunswick, New Jersey)
- **Grace Bethel Korean UMC** (Leonia, New Jersey)
- **Embrace Church** (Oakland, California)
- **ReNew Church** (South Pasadena, California)
- **Good Seed Korean UMC** (Federal Way, Washington)
- **Immanuel Korean UMC Campus Ministry** (Marietta, Georgia)

APPENDIX II — Proposed Organization (2021-2024)

Council Members

- Bishops named by the Council of Bishops (2)
- Executive Director (ex officio) (1)
- Representative of The Korean Association of The United Methodist Church (1)
- Representative of The National Association of The Korean United Methodist Churches (1)
- Program Area Ministry Team Coordinators (3)
- Representative of National Association of Pastors Serving in Cross-cultural Appointments (1)
- Representative of the Nexus (Next Generation English Ministry Caucus) (1)
- Representative of National Association of Korean American United Methodist Clergywomen (1)
- Representative of the National Network of Korean United Methodist Women (1)
- Laity (1 male and 1 female) chosen by the Council of Bishops (2)
- At large members, if needed

Resource Persons

- The following resource/liaison persons are invited to attend the council meetings as needed (with voice but no vote):

- Bishops representing other jurisdictions: NCJ, SCJ, and SEJ
- Representatives (one each) of Global Ministries, Discipleship Ministries, Higher Education and Ministry, and United Methodist Communications, who shall attend at the expense of their respective agencies
- Korean Ministry Plan Missionary (1)

Program Area Ministry Teams

- Congregational Development
- Leadership Development
- Next Generation Ministry

Executive Committee

- Chair (1)
- Vice-Chairs (1)
- Program Area Coordinators (3)
- Ex Officio: Executive Director (1)
- At-large Members: National Caucus (1)
- Clergy Woman (1)

Funding Review Committee

- Chair (1)
- Program Area Coordinators (3)
- Ex Officio: Executive Director, staff — no vote (1)

Report on the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry: A Timeless Vision in a Fractured World

I. Introduction: A Timeless Vision May Be Shaken but Ultimately It Cannot Be Defeated

A timeless vision may be shaken but ultimately it cannot be defeated. The General Conference of 1992 reclaimed the Creator's vision by asserting that the mission of the church is to be "discerning, unrestricted, and all-inclusive: wise and visionary in formulation, global in focus, and including all persons in God's world." The same year—nearly three decades ago—The United Methodist Church faithfully birthed one of the six ethnic national plans as part of God's scandalous and enigmatic actions to reaffirm the inclusion of people from diverse cultural identities, family traditions, socioeconomic status, sexual identity, and political affiliations.

The Lord of history first envisioned a garden of equity and mercy for the whole creation. God's promise of a world full of life has been eclipsed by a pervasive sense of individualism that ignores, incarcerates the disenfranchised, decriminalizes family separations, and trivializes human sexuality. A profound disenchantment invades the consciousness of society and church as one by one—notwithstanding their faith, race, or sexuality—they have been challenged to gather the shattered pieces of what was perceived to be a coherent story of meaning and purpose.

The horizon that was once thought to be within a short reach seems vanished, yet the discovery of what was always there has emerged. Namely, the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan's vision of Accompaniment and Service is created together with boundless courage with the underserved, underprivileged, and underrepresented for as long as it is needed.

Our vision continues to defy monolithic paradigms of life and ministry, particularly in the historical age that defines the twenty-first century. "Forget the former things: do not dwell on the past" has been exactly what the ethnic plans have been listening to and pursuing as the changing demographics continue to demand new models of leadership (Isaiah 43:18 NIV). "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19 NIV) persists a Creator whose vision longs for relevant leaders for the transformation of the world at such a time like this.

We are a robust strand of more than twenty-five years worth of narratives ranging from a racial, economic, political, and religious spectrum. The DNA of the Plan is a

collage of diverse stories comprised of fragility and resilience; setbacks and breakthroughs; and certainty and ambiguity. The collage of stories that incarnate the Plan has been sketched in the busy streets and churches of Honduras, in the strained yet liberating classrooms of community centers of Los Angeles, California, in the hallways of universities in Oklahoma, and seminaries in North Carolina, in the unyielding resistance of DACA students, and in a rooted and ready Latina who became the first Guatemalan American legislator in the state of Illinois.

The following stories are not only a confirmation that God is "making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:19 NIV) but also a road map to continue that discerning, unrestricted, and all-inclusive vision as we move on to the third decade of the twenty-first century.

II. Preliminary Steps of the Ethnic Plan's Collaboration

Previous General Conference Efforts

For many years together, the six ethnic plans have consistently met, planned, collaborated, supported, and worked to propose initiatives, principles, and strategies. The ethnic plans have consistently shared their best practices within this partnership and genuine relationships have been built across racial and cultural lines.

Historically, the ethnic plans have stood ready and strong to resource annual conferences and local congregations to reconcile and rebuild torn relationships during turbulent times while proven effective in building new relationships, reaching those on the margins of society, and connecting those who are seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

The work of the plans has been to strengthen ethnic and multicultural churches to grow with vitality and life-giving love. As we continue the great mission to invite, nurture, and encourage all persons to become disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe in the end, we will be known by our love.

Joint Efforts in Annual Conferences

The six ethnic plans are positioned to demonstrate the potential of their unique partnership and unity of purpose in a time when The United Methodist Church becomes a global church in a multifaceted, fast-paced, nontraditional, multicultural, multiethnic world.

There are four areas in which the plans can demonstrate the power of solidarity and synergy of partnership, the common ground in the programming and initiatives on which to expand and find commonality and sharing of resources.

1. Training and Leadership Development of Laity
2. Engaging Young Adult Leadership
3. New Church Starts and Church Revitalization in communities with changing demographics and gentrification.
4. Promoting Social Justice through Community/Church Action.

First Gathering with Episcopal Representatives & Connectional Table

On October 10, 2018, the six ethnic plans gathered to discuss the future of racial/ethnic work in The United Methodist Church. As a result, the plans are committed to embody the unity of Christ through engaging, activating, and moving together toward the collaborative response to the changing mission field. The diverse communities represented by the six ethnic plans are persuaded by God's spirit that our unity rests in their diversity of color, race, language, theological, and cultural perspectives. Therefore, the plans will honor the distinctiveness of each context and the ethnic communities just as creation nurtures and embraces us all.

Recommendations

First, this mutual effort and comprehensive process must be compatible with the purposes of our respective ethnic plans. Secondly, those unique purposes must reflect a multitiered and multicultural partnership for program design. Our obedience to the divine mandate is the only force behind our confidence, which will be sustained by working on partnership program development together. Third, we have yet to explore specific ways in which we will implement new collaborations.

- Mission Focus: Reaching those in need through innovative methods in true partnerships, especially with young adults.
- Revenue Focus: Ensuring a sound future through World Service and renewed financial development.
- Infrastructure Building with Autonomy: Ensuring a sound base on which to build and expand with meaningful performance measurements and organizing our people resources.

III. Hispanic/Latino Quadrennial Accomplishments

A. Leadership Development

Annual Conference and Church Strategy Development

"During the past several years, the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference has had the privilege of being in partnership with the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan. We have received multi-year funding for our work, taken advantage of consultation and conversation with the Plan leaders. As we continue to develop our work, I remain confident in the ability of those involved with the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan to provide us with the strategic resourcing we need to continue to advance our work in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference."

Rev. Lowell Greathouse
Mission and Ministry Coordinator/DCM
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference

During the 2017-20 quadrennium the Plan in partnership with the four programmatic agencies accompanied all the annual conferences in the U.S and across the globe in strategically aligning the resources available in the connection for the identification, recruitment, and training of a new generation of principled leaders to impact their ever-changing local communities as well as continuing the recruitment and support of current first-generation leaders involved in racial ethnic ministry. This accompaniment was carried out by providing technical and financial assistance, identifying and commissioning racial/ethnic missionaries, and developing and deploying consultants and facilitators with the skills, tools, and experience to respond to the needs of annual conferences in their own contexts.

Empowering First-Generation Hispanic and Latino leaders

"The partnership and resources of the Hispanic/Latino Plan has been instrumental in the process of empowering the first-generation Hispanic Leaders in the Wisconsin Conference. It is through these resources that we have been able to provide trainings and equip our laity and clergy to become leaders and agents of change in their growing Hispanic/Latino communities. We celebrate that in this quadrennial, eight new Hispanic/Latino congregations have been planted in new places, reaching out new disciples for Jesus Christ."

Rev. Jorge Mayorga
Director of Congregational Development
Wisconsin Annual Conference

The Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan (HLMP) has strategically identified, recruited, and trained new leaders for ministry among members of first-generation Hispanic immigrants to address the needs of their ever-changing local communities. The national office has carried out this objective by continuing and refocusing the lay missionary program for the formation of first-generation Hispanic/Latino immigrant leaders.

In addition, diverse materials were contextualized in order to make available new paths of ministry. The Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan worked the curricula and processes to adapt them to the unique contexts of each annual conference and their surrounding communities in order to address their challenges and realities. Teams of intergenerational and intercultural consultants were formed to enrich the facilitation processes, which offered diverse perspectives and experiences according to the needs of their particular contexts.

Leadership Formation Achievements

- 26 annual conferences accompanied in 5 jurisdictions
- 14 GBGM Racial/Ethnic missionaries commissioned
- Licensing School and Course of Study Spanish and Portuguese
- \$1.2M granted dollars matched by \$1.4M from partners
- 120 workshops on leadership development including English, Spanish, and Portuguese
- A series of multicultural and multilingual new resources developed for several ministry tracks
- Accompaniment was provided to the Honduras Mission by contextualizing resources
- 20 consultants were trained and deployed to assist the implementation of racial/ethnic plans

B. Church Growth

Ministry Team Training for New Places of Worship and Communal Services

"I have worked with my wife developing a very peculiar ministry based on an intensive pastoral support to the Brazilian Community . . . our work consists in daily visitations, social support for families who came from Brazil without financial conditions for basic needs like food, housing, immigration issues, and cultural adaptation."

Rev. Juarez Goncalves
Director of Brazilian & Hispanic Ministry
New England Annual Conference

Following the first recommendation of the 2015 National Consultation of Hispanic/Latino Ministry that urged The United Methodist Church to raise up and support young Hispanic/Latino leaders as "Bridge Builders" and partners in ministry for the church and world. The Plan impacted local churches and the communities they serve by fostering the creation of a process for the ongoing formation of new principled leaders in twenty-four annual conferences.

Based on the experienced exponential growth among the Brazilian community in the United States, in partnership with GBGM, the Plan led a National Consultation on Brazilian Ministry toward building a better understanding of the rich and diverse future of ethnic ministry in The United Methodist Church. In partnership with Discipleship Ministries, the Plan has been working with consultants in order to equip Hispanic/Latino church planters across the connection. A national team of key leaders was formed to organize and strategize different ways to provide networking opportunities, kindle peer learning, and develop curricula.

Ministry Team Empowering Grants

"The California-Pacific Conference has benefited greatly in the past few years from a creative and productive partnership with the Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The resources, relationships and strategic conversations provided us through this relationship have been central to the development of our "You Are Not Alone/No Estan Solos" Program which provides a network of ministries of solidarity, service and advocacy among our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers throughout our conference."

Rev. David K. Farley
Director of Justice and Compassion Ministries
California-Pacific Annual Conference

Ministry Team Empowering Grants are utilized by local mission teams and annual conferences for the organic development of their new ministries. The three categories are Youth Development, Training Centers, and Social Justice Centers. With support of Global Ministries and annual conferences, technical and financial resources were deployed to strengthen unfolding ministries. The Plan has accompanied diverse projects across the United States through empowering grants that have been vital for the growth and formation of young adults discerning to be in the life of the church and society.

Church Growth Achievements

- 24 of matching grants in the development of new places of worship of \$429K matched by \$1.0M from partners

- 4,500 unaccompanied immigrant children were incorporated into the life of local churches
- 130 existing local churches in 26 annual conferences went through a process of assessment-action-assessment to transition their current ministry to become multicultural/multigenerational
- In order to better equip the growing of Brazilian Ministry in the U.S. of the UNMC, a national consultation toward the future has been organized

C. Ministry with the Poor

Global Migration and Other Social Concerns

“No Están Solos (You Are Not Alone)—program for unaccompanied migrant children—was first initiated as a response to the influx of unaccompanied migrant children from the northern triangle, who are migrating into the United States and are fleeing from gang violence, extortion, abuse, and poverty. When I first heard of this program, I knew that I had to be involved! As a daughter of immigrants and as a person living in an immigrant community, I saw the importance of this work. It was through this experience that I witnessed the inter-relatedness between immigration law/policy, criminal law/policy, and social work. That is why I am an aspiring social worker and lawyer who aims to address the issues of crimmigration (criminal law and immigration) with the empathy and skill of a social worker.”

Rosie Rios

Lay Member and Head of the Delegation, 2016
General Conference
California-Pacific Annual Conference

As the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan continues to work on migration issues, the learning has significantly increased, making possible the development of more strategic partnerships and contextual workshops that connect directly with domestic stakeholders as well as those around the globe.

Many migrants and potential migrants today are Methodists; some are welcomed in new places, bringing new vigor to old congregations, while others face discrimination and exploitation. Migration today is inextricably linked to the issues of Christian community, evangelism, new church development, the nurturing of church leadership, and more importantly in our role in the connection as immigrant plan.

Ministry with the Poor Achievements

- In partnership with UMCOR, grants were provided to The UMC task force on immigration to solidify the spirit of collaboration and service.

- To better understand the realities of the Central America Triangle, the Plan has established and expanded relationships with partners in the region.
- In a time of racial profiling and violation of basic human rights, several resources have been produced as a mean to accompany and support the newcomers to the U.S.

IV. 2021-2024 Goals and Structures

A. The Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan Goals

1. Leadership Development

The ethnic plans have learned to reconstruct the formation of our leadership in a radically new way that requires not only the creation of new curricula but adopting structural changes. These new paradigms must include contextual and contemporary understandings in identifying, recruiting, equipping, and deploying leadership within the denomination. Our learning has helped cultivate a holistic program of leadership development that includes accompanying annual conferences by developing strategies to address the nurture of new congregations and work on immigration and other critical social concerns. These are not three different stages, or three disparate concerns, but the very context and the clear purpose of the leadership development efforts.

Empowering First-Generation H/L Leaders

The Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan will strategically identify, recruit, and train new leaders for ministry among members of first-generation Hispanic immigrants to address the needs of their ever-changing local communities.

- Lay Missioner
- Certified Lay Minister
- Dialogues Resources
- Candidacy Certification Accompaniment
- Licensing and Ordination

Conference Teams for Strategic Development

The Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan will provide a process of *acompañamiento* (accompaniment) to annual conferences and the global church to strategically develop diverse teams at the conference level. The objective of these teams is to lead the process of aligning resources available in the connection for the identification, recruitment, and empowering of a new generation of principled leaders to impact their communities. This process is facilitated by the Plan by providing technical and financial

assistance, and through the deployment of consultants and facilitators.

- Conference Teams
- Annual Conference Accompaniment

Ethnic Plans Collaborative Initiatives

The work of the ethnic plans will continue to invest energy and resources to strengthen ethnic and multicultural churches to grow with vitality and life-giving love by strategically reaching those in need through innovative methods in true partnerships, especially with youth and young adults.

2. Church Growth

New Places for Worship and Communal Service

Based on the challenges and opportunities of the ethnic communities in the twenty-first century, New Faith Communities must be understood as places of freedom to share and build community that will transform people and society from the perspective of God's reign. The goal is to develop and equip leadership who will promote full congregational development by sharing faith, challenging each other, and seeking ways to be involved in whatever forms of ministry and advocacy for justice the Lord requires in their communities.

- Community Centers
- New Faith Communities
- Emerging Generations

3. Walking with the Poor

Global Migration and Other Social Concerns

Global conditions regarding migration continue to be staggering. An unprecedented number of people are being forced to migrate to escape war, poverty, the impact of climate change, and persecution. The location in the world that has witnessed the heaviest dislocations in just the last several years has been in Central America moving both northward to the U.S. and south again. The Plan, along with the general agencies and other partners, has aimed to understand, monitor, and strategize considering the unfolding situations that affect migrants across the globe.

- Latin American Network
- Voices and Dreams Program
- UMC Immigration Task Force
- Abundant Health Partnership

B. Structures and Resources

1. General Agencies Partnership

The United Methodist Church's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, a mission that calls all of us to go into a world of needs and challenges, in which the ethnic communities are now a priority. However, based on the experiences and assessments of previous quadrennia, the Plan is persuaded that God is calling the whole church to become fully engaged with all people to fulfill our United Methodist Church's mission.

In obedience to the supreme mandate to be one, we are confident that, by God's grace, the general agencies will continue partnering with the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan to face the complexity of challenges and opportunities provided by a world that more than ever prioritizes inequality, individualism, and violence instead of the principles of God's kingdom.

In ongoing collaboration with the Ethnic Ministry Plans, each general agency is expected to continue collaborating in the implementation of their proposed programmatic goals and objectives for the 2021-2024 quadrennium, as described in this quadrennial proposal.

1. To provide processes of accompaniment to assist annual conferences in developing and assessing their strategic plans for ethnic ministries. This accompaniment will be based on guidelines developed under the direction of the respective board or committees from each of the ethnic plans by establishing holistic partnerships that include financial and technical resources.
2. To design, create, contextualize, test, iterate, and implement programs, initiatives, and resources that apply different methodologies to identify and respond to each particular ethnic community.
3. To design and produce contextualized written resources and workshops to address the systemic and structural issues related to ethnic communities such as immigration, health care, education, unemployment, housing and poverty, mass incarceration, retribution, and other social issues.
4. To support the licensing school for the development of missional placements by partnering with theological schools and general agencies to strengthen the Course of Study program.
5. To continue looking for alternative models of theological education for pastoral leaders with undergraduate United Methodist colleges, seminaries, and/or training centers to facilitate the pastors' transition for ordination.

6. To identify placement opportunities for missionaries that support the ethnic plans' stated strategies, priorities, and goals; and to recruit, train, commission, deploy, and accompany missionaries.
7. To promote and administer the National Challenge Fund for Hispanic Ministries.

2. Executive Director Office

To support and coordinate the implementation of the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan, the executive committee recommends the continuation of an office led by a director and staff, who will be guided and supervised by the executive committee. Several factors make the director and staff of the Plan important and necessary for its effective implementation.

- The director and staff will strive to work with all the general agencies and annual conferences of the church to facilitate interagency work.
- Only the national office may provide relevant resources, data, models of ministry, process of leadership development, pedagogical methodologies, and the regular communication and exchange of success stories demanded by annual conferences.

- Having done an extensive assessment of Hispanic/Latino ministry, the HLMP recognizes the need for ongoing assessment and research of the denomination's work among Hispanics/Latinos.
- In order to fulfill the work of the HLMP, a national office shall be continued with at least one full-time, unencumbered executive staff person, with additional staff as needed and financially possible, administratively placed within Global Ministries under the direction of the National Committee of the HLMP. The executive shall be selected by the National Committee of the HLMP in consultation with Global Ministries.

3. Committee Members Organization

The Plan recommends that the Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan continues to be the entity responsible for overseeing and guiding the implementation of the HLMP and be composed of fifteen members that reflect the broader constituency with regard to gender, age, lay versus clergy status, Hispanics/Latinos, and non-Hispanics who meet the following criteria:

INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES	SOURCE OF FUNDS	MEMBERS
Council of Bishops	Episcopal Fund	2
MARCHA: Hispanic Caucus	HLMP	1
Brazilian Ministries	HLMP	1
One elected board member from: GBOD, GBHEM, GBCS, GBGM & UMCOM	General Agency	5
Methodist Church of Puerto Rico	HLMP	1
Young Adult	HLMP	1
Youth	HLMP	1
Members at Large	HLMP	3
Total		15

In addition to committee members, at least one staff person from each of the program agencies that has responsibility for Hispanic/Latino ministries including one representative from The United Methodist Publishing House, General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women—these latter two who will serve as monitors (expenses will be covered by their agencies).

All members of this committee must maintain regular, vital, and organic communication between the national office and the constituencies they represent.

4. National Committee Functions and Responsibilities

The executive committee recommends that this body be charged:

1. To set policy and direction for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the HLMP, which includes direct supervision of the Plan's office.
2. To lead the church in the development of guidelines for grants and programs for Hispanic/Latino

ministries with the general agencies, seminaries, annual conferences, training centers, and others responsible for implementing components of the Plan.

3. To coordinate responses to the Plan of all the general agencies and annual conferences and facilitate interagency collaboration.
4. To undertake program initiatives in response to identified needs in collaboration with the general programmatic agencies, seminaries, training centers, and annual conferences.
5. To review grant applications and provide final approval of the distribution of funds allocated to the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan.
6. To revise the existing guidelines, as needed, for the Challenge Fund and to assist in the promotion of the fund.
7. To promote and support the necessary ongoing research on issues affecting Hispanic/Latino communities and the mission of The United Methodist Church as a base for the implementation of programs.
8. To monitor and assist in the evaluation of programs in Hispanic/Latino ministries by the general agencies and annual conferences.
9. To build a strong relationship with a holistic strategy for Latin America and the rest of the globe.
10. To have a representative in the UM Immigration Task Force.
11. To make an oral report, in addition to a written report, to the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

C. Financial Request for 2021-2024

To achieve all the above goals with the existing organization, we request the 2020 General Conference approve \$3,143,830 for the continuation of the implementation of the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan during the 2021-2024 quadrennium. This amount will be allocated to Global Ministries in consultation with the National Committee on Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The funds allocated to Global Ministries through the HLMP, with the exception of those funds designated for the national office, the coordinator, staff, and the National Committee of the HLMP, shall be used for program initiatives to strengthen and support annual conference and local church ministries according to the priorities and criteria of the Plan.

In order to fulfill the work of the HLMP, a national office shall be continued with at least one full-time, unencumbered executive staff person, with additional staff as needed and financially possible, administratively placed within Global Ministries under the direction of the National Committee of the HLMP. The executive shall be selected by the National Committee of the HLMP in consultation with Global Ministries.

A portion of the program initiatives outlined in the HLMP shall be delivered through the budgets of the various general program agencies of The UMC and their governing bodies. All funds allocated through the HLMP shall be designated as separate line items within the general programs of Global Ministries.

We recommend that these funds be allocated to the general program of Global Ministries according to the responsibilities assigned with final allocation to be determined by the National Committee of the HLMP in consultation with the General Council of Finance and Administration.

V. 2021-24 Quadrennial Budget

General Board of Global Ministries	\$3,143,830
Empowering First-Generation H/L Leaders	
Conference Teams for Strategic Development	
Ethnic Plans Collaborative Initiatives	
New Places for Worship and Communal Service	
Global Migration and Other Social Concerns	
Program Coordinator Office	
Administrative Fees	
National Committee Training	
Grand Total	\$3,143,830

VI. Closing Remarks

The relevancy of the church to transform the world depends on vibrant leadership and, to a great extent, the cultivation of laity into faithful disciples depends on committed and principled clergy who are bold enough to see the Christ in the other. It is by this conviction that the executive committee is confident that the goals and

recommendations presented in this 2020 General Conference proposal of the Hispanic/Latino Ministry Plan will make The United Methodist Church become the source of the vibrant leadership needed to face a world that is consumed with social-political and religious divisions. **Our timeless vision may be shaken but ultimately it will not be defeated.**

The Pacific Islander Ministry Plan Report to General Conference 2020

“If you want to travel fast, travel alone. If you want to travel long, travel together” (An African proverb). The Pacific Islander Ministry (PIM) Plan experienced anew the age-old wisdom inherent in this saying. The seven-year journey of the PIM Plan has been slow, but the journey itself has been a valuable teacher. True to the ancient saying, the desire to travel together has meant a slower pace, but traveling together is a nonnegotiable. As such, we will necessarily revisit some of the goals and objectives set in the last two quadrennia, but we do so with a deep sense of gratitude and affirmation for the journey thus far, more keenly aware of our shared privileges and responsibilities as United Methodists living out our faith authentically as Pacific Islanders called to be disciples and to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Ultimately, the call is the journey, and we journey in faith knowing that Christ goes with us.

Leadership Development

One of the primary goals of the PIM Plan, from its inception, is to empower Pacific Islanders to participate in the life of the church using their authentic gifts and graces, and thereby help The UMC to more closely reflect the fullness of God. This requires a holistic, multifaceted approach that is developed with sensitivities and appreciation for contexts and experience as well as incorporating critical tools and resources. We seek to continue this journey by proposing the following goals and objectives:

Equip First-Generation Leaders

The Plan will continue to equip first-generation leaders with appropriate tools for disciple-making in their new surroundings. One of the specific characteristics of Pacific Islander United Methodists is that they practice a form of Wesleyan Christianity as learned and lived out in their native setting. Those faith practices sustain their existence in the new land and should be appreciated and recognized as a gift.

- Development of lay leadership:
 - The Plan will offer strategies through partnership with general agencies and annual conferences for aligning existing lay leadership initiatives within the Pacific Islander ministries with current denominational leadership paradigm, such as Lay Speaking and Lay Missioner ministry programs.

- The Plan will provide a strategy for developing lay leadership skills that will enable full participation in all levels of the church’s administration and governance.

- Development of clergy leadership:

- The Plan will provide strategies for the development and advancement of clergy leadership from licensing, certification, and ordination.
- The Plan will provide strategies for equipping first-generation leaders who were trained in their native setting, to enable them to fully participate in their new charge.

Develop Second-Generation Leaders

- Youth and Young Adult Ministry:

- Focus on eighteen-to-forty-year-olds: Experience and engagement over the last two quadrennia confirmed our initial finding that this age group needed to find affirmation and validation within the church family and ministries. Young people of this age group were in the pews, in the parking lot, in the periphery of church community and life, but church, led by many first-generation leaders, was not readily relevant to them. The Plan will continue to provide learning and training opportunities for this age group, with hopes of developing leaders for their current setting and for the future.
- Provide grants for youth and children’s ministries.

- Develop strategies for supporting young people who are called into ordained ministry, by accompanying them from the discernment process into ordination.

Developing the Church Community

In the Pacific Islander context, the church is the community and everyday life is lived out within the confines of this community. This is certainly a gift that we want to sustain. However, this calls the church to be more than just place of worship, spiritual nurturing, and fellowship, but to be a critical link to the wider world, by providing avenues for social, political, and educational growth.

Congregational Development

Developing new congregations and revitalizing existing congregations is a priority for the PIM Plan. Thus far, we have managed to maintain existing church communities that have for the most part been transplanted from the home country. The growing Pacific Islander population and the changing demographics within that population require a new iteration of church, recognizing the gifts innate to the Pacific Islander community and also responding to the organic needs of the church community and its social and geographical context. The Plan will continue to assist Pacific Islander communities in starting up and revitalizing new and existing congregations by providing training and programs, and scholarships to attend denominational training and initiatives.

Church as Community

The Plan will provide grants to assist local congregations and church communities to provide appropriate services. Possible projects include parenting, elderly care, domestic violence, and cultural knowledge and preservation.

Social Justice and Advocacy

Pacific Islanders are living into the knowledge that there is no holiness without social holiness. In traditional settings, social justice advocacy was not always a part of the church's role. Hence, it is a part of the Plan's role to provide educational opportunities for learning in this area. In addition, the Plan will also provide grants for local programs that will promote social justice and advocacy in areas such as immigration, poverty, mass incarceration, gang, drugs, and other social needs.

Resource Development

Language Resource

As recent immigrants, Pacific Islanders have great language resources needs. Most Pacific Islanders speak only their native language and understand very limited English. Most of the existing congregations rely on resources from their home country. The Plan will partner with appropriate general agencies and program initiatives to produce specific relevant language resources for worship and other appropriate needs.

Culturally Appropriate Christian Education Curriculum

The Plan will partner with appropriate agencies and programs to produce contemporary and culturally appro-

priate curriculum for all ages, for the community with the greatest need in this area.

Health

Pacific Islanders have great health challenges. The change in lifestyle and food intake has led to disturbingly high rates of serious chronic illness, including congestive heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes among Pacific Islanders and yet, they are among the highest number of uninsured people in the United States. Grants will be made available for health projects. There are a variety of needs depending on areas and existing community health resources in those areas. Hence, it would be best to make funds available through grants and each congregation/ministry can respond to this need in the best possible form.

Structures and Resources

General Agencies Partnership

The United Methodist Church's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The PIM Plan is a means for carrying out this mission. The Plan is committed to joining The UMC in making disciples who will offer their authentic gifts and graces to be used in carrying out the mission of the church. A hurting world needs diverse means of disciple making, of care and love, and the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan, along with the other ethnic plans, is in the best position to offer this to the world. Indeed, God is calling the whole church to engage with ethnic communities across the United States to fulfill our United Methodist Church's mission.

In ongoing collaboration with the ethnic ministerial plans, each general agency is expected to continue collaborating with the implementation of their proposed programmatic goals and objectives for the 2021-2024 quadrennium, as described in this quadrennial proposal.

1. To provide processes of accompaniment to assist annual conferences in developing and assessing their strategic plans for ethnic ministries based on guidelines developed under the direction of the respective board or committees of each of the ethnic groups by establishing holistic partnerships that include financial and technical resources.
2. To create and contextualize, design, test, perfect, and implement model program initiatives and resources that apply different methodologies to identify and respond to each ethnic community
3. To design and produce contextualized written resources and workshops to address the systemic

and structural issues related to ethnic communities such as immigration, health care, education, unemployment, housing and poverty, mass incarceration, retribution, and other social issues.

4. To continue evaluating and updating current and new laity development curriculum by creating small groups and teams that design and implement workshops that relate to making disciples for the transformation of the world.
5. To continue supporting the candidacy process of local missional development by partnering with schools and general agencies to promote, collaborate, review, and upgrade the academic quality of the Course of Study programs.
6. To continue working on designing, testing, implementing, and evaluating at least one alternative model of theological education for pastoral leaders with undergraduate United Methodist colleges, seminaries, and/or training centers that facilitate these pastors' movement toward ordination.
7. To identify placement opportunities for missionaries that support the ethnic plans' stated strategies, priorities, and goals; and to recruit, train, commission, deploy, and accompany missionaries.

Committee Members Organization

The Plan recommends that the Pacific Islander Ministry Committee will provide oversight and guide the implementation of the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan. It is recommended that the committee be composed of the following (currently approximately ten persons):

- Two (2) persons from each of the related Pacific Islander sub-ethnic groups
- One (1) staff of the Office of Asian Pacific Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries or Consultant
- One (1) staff of the Pacific Islander National Caucus of United Methodists
- Other persons as needed (to be determined by the committee)

The committee will meet at least annually to:

- Develop guidelines and policies for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan.
- Determine the ministries that will be developed for that current year.
- Recommend funding for new or continuing projects.
- Develop reports of the ministries that are in process.
- Evaluate projects funded.
- Recommend changes in order to accomplish the work.
- Support each other's work.
- Develop recommendations for the following quadrennium.

Budget for 2021-2024

To achieve all the above goals with the existing organization, we request the 2020 General Conference approve \$540,000 for the continuation of the implementation of the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan during the 2021-2024 quadrennium. This amount will be allocated to Global Ministries.

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶1302.

Petition Number: 20272-GM-¶1302-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Support for Intersectional Justice Work—GBGM

Amend ¶ 1302 as follows

Add new ¶ 1302.16:

16. Provide training, resources, and consultation for and with all levels of the global church to actively resist intersecting structures of white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, patriarchy, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism and classism.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, we are charged to remember injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere. We affirm our commitment to the dignity of all people and the integrity of creation. At this time of challenge in church and society, we work diligently for justice in intersecting issues.

¶1309.

Petition Number: 20274-GM-¶1309-G; Beedle, Edward - Palmyra, IN, USA.

Missionary Standards

Add a new *Book of Discipline* ¶ 1309 by adding a new subparagraph 3 as follows:

¶1309. *Personnel Policies*—1. . . .

2. . . .

3. *Missionary Standards*—For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of United Methodist missionaries on the lives of other persons both within and outside the church, the church expects its missionaries to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end, all new individuals approved by the General Board of Global Ministries after January 1, 2022, for full-time missionary service directly financially supported by the board shall agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

Rationale:

Whether they are clergy or laity, the work and personal example of our missionaries matters for our church's mission and witness. Those GBGM sends around the world to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ should be expressly committed to the same basic standards of Christian living as our clergy (¶ 304.2).

¶1309.1.

Petition Number: 20273-GM-¶1309.1-G; Auta, John Pena - Jalingo, Nigeria.

GBGM Personnel

Amend *Book of Discipline* ¶ 1309.1 as follows:

¶ 1309. *Personnel Policies*—1. *Selection*—The staff of the board shall be selected on the basis of competency and with representation of ethnic and racial groups, young adults, and women, in accordance with policies in ¶ 714. Since the board is concerned with propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ, all newly hired staff shall be trinitarian Christians, each of whom shall be a member of a local church and personally committed to a life of Christian discipleship.

Rationale:

The church exists to bring people to a saving knowledge of God through Christ, make disciples, worship the triune God, and help transform the world. GBGM is entrusted with much responsibility in this mission. Therefore, those doing the GBGM's work should be personnel who share basic Christian foundations and goals.

¶1311.11.

Petition Number: 20275-GM-¶1311.11-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

General Board of Global Ministries Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 1311.1 as indicated following:

¶ 1311. *Membership*—The policies, plans of work, management, business, and all affairs of the board shall be governed and administered by it according to the following conditions:

1. The basic members (clergy, laity) are elected by the jurisdictions upon nominations of the annual conferences. The jurisdictions shall use the following formula when electing members: Northeastern Jurisdiction-3; Southeastern Jurisdiction-4; Western Jurisdiction-2; North Central Jurisdiction-3; and South Central Jurisdiction-3. Each central conference shall nominate one member to the basic membership of the board for a total of ~~seven~~ eight (8). The additional members of the board shall be nominated and elected in accordance with the board's bylaws. There may be up to five (5) additional members from the five jurisdictions, one of whom shall be from either the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference or the Rio Grande Annual Conference, unless they are already represented in the basic membership of the board. There shall be ~~two (2)~~ one (1) additional members from the central conferences.

Rationale:

The change from seven to eight members from the central conferences reflects the addition of a central conference in Africa. The reduction of one of the "additional" members maintains the current number of board members. This petition is dependent upon the passing of the petition adding one

¶1315.1c4.

Petition Number: 20276-GM-¶1315.1c4-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 1315.1.c.4:

(4) administer these ministries described in subparagraph three (3) above in the spirit of Jesus Christ, preserving the dignity of persons without regard to religion, race, nationality, sexual orientation, ~~or~~ gender, disability, or economic condition, and seek to enhance the quality of life in the human community;

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that reflects

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20534.

Petition Number: 20534-GM-NonDis-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

The United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries

Be it resolved that the 2020 General Conference approves the continuation of the United Methodist Committee on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries under the purview of the General Board of Global Ministries. A short summary of Deaf Ministries is included in the Global Health portion of Global Ministries' Report to General Conference, funding for Deaf Ministries is included in the budget request Global Ministries submitted to GCFA, and the committee's tasks and objectives are set forth in Resolution 3004, which is the subject of a petition to readopt as is.

Rationale:

GC 2000 established the committee to lead the global church to become inclusive and engaged with Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or Deaf-blind people so that these lay and clergy would feel welcomed and included in worship and service to the church and world.

Petition 20535.

Petition Number: 20535-GM-NonDis; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Pacific Islander Ministry Plan

Be it resolved that the 2020 General Conference approves the continuation of the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan, as described in the plan's Report and Recommendation to the General Conference, along with the funds contained in the World Service proposal, to fulfill the goals of the plan.

Rationale:

This plan, established by GC 2012, develops churches and ministries serving Pacific Islanders in the U.S. Building on its connections with this growing immigrant community, the plan will continue providing outreach, language resources, global health ministries, and leadership development that impact Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian faith communities in the U.S.

Petition 20536.

Petition Number: 20536-GM-NonDis-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries. 1 Similar Petition

National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries

Be it resolved that the 2020 General Conference approves the continuation of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry as described in the plan's Report and Recommendation to the General Conference, along with the funds contained in the World Service proposal, to fulfill the mission and goals of the plan.

Rationale:

This National Plan strategically aligns resources across the connection in order to identify, recruit, and train a new generation of principled leaders for creating new sacred spaces for worship, growing and revitalizing existing congregations, and impacting lives in the Hispanic/Latino/Latina communities.

Petition 20537.

Petition Number: 20537-GM-NonDis-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Korean Ministry Plan

Be it resolved that the 2020 General Conference approves the continuation of the Korean Ministry Plan, as described in the plan's Report and Recommendation to General Conference, along with the funds contained in the World Service proposal, to fulfill the mission and goals of the plan.

Rationale:

Established by GC 2000, the Korean Ministry Plan during 2017-2020 started 15 new Korean-speaking and 6 new English-speaking congregations, conducted a \$1 Million Matching Fund Campaign among Korean-American churches, developed ministry resources, and fostered international mission, peace movement, and relationships with Korean Methodist Church in Korea and Korean diaspora.

Petition 20538.

Petition Number: 20538-GM-NonDis; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Asian-American Language Ministry Plan

Be it resolved that the 2020 General Conference approves the continuation of the Asian American Language Ministry Plan for Asian American ministry as described in the plan's Report and Recommendation to the General Conference, along with the funds contained in the World Service proposal, to fulfill the mission and goals of the plan.

Rationale:

Asian-American communities are ripe mission fields for sharing the gospel and strengthening ministries with the unchurched and non-Christians. This diverse diaspora includes at least 12 sub-ethnic groups that desire to interact with each other despite language and cultural differences. AALP is equipped to expand UMC engagement with these communities.

Petition 20595.

Petition Number: 20595-GM-NonDis-G; Pérez, Lyssette - Egg Harbor Township, NJ, USA for MARCHA.

Holistic Strategy on Latin America and Caribbean Special Program 2020-2024

Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean Special Program 2020-2024

MARCHA (Methodist Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans) petitions the 2020 General Conference to continue the Holistic Strategy on Latin American and the Caribbean Special Program into the quadrennium 2020–2024 as outlined in the 2016 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 703.10.

The Holistic Strategy on Latin American and the Caribbean Special Program will be coordinated by Global Ministries, in collaboration with several agencies, with funding provided through the participating agencies through their budgets. Its coordinating group will meet annually face-to-face or via phone/web and be staffed by Global Ministries. The coordinating group will require participation of all general agencies, the National Plan Hispanic/Latino Ministries, the Council of Bishops, MARCHA, and representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, selected by the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL). General agencies and the Council of Bishops representatives will be covered by the council and respective agencies.

Missional Opportunities

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to experience drastic sociological, political, environmental, and economic changes. These changes affect

the ministry of the autonomous Methodist churches and the way they relate in mission with general agencies and congregations of The UMC that developed a strong partnership with them in a variety of ministries. The constant migration of persons both into the U.S. and back to Latin America and the Caribbean calls for a closer connection to serve the needs of people who are forced to leave their places of origin and move both North and South through the Americas. A significant number of clergy and lay leaders of The UMC came from Methodist churches in Latin American and the Caribbean and maintain mission contacts with them. These relationships created opportunities to share resources and expertise from the churches in the region with the ministry of The UMC among the Hispanic/Latino community and vice versa.

In this context, Methodist churches in twenty countries, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA), and the United Methodist Mission in Honduras, knit together in mission through CIEMAL, continue to reach out through new initiatives in evangelization. Many communities experience significant church growth with renewed commitment to their Wesleyan heritage of witness with and on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. Furthermore, the different crises in Latin America and the Caribbean require the prophetic presence of the church helping the people to keep the faith and to seek fair solutions for all. The churches in the region, within their limited resources, are responding to the more immediate needs and continue to advocate for justice and preservation of human rights. The deep and complex relationships between the United States and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean demand a closer working relationship between our churches to amplify our prophetic witness.

There is a long list of official indicators provided by international and governmental organizations of the need for attention and assistance. The increase of chronic poverty across the region, the persistence of child labor, the political and economic instability, the discrimination and violence against Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean, and indigenous populations, the pervasiveness of sexual and gender-based violence against women, children, and gender diverse individuals, the devastating effects of climate change are sufficient to show that the Caribbean and Latin America needs urgent attention. The changing economic and political contexts increase the demand for social assistance from the churches in the region. Sadly, many churches are facing financial crises themselves due to the impoverishment of their membership.

The Call

There is an urgent need for a continued coordinated strategy within The UMC in collaboration with CIEMAL, the MCCA, and Methodist churches and ecumenical or-

ganizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. The beginning implementation of the Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean in 2008 provided a fruitful dialogue that addressed the increased needs of the region in significant ways.

We call upon Global Ministries to continue the implementation of the Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean in partnership with CIEMAL, and to continue empowering the churches in the region to engage missionally with marginalized populations. We call upon UMCOR to continue providing support for disaster response, sustainable development, and migration ministries in the region.

We call upon Global Ministries, Discipleship Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministries to undergird the ministries of the relatively new Methodist churches in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. We ask these agencies in collaboration with the Council of Bishops to organize opportunities for annual conferences and local churches doing work in the region to share experiences and coordinate strategies for increased effectiveness and level of support.

We call upon the General Board of Church and Society to advocate in the U.S. Congress for fair policies toward the Latin American and Caribbean countries in financial or political crisis without compromising their sovereignty or undermining their responsibility to provide for the needy in their midst.

We call upon United Methodist Communications (UMCom) to continue providing coverage to the news coming out of church sources in the Caribbean and in Latin America and to help in the mission education of United Methodists by informing them of the mission realities in the region.

We call upon United Methodist Women to continue its vital ministries in support of women and children in Latin America and the Caribbean, and its mission education programs for the whole church.

We call upon the Connectional Table to request that the Holistic Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean Coordinating Group present a quadrennial report for submission to General Conference.

We call upon annual conferences and individual United Methodists to pray for and support the development

of church programs in Latin America and the Caribbean region by contributing to the permanent fund Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean (GBGM Fund 025100), to the Advance, and joining Volunteers in Mission teams or other mission teams in the region. These forms of collaboration need to be increased and new ones established in response to the needs of the region.

Rationale:

Renewing this Holistic Strategy is essential for a continued and enhanced partnership between The UMC and the churches in Latin America and the Caribbean, the strengthening of the collaboration, coordination, and the mutual sharing of resources among the churches involved. The primary general program-related agency (see *BOD*, p.

Petition 20627.

Petition Number: 20627-GM-NonDis-G; Byerman, Mary - Tampa, FL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Church Funding of Church-Rejected Agendas

The 2020 General Conference directs the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), together with the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and United Methodist Women (UMW), to withdraw their membership immediately from the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, formerly named the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, and to cease giving any organizational membership dues or other unrestricted donations to this controversial political activist group. The General Conference encourages these agencies to instead seek out partners for Middle East peacemaking that take a more balanced and unbiased approach and that take seriously the threats posed to Israeli lives by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and others.

Rationale:

Although General Conference has consistently rejected less radical proposals, this group continues campaigning to single out Israel for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), without morally consistent concern about terrorism and other regimes in that region. Our Church's name and limited money should not be used for such harsh, divisive agendas.

Proposed Resolutions

R3004.

Petition Number: 20548-GM-R3004-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

The Church and Deaf Ministries Steering Committee

Re-adopt resolution in its entirety.

Rationale:

GC 2000 established the committee to lead the global church to become inclusive and engaged with Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or Deaf-blind people so that these lay and clergy would feel welcomed and included in worship and service to the church and world.

R3103.

Petition Number: 20573-GM-R3103-G; Matheny, Judy - WV, USA for Rural Chaplains Association.

Nurturing and Enabling Cooperative Ministry

Delete # 3101, National Cooperative Ministry Leadership, and # 3103, Facilitation of Cooperative Ministry Throughout the Church, and substitute the following:

3103 Nurturing and Enabling Cooperative Ministry

WHEREAS, intentional grouping of churches in determined geographic areas into cooperative parishes has long been recognized to enable congregational nurturing, outreach to communities of the poor and marginalized, and witnessing to Christian commitments; and

WHEREAS, in order to facilitate broader use of existing forms of cooperative parish ministries and to enable new patterns and processes for working together, there is continuing need to bring people together for training, networking, and celebration;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the general programming agencies of The United Methodist Church—Global Ministries, Discipleship, and Higher Education and Ministry—be called upon to provide encouragement and work with constituencies in training events that expand the effective use of cooperative patterns and processes within the church;

Be it further resolved, that the annual conferences, districts, and local churches of The United Methodist Church be called on to implement processes that will re-

sult in understandings of how to initiate needed cooperative ministries and to facilitate their participation in making disciples for the transformation of the world.

Rationale:

Various forms of cooperative ministries have a long track record of enabling congregations to be involved in nurturing and outreach ministries. Undergirding and other supportive relationships with all levels of the church are strategic to continuing the involvements of rural and urban churches in making disciples for the transformation of

R3104.

Petition Number: 20572-GM-R3104-G; Matheny, Judy - WV, USA for Rural Chaplains Association.

Church and Community Workers

Delete # 3104 Church and Community Workers and substitute a revised version to read as follows:

3104 Church and Community Workers

WHEREAS, church and community workers, a cadre of missionaries serving within the bounds of the USA, have a long history of effective work with small town and rural, urban, and specialized settings; and

WHEREAS, a primary strength of the Church and Community Ministry Program is developing contacts and linkages between local church, cooperative parish ministries, and community groups in response to human hurt, specialized need, and justice issues; and

WHEREAS, there is a desperate need to continue the placement of church and community workers in economically depressed areas where the local funding partnership base is extremely limited; and

WHEREAS, the goals of church and community ministry programs are closely aligned with the four mission initiatives of The United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, church and community workers are employed and assigned by Global Ministries;

Therefore, be it resolved, that Global Ministries continue to recruit, enlist, train, and deploy church and community workers and provide joint funding with other partners; and

Be it further resolved, that the funding partnership continue between the local area, annual conferences, and Global Ministries in order to place church and community workers in mission outreach with economically depressed areas.

Rationale:

A continuing partnership of Global Ministries with annual conferences and locally served areas is strategic to further the missional goal of responding to the needs, hurts, and injustices in the rural and urban context in the USA.

R3104.

Petition Number: 20634-GM-R3104; Paige, Peggy - Inghams, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Church and Community Workers

Delete Resolution #3104, Church and Community Workers, and substitute the following:

Church and Community Workers

WHEREAS, Church and Community Workers, a cadre of missionaries serving within the bounds of the USA, have a long history of effective work with small town and rural, urban, and specialized settings; and

WHEREAS, a primary strength of the Church and Community Ministry Program is developing contacts and linkages between local church, cooperative parish ministries, and community groups in response to human hurt, specialized need, and justice issues; and

WHEREAS, there is a desperate need to continue the placement of Church and Community Workers in economically depressed areas where the local funding partnership base is extremely limited; and

WHEREAS, the goals of church and community ministry programs are closely aligned with the four mission initiatives of The United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, Church and Community Workers are employed and assigned by Global Ministries; and

Therefore, be it resolved, that Global Ministries continue to recruit, enlist, train, and deploy Church and Community Workers and provide joint funding with other partners; and

Be it further resolved, that the funding partnership continue between the local area, annual conferences, and Global Ministries in order to place Church and Community Workers in mission outreach with economically depressed areas.

Rationale:

A continuing partnership of Global Ministries with annual conferences and locally served areas is strategic to further the missional goal of responding to the needs, hurts, and injustices in the rural and urban context in the USA.

R3241.

Petition Number: 20547-GM-R3241; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

A Covenant to Care: Recognizing and Responding to the Many Faces of HIV/AIDS in the USA

Re-Adopt as Amended:

United Methodists have been in ministry since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They have followed the way of healing, ministry, hospitality, advocacy, and service shown by Jesus Christ. According to the Gospel of Luke (4:16-21), Jesus identified himself and his task with that of the servant Lord, the one who was sent to bring good tidings to the afflicted, hope to the brokenhearted, liberty to the captives, and comfort to all who mourn, giving them the oil of gladness and the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Isaiah 61:1-3). God's Word calls us to a ministry of healing, a ministry that understands healing not only in physiological terms but also as wholeness of spiritual, mental, physical, and social being.

The Context of Caring Ministry in the United States

In recent years, AIDS in the United States has received less media attention, but that does not mean the disease has gone away. Though medical drugs can prolong the life of people who have been infected, there is no cure for AIDS. Not only must our commitment to ministry continue, but it must also expand, particularly in the area of prevention education.

HIV/AIDS affects and infects a broad cross section of people in the United States and Puerto Rico: all ages, all races, both sexes, all sexual orientations. ~~The cumulative number of AIDS cases reported to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) through December 2008 is 1,106,391. Adult and adolescent AIDS cases total 851,974 among males and 211,804 among females.[1] According to Centers of Disease Control (CDC), at the end of 2016, 1,008,929 people in the United States, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the Republic of Palau, and the US Virgin Islands were diagnosed with HIV infection. The number of new cases reported in 2017 was 38,739 (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>).~~

In the early 1980s, most people with AIDS were gay white men. Overall incidences of new cases of AIDS increased rapidly through the 1980s, peaked in the early 1990s, and then declined. However, new cases of AIDS among African Americans increased. By 1996, more cases of AIDS were reported among African Americans than any other racial/ethnic population. ~~The number of people~~

diagnosed with AIDS has also increased, with American Indians and Alaska Natives in 2005 ranking 3rd after African Americans and Hispanics.^[2] In 2005, the rate of adult/adolescent AIDS cases per 100,000 population was 71.3 among African Americans, 27.8 among Hispanics, 10.4 among Native Americans/Alaska Natives, 8.8 among whites, and 7.4 among Asians/Pacific Islanders.^[2] Though national surveillance data does not record the hearing status of people with HIV/AIDS, the Department of Health and Human Services believes that deaf and hard-of-hearing people have been disproportionately infected with HIV.^[3]

The CDC tracks diagnoses of HIV infection among seven racial and ethnic groups. In 2017, the African American community ranked first (16,694); then White (10,049); Hispanic/Latino (9,908); Asian (945); American Indian/Alaska Native (212), People of multiple races (872), and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (59) (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>). At the end of 2015, CDC estimated that of the 1.1 million people who had HIV, about 15%, or 1 in 7, did not know they were infected (in 2006, 25% were unaware of their status) (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>).

As of December 2006, according to CDC estimates, more than one million people in the United States were infected with HIV. One-quarter of these were unaware of their status! Approximately 56,300 new HIV infections occur each year: about 75 percent men and 25 percent women. Of these newly infected people, almost half are African Americans, 30 percent are white, 17 percent are Hispanic. A small percentage of men and women are part of other racial/ethnic groups.^[4] No longer is HIV a disease of white gay men or of the east and west coast; it has not been for more than a decade. In 2007, 40 percent of persons with AIDS were living in the South, 29 percent in the Northeast, 20 percent in the West, 11 percent in the Midwest, and 3 percent in the US territories.^[5] Southern states account for about 44% of all people diagnosed with HIV in the U.S., although those states represent only 37% of the U.S. population. The South has higher diagnosis rates in suburban and rural areas as compared to other regions nationwide and this challenges prevention efforts. African Americans, both women and men, account for 54% of new diagnoses in 2014 (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/policies/cdc-hiv-in-the-south-issue-brief.pdf>).

The large and growing Hispanic population in the United States is also heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. Although Hispanics accounted for 14.4 percent of the United States population in 2005, they accounted for 25.6 18.9 percent of all new AIDS diagnoses in 2017 persons who received an AIDS diagnosis.^[8] (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>).

United Methodist churches, districts, and conferences can help to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS by providing sound, comprehensive, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive preventive education, including information that abstinence from both sex and injection drug use is the safest way to prevent HIV/AIDS. In addition, the church can provide grounding in Christian values, something that cannot be done in public schools or in governmental publications on HIV/AIDS.

Youth and Young Adults: AIDS is increasingly affecting and infecting our next generation of leaders, particularly among racial and ethnic minorities. In 2007, African American blacks and Latinos/Hispanics accounted for 87 percent of all new HIV infections among 13- to 19-year-olds and 79 percent of HIV infections among 20- to 24-year-olds in the United States, even though together they represent only about 32 percent of people in these ages.^[6]

HIV is affecting our next generation of leaders, particularly those from racial and ethnic minorities. In 2017 young people aged 13-24 accounted for 21% of all new infections. They were largely from minority groups (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>).

Racial and Ethnic Minorities: African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans have been disproportionately infected with HIV/AIDS. Representing only an estimated 12 percent of the total US population, African Americans make up almost half, 45 percent, of all AIDS cases reported in the country. While there were fewer new HIV infections among black women than black men in 2006, CDC's new analysis finds that black women are far more affected by HIV than women of other races.^[7]

It is critical to prevent patterns of risk behaviors that may lead to HIV infection before they start. Clear communications between parents and their children about sex, drugs, and AIDS is an important step. Church, school, and community-based prevention education is another step. Youth and young adults must be actively involved in this process, including peer education.

The large and growing Hispanic population in the United States is also heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. Although Hispanics accounted for 14.4 percent of the United States population in 2005, they accounted for 25.6 18.9 percent of all new AIDS diagnoses in 2017. persons who received an AIDS diagnosis.^[8] (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>).

Women: AIDS among women has been mostly "an invisible epidemic" even though women have been affected and infected since the beginning. Young Women of color are especially impacted by the disease. Though in recent years HIV diagnoses among women have declined, in 2017 more than 7,000 women received an HIV diagno-

sis in the United States and the associated areas of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the Republic of Palau, and the US Virgin Islands. 59% of these were Black or African American, and in 86% of these cases, transmission was through heterosexual contact (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/gender/women/index.html>). The majority of female adults and adolescents living with an HIV diagnosis in 2008 were infected with the virus through heterosexual contact (73 percent). An estimated 15 percent of diagnosed HIV infections in 2009 among females were attributed to injection drug use.[9] Of the total number of new HIV infections in US women in 2009, 57 percent occurred in blacks, 21 percent were in whites, and 16 percent were in Hispanic/Latinas.[10] Reducing the toll of the epidemic among women will require efforts to combat substance abuse and reduce HIV risk behaviors.[10]

People who are Deaf, Late-Deafened, and Hard of Hearing: In the United States, Because studies on the deaf or hard of hearing in the United States are limited, and it is unclear how many people in this sub-population are living with HIV/AIDS; but the number it is significant (<https://www.poz.com/article/Silence-Deaf-1609-1512>). Estimates fall into a wide range of 8,000 to 40,000 people.[11] The National Center for Health Statistics reports that adults with hearing loss have poorer health and increased risk of engaging in health risk behaviors than adults with good hearing. The rate of substance use disorder among deaf or hard of hearing is higher than among the general population. Substance use, in turn, is linked to higher risk for HIV infections.[11] Undergraduate deaf college students scored significantly lower on the HIV/AIDS Knowledge Index than hearing undergraduate students. This lack of knowledge about HIV disease contributes to the fact that the deaf are often not diagnosed with HIV until symptomatic and die sooner than hearing individuals.[11] Many people erroneously assume that American Sign Language (ASL) users have high English proficiency, but the truth is that ASL has its own grammar and syntax and communicates in concepts. As a result, HIV prevention and treatment materials are often culturally inappropriate and linguistically incomprehensible for the deaf and hard of hearing.[11] Developing communication methods appropriate for the deaf or hard of hearing may help reduce health risk behaviors in this population and ensure equal access to health services. These methods may include peer to peer communication, as research suggests that the deaf are more likely to learn from each other rather than from formal information sources.[11]

Older Adults: The number of persons 50 years and older living with HIV/AIDS has been increasing in recent years.[12] In 2017, persons aged 50 and older accounted

for 17% of new HIV infections (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>). 2005, persons aged 50 and older accounted for 24 percent of persons living with HIV/AIDS (increased from 17 percent in 2001). Some older persons may be less knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS and therefore less likely to protect themselves.[12] Reaching this group of people with HIV prevention messages means exploring avenues such as church, widows' support groups at senior centers, and Golden Age Clubs at community centers and churches.

Drug-Associated HIV Transmission: In 2015, 6% of all new HIV diagnoses in the United States were attributed to Since the epidemic began, intravenous injection drug use (IDU). If the current rates continue, 1 in 23 women and 1 in 36 men who inject drugs will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/cdc-hiv-idu-fact-sheet.pdf>). has directly and indirectly accounted for more than one-third (36 percent) of AIDS cases in the US. Racial and ethnic minorities in the US are most heavily affected by IDU-associated AIDS. In 2000, IDU-associated AIDS accounted for 26 percent of all cases among African Americans and 31 percent among Hispanic adults and adolescents, compared with 19 percent of all cases among white adults/adolescents. Noninjection drugs such as cocaine also contribute to the spread of the epidemic when users trade sex for drugs or money, or when they engage in risky sexual behavior that they might not engage in when sober.[13]

HIV prevention and treatment, substance abuse prevention, and sexually transmitted disease treatment and prevention services must be better integrated to take advantage of the multiple opportunities for intervention:—first, to help uninfected people stay that way; second, to help infected people stay healthy; and third, to help infected individuals initiate and sustain behaviors that will keep themselves safe and prevent transmission to others. Efforts such as needle exchange programs need to be implemented and/ or expanded in order for the spread of HIV to be reduced.

It is critical to prevent patterns of risky behaviors that may lead to HIV infection before they start. Clear communications between parents and their children about sex, drugs, and AIDS is an important step. Church, school, and community-based prevention education is another step. Youth and young adults must be actively involved in this process, including peer education.

The Challenge for Ministry

Across the United States, in churches large and small, pastors and laity have asked, "What can my church do?" Churches can build on areas which are already doing well; they can covenant to care. Churches and other United Methodist organizations need to continue or begin com-

passionate ministry with persons living with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones. In terms of prevention education, United Methodists have an opportunity to teach not only the facts about HIV transmission and how to prevent infection but to relate these facts to Christian values. Congregations can do HIV/AIDS prevention education in broader contexts, such as human sexuality and holistic health, as well as addressing societal problems, such as racism, sexism, addiction, and poverty. We call on United Methodists to respond:

1. Churches should be places of openness and caring for persons with AIDS and their loved ones. We ask congregations to work to overcome attitudinal and behavioral barriers in church and community that create stigma and discrimination of persons with AIDS and their loved ones. Congregations can offer Christian hospitality and become arks of refuge to all. We must remember that:

- the face that AIDS wears is always the face of a person created and loved by God;
- the face that AIDS wears is always the face of a person who is someone's mother or father, husband or wife, son or daughter, brother or sister, loved one or best friend;
- the face that AIDS wears is always the face of a person who is the most important person in someone else's life.

2. Each congregation and annual conference, through their church and society committees, should mobilize persons for legislative advocacy at the local, state, and national levels to support for HIV/AIDS initiatives in the United States. These advocacy efforts will be strengthened through partnerships with organizations/coalitions who are currently involved in this issue.

3. Educational efforts about AIDS should use reliable medical and scientific information about the disease, transmission, and prevention. Two more recent and impactful initiatives are:

- U=U (Undetectable = Untransmissible): Anti-Retroviral medication taken consistently can reduce a person's viral load until it cannot be detected or transmitted. Having an undetectable viral load is the best thing people with HIV can do to stay healthy. In addition to that, they have effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to an HIV-negative partner through sexual contact (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/art/cdc-hiv-tasp-101.pdf>).

- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis): A daily medication that can reduce the chance of infection through sexual contact by more than 90% (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/factsheets/prep101-consumer-info.pdf>).

Spiritual resources must also be included to enable people to address issues related to discipleship, ministry, human sexuality, health and wholeness, and death and dying. Education helps to prepare congregations to respond

appropriately when they learn that a member has been infected by the HIV virus or diagnosed with AIDS. It can lead to the development of sound policies, educational materials and procedures related to the church school, nurseries, and other issues of institutional participation. Prevention education can save lives.

4. Each congregation should discern the appropriate response for its context. Ministries should be developed, whenever possible, in consultation and collaboration with local departments of public health and with other United Methodist, ecumenical, interfaith, and community-based groups concerned about the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Congregations can organize to provide spiritual, emotional, physical and/or financial support to those in their community who are caring at home or elsewhere for a person who has AIDS. Projects might include observing events such as World AIDS Day (December 1) and the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS (first week in March), sponsoring support groups for people with AIDS and their loved ones, developing strong general church programs for children and youth that also include AIDS education, pastoral counseling, recruiting volunteers, and offering meeting space for community-based organizations, including groups trying to overcome substance abuse and sexual addiction.

5. The people of The United Methodist Church has a congregational HIV/AIDS ministry are called to a the Covenant to Care Program, whose basic principle is "If you have HIV/AIDS or are the loved one of a person who has HIV/AIDS, you are welcome here." We commend those who have been engaged in this welcoming ministry through this program and recommend this "Covenant to Care" to all United Methodist organizations: The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee works with a network for ambassadors whose role is one of care, support, and information. More information is available on the website at UMGAC website: www.umglobalaidsfund.com (<http://www.umglobalaidsfund.com>). ~~More information is available on the General Board of Global Ministries' website at <http://gbgm-umc.org/health/aids/> [14] <<http://gbgm-umc.org/health/aids/%5B14%5D%3E>>:-~~

6. United Methodist churches, districts, and conferences can help to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS by providing sound, comprehensive, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive preventive education, including information that abstinence from both sex and intravenous injection drug use are the safest way to prevent HIV/AIDS. In addition, the church can provide grounding in Christian values, something that cannot be done in public schools or in governmental publications on HIV/AIDS. Resources on HIV/AIDS are available from the Global Health Unit of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (<https://www.umcmmission.org/learn-about-us/our-work/>

global-health) and from The United Methodist Global AIDS Committee (www.umglobalaidsfund.com; <http://www.umglobalaidsfund.com>).

[1.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report* 2008. <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/surveillance/resources/reports/2008>> report/

[2.] National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Fact Sheet: HIV Statistics (December 2005). (31 January 2006)

[3.] Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "Programs: The Deaf and Hard of Hearing and HIV/AIDS." <<http://hab.hrsa.gov/programs/fact-sheets/deaffact.htm>> (4 March 2003)

[4.] National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Fact Sheet: HIV Statistics (December 2002). (31 January 2003)

[5.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "US HIV and AIDS Cases Re-ported through December 2007 Year-end Report."

[6.] Advocates for Youth.

[7.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV/AIDS among African Americans." 2006. <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/>>

[8.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV/AIDS among Hispanics in the United States." 2006.

[9.] Avert (Averting HIV and AIDS).

[10.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV/AIDS among US Women." 2009. <<http://www.cdc.gov/women/pubs/std.htm>>

[11.] US Department of Health and Human Services, HIV/AIDS Bureau 2008 <<http://hab.hrsa.gov/about/hab-populations/deafhardofhearingfacts.pdf>>

[12.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC HIV/Surveillance Report, 2005 <<http://cdc.gov/hiv/topics/over50/resources/factsheets/over50.htm>>

[13.] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Drug-Associated HIV Trans-mission Continues in the United States," 2002.

[14.] For more information about the Covenant to Care Program or the Church and HIV/AIDS Ministries, contact UMCOR, General Board of Global Ministries, Room 1500, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115; Voice Phone: 212 870 3871; Fax: 212 870 3624; TDD: 212 870 3709. <<http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/health/aids/>>.

ADOPTED 2004

READOPTED 2008

AMENDED AND READOPTED 2012

RESOLUTION #3241, 2008, 2012 *Book of Resolutions*

RESOLUTION #152, 2004 *Book of Resolutions*

RESOLUTION #141, 2000 *Book of Resolutions*

See Social Principles, ¶ 162U.

Rationale:

Because HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant health issue in the U.S. and an important area of ministry for the United States congregations, this resolution should be readopted, as amended. The amendments principally update HIV/AIDS data.

R3243.

Petition Number: 20546-GM-R3243-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

The Church and the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Re-Adopt as Amended :

In response to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, The United Methodist Church will work cooperatively with colleague churches in every region. The Bible is replete with calls to nations, religious leaders, and faithful people to address the needs of those who are suffering, ill, and in distress. Jesus Christ reached out and healed those who came to him, including people who were despised and rejected because of their illnesses and afflictions. His identification with suffering people was made clear when he said that "whatsoever you do to the least of these, you also do to me" (Matthew 25:40, paraphrased). His commandment that "you should treat people in the same way that you want people to treat you" (Matthew 7:12) is a basis for the church for full involvement and compassionate response.

The Global Impact of HIV/AIDS

The global statistics are still grim. Since the first cases of HIV were diagnosed and reported more than 35 years ago, 78 million people have become infected with HIV and 35 million have died from AIDS-related illnesses. <http://www.unaids.org/en/whoweare/about?gclid=EAIaIQobChMItsm6hdqq4QIVehgMCh2rugmDEAAYASAAEgIkD_BwE>. In 2017 approximately 36.9 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS. Of these, 1.8 million were children, under 15 years of age. That year about 1.8 million individuals were newly infected, which means approximately 5,000 new infections per day. However, new HIV infections have been reduced by 47% since the peak in 1996 and AIDS-related deaths have declined by more than 51% since the peak in 2004. <<https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/global-statistics>>.

At the end of 2007, 33 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS in the world; of these 31 million were adults and 2 million were children.

At this time, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. It is mainly spread mainly through intimate sexual contact with an infected person, by needle-sharing among injecting drug users, from mother to child at birth or during

breastfeeding and, less commonly, through transfusions of infected blood or blood clotting factors. HIV can also be contracted if unsterilized needles tainted with infected blood are used by health care workers, tattooists, and acupuncturists. Other routes of transmission are through transplantation of organs from infected individuals, donated semen, and skin piercing instruments used in cosmetic, traditional, and ceremonial practices. AIDS is not caused by witchcraft, mosquito bites, or nonsexual contact such as shaking hands or hugs.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic compounds the strain on institutions and resources, while at the same time undermining social systems that enable people to cope with adversity. In seriously affected nations, HIV/AIDS compromises education and health systems, shrinks economic output and undermines sociopolitical stability. With life expectancy falling and the labor force becoming decimated, many countries are facing low economic growth rates. In parts of southern Africa, a food shortage has added to the woes. Agricultural productivity is declining as more and more women and young people are infected and become unable to work in the fields. The ramifications of HIV/AIDS are particularly grave for societies where the extended family is the system of social security for the care of elderly people, those who are ill, and orphans. However, where HIV counseling, testing, and ongoing treatment are available, people living with HIV live better and longer. Stigma becomes the major source of harm and it stops people from accessing services.

Women and Children

Women and children have been affected in increasing numbers. Deaths from AIDS have left 15 million orphans in Africa. Over 13.4 million children are living without one or both parents due to AIDS and about 95% live with their extended family. More than 80% live in sub-Saharan Africa (<https://www.pepfar.gov/press/258063.htm>). These children are being looked after by extended families, older siblings in child-headed households, and orphan trusts. Older relatives, especially women, have to bear an enormous burden of taking care of the orphans. In countries that are also affected by war and civil strife, children and young people are more vulnerable to becoming infected with HIV because they are at the higher risk of sexual abuse, forced military recruitment, and prostitution.

This burden is increased when women are also faced with stigma and discrimination and the hardships of civil strife, war, and famine. HIV disproportionately affects women and adolescent girls because of vulnerabilities created by unequal cultural, social, and economic status. Women often have less status and less access to education, health care, and economic security than men, which in turn affect their ability to protect themselves from in-

fection. Many cannot say “no” or negotiate the use of condoms because they fear they will be divorced or that their husband or other male partner will respond by battering them. Pregnant women who are HIV positive may be subjected to forced sterilizations or abortions. The use of rape and sexual violence as instruments of war adds a further serious dimension. Consequently, women account for more than 50% of people living with HIV worldwide. Young women (10-24 years old) are twice as likely to acquire HIV as young men the same age. Restricted social autonomy of women and young girls can reduce their ability to access sexual health and HIV services (<https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/women>). As of 2008 according to UNAIDS, 16 million of the 33 million persons infected with AIDS are women.

Health budgets and resources are being adversely affected in countries that have to care for increasing numbers of citizens afflicted with HIV/AIDS. For example, it costs approximately \$200 to treat a person for a year using the cheapest form of generic antiretroviral drugs; In 2000, the cost of a year’s supply of first-line HIV treatment was about US \$10,000 per person; however, in 2012, it was less than \$100 per person (<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2012/july/20120706prafriatreatment>). Yet, but very few can afford this medicine in sub-Saharan Africa. Antiretroviral drugs and other medicines must be made available at an affordable cost, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Until effective preventive strategies are implemented, helpful medicines are made universally available, and an effective vaccine is introduced, the future is bleak for deterring the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The suffering borne by individuals, families, and communities and the strain placed on health-care facilities and national economies, call for intensified cooperative efforts by every sector of society, including the church, to slow and prevent the spread of HIV, provide appropriate care of those already ill and speed the development of an effective and affordable vaccine. Those caring for AIDS patients need support too. Communities, health-care workers, and home-care programs must be equipped to meet the challenge.

Drugs and AIDS

Of the 33 million persons living with HIV, one million are intravenous injecting drug users. Many more have used, and continue to use, alcohol and other drugs.

The international drug trade knows no boundaries or frontiers and has no specific national identity. It is now worth an estimated \$400 billion per year and is organized and managed like a multi-national corporation. Drugs of

all kinds are now produced in all regions of the world. Despite its illegality, drug production and distribution has become a major source of revenue for many countries. The most lucrative markets remain in the United States and Western Europe, but consumption is spreading fast in Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and throughout Africa.

In the United States, an estimated one-third of HIV/AIDS cases are related to injecting drug use. Substance abuse is directly tied to the increase in HIV/AIDS among women. Women are primarily infected with HIV through injecting drugs (48 percent) or heterosexual transmission from an infected partner, who is often himself a drug user (54 percent).

People who inject drugs are among the groups most vulnerable to HIV infection. It is estimated that people who inject drugs are 22 times more likely to acquire HIV than the general population. On average one in ten new HIV infections is caused by the sharing of needles. 13.1% of approximately 11.8 million people who inject drugs worldwide are thought to be living with HIV.

People who inject drugs often have the least access to HIV prevention, treatment, and health care because drug use is criminalized and stigmatized. These people often are living in poverty (<https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/people-inject-drugs>).

In 2015, 6% of HIV diagnoses in the United States were attributed to IDU and another 3% to male-to-male sexual contact and IDU. 59% of infections were among men, and 41% among women. If current rates continue, 1 in 23 women who inject drugs and 1 in 36 men who inject drugs will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/cdc-hiv-idu-fact-sheet.pdf>).

Research has shown over and over again that drug use, injected or otherwise, can affect decision-making, especially about engaging in unsafe sex, which in turn promotes the spread of AIDS.

The Role of United Methodists

The global AIDS pandemic provides a nearly unparalleled opportunity for witness to the gospel through service, advocacy, and other healing ministries. United Methodist public health specialists, health workers, social workers, teachers, missionaries, clergy, and laity live and work in areas where the AIDS pandemic is spreading. United Methodist congregations, schools, health facilities, women's, men's, and youth groups can play a major role by providing awareness, support, education, and care to those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations

In response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the world, The United Methodist Church commits itself to a holistic ap-

proach of awareness, education, prevention, treatment, community organizing and public advocacy. Out of our love and concern for our brothers, sisters and children in our local and global communities, the following actions are strongly recommended.

A. Local congregations worldwide to:

1. be places of openness where persons whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS can name their pain and reach out for compassion, understanding, and acceptance in the presence of persons who bear Christ's name;

2. provide care and support to individuals and families whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS;

3. be centers of education and provide group support and encouragement to help men, women, and youth refrain from activities and behaviors associated with transmission of HIV infection;

4. advocate for increased levels of funding for HIV/AIDS. In the United States, persons should contact their US Congresspersons and urge adequate funding for the Global Fund for AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria as well as the United States' bilateral initiatives on AIDS. Additionally, funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) must be guaranteed from the United States each year. UNFPA works diligently to provide resources for reproductive health of women and girls as well as HIV/AIDS prevention;

5. observe World AIDS Day on or around December 1 each year. Materials for World AIDS Day are available from the websites of UNAIDS (<http://www.unaids.org>) <<http://www.unaids.org>> (<https://www.unaids.org/en/site-search#?cludoquery=world%20aids%20day%202018&cludopage=1&cludorefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unaids.org%2Fen%2Fresources%2Ffact-sheet&cludorefpt=Global%20HIV%20%26%20AIDS%20statistics%20%E2%80%94%202018%20fact%20sheet%20%7C%20UNAIDS&cludorefact=%20World%20AIDS%20Day&cludorefaci=6>); <https://www.unaids.org/en/site-search>), the General Board of Global Ministries (See https://www.globalministries.org/special_days_aids_day_index) (<<http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Programs/Global-Health/HIV/>>), and the General Board of Church and Society (<http://www.umc-gbcs.org>; <http://www.umc-gbcs.org/>; <https://www.umcsc.org/just-save-one-world-aids-day-a-chance-to-extend-gods-grace/>);

6. include problems of alcohol, drug abuse and unsafe sex and the value of abstinence as part of Christian education;

7. provide support, comfort, and care to those afflicted with alcohol-related problems, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS within their given mandate and work to implement needle exchange programs locally as a means of reducing the spread of AIDS;

8. make available creative programs and activities for school children, youth, and young adults that keep them away from alcohol and drug abuse; and

9. promote and make available peer education models based on empowerment and self-determination.

B. General program agencies to:

1. assist related health institutions to obtain supplies and equipment to screen donated blood and provide voluntary HIV testing;

2. support efforts by churches, projects, and mission personnel within regions to promote disease prevention and to respond to the needs of family care providers and extended families;

3. facilitate partnership relationships between institutions and personnel from region to region, as appropriate, to share models and effective approaches regarding prevention, education, care, and support for individuals and families with HIV/AIDS;

4. assist health workers to obtain regional specific, timely updates on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of HIV/AIDS;

5. facilitate the sharing of pastoral-care resources and materials dedicated to the care of persons and families whose lives have been touched by HIV;

6. respond to requests from the regions to develop training seminars and workshops for church-related personnel in cooperation with ecumenical efforts, private voluntary organizations, and programs already existing in the regions;

7. advocate national, regional, and international cooperation in the development, availability, and transport of appropriate/ relevant equipment and supplies for infection control, disease prevention, and treatment;

8. support programs that focus on the enhancement of women through economic justice and education as well as programs that provide comprehensive reproductive health services, family planning, and HIV/AIDS prevention information;

~~9. work cooperatively with~~ obtain resources from the General Board of Church and Society Office of the Special Program on Substance Abuse and Related Violence (SPSARV) of the General Board of Global Ministries on issues related to drugs and AIDS (<https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/health-and-wholeness/addictions>; <https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/6>; <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-we-care-about/health-and-wholeness/hiv-aids>), as well the Global Health Unit of the General Board of Global Ministries; and

10. urge the federal government to improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination to fight the double scourge of drugs and AIDS (General Board of Church and Society). ~~and General Board of Global Ministries).~~

C. Annual conferences to:

1. explore HIV prevention and care needs within their areas and to develop conference-wide plans for appropriate, effective responses;

2. promote pastoral responses to persons with HIV/AIDS that affirm the presence of God's love, grace, and healing mercies;

3. encourage every local church to reach out through proclamation and education to help prevent the spread of HIV infection and to utilize and strengthen the efforts and leadership potential of men's, women's, and youth groups.

D. Episcopal leaders to:

1. issue pastoral letters calling for compassionate ministries and the development of educational programs that recognize the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat of major global and regional significance;

2. provide a level of leadership equal to the suffering and desperation that individuals, families, and communities are experiencing; and

~~3. Partner with the UMC Global AIDS Fund to mobilize funding for AIDS projects around the world and in the annual conferences. Consult the UM Global Aids Committee regarding program ideas and resources.~~

God's Unconditional Love and Christ's Healing Ministry

The unconditional love of God, witnessed to and manifested through Christ's healing ministry, provides an ever-present sign and call to the church and all persons of faith to join efforts to prevent the spread of HIV, provide care and treatment to those who are already infected and ill, uphold the preciousness of God's creation through proclamation and affirmation, and be harbingers of hope, mercy, goodness, forgiveness, and reconciliation within the world.

The United Methodist Church unequivocally condemns stigmatization and discrimination of persons with HIV/AIDS and violence perpetrated against persons who are or are presumed to be infected with HIV. The United Methodist Church advocates the full involvement of the church at all levels to be in ministry with, and to respond fully to the needs of, persons, families, and communities whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS. In keeping with our faith in the risen Christ, we confess our belief that God has received those who have died, that the wounds of living loved ones will be healed, and that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is present among us as we strive to exemplify what it means to be bearers of Christ's name in the midst of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

See Social Principles, ¶¶ 165B and 162U

ADOPTED 2004

REVISED AND READOPTED 2008, 2012

RESOLUTION #3243, 2008, 2012 *Book of Resolutions*

RESOLUTION #298, 2004 *Book of Resolutions*

RESOLUTION #278, 2000 *Book of Resolutions*

Rationale:

Because HIV/AIDS is still a global scourge calling for action by the church and society, this resolution should be readopted as amended. Amendments provide updated information.

R3395.

Petition Number: 20579-GM-R3395-G; Matheny, Judy - WV, USA for Rural Chaplains Association.

Rural Chaplains in Ministry

Delete # 3395, Ministries of Rural Chaplains, and substitute a revised version to read as follows:

3395 Rural Chaplains in Ministry

WHEREAS, rural chaplains are lay and clergy women and men who have sensed the call to live in, work with, and advocate for town and rural persons, families, churches, and communities; and

WHEREAS, rural chaplains serve as a voice for justice and an instrument of hope and healing for those who experience pain and hardships in facing issues including economic, educational, health, social, multicultural, and spiritual struggles; and

WHEREAS, the Rural Chaplains Association plans an annual focus event to provide both lay and clergy rural chaplains a supportive setting for sharing insights and perspectives on rural churches and communities, including consequential learning from experiential exposures related to issues such as immigration, migrant workers, farm workers, rural businesses, health, public education, and social agencies; and

WHEREAS, rural chaplains work with other prophetic persons/groups on the local level who are committed to long-term involvement aimed at developing local and outside resources to assist with transformation of the lives of rural congregations and communities; and

WHEREAS, the Rural Chaplains Association seeks to expand its international/global linkages in order to expose participants to cultural, economic, political, ecological, and religious life of rural people from places around the world; and

WHEREAS, the Rural Chaplains Association was formed to be a ministry of presence as it provides a place for sharing struggles, losses, celebrations, and healing in the midst of continuing decline in many rural areas; and

WHEREAS, the General Conference for the past six quadrennia has affirmed the Rural Chaplains Association and the ministry of rural chaplains;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church reaffirm the Rural Chaplains Association and the ministries of care, justice, and nurture that rural chaplains continue to carry out with God's people in rural areas, small towns, and village communities; and

Be it further resolved, that Global Ministries be encouraged to continue an active and ongoing relationship with the Rural Chaplains Association.

R6051.

Petition Number: 20545-GM-R6051; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

United States-China Political Relations

Re-Adopt resolution in its entirety.

Rationale:

This resolution, dating back to 1984, recognizes the value of the constructive, mutually beneficial, peaceful relations and partnerships the United States has with the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Re-adopting the resolution will affirm the importance of maintaining those relationships, notwithstanding existing conflicts, tensions and human rights issues.

R6128.

Petition Number: 20544-GM-R6128-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Seeking Peace in Afghanistan

Re-Adopt as Amended:

Neither by power, nor by strength,

but by my spirit, says the LORD of heavenly forces.

—Zechariah 4:6

US military involvement in Afghanistan now represents the longest war in US history. The involvement of North American Treaty Organization (NATO) forces constitutes the largest military operation outside of its role in Europe. For Afghans, the current war involving more than 100,000 foreign military troops is simply the latest in a long history of foreigners trying to impose by military might their own agenda in Afghanistan.

While generals and government officials all acknowledge that there is "no military solution" in Afghanistan,

they continue to place their primary trust in weapons. Yet the psalmist reminds us, “A warhorse is a bad bet for victory; it can’t save despite its great strength” (Psalm 33:17).

Tragically, the situation on the ground has worsened. ~~The number of US/NATO foreign troops in Afghanistan has tripled since 2008,¹ and so has the number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Consequently, civilian~~ Civilian casualties have escalated significantly, with many going unreported. The majority of the public in the United States and NATO countries opposes ongoing war and troop involvement. Most Afghans want an end to decades of war and for foreign troops to leave.

Since 2006, the ~~steady increase continued presence~~ of troops has fanned popular resentment at foreign troops and the corrupt Afghan government officials they support. ~~More troops both foreign and Afghan has increased the~~ The number of violent attacks by insurgents and coalition forces alike has increased and devoted precious resources to weapons rather than health care, education, and community development.

The war has expanded to Pakistan as well. Armed insurgent groups operate on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and the United States has greatly increased unmanned drone strikes in remote Pakistani villages. Very little effort is made to account for civilian casualties from these strikes, and some bombings are based on faulty intelligence. Such remote bombings—especially in noncombat zones—create widespread resentment among the families and communities hit, making them a recruiting tool for armed groups. These attacks in noncombat zones are similar to targeted assassinations or extrajudicial killings that are strongly prohibited under international law and sharply criticized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killings and numerous human rights advocates. It sets a disturbing precedent for governments to take the law into their own hands.

For more than ~~3040~~ years, governments and armed groups have pumped billions of dollars in weapons into Afghanistan with bitter consequences for the people. The continuing militarization of Afghan society has taken significant resources away from diplomatic and development work in a deeply impoverished, war-torn land. United Methodists have long expressed concern that those who suffer the most in war are women and children. Indeed, Afghanistan has one of the highest infant² and maternal mortality³ rates (see <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?view=map>; <https://data.unicef.org/country/afg/>; World Health Organization, Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008, Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2010, Annex 1, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500265_eng.pdf), and average life

expectancy is mid-40s. While each year the United States and other governments devote over \$100 ~~tens of~~ billions of dollars to weapons and soldiers;⁴ (see World Health Organization, Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008, Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2010, see Annex 1, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500265_eng.pdf), one in four Afghan children still will not reach the age of 5.5 (World Population Prospects, Table A.19). By contrast, for more than ~~4550~~ years United Methodists and other humanitarian organizations, in partnership with local Afghans, have supported health care and community development work in Afghanistan.

The United Methodist Social Principles recognize that “Conflicts and war impoverish the population on all sides, and an important way to support the poor will be to work for peaceful solutions” (§ 163E). United Methodists also recognize that women have long taken the lead in calling and working for peace. In October 2001, Women’s Division directors adopted a resolution that asked United Methodist Women to: “Urge the president to use diplomatic means to bring the perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice and to end the bombing of Afghanistan.”

We recall the words of US representative Barbara Lee (California) in September 2001, who was the lone voice at that time in the US government to question military action against Afghanistan. She warned in a House of Representatives floor speech on September 14, 2001, “If we rush to launch a counterattack, we run too great a risk that women, children, and other noncombatants will be caught in the crossfire. . . . [W]e must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target. We cannot repeat past mistakes.”

We confess that years of war and pumping of weapons into Afghanistan, along with years of silence by too many of us in churches, has not served the needs of people—in Afghanistan or at home—but rather prolonged a cycle of militarism, violence, and suffering. Today the United States as 5 percent of the world’s population devotes almost the same amount of resources to military spending as the other 95 percent of the world combined.⁶ (see Christopher Hellman and Travis Sharp, “The FY 2009 Pentagon Spending Request,” Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, February 22, 2008, http://armscontrolcenter.org/policy/securityspending/articles/fy09_dod_request_global). Forty-five Over 50 years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. warned that “a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death” (“Beyond Vietnam” speech, April 4, 1967). We are haunted by the prophet Habakkuk’s lament, “Their own might is their god!” (Habakkuk 1:11 NRSV). May we find the courage to join with Afghans

and neighboring Pakistanis and all who seek to transform today's glut of swords into iron plows.

~~In November 2009, 79 United Methodist bishops signed an open letter to the US president calling on him to turn from military escalation "to set a timetable for the withdrawal of all coalition forces by the end of 2010."~~ Our long-standing conviction that "war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ" and our call into discipleship as peacemakers have led us in our Social Principles to declare, "We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government" (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2008, ¶ 165C).

Now in the ongoing war in Afghanistan we must also challenge any preemptive arguments for prolonging war and militarization of the society. The argument that more than \$100 billion per year should be devoted to waging war in the hopes of "denying a future safe haven to terrorists" when those same funds devoted to meeting the ~~Mil-~~lennium Sustainable Development Goals in health care would save tens of thousands of lives across the globe is neither moral, sustainable, nor realistic.

We offer the following points for reflection and action as we seek to live out our Christian vocation as peacemakers:

1. Urge prompt and complete withdrawal of US/NATO forces as a necessary step toward demilitarizing the region and promoting Afghan-led peace talks among all parties. We urge an immediate unilateral cease-fire, an end to night raids, and an end to bombings as initial confidence-building steps toward demilitarization and reconciliation. We support peace that includes Afghan women in all negotiations in a substantive way.

2. We call for an immediate end to drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which have escalated exponentially since 2008. We support full and independent investigations into all such bombings to account for civilian casualties.

3. End the militarization of Afghanistan. Most US foreign aid to Afghanistan currently goes to training, equipping, and funding the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police, and to private security contractors. Foreign aid has helped train several hundred thousand Afghan men as soldiers and police while funding training for only 2,500 Afghan midwives.⁷ (Abby Sugrue, "Afghan Mothers Delivered into Good Hands," USAID Frontlines, January 2011, available: www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_jan11/FL_jan11_AFmothers.html). This is neither just nor sustainable in the short or long term. Lasting human security and stability in Afghanistan will come through diplomacy, education, and health care, not more weapons,

more police, and more soldiers. We urge an end to all arms shipments from all sources.

4. Shifting resources from military spending and training to health and education, where many more women work, is one of the best ways of supporting and empowering Afghan women's leadership. We recognize and commit our support to the creative ways Afghan women are organizing and working in their communities despite war and conflict.

5. Ongoing war in Afghanistan costs nearly \$100+ billion per year. It costs \$1 million per year for each US soldier serving in Afghanistan.⁸ (Christopher Drew, "High Costs Weigh on Troop Debate for Afghan War," New York Times, November 14, 2009, www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/us/politics/15cost.html <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/us/politics/15cost.html>>). These funds are beating plowshares, classrooms, and hospitals into weapons. Teachers, firefighters, and other public employees are facing layoffs in part because the US government keeps redirecting tax dollars from local communities to war overseas. Each dollar spent on war in Afghanistan is taken from women and children and communities in the United States and around the world. War spending endangers civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the home countries of US/NATO forces.

6. Military spending should be shifted to humanitarian and sustainable development work that is not at all connected with any military forces. Humanitarian work should be nonpolitical and not connected with any of the warring parties. Nongovernmental organizations report that health and education work in highly militarized areas is now far more dangerous for internationals and Afghans alike, and many parts of the country are no longer accessible for aid workers. We call for ~~an end to Provincial Reconstruction Teams~~ and a strict separation of humanitarian work from military operations as called for in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct.

7. The apostle Paul reminds us, "God is not mocked. A person will harvest what they plant" (Galatians 6:7). Corruption is best challenged by "first examining the log in our own eye" (Matthew 7:3, paraphrase). We urge cutting off the source of funds for bribes. The huge amounts of foreign money flowing into Afghanistan are largely diverted by warlords and private contractors (both international and Afghan). US forces end up subcontracting warlords to secure the vast military supply line. According to US Representative John Tierney's (Massachusetts) June 2010 congressional report "Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan," \$400 million per year of US security funding ends up in the hands of the Taliban—more than they get from drug sales. Military contractors and defense corporations

(e.g., Blackwater/Xe Services LLC, Dyncorp, Halliburton, Lockheed, etc.) are among the most unaccountable actors in Afghanistan. Cut off funding for private security contractors, as it masks the level of US war spending and personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

ACTIONS

Urge all United Methodists to:

1. Call for a “swords into iron plows” approach in government spending and to develop church and peace-maker alliances with local governments to press national governments to redirect money from war spending to meet human needs.

2. Many young people facing unemployment are being targeted by the military for recruitment. Support peace education, provide counseling on selective conscientious objection, and offer alternative service education options for all high school students, with an emphasis on impoverished communities.

3. Support veterans, families of veterans, and Afghan civilians facing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It has been reported that in since 2009 and 2010 more US veterans and active duty soldiers died from suicide each year than were killed in combat. Raise awareness about the high number of suicides, the increase in domestic violence, and other destructive behaviors brought on by war-related trauma. Support full funding of health care, especially mental health care and traumatic brain injury (TBI), for all affected by war.

4. The war has been used to justify ongoing war spending and increasing repressive measures that stifle dissent and encourage racial profiling of Arab and Muslim people in many countries. (see ~~other General Conference resolutions: “Taking Liberties: On the Stifling of Dissent” and “Prejudice against Muslims”~~). We call on United Methodists to stand with communities facing discrimination and urge all governments to restrain their use of measures that increase racial profiling and scapegoating.

5. Support regional negotiations and diplomacy throughout Central/South Asia with all parties to build cooperation. We support and encourage our partners to monitor that women’s leadership is central in these negotiations; women must be involved in all peace negotiations, and this participation must be real and not simply a token gesture. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on October 31, 2000, directly calls for women to participate equally and fully in all levels of peacemaking and decision-making, from conflict prevention and mitigation to postconflict recovery and transformation. It also calls to end impunity against those who commit violence against women. Durable peace, security, and reconstruction in Afghanistan will not occur with-

out the direct participation of all in the society, including women, who represent half of the population.

ADOPTED 2012

See Social Principles, ¶ 165C.

1. Elisabeth Bumiller, “Troops in Afghanistan Now Outnumber Those in Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 25, 2010, available: <http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/05/25/troops-in-afghanistan-now-outnumber-those-in-iraq/>. The total number of NATO troops as of November 2010 is 130,930-BBC News, “Afghan Troop Map: U.S. and NATO Deployments,” November 19, 2010, available www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11795066.—The total number of NATO troops in 2009 was 55,100-International Security Assistance Force, North American Treaty Organization, “ISAF Regional Commands and PRT Locations,” January 12, 2009, available: www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat_archive/isaf_placemat_090112.pdf.

2. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision*, New York: United Nations, 2007, available: www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2006/WPP2006_Highlights_rev.pdf, see Table A.18.

3. World Health Organization, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2008*, Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2010, available: http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500265_eng.pdf, see Annex 1.

4. Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011, available: www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf, see Table 1, p. 3.

5. *World Population Prospects*, see Table A.19.

6. Christopher Hellman and Travis Sharp, “The FY 2009 Pentagon Spending Request,” Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, February 22, 2008, available: http://armscontrolcenter.org/policy/securityspending/articles/fy09_dod_request_global.

7. Abby Sugrue, “Afghan Mothers Delivered into Good Hands,” USAID Frontlines, January 2011, available: www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_jan11/FL_jan11-AFmothers.html.

8. Christopher Drew, “High Costs Weigh on Troop Debate for Afghan War,” *New York Times*, November 14, 2009, available: www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/us/politics/15cost.html.

Rationale:

For more than 50 years, Global Ministries has been supporting mission, humanitarian work, and sustainable health and community development in Afghanistan, despite 40 years of war and conflict that persist today. This

updated resolution recommends ways to support Afghan peace and development, including participation and leadership of Afghan women.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20596-GM-R9999-G; Pérez, Lyssette - Egg Harbor Township, NJ, USA for MARCHA.

Mandate for Racial-Ethnic Ministries

WHEREAS, the Great Commission calls The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church endeavors to reflect the beauty of God's diverse world as proclaimed in Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV), "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" and

WHEREAS, the U.S. church is still 90 percent white (according to the most recent data from the denomination General Council of Finance and Administration), while racial ethnics made up 40 percent of the U.S. population in 2018, according to a Pew Research Center Report; and

WHEREAS, the United States' diversity remains on the rise with all racial/ethnic minorities growing faster than whites, according to U.S. Census Bureau; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2012 that 50.4 percent of all U.S. children under the age of one belonged to racial and ethnic minority groups; and

WHEREAS, the only growth in The UMC membership in the U.S. in the decade of 1996 to 2016 occurred within the racial/ethnic members:

- The Asian-American membership grew +106%
- The Pacific Islander membership grew +101%
- The Hispanic membership grew +78%.
- The African-American membership grew +37%.
- The Native-American membership grew + 23%.
- However the Caucasian membership shrank -21%.;

and

WHEREAS, the Inter-Ethnic Strategy and Development Group (IESDG) represents the five racial/ethnic caucuses of The UMC, and

WHEREAS, IESDG is comprised of over thirty racial/ethnic communities who are making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, even as they struggle to overcome racism, nationalism, and the

effects of oppressive and unjust systems such as immigration, poverty, and other social issues;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church shall dedicate itself to ensuring an appropriate structure and system that will continue to empower and enable the growth of racial/ethnic ministries in our church, so as to align with relevant demographic data;

Be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church shall continue to maintain and fund the 6 racial ethnic plans of The UMC as it is vital for the life of the church:

- Asian American Language Ministry
- Native American Comprehensive Plan,
- National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry,
- Pacific Island Ministry Plan
- Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, and
- United Methodist Council on Korean American Ministries.

Be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church shall ensure that all other racial/ethnic ministries and initiatives, including racial/ethnic scholarships, ethnic local church grants, and other racial/ethnic programs, remain fully supported and funded so that the ministry of our church continues to thrive.

And, be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church shall empower the work of the general agencies as they support our church to expand the grace of God to people of all races, cultures, and nations.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20633-GM-R9999-G; Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Religious Freedom: Grounded in Love

"For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another" (Galatians 5:13-15 NRSV).

The many Epistles in the New Testament were addressed to, and read by, small faith communities facing religious persecution and political repression. The early church often faced beatings, imprisonment, and death for the public expression of their faith. As a religious minority, early Christian communities were frequently accused

of blasphemy against the dominant religion and/or of being a political opposition group that must be suppressed. From the start, Christians have asserted our right to freely respond to God's grace at work in our lives.

Throughout history many different religious communities, notably minorities, have maintained their faithfulness as they faced similar accusations and violent repression. Too often those seeking to maintain or attain political power have yoked religious fervor with use of violence and repression against "the other." As Paul warned the Galatians long ago, today too many neighbors of different faiths are devouring one another rather than living together in mutual respect and love. Religious freedom seeks to restore the rule of love that binds us through our diversity, over against the ways of fear, hate, and violence that keep us divided.

At the same time, history gives us many examples of people of different faiths living side by side in cooperation and conversation with one another. We affirm that often we learn more about, and deepen, our own faith when we share and engage with others.

With the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, Western Christian societies placed increasing emphasis on the individual and one's personal relationship with God. The rights of the individual, in contrast to the State or the church, gave rise to the modern human rights movement culminating in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and succeeding international human rights treaties. These rights include freedom of religious belief and have served as a foundation for much of modern calls for religious freedom.

Religious freedom, as a human right, involves not only every individual's freedom of belief, thought, and conscience, but also a person's right to change one's belief. Religious freedom flourishes when societies welcome diverse faith communities gathering in worship and living out their respective faith traditions as integral parts of society.

The insistence on religious freedom as a human right does not necessarily mean an end to repression but rather the affirmation from a Christian perspective that love of God and love of neighbor is more powerful than government repression, hate speech, and violent, extremist threats. The words from First Peter demonstrate the power of religious freedom in contrast to a spiraling cycle of violence and repression: "Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who de-

mands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Peter 3:9, 13-16 NRSV).

Our commitment to religious freedom leads us to challenge any secular or religious claim to the right to impose one religious way onto others by political, economic, or military force. When any religion is used to justify violence or hateful attacks on others, God mourns, and God calls us all to repent and seek an end to such violence. In humility, we affirm that God's love is too strong, too broad, and too deep for any of us to constrain or prescribe how God continues to work among us all. Accepting God's grace at work in transforming our lives, we are both free and at the same time compelled to share how God's love manifests itself in our lives and in the world today. We testify to God's love both through sharing the good news and through our love of neighbors and love of enemies. Yet if we do not respect, honor, and listen to our neighbors, and especially our enemies, then we have not love (1 Corinthians 13:1-7).

Religious freedom, grounded in love, invites us into the hard work of dialog, listening and sharing with different faith communities, and also to acts of reconciliation across boundaries that divide our own Christian communities. The letter of Colossians offers us guidance in our interfaith and intercultural efforts. "Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. . . . Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone" (Colossians 3:13-14 & 4:5-6 NRSV. . . .

In the Letter to the Romans, Paul urges, "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. . . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all" (Romans 12:9-14, 17 NRSV).

Following the wisdom of Paul, we seek societies where all faith communities are honored and treat one another with mutual respect. At the same time, whenever freedom of religion is denied or people are discriminated against on the basis of their religious belief or practice, we are called to speak out and to resist all such discrimina-

tion in nonviolent, loving ways. Blessing those who persecute does not mean accepting the violence of persecution. Rather, it requires resistance grounded in love.

“Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10 NRSV). Thus, we challenge actions and government policies that misuse the notion of religious freedom in ways that would harm others by denying anyone services, honor, dignity, equal rights, and equal protection. Such actions that harm or discriminate against others are not expressions of religious freedom. Moreover, love does not allow a neighbor, or an enemy, to keep doing wrong even in the name of religion. Religious freedom grounded in love does not mean “anything goes.” It does not condone silence in the face of violent repression of anyone’s religion. On the contrary, the Letter to the Ephesians insists that we take on an often painful, hard task: “So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25). We must speak out and act whenever religious freedom is denied but always in a spirit of love and respect for all.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church, its agencies, institutions, and members are called to:

1. Honor, respect, and advocate for religious freedom for all faith communities through prayer, study, interfaith sharing, and listening as expressions of our love for all.

2. Urge all governments to respect the right of religious freedom in their laws and practices; and to welcome a diversity of religious expressions as serving the common good in every society.

3. Join with ecumenical and interfaith partners to advocate, through education and political action, to protect and further religious freedom wherever it is denied or threatened. Indeed, we take the words of Paul to Corinth to heart: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

4. Extend the compassionate ministry of the church to persons who suffer because either religious or governmental authorities seek to deny these rights to them.

5. Offer support to the mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance and other international efforts seeking to protect and promote religious freedom as a human right.

See Social Principles, ¶ 165C, D.

Rationale:

Long affirming religious freedom for all, UMC resolutions historically were grounded primarily in the language of human rights and international law. But this resolution, modeled on the same foundation as early church communities, is *grounded in agape love* and respect for neighbors, including the vulnerable, the outcast, and even

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Report of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Preface

Beloved, we greet you in the precious name of Jesus Christ. Our work since 2017 has been an exciting experience for all members that serve on the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM). Our time together provided an opportunity for members to get to know each other, travel to places we've never been, and interact with people we would otherwise not have met. As we moved from one country to another and one continent to the next, there was an awesome sense of unity among team members. Barriers of language, tribe, race, color, culture, and sexual orientation were transcended. We became a great team of people called United Methodist, coming from across the global spectrum—Africans, Americans, Asians, and Europeans—working, praying, worshiping, and sharing together under the banner of the Cross and Flame. Our understanding of who we are and whose we are became evident. It was indeed a unique privilege. Recruited by God Almighty from the North and South, East and West, we matured into “one great fellowship . . . throughout the whole wide earth” (from “In Christ There is No East or West,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 548)

Jesus commissioned us to go to the ends of the world to share his healing and redemptive love. John Wesley proclaimed, “the world is my parish.” As United Methodists, we cannot serve only our own church and community, but rather, we are called to serve the whole world. When we engage the world through the power of incarnation, we create opportunities of mutual transformation. Christ's love becomes even more powerful when we hear the stories of faith and transformation in places unfamiliar to us. We are living into challenging realities as a worldwide church. Our focus on the missional commitment of the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is not merely aspirational. As a church, we serve on many continents and in many countries, speaking different languages and shaped by different cultures. We have moved to many places of the world

with millions of new members whom we want to be rooted in the Wesleyan tradition. This growth is not of our own making. It is a gift from God, drawing us into a new community. None of our human-made categories, borders, or national labels should separate us from the unity we share as United Methodists. Living into the promises of God demands us all to be forthright as we willingly and openly receive this gift, trusting in what God is doing with the body around the world called The United Methodist Church. We have tasted the goodness of being part of God's mission in this world.

Mandates of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

During this quadrennium, the SCCCМ focused on four primary mandates assigned by the General Conference and the *Book of Discipline* (BOD).

1. *General Book of Discipline*
2. Comprehensive Plan for Africa
3. Episcopal Assessment of the Philippines Central Conference
4. Review and action on legislation assigned to us by the General Conference

The Composition of the SCCCМ (2016 BOD ¶ 2201.3)

1. One bishop from each central and jurisdictional conference serves on the SCCCМ.
2. Each central and jurisdictional conference is represented by a layperson and a clergyperson, with additional representatives from any central conference with more than three episcopal areas (who are also General Conference delegates).
3. The General Board of Global Ministries names a layperson and a clergyperson, along with a bishop.

4. This quadrennium, twenty-six members came from central conferences with seventeen members from jurisdictional conferences.
5. The central conference bishop assigned to the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships.
6. The chairperson must be a central conference bishop.

Officers of the SCCCM (as elected by committee members)

Chairperson: *Bishop Ciriaco Q. Francisco*, Manila Episcopal Area, Philippines Central Conference

Vice Chairperson: *Bishop John Yambasu*, Sierra Leone Episcopal Area, West Africa Central Conference

Secretary: *Rev. Dee Stickley-Miner*, West Ohio Annual Conference, North Central Jurisdiction

Staff Support

Global Ministries: Mr. George Howard

General Council on Finance and Administration: Mrs. Cheryl Akey and Mrs. Fiona Nieman

Organization of the SCCCM's Work

The SCCCM created four primary work teams.

1. *General Book of Discipline* Part VI, Chapters 1-4 and 6

Chairperson: *Bishop Patrick Streiff*, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference

Vice Chair: *Rev. In-Young Lee*, Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference

2. *General Book of Discipline*, Part VI, Chapter 5

Chairperson: *Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton*, Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

Vice Chair: Dr. Kasongo Mutombo, Congo Central Conference

3. *General Book of Discipline*, Part VI, Chapter 7

Chairperson: Mr. Fred Brewington, Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

Vice Chair: Mr. Gideon Salatan, Philippines Central Conference

4. Africa Comprehensive Plan

Chairperson: *Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer*, North Central Jurisdictional Conference

Vice Chair: Mrs. Christine Schneider-Oesch, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference

SCCCM meetings

1. February 10-15, 2017, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (Global Ministries office)
2. February 8-13, 2018, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa
3. March 22-26, 2019, Manila, Philippines
4. May 4-5, 2020, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Accomplishments of the SCCCM, 2016-2020

Africa Comprehensive Plan

The 2016 General Conference mandated the SCCCM to plan, organize, and implement a collaborative and comprehensive plan on the number and boundaries of central conferences and the location of five new episcopal areas in Africa. The SCCCM was further mandated to bring recommendations regarding the number and boundaries of central conferences and the central conferences to which new episcopal areas would be granted. The 2016 General Conference also gave the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) a directive to include funding for the addition of five new episcopal areas in their proposed 2021-2024 budget.

To achieve a collaborative and comprehensive plan, the SCCCM held two meetings with representatives from Africa. All active bishops of the African central conferences participated, along with a delegate from each annual and provisional annual conference elected by their central conferences. The SCCCM team was limited to ten members, none of whom were from Africa. The team's role was to facilitate the gatherings, listen to the wisdom shared, analyze data, and develop a plan. These consultations were held August 31 to September 2, 2017, in Zimbabwe, and August 30 to September 1, 2018, in Sierra Leone.

As a result of this work, the SCCCM voted unanimously to bring legislation to the 2020 General Conference that seeks the following:

1. Creation of a new central conference with realignment of boundaries and the renaming of some existing central conferences to more clearly identify geographic location. This will require a two-thirds vote of 2020 General Conference delegates (2016 *BOD* ¶ 540.1).
2. Proposed legislation adds new episcopal areas to the West Africa Central Conference (1), Congo Central Conference (2), and Africa Central Conference (2). Although each central conference identifies the boundaries of episcopal areas, the

legislation recommends the geographic location of each new episcopal area.

3. Proposed legislation includes actions to organize the “Constituting Session” of the new central conferences.
4. A series of petitions aligns the number of general agency directors who come from central conferences to account for the creation of a new central conference.

See Petitions 20014, 20084, 20148, 20261, 20271, 20275, 20341, 20516, 20649, 20650 in the *ADCA*.

Leaders of the Africa Comprehensive Plan participated alongside General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) leaders in conversations related to the reunification of The United Methodist Church in Burundi, as well as the specially called session of the Burundi Annual Conference to celebrate the unification.

Episcopal Assessment of the Philippines Central Conference

The *Book of Discipline* empowers the SCCCM to complete assessments of episcopal areas within central conferences. Assessment teams meet with leaders within each episcopal area to gain a better understanding of its missional context and to weigh the effectiveness of its mission, ministry, and structure. The SCCCM elected nine members to serve on the assessment team. Because there are three episcopal areas, the team subdivided into three distinct teams. Each team included a bishop, an ordained clergyperson, and a layperson. They completed their work March 14-20, 2019.

1. Davao Episcopal Area

Bishop Harold Ruckert, Germany Central Conference
Rev. Dee Stickley-Miner, North Central Jurisdiction
Mr. Simon Mafunda, Africa Central Conference

2. Manila Episcopal Area

Bishop John Yambasu, West Africa Central Conference

Rev. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, Western Jurisdiction

Ms. Christine Flick, Germany Central Conference (chair of the assessment team)

3. Baguio Episcopal Area

Bishop Mande Muyombo, Congo Central Conference
Rev. Amy Lippoldt, South Central Jurisdictional Conference

Mr. George Howard, Global Ministries

The following observations were shared with leaders of the Philippines Central Conference and documented in the SCCCM Assessment Team Report:

1. The United Methodist Church (UMC) in the Philippines is strong and healthy. Bishops, laity, and clergy work diligently with an entrepreneurial spirit and creativity to address challenges and opportunities.
2. The SCCCM is confident that the current three episcopal areas are fully adequate to provide leadership for The UMC in the Philippines.
3. The primary purpose of an SCCCM episcopal assessment is to review the workload of a bishop and the effectiveness of church structures. As such, we believe The UMC in the Philippines would benefit from conversations regarding the possible reduction of the number of annual conferences in the three episcopal areas. Each bishop currently provides leadership and administrative oversight for five to twelve annual conferences. A reduction in the number would allow bishops to focus more on the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and less on administrative duties.
4. We encourage continued cooperation between the episcopal areas to learn from one another and to increase the resources they bring to their common opportunities and struggles.

General Book of Discipline

The SCCCM has worked collaboratively with the following partners as we worked to provide a draft of the *General Book of Discipline*:

1. The Committee on Faith and Order partnered with the SCCCM on all of Part VI of the *General Book of Discipline*.
2. The Ministry Study Committee partnered with the SCCCM on Part VI, Chapters 2-3.
3. The Connectional Table partnered with the SCCCM on Part VI, Chapter 5.

The 2016 General Conference mandated the SCCCM with presenting a draft of a *General Book of Discipline* (GBOD) that subdivides the present Part VI on Organization and Administration into two separate parts: a new Part VI General Organization and Administration and a new Part VII Additional Organization and Administration (see mandate in *BOD* 2016 ¶ 101). The new Part VI shall contain what is connectionally essential for a worldwide church. The new Part VII shall contain what is adaptable by central conferences according to the United Methodist Constitution, ¶ 31.5. The aim has been to establish a

shorter, more clearly structured, easily understandable, and translatable *General Book of Discipline*.

Except for *BOD* 2016, Part VI, chapter 5, “Administrative Order,” the SCCCCM would have been able to submit legislation to the 2020 General Conference. However, following the 2019 called session of General Conference, it has decided not to bring any part of its work for final decision and enactment to the 2020 General Conference. The ongoing tension in the church does not present a climate of mutual trust, which would be essential for giving more freedom for local contextual mission.

The SCCCCM remains deeply convinced that United Methodists need to regain a covenant-based understanding of the *Book of Discipline* and that a consensus model of conferencing on the level of General Conference is the only appropriate way of living into the new reality of a worldwide church. The appendix to this report outlines such a covenant-based understanding for developing a *General Book of Discipline*.

As an intermediate step toward submission, the SCCCCM calls on all delegates to the 2020 General Conference to engage in discussion about the proposed draft of a new Part VI that shall contain that which is connectionally essential. We will engage in conversation at General Conference 2020 about the value of a worldwide church and what it means to live in covenant with one another. Following General Conference, we will ask all delegations to lead a feedback process in their annual conferences. Without engaging in honest, consensus-oriented discussion, United Methodists will not be able to implement a more concise *General Book of Discipline* that allows for contextual adaptation.

The appendix to this report not only outlines a covenant-based understanding of the *General Book of Discipline*, but also explains in more detail the complex work accomplished by the SCCCCM and the possibilities of engaging with it. Please read the appendix to this report. It will help you also understand the two petitions linked to the ongoing work on a *General Book of Discipline*, the disciplinary petition for revision of *BOD* ¶ 101 [Petition # 20157, *ADCA* p. 616], and the non-disciplinary petition for a *General Book of Discipline* [Petition # 20660, *ADCA* p. 824].

Living into the Worldwide Identity of The United Methodist Church—On the Journey toward a General Book of Discipline

In its origin, the *Book of Discipline* was a guide for mission printed in a slim booklet. It was an expression of the covenant on the essentials that binds the Methodist movement connectionally together and allows the freedom for specificity in diverse contexts. Today, the church

has a track record of using the *Book of Discipline* as a legal fix for problems faced in a particular setting by creating additional paragraphs that affect everyone everywhere at every General Conference. The *Book of Discipline* has exponentially grown into a very detailed legal book.

We have been legalizing our understanding of covenant, but a covenant has to do foremost with relationships between people and keeping those relationships alive. The *Book of Discipline* had been and should again become the manual of a covenant community engaged in mission. A covenant community can only be built and maintained through conferencing and through mutual trust that increases by openly and authentically journeying together. We often do that well on a local or annual conference level, but we fail at the worldwide level, where we take action on the *Book of Discipline* in General Conference without regard to building as much consensus as possible.

Can the members of our church regain the spiritual practice of a covenantal community, rooted in faith in Christ, conferencing with each other and strengthening relationships for being sent in mutual trust into diverse missional contexts for a new quadrennium? When that happens, the *Book of Discipline* will become again an expression of the core that binds together all those whom Christ has called to be part of his body in the expression of United Methodism.

Many parts of the current *Book of Discipline* have been based on the situation in the United States (U.S.) and are not applicable to churches that serve in manifold ways in different nations, using different languages, and living under different state constitutions and legal systems. In many instances, central conferences outside the U.S. have to adapt the *Book of Discipline* or take action outside the boundaries of the *Book of Discipline* to fulfill God’s call in their civil realities. This has led to different local practices in organizing the work and ministry of the church. Furthermore, the reception process in different language groups and countries is much slower than the pace of change in quadrennial general conferences. The sheer size of our current *Book of Discipline*, as well as our perception of the *Book of Discipline* as a law book, hinders the furtherance of a worldwide mission.

As United Methodists, we must consider the gift of God’s mission among us and respond in a way that does not quench the spirit but is helpful to the church and its mission in multiple locations. As a church, we need to bring life to our tradition by concentrating on the essentials of our covenant. The *Book of Discipline* ¶ 125 gives an excellent description of our covenant: “Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining ‘a

vital web of interactive relationships.” Will we be able to reclaim such a covenant community of disciples of Christ in interactive relationships and use the *Book of Discipline* as our manual for mission?

Over the last two quadrennia, the SCCCM has led this discernment, independent of the specific question on human sexuality. Based on the mandate given in *BOD* ¶ 101, we have raised the question, “What binds us together as an essentially connectional community?” The SCCCM began addressing the larger topic: What kind of church do we want to be as a worldwide community in the Wesleyan spirit? How would a *Book of Discipline* need to be shaped for empowering United Methodists to be part of God’s mission in a diverse global world? What is the theological foundation of our being church?

Whether the 2020 General Conference will find a broad majority answer on the topic of homosexuality or further division, the challenge would remain the same for each and all parts of the body called United Methodist: **How will we live into a new reality of a worldwide church and of expressing in a *Book of Discipline* what is essential for our connectional covenant?** We call on the General Conference and the whole Church to listen to this urgent need and to take appropriate action to further effective and fruitful ministry in diverse circumstances throughout the world.

Appendix: Draft of a General Book of Discipline, Part VI, chapters 1-7

What binds us together as essentially connectional shall be, in accordance with *BOD* ¶ 101, the Parts I to V of the *Book of Discipline*, together with a new Part VI General Organization and Administration. The new Part VI captures what is at the heart of our identity as a worldwide ecclesial community. It is presented with the hope of enhancing the mission of the church in a long-term, sustainable way and empowering the diverse regions of the world to be better equipped for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, all to the glory of God.

The new Part VII contains all remaining material of the present *Book of Discipline* that is not included in the text of the new Part VI and can be adapted by central conferences.

The new Part VI, with an overview of each chapter and its structuring of essentials:

Chapter One: The Local Church

In Chapter 1, details are much reduced to essentials. The number of sections and paragraphs is shortened.

Some material is rearranged and brought together under the same section title, but detailed descriptions and regulations for lay ministries were moved to the adaptable Part VII.

Chapter Two: The Ministry of the Ordained

In Chapter 2, the theological elements describing the purposes of ordained ministry and the function of the orders of elder and deacon are preserved, as well as the purpose and function of local pastors and the essential qualifications for persons entering into ordination and licensed ministry. A new structuring of sections brings more clarity and less repetition. Detailed regulations regarding conference relations, procedures, district committees on ordained ministry, etc., were moved to the adaptable Part VII.

Chapter Three: The Superintendency

In Chapter 3, the theological reflection on the nature of superintendency leads to dealing first with essentials of the episcopal ministry and its collegial expression in the Council of Bishops before dealing with regulations on individual bishops. Similarly, the cabinet is dealt with before regulations on individual superintendents.

Chapter Four: The Conferences

In Chapter 4, each level of conference is presented in a consistent structuring. Because jurisdictional conferences only exist in the U.S., the content has been moved into the adaptable portion in the new Part VII. In the section on the annual conference, an extensive revision has been made. Annual conferences in central conferences are so diverse in size and makeup that mandated entities were reduced to the two essential ones: the Council on Finance and Administration and the Board of Ordained Ministry. The very detailed regulations for annual conference structures were in most parts moved to the adaptable portion in the new Part VII.

Chapter Five: Administrative Order

Chapter 5 is still a work in progress. There was intensive reflection on the theology of agency that will open the chapter with a basic theological grounding in God’s mission beyond and prior to any discussion of agencies and their mandates. The non-adaptable Part VI shall be based on mission and theology rather than structure and past practice. Some samples have been developed and are shown in the draft. Work will need to continue in collaboration with all partners involved during the forthcoming quadrennium.

Chapter Six: Church Property

Chapter 6 keeps the basic principles related to property but allows for implementation in the legal context of a country. The U.S.-specific regulations are moved to the adaptable portion in the new Part VII.

Chapter Seven: Judicial Administration

Chapter 7 opens with a new paragraph containing a theological statement as preamble and purpose to all that follows. In the section on the Judicial Council, some very detailed regulations are regrouped into specific paragraphs for “General Conference Regulations.”

In the 2700s paragraphs, the basic principles for fair process were retained, but in a way that allows for the variations needed in completely different legal traditions, particularly related to the differences between the Anglo-Saxon and the Roman law traditions in the world.

Consultation in All Annual Conferences on the Draft of the New Part VI, Chapters 1-7

A non-disciplinary petition to the 2020 General Conference will ask (1) for affirmation of the direction taken thus far by the SCCCM; (2) for leadership by General Conference delegates in engaging with the proposed draft; and (3) for a consultation in all annual conferences worldwide after the 2020 General Conference, with feedback from the annual conferences until the end of November 2021 [Petition # 20660, *ADCA* p. 824]. The consultation will enable the SCCCM to receive the needed feedback for finalizing and presenting the new Parts VI and VII for action by the 2024 General Conference.

Questions for Annual Conference Feedback Following the 2020 General Conference

1. What elements of the proposed Part VI do not reflect essentials for a worldwide connection of The UMC and/or are not applicable in your own context and mission?
2. What essentially connectional elements are missing in the proposed Part VI?
3. What inconsistencies or inaccuracies are found in the proposed Part VI and are thus in need of correction?

As we present this draft to the 2020 General Conference, we do so with deep appreciation to all the units and study groups in the church that have been willing to collaborate with the SCCCM in coming so far on this journey as a worldwide connection and for discovering, together with us, what a gift a more concise and connectionally understood *General Book of Discipline* would be for the church. We are looking forward to receiving initial feedback from delegates during the 2020 General Conference through mutually enriching listening in table discussions among delegates from different parts of the world before sending the draft to a churchwide consultation.

May God’s Holy Spirit guide us all on our journey as a connectional people.

Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chairperson, Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Draft of a *General Book of Discipline* 2020

Introduction

What binds United Methodists together as essentially connectional shall be the Parts I to V of the *Book of Discipline*, together with a new Part VI, *General Organization and Administration*. The 2016 General Conference has mandated the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (Standing Committee) with subdividing the present *BOD* Part VI into two separate parts: a new Part VI, *General Organization and Administration* and a new Part VII, *Additional Organization and Administration* (see mandate in *BOD* 2016, ¶ 101). The new Part VI shall contain what is connectionally essential for a worldwide church. The new Part VII shall contain what is adaptable by central conferences according to the Constitution ¶ 31.5. What will follow hereafter is the draft of such a new Part VI, chapters 1-7, based on the *Book of Discipline* 2016.

The report of the Standing Committee (*ADCA* p. 725) outlines the journey toward a *General Book of Discipline* and what it means to adopt a covenant-based understanding of the *Discipline* as a guide for mission. Related to this work of the Standing Committee are two petitions:

- the disciplinary petition for revision of *BOD*, ¶ 101 [Petition # 20157, *ADCA* p. 616]
- the non-disciplinary petition for a *General Book of Discipline* [Petition # 20660, *ADCA* p. 824].

This report will set up a time for the whole plenary to engage in a dialogue on the value of a *General Book of Discipline* and the importance of being in covenantal relationship across the world. The translation, printing, and distribution of this report has been funded outside of the General Conference budget by the West Ohio and New York Annual Conferences, the Ohio River Valley District of West Ohio, the General Board of Global Ministries, the Germany and Central and Southern Europe Episcopal Areas, Connexio, and individuals of the New York Annual Conference.

For such a new Part VI, *General Organization and Administration*, the aim has been to establish a shorter, more clearly structured, more easily understandable and translatable *General Book of Discipline*. Therefore, material may have been rearranged, reordered, and revised. Numerous repetitions were deleted. Each chapter is hereafter introduced by a short summary and an outline of the structuring of the sections. This introduction is only given

hereafter and will not be part of a future text of the *General Book of Discipline*.

In addition to the draft presented here, the Standing Committee is developing two supportive online documents for use by the Standing Committee. These will track changes made in comparison to the 2016 *BOD* for both Parts VI and VII, and will be available online in English.

If the draft of a new, concise Part VI, as presented hereafter, contains what is essential and applicable worldwide, it will require fewer revisions every four years (including translation of the revisions into multiple languages used in annual conferences all over the world) and will not need to have organizational details added every four years to fix local or regional problems.

Important Principles for the Drafts of a New Part VI and a New Part VII

- The text is based on the existing Part I, *Constitution* and does not propose structural changes for The UMC in the U.S., nor is it accompanied by any constitutional amendments. This means that The UMC in the U.S. will have both Parts VI and VII as its valid *Discipline*, whereas central conferences outside the U.S. may take action to adapt Part VII to their specific context.
- The text is based on the *BOD* 2016 and the mandate given in *BOD* 2016, ¶ 101. It does not touch the standards for clergy related to human sexuality and unauthorized conduct, and leaves any decisions on these matters in the authority of General Conference.
- The text establishes a clear relationship between the two new parts, the new Part VI and the new Part VII. At the end of each paragraph or sub-paragraph in the new Part VI, there is a reference to the related paragraph(s) in a new Part VII, *Additional Organization and Administration*.
- Sections and paragraphs are renumbered. All references within paragraphs are adjusted (for Parts I-V according to *BOD* 2016; for new Parts VI and VII according to the new draft). In the new Part VI, section titles are only used for several paragraphs together under the same heading. Other sub-titles are deleted.
- Judicial Council decisions are adjusted to the respective new Parts VI and VII.

- Furthermore, the draft of the new Part VI adds for each paragraph a reference to *BOD* 2016. This reference will not be needed after an adoption of the draft by a future General Conference.

Consultation in All Annual Conferences on the Draft of the New Part VI, Chapters 1-7

A non-disciplinary petition to the 2020 General Conference asks delegates to develop a process within their annual conferences to provide feedback on the *General Book of Discipline* by November 30, 2021 [Petition # 20660, *ADCA* p. 824]. This information will enable the Standing Committee to receive critical feedback for finalizing and presenting the new Parts VI and VII for action by the 2024 General Conference.

Questions for the feedback will be:

1. What elements of the proposed new Part VI do not reflect essentials for a worldwide connection of The UMC and/or are not applicable in your own context and mission?
2. What essentially connectional elements are missing in the proposed new Part VI?
3. What inconsistencies or inaccuracies are found in the proposed new Part VI and are thus in need of correction?

May God's Holy Spirit guide us all on our journey as a connectional people.



Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Chair,
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Draft of a *General Book of Discipline* 2020

New Part VI

General Organization and Administration

Chapter One

The Local Church

Section I. The Church and Pastoral Charge

Section II. Church Membership

Section III. Care of Members

Section IV. Organization of the Local Church

Section V. The Charge Conference

Section VI. The Church Council

Section I. The Church and Pastoral Charge

¶ **201.** *Definition of a Local Church*—The local church is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the worship of God, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 201 = 201

¶ **202.** *The Function of the Local Church*—The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the charge consisting of one or more local churches that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 202 = 202

¶ **203.** *Relation to the Wider Church*—The local church is a connectional society of believers, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its *Discipline* and is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Sav-

ior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 203=203

¶ **204.** *Responsibility for the Community*—Each local church has a definite evangelistic, nurturing, and witnessing responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It is responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 204=204

¶ **205.** *Definition of a Pastoral Charge*—1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which an ordained or licensed clergy is or may be duly appointed or appointable as pastor in charge or co-pastor. Where co-pastors are appointed, the bishop may designate for administrative purposes one as pastor in charge.¹

>VII: 205.001<

2. A layperson assigned by the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, to do the work of ministry, is accountable to the district superintendent or another clergy appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.

>VII: 205.002<

GBOD ¶ 205.1=205.1; 205.2=205.4

1. See Judicial Council Decisions 113, 319.

Section II. Church Membership

¶ **206.** *Eligibility*—The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, and become members in any local church in the connection (¶ 4).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 206=214

¶ **207. *Definition of Membership***—1. The membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all people who have been baptized and all people who have professed their faith.

a) The baptized membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local United Methodist church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.

b) The professing membership of a local United Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches.

2. For statistical purposes, church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.

3. All baptized or professing members of any local United Methodist church are members of the worldwide United Methodist connection and members of the church universal.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 207.1-3=215.1-4

¶ **208. *Baptismal Covenant***—1. Christ constitutes the church as his body by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13, 27). The church draws new people into itself as it seeks to remain faithful to its commission to proclaim and exemplify the gospel. In baptism water is administered in the name of the triune God by an authorized person. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation and incorporation into the body of Christ. After baptism, the church provides the nurture that makes possible a comprehensive and lifelong process of growing in grace.

Becoming a professing member requires the answer of faith of the baptized person made visible in a service of profession of Christian faith and confirmation using the vows of the baptismal covenant. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

2. *Baptism and Professing Membership*—a) Baptized infants and children are to be instructed and nurtured in the meaning of the faith, the rights and responsibilities of their baptism, and spiritual and moral formation. Using the services of the baptismal covenant, youth will profess their faith, commit themselves to a life of discipleship, and be confirmed. Confirmation is both a human act of commitment and the gracious action of the Holy Spirit strengthening and empowering discipleship.

b) Youth and adults who have not been baptized and who are seeking to be saved from their sins and profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are proper candidates for baptism in The United Methodist Church. It is the duty of the congregation, led by the pastor, to instruct them in the meaning of baptism, in the meaning of the Christian faith, and in the history, organization, and teachings of The United Methodist Church. After the completion of the period of nurture and instruction, the sponsor(s) and pastor shall bring the candidates before the congregation and administer the services of the baptismal covenant, in which people are baptized, confirmed, and received into the church.

>VII: 208.001<

3. *Ongoing Formation in the Baptismal Covenant*—a) Formation in the baptismal covenant and in the call to ministry in daily life is a lifelong process and is carried on through all the activities that have educational value. It focuses attention upon the meaning of discipleship and the need for members to be in mission in all of life's relationships.

b) There are many occasions as people mature in the faith when the Holy Spirit's confirming action may be celebrated, such as in the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant or other services related to life passages. Unlike baptism, which is a once-made covenant and can only be reaffirmed and not repeated, confirmation is a dynamic action of the Holy Spirit that can be repeated.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 208.1=216.1+214; 208.2=216, 1 a+b; 208.3=216.2

¶ **209. *Professing Membership***—1. When persons unite as professing members with a local United Methodist church, they profess their faith in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ his only Son; and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows that are a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the church:

a) To renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of the world, and repent of their sin;

b) To accept the freedom and power God gives them to resist evil, injustice, and oppression;

c) To confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put their whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as their Lord;

d) To remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world;

e) To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries;

f) To faithfully participate in its ministries by their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service, and their witness;

g) To receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 209.1-2=217.Intro+1-7

¶ 210. *Growth in Faithful Discipleship*—Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 210=218

¶ 211. *Mutual Responsibility*—Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to respond to conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 211=219

¶ 212. *The Call to Ministry of All the Baptized*—All members of Christ's universal church are called to share in the ministry that is committed to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is performed in family life, daily work, recreation and social activities, responsible citizenship, the stewardship of property and accumulated resources, the issues of corporate life, and all attitudes toward other persons. Members are to engage in disciplined, covenant or class meetings to foster their missional involvement and to witness for Christ, serving as a living example in society while addressing injustice and suffering in the world and taking action that helps exemplify the hope and promise of Christ.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 212=220

¶ 213. *Lay Servant Ministries*—Each central conference may create categories of servant ministries for laypersons that are appropriate and needed for the expanding and

ongoing mission and ministry of that conference. Educational, spiritual, and psychological qualifications and provisions for appropriate certification may be defined by the central conference. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 213.001-213.004<

GBOD ¶ 213=266+new

¶ 214. *Membership Records*—1. Each local church shall accurately maintain:

a) Membership records for each baptized or professing member including:

(1) the person's name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors;

(2) date of confirmation/profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors;

(3) if transferred from another church, date of reception, sending church, and receiving pastor;

(4) if transferred to another church, date of transfer, receiving church, and address of receiving church;

(5) date of removal or withdrawal and reason;

(6) date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor;

(7) date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial, and officiating pastor.

b) Constituency Roll, containing the names and addresses of such persons as are not members of the church concerned, including unbaptized children, youth, and adults whose names are not on the membership record, and other nonmembers for whom the local church has pastoral responsibility.

c) Affiliate Membership Roll.

d) Associate Membership Roll.

2. In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership.

>VII: 214.001-214.003<

GBOD ¶ 214.1a=230.1; 214.1b-d+2=230.3-6

¶ 215. *Transfer from Other Denominations*—A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with The United Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by a proper certificate of transfer from that person's former church or some certification of Christian baptism and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith through appropriate

services of the baptismal covenant in our ritual. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, ministry, and polity of the church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue certificates of transfer or letters of recommendation shall be listed as “Received from Other Denominations.”

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 215=225

¶ **216. *Affiliate and Associate Membership***—1. A professing member of The United Methodist Church, of an affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, or of a Methodist church that has a concordat agreement with The United Methodist Church, who resides for an extended period in a city or community at a distance from the member’s home church, may on request be enrolled as an affiliate member of a United Methodist church located in the vicinity of the temporary residence. The home pastor shall be notified of the affiliate membership. Such membership entitles the person to the fellowship of that church, to its pastoral care and oversight, and to participation in its activities, including the holding of office; except such as would allow one to vote in a United Methodist body other than the local church. However, that person is counted and reported as a professing member of the home church only.

2. A member of another denomination may become an associate member under the same conditions, but may not become a voting member of the church council.²

3. Affiliate or associate relationship may be terminated at the discretion of the United Methodist church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held whenever the affiliate or associate member shall move from the vicinity of the United Methodist church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 216.1-3=227

2. See Judicial Council Decision 372.

¶ **217. *Accountability***—1. All members are to be held accountable for faithfulness to their covenant of baptism.

2. If a baptized member neglects faithfulness and discipline in terms of the baptismal covenant, every means of encouraging that member to return and of nurturing him or her to assume the vows of professing membership should be made.

3. If a professing member should be accused of violating the covenant and failing to keep the confirmation vows, then it is the responsibility of the local church, working through its pastor and its units, to minister to that

member in compliance with the provisions of ¶ 220 in an effort to enable the member to faithfully perform the vows and covenant of membership.

>VII: 217.001<

GBOD ¶ 217.1-3=221.1-3

¶ **218. *Annual Membership Report and Audit***—1. The pastor shall report to the charge conference annually the names of persons received into the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church council shall appoint a committee to audit the membership record, submitting the report annually to the charge conference. >VII: 218.001<

2. In central conferences, the membership records in each local church shall be according to a common format prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration in cooperation with the central conferences. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 218.002<

GBOD ¶ 218.1=231; 218.2=233/new

Section III. Care of Members

¶ **219. *Care of Children and Youth***—1. Because the redeeming love of God revealed in Jesus Christ extends to all persons, and because Jesus explicitly included the children in his kingdom, it is the responsibility of the pastor of each charge to counsel Christian parents or guardians in the meaning of baptism for children and youth of all ages, and of the significance of the vows for themselves and the local church. This includes active participation in the life of faith in the local church to prepare everyone for lifelong membership in Christ’s church. At least one parent or guardian shall be a member of a Christian church; or sponsor(s) or godparent(s) who are members renewing their own baptismal vows. All members of the local church likewise will assist and encourage the nurture of each child or youth.

2. The pastor of the church shall, at the time of administering the sacrament of baptism, furnish the parent(s), guardian(s), sponsor(s), or godparent(s) of the child who is baptized with a certificate of baptism, which also clearly states that the child is now a baptized member in The United Methodist Church. Appropriate records of the sacrament of baptism shall be maintained and kept at the local church or another appropriate location.

>VII: 219.001<

3. The membership record shall be regularly reviewed to identify those who have not become professing members, for purposes of nurturing them toward profession of faith.
>VII: 219.002<
GBOD ¶ 219.1=226.1; 219.2=226.2a+b; 219.3=226.3

¶ 220. *Care of Adult Members*—1. The local church shall endeavor to enlist each member in activities for spiritual growth and in participation in the services and ministries of the church and its organizations. It is the duty of the pastor and of the members of the church council by regular visitation, care, and spiritual oversight to provide necessary activities and opportunities for spiritual growth through individual and family worship and individual and group study to connect faith and daily living, and continually to aid the members to keep their vows to uphold the church by their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. The church has a moral and spiritual obligation to nurture its nonparticipating and indifferent members and to lead them into an active church relationship.

2. The pastor in cooperation with the church council may arrange the membership in groups—with a leader for each group—designed to involve the membership of the church in its ministry to the community. Such groups may be especially helpful in evangelistic outreach by contacting newcomers and unreached persons, by visitation, by mobilizing neighbors to meet social issues in the community, by responding to personal and family crises, by holding prayer meetings in the homes, by distributing Christian literature, and by other means.

>VII: 220.001<

GBOD ¶ 220.1=228.1; 220.2=228.2a

¶ 221. *Review in Case of Neglect*—1. While primary responsibility and initiative rests with each professing member to faithfully perform the vows of the baptismal covenant that have been solemnly assumed, if the member should be neglectful of that responsibility, the following procedures shall be implemented:

2. Membership records are reviewed regarding the active participation of all professing members residing in the community. Inactive members are requested to do one of four things:

a) reaffirm the baptismal vows and return to living in the community of the baptismal covenant in the church where the member's name is recorded,

b) request transfer to another United Methodist church where the member will return to living in the community of the baptismal covenant,

c) arrange transfer to a particular church of another denomination, or

d) request withdrawal.

3. If a professing member whose address is known is residing outside the community and is not participating in the worship or activity of the church, the directives to encourage a transfer of the member shall be followed or that member may request in writing that the name be removed from the roll of professing members.

4. If the address of a professing member is no longer known to the pastor, every effort shall be made to locate the member. If the member can be located, the directives of either §2 or §3 above shall be followed.

5. If the directives of §2, §3, or §4 above have been followed over a period of two years without success, the member's name may be removed as a professing member by vote of the charge conference on recommendation of the pastor. On the membership record there shall be entered after the name: "Removed by Charge Conference Action"; and if the action is on the basis of §4 above, there shall be added: "Reason: Address Unknown." The record shall be retained in order that upon reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant the person may be restored as a member. Should a transfer of membership be requested, the pastor may, after consultation with the person, issue the certificate of transfer.
>VII: 221.001<

GBOD ¶ 221.1-5=228.2b(1)-(4)

¶ 222. *Transfer of Members*—1. *Transfer to Other United Methodist Churches*—When a pastor receives a request for a transfer of membership from a member or from the pastor of another United Methodist church or a district superintendent, that pastor shall send the proper certificate directly to the pastor of the United Methodist church to which the member is transferring, or if there is no pastor, to the district superintendent. On receipt of such a certificate of transfer, the pastor or district superintendent shall enroll the name of the person so transferring after public reception in a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, public announcement in such a service. The pastor of the church issuing the certificate shall then be notified, whereupon said pastor shall remove the member from the roll. >VII: 222.001<

2. *Transfer to Other Denominations*—A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. Upon request of the member, the pastor shall hand a certificate of transfer to the member. >VII: 222.002<

3. *Transfer from Discontinued Local Churches*—If a local church is discontinued, the district superintendent shall select another United Methodist church and transfer its members thereto, or to such other churches as the members may select.

GBOD ¶ 222.1=239; 222.2=240; 222.3=229

¶ 223. *Withdrawal Without Notice*—If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter “Withdrawn” after the person’s name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 223=241

¶ 224. *Restoration of Professing Membership*—1. A person whose name has been removed from professing membership by withdrawal, or action by charge conference, or trial court, may ask to be restored to membership in the local church.

2. A person whose membership was recorded as having been withdrawn, for any voluntary reason may be restored to professing membership by reaffirmation of the baptismal vows.

3. A person who withdrew under charges or was removed by trial court may ask to return to the church. Upon evidence of a renewed life, approval of the charge conference, and reaffirmation of the baptismal vows, the person may be restored to professing membership.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 224.1+2=242.1+2; 224.3=242.5

Section IV. Organization of the Local Church

¶ 225. *Primary Tasks*—In carrying out its primary task, the local church shall be organized so that adequate provision is made for these basic responsibilities:

(1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation;

(2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership;

(3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church;

(4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference;

(5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and

(6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 225=243

¶ 226. *Organization*—1. The basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units: a charge conference, a church council, a committee on nominations and leadership development, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a committee on finance, a board of trustees unless otherwise required by

civil law, and such other elected leaders, commissions, councils, committees, and task forces as the charge conference may determine. Every local church shall develop a plan for organizing its administrative and programmatic responsibilities. >VII: 226.001<

2. The church council and all other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church shall be amenable to the charge conference. The church council shall function as the executive unit of the charge conference.

3. When circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶ 225 are observed. >VII: 226.002<

4. Members of the church council or alternative structure shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.³

5. Central conferences shall establish provisions, or delegate such authority to their respective annual conferences, for organizing a new church or a new charge, provided that the organizing of a new local church within a charge shall be subject at least to the agreement of the superintendent and of said charge conference, and that the organizing of a new charge shall be subject at least to the agreement of the cabinet of the annual conference. All such newly organized churches shall be in accordance with local laws and other provisions of the *Discipline*. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 226.003<

6. Central conferences may establish provisions for ministry groups, units, or institutional work on the level of the local church as it best serves the mission of the church, or delegate such authority to their respective annual conferences. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 226.004-226.007<

GBOD ¶ 226.1-2=244Intro+1; 226.3=247.2; 226.4=244.3; 226.5=259; 226.6=new

3. See Judicial Council Decisions 469, 500.

¶ 227. *Transfer of a Local Church*—A local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located by a two-thirds vote of the professing members who are present and voting in each of the following: (1) the charge conference, (2) a congregational meeting of the local church affected, and (3) each of the two annual conferences involved. Upon announcement of the required majorities by the bishop or bishops involved, the transfer shall immediately be effective. The votes required may originate in the local church or either of the annual conferences involved and shall be effective regardless of the order in which taken.

>VII: 227.001<

GBOD ¶ 227=260

Section V. The Charge Conference

¶ 228. *General Provisions*—1. Within the pastoral charge the basic unit in the connectional system of The United Methodist Church is the charge conference. The charge conference shall therefore be organized from the church or churches in every pastoral charge as set forth in the Constitution (¶ 43). It shall meet at least annually.

2. The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other appropriate body, together with retired ordained clergy who elect to hold their membership in said charge conference and any others as may be designated in the *Discipline*, and other persons as elected by the charge conference. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

3. The district superintendent shall fix the time of meetings of the charge conference. The charge conference shall determine the place of meeting.

4. The district superintendent shall preside at the meetings of the charge conference or may designate an elder to preside.

5. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

6. Special sessions may be called by the district superintendent after consultation with the pastor of the charge. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purposes stated in the call. Any such special session of the charge conference may be convened as a church conference (GBOD ¶ 230).

7. Notice of time and place of a regular or special session of the charge conference shall be given at least ten days in advance.

8. A joint charge conference for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the district superintendent may determine.

>VII: 228.001<

GBOD ¶ 228.1+2=246.1+2; 228.3-7=246.4-8;

228.8=246.10

¶ 229. *Powers and Duties*—1. The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church and the general church and shall have oversight of the church council(s).

2. The primary responsibilities of the charge conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church (¶¶ 120-124), receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church. The charge conference receives the report of the pastor in charge.

>VII: 229.001<

3. The charge conference recording secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and, with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the district superintendent, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files.

>VII: 229.002<

4. The charge conference shall examine and recommend candidates for licensed or ordained ministry to the Board of Ordained Ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 309.2.c. >VII: 229.003<

5. The charge conference shall examine and recommend renewal of candidates for the ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 309.2.c.

6. The charge conference shall inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of persons in specific lay servant ministries (¶ 213) and recommend persons who have met the standards set forth for such ministries.

>VII: 229.004<

7. The charge conference is responsible to fulfill the apportionment according to the rules set by the annual conference and the general church. Payment of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church. >VII: 229.005<

8. The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the membership.

9. In those instances where there are two or more local churches on a pastoral charge, the charge conference may provide for a charge or local church council, a charge or local church treasurer, and such other officers, commissions, committees, and task groups as necessary to carry on the work of the charge.

10. The charge conference shall promote awareness of and concurrence with the Doctrinal Standards and

General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and with policies relative to Socially Responsible Investments ([BOD] ¶ 717), the Social Principles (¶¶ 160-166), and *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*.

11. If any charge conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in the *Book of Resolutions* should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church. >VII: 229.006<

12. The charge conference shall have such other duties and responsibilities as the General, central, jurisdictional, or annual conference may duly commit to it. >VII: 229.007<

GBOD ¶ 229.1=247.1; 229.2-3=247.3-4; 229.4-5=247.8-9; 229.6=247.11; 229.7-8=247.14-15; 229.9=247.17; 229.10-11=247.20-21; 229.12=247.23

¶ 230. *The Church Conference*—To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings, subject to the authorization of the district superintendent.

>VII: 230.001<

GBOD ¶ 230=248

¶ 231. *Elections*—Out of the professing membership, the charge conference, or church conference authorized by the district superintendent, shall elect upon recommendation by the committee on nominations and leadership development, or by nomination from the floor, at least the following: >VII: 231.001<

1. The church council and its chairperson (see ¶ 234).

a) The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the *Discipline*. >VII: 231.002<

2. The committee on nominations and leadership development, chaired by the pastor in charge. Among its members shall be the pastor, the lay leader, and a lay member of the annual conference, and representation of each local church.

a) Throughout the year, the committee shall identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian leadership for the local congregation.

b) It shall recommend to the charge conference the names of officers and leaders to be elected. >VII: 231.003<

3. The committee on pastor-parish relations and its chairperson. It is composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine professing members of the local church, including the lay leader, a lay member of the annual con-

ference, and representation of each local church. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee.

a) It shall assist the pastor and staff of the local church in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically, setting priorities for leadership and service, and provides evaluation at least annually and where needed develop job descriptions.

b) It shall discern persons for ordained ministry and bring recommendations to the charge conference for candidacy.

c) The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may be called to meet without the pastor and/or staff under consideration only by and in presence of the district superintendent who shall notify the pastor and/or staff prior to the meeting and bring them into consultation immediately thereafter.

d) The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential. Its relationship to the district superintendent and the bishop is advisory only.⁴ >VII: 231.004<

4. The committee on finance and its chairperson. Among its members shall be the pastor, the lay leader, and a lay member of the annual conference.

a) It shall give stewardship of financial resources, submit a budget to the church council, and make provisions for an annual audit. >VII: 231.005<

5. The board of trustees as provided in chapter six on Church Property, unless otherwise required by civil law. >VII: 231.006<

6. The lay leader of the charge who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;

b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;

c) the lay leader may also be elected as lay member of annual conference. >VII: 231.007<

7. The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates who shall be professing members for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election (see ¶ 32), except in a newly organized church, which shall have the privilege of representation at the annual conference session, and other exceptions allowed by ¶ 32.⁵

a) The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates shall, along with the pastor, serve as interpreter(s) of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general church.

b) If the charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in place. >VII: 231.008<

8. To insure for appropriate financial accountability for offerings and other income funds, there shall be elected both a financial secretary and a treasurer, if not paid employees of the local church.

a) The financial secretary records and deposits donated funds, as well as other financial assets of the congregation at the direction of the church council. The treasurer disburses funds to authorized expenditures at the direction of the church council. Thus no one person will oversee both income and expenditures of the local church accounts.

b) No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, finance chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the committee on finance, as described herein. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves. >VII: 231.009<

9. The recording secretary.

10. Additional members of the charge conference (see ¶ 228.2).

11. It is recommended that the charge conference elect a church historian in order to preserve the history of each local church.

12. All local church offices and all chairs of organizations within the local church may be shared between two persons, with the following exceptions: trustee, officers of the board of trustees, treasurer, lay member of annual conference, member and chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations. When two persons jointly hold a position that entails membership on the church council, both may be members of it.

13. The term of office is according to the provisions of the annual conference. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office.

GBOD ¶ 231 Intro+1=249 Intro+1+251.3;

231.2=249.2+258.1; 231.3= 249.3+258.2;

231.4=249.4+258.4; 231.5=249.4+258.3; 231.6=251.1;

231.7=249.5+251.2; 231.8=249.4+258.4; 231.9=249.6;

231.10 (new); 231.11=247.5; 231.12=249.8;

231.13=247.7

4. See Judicial Council Decision 701.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 170, 305, 342, 469, 495.

¶ 232. *Removal of Officers and Filling of Vacancies*—If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the district superintendent may call a special session of the charge conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as “Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies).”

>VII: 232.001<

GBOD ¶ 232=250

¶ 233. *Missional Potential*—In central conferences, the charge conference may organize ministries according to missional needs and potential. It may elect a coordinator or ministry group chairperson for any or all of its areas of ministry. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 233.001-233.005<

GBOD ¶ 233=253+254

Section VI. The Church Council

¶ 234. *The Church Council*—1. *Purpose*—The church council shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church.

2. *Mission and Ministry*—Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

a) The nurturing ministries include: education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship.

b) The outreach ministries include: local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy.

c) The witness ministries include: developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; and communications. >VII: 234.001<

3. *Meetings*—The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. >VII: 234.002<

4. *Responsibilities*—It will be the responsibility of the church council to:

a) give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the church; encourage, plan and set the goals of the local church; determine activities and work; receive reports and evaluate the ministry;

b) review the membership of the local church;

c) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;

d) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;

e) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations) if these are not set by the annual conference. >VII: 234.003<

5. *Membership*—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

a) the chairperson of the church council;

b) the lay leader;

c) a lay member to annual conference;

d) the pastor(s);

e) the secretary of the charge conference;

f) other members as elected by the charge conference. >VII: 234.004<

6. *Quorum*—The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

7. The church council may appoint additional committees as it deems advisable.

>VII: 234.005-234.008<

GBOD ¶ 234.1+2a-c=252.1+2a-c; 234.3=252.3a;

234.4a=247.3; 234.4b-e=252.4a-d;

234.5a-d=252.5a+b+g+l; 234.5e-f=247.4+new;

234.6=252.6; 234.7=258.5

Chapter Two

The Ministry of the Ordained

Section I. The Meaning of Ordination and Conference Membership

Section II. Candidacy for Licensed and Ordained Ministry

Section III. License for Pastoral Ministry

Section IV. Associate Membership

Section V. Provisional Membership

Section VI. The Order of the Deacon

Section VII. The Order of the Elder

Section VIII. Clergy from Other Annual Conferences, Other Methodist and Christian Denominations

Section IX. Mentoring, Evaluation, Continuing Education, and Sabbatical Leave

Section X. Changes of Conference Relationship

Section XI. Administrative Fair Process and Complaint Procedure

Section I. The Meaning of Ordination and Conference Membership

¶ 301. *Ministry in the Christian Church*—1. Ministry in the Christian church is derived from the ministry of Christ, who calls all persons to receive God's gift of salvation and follow in the way of love and service. All Christian ministry is grounded in the covenant of baptism by which we are initiated into the body of Christ and called to a life of discipleship. The sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion ground the ministry of the whole church. They are celebrated in the Christian community as a means of grace. Thus, the whole church receives and accepts this call, and all Christians participate in this continuing ministry (see ¶¶ 120-140).

2. Within the church community, there are persons whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and promise of future usefulness are affirmed by the community, and who respond to God's call by offering themselves in leadership as set-apart ministers, ordained and licensed (¶ 302). Individuals discern God's call as they relate with God and their communities, and the church guides and confirms those calls. Calls—and the discernment and confirmation of them—are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 301.1+2 = 301.1+2

¶ 302. *Ordination and Apostolic Ministry*—The pattern for this response to the call is provided in the development of the early church. The apostles led in prayer, teaching, and preaching, ordered the spiritual and temporal life of the community, established leadership for the ministry of service, and provided for the proclamation of the gospel to new

persons and in new places. The early church, through the laying on of hands, set apart persons with responsibility to preach, to teach, to administer the sacraments, to nurture, to heal, to gather the community in worship, and to send them forth in witness. The church also set apart other persons to care for the physical needs of others, reflecting the concerns for the people of the world. In the New Testament (Acts 6), we see the apostles identifying and authorizing persons to a ministry of service. These functions, though set apart, were never separate from the ministry of the whole people of God. Paul states (Ephesians 4:1-12) that different gifts and ministries are given to all persons. The Wesleyan tradition has, from the beginning, encouraged a culture of call and a community of discernment, which affirms and supports the ministry of all Christians and identifies and authorizes persons into ministries of the ordained.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 302 = 302

¶ 303. *Orders in Relation to the Ministry of All Christians*—1. Within the people of God, some persons are called to the ministry of deacon. The words *deacon*, *deaconess*, and *diaconate* all spring from a common Greek root—*diakonos*, or “servant,” and *diakonia*, or “service.” Very early in its history the church, as an act of worship and praise of God, instituted an order of ordained ministers to personify or focus the servanthood to which all Christians are called. These people were named deacons. This ministry exemplifies and leads the church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and the world. Those called to the ministry of deacon are called to witness to the Word in their words and actions and to embody and lead the community's service in the world for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice.

2. Within the people of God, other persons are called to the ministry of elder. The elders carry on the historic work of the *presbyteros* in the life of the church. Beginning in some of the very early Christian communities, the *presbyteros* assisted the bishop in leading the gathered community in the celebration of sacraments and the guidance and care of its communal life. Those called to the ministry of the elder are called to bear authority and responsibility to preach and teach the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church so it can be faithful in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 303.1-2 = 305

¶ 304. *Purpose of Ordination*—1. Ordination to ministry is a gift from God to the church. In ordination, the church affirms and continues the apostolic ministry through persons empowered by the Holy Spirit. As such, those who are ordained make a commitment to conscious living of the whole gospel and to the proclamation of that gospel to the end that the world may be saved.

2. Ordination is fulfilled in leadership of the people of God through ministries of Service, Word, Sacrament, Order, Compassion, and Justice. The church's ministry of service is a primary representation of God's love. Those who respond to God's call to lead in service, word, compassion, and justice and equip others for this ministry through teaching, proclamation, and worship and who assist elders in the administration of the sacraments are ordained as deacons. Those whose leadership in service includes preaching and teaching the Word of God, administration of the sacraments, ordering the church for its mission and service, and administration of the discipline of the church are ordained as elders.

3. Ordained persons exercise their ministry in covenant with all Christians, especially with those whom they lead and serve in ministry. They also live in covenant of mutual care and accountability with all those who share their ordination, especially in The United Methodist Church, with the ordained who are members of the same annual conference and part of the same order. The covenant of ordained ministry is a lifetime commitment, and those who enter into it dedicate their whole lives to the personal and spiritual disciplines it requires.

4. The effectiveness of the church in mission depends on these covenantal commitments to the ministry of all Christians and the ordained ministry of the church. Through ordination and through other offices of pastoral leadership, the church provides for the continuation of Christ's ministry, which has been committed to the church as a whole. Without creative use of the diverse gifts of the entire body of Christ, the ministry of the church is less effective. Without responsible leadership, the focus, direction, and continuity of that ministry is diminished. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for ordained ministry and provide spiritual and financial support for their education as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.

5. In keeping with ancient Christian teaching and our Wesleyan tradition, we affirm that ordination for the same, or equivalent order, is not repeatable.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 304.1-5 = 303.1-5

¶ 305. *Qualifications for Ordination*—1. Those whom the church ordains shall be conscious of God's call to ordained ministry, and their call shall be acknowledged and authenticated by the church. God's call has many manifestations, and the church cannot structure a single test of authenticity. Nevertheless, the experience of the church and the needs of its ministry require certain qualities of faith, life, and practice from those who seek ordination as deacons and elders. In order that The United Methodist Church may be assured that those persons who present themselves as candidates for ordained ministry are truly called of God, the church expects persons seeking ordination to:

a) Have a personal faith in Christ and be committed to Christ as Savior and Lord.

b) Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness.

c) Teach and model generous Christian giving with a focus on tithing as God's standard of giving.

d) Acknowledge a call by God to give themselves completely to ordained ministry following Jesus' pattern of love and service.

e) Communicate persuasively the Christian faith in both oral and written form.

f) Make a commitment to lead the whole church in loving service to humankind.

g) Give evidence of God's gifts for ordained ministry, evidence of God's grace in their lives, and promise of future usefulness in the mission of the church.

h) Be persons in whom the community can place trust and confidence.

i) Accept that Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation through faith in God through Jesus Christ; be competent in the disciplines of Scripture, theology, church history, and church polity; possess the skills essential to the practice of ordained ministry; and lead in making disciples for Jesus Christ.

j) Be accountable to The United Methodist Church, accept its Doctrinal Standards and *Discipline* and authority, accept the supervision of those appointed to this ministry, and be prepared to live in the covenant of its ordained ministers.

2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained clergy on the lives of other persons both within and outside the church, the church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end, they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in

marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

3. While persons set apart by the church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.²

4. The United Methodist Church entrusts those persons who are in the ordained ministry with primary responsibility for maintaining standards of education and preparation for ordination. Having been originally recommended by a charge conference or equivalent body (§ 309.2c) and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference, persons are elected to membership in the annual conference and ordained by the bishop.

5. In all votes regarding license, ordination, or conference membership, the requirements set forth herein are minimum requirements only.

6. In central conferences, the annual conference, upon recommendation of its Board of Ordained Ministry, may create an executive committee of the board, district committees on ordained ministry, or other appropriate structure, as it serves the need to carry out the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry, and assign and delegate to such structures the appropriate tasks and responsibilities it chooses.

With regard to mandated sub-units of the Board of Ordained Ministry and their respective tasks and responsibilities, jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 305.1-5 = 304.1-5; 305.6=new

1. "Self-avowed practicing homosexual" is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that person is a practicing homosexual. Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020.

2. See Judicial Council Decisions 984, 985, 1027, 1028.

¶ 306. *Order of Deacons and Order of Elders*—All persons ordained as clergy upon election to full membership in the annual conference shall be members of and participate in an order appropriate to their election. An order is a covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for, and hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church. These orders, separately or together, seek to respond to the spiritual hunger among clergy for a fulfilling sense of vocation,

for support among peers, and for a deepening relationship with God.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 306 = 306

¶ 307. *Changing Orders*—1. Upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and vote of the clergy session of the annual conference, elders may be received as deacons in full connection, and deacons in full connection may be received as elders, provided they are in good standing and have:

a) informed the bishop and district superintendent of their intention,

b) applied in writing to the Board of Ordained Ministry,

c) articulated to the Board of Ordained Ministry their call to the ministry of the deacon or the elder.

d) completed all requirements for admission to the order for which they apply, §§ 320 and 324, and

e) completed at least two years, and no more than eight years, under appointment while licensed for the ministry of the order to which they are transitioning.

2. Such persons shall retain their credentials and full membership in the annual conference through the transition period from one order to the other. When ordained to the order to which they are transitioning, they shall surrender to the conference secretary the credentials of the order from which they are leaving.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 307.1+2 = 309.2+3

¶ 308. *General Provisions*—1. The annual conference is the basic body of The United Methodist Church. The clergy membership of an annual conference shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection (§§ 325, 333), provisional members (§ 323), associate members (§ 317), affiliate members (§ 340.4), and local pastors (§ 313). All clergy are amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their duties in the positions to which they are appointed.³

2. Both men and women are included in all provisions of the *Discipline* that refer to the ordained ministry.⁴

3. There shall be an annual meeting of this covenant body, called "clergy session," in executive session of all clergy members in full connection with the annual conference, with voting rights as specified by the *Discipline*, at the site of the regular session of the annual conference, or at an alternative time and location determined by the bishop after consultation with the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry, to consider questions relating to matters of ordination, character, and conference relations.⁵

4. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and at such place as the bishop shall determine, after consultation with the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry. A special clergy session shall have only such powers as stated in the call.

>VII: 308.001<

GBOD ¶ 308.1-4 = 369.1-2+5-6

3. See Judicial Council Decisions 327, 371.

4. See Judicial Council Decisions 155, 317.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 406, 555, 1009.

Section II. Candidacy for Licensed and Ordained Ministry

¶ 309. *Candidacy and Certification for Licensed and Ordained Ministry*—1. The licensed or ordained ministry is recognized by The United Methodist Church as a called-out and set-apart ministry. Therefore, it is appropriate that those persons who present themselves as candidates for licensed or ordained ministry be examined regarding the authenticity of their call by God to set-apart ministry.

>VII: 309.001<

2. Those beginning candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry:

a) shall be a professing member in good standing of The United Methodist Church or a baptized participant of a recognized United Methodist campus ministry or other United Methodist ministry setting for a minimum of one (1) year;

b) shall request a meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or equivalent body to consider the statement of call and to be evaluated in light of Wesley's historic questions;

(1) Do they know God as pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? Are they holy in all manner of conversation?

(2) Have they gifts, as well as evidence of God's grace, for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

(3) Have they fruit? Have any been truly convinced of sin and converted to God, and are believers edified by their service? As long as these marks occur in them, we believe they are called of God to serve. These we receive as sufficient proof that they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

c) Upon recommendation of the candidate by the committee on pastor-parish relations or equivalent body approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, the charge conference shall meet to recommend the candidate in written ballot by two thirds majority to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

>VII: 309.002<

3. Candidates recommended by the charge conference and seeking to become certified for licensed or ordained ministry shall meet with the Board of Ordained Ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry may require the candidate to provide written material and reports according to its guidelines. These shall include, but are not limited to, written answers to questions about call, experience of faith and ministry, and understanding of the Christian faith; psychological reports, criminal background, an official statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

>VII: 309.003; 309.004; 309.005<

GBOD ¶ 309.1 = 310.Intro; 309.2=310.1; 309.3=310.2a+b

¶ 310. *Continuation of Certified Candidates*—1. The progress of certified candidates shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry which may continue the candidacy when the following conditions have been met satisfactorily,⁶ but for no more than twelve years following certification:

2. The certified candidate has received the annual recommendation of his or her charge conference.

3. The certified candidate is making satisfactory progress in his or her studies.

4. The certified candidate continues to evidence gifts, fruits, and God's grace for the work of ministry.

>VII: 310.001<

GBOD ¶ 310.1-4 = 313.Intro+5; +1-3

6. See Judicial Council Decision 1263.

¶ 311. *Discontinuance and Reinstatement of Certified Candidates*—Certified candidates may be discontinued on their own request, upon severing their relationship with The United Methodist Church, or upon action by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall keep a permanent record of the circumstances relating to discontinuance.

Certified candidates whose status has been discontinued by the Board of Ordained Ministry shall only be reinstated by the same board.

In jurisdictional conferences, this paragraph shall also be implemented by their respective committees on ordained ministry.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 311 = 314.2

Section III. License for Pastoral Ministry

¶ 312. *License for Pastoral Ministry*—1. All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry.

The Board of Ordained Ministry may recommend to the clergy session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who have provided the reports and statements required by the board, and who are in one of the following categories:

2. Provisional elders to be commissioned by the annual conference;
3. Local pastors who have completed the conditions for candidacy certification and the studies for the license as a local pastor;
4. Associate members of the annual conference;
5. Deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder;
6. Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations who have training equivalent to the studies for license as a local pastor.

>VII: 312.001<

GBOD ¶ 312.1-6 = 315.Intro+.1-5

¶ 313. *Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry*—1. Provisional elders approved annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry and local pastors approved annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry may be licensed by the bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor (¶ 334), including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage (where state laws allow),⁷ burial, confirmation, and membership reception, within and while appointed to a particular charge or extension ministry. For the purposes of these paragraphs the charge or extension ministry shall be defined as “people within or related to the community or ministry setting being served.” Those licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to extension ministry settings when approved by the bishop and Board of Ordained Ministry.

2. Licensed clergy shall be amenable to the clergy session of the annual conference in the performance of their pastoral duties and shall attend the sessions of the annual conference.

3. The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, central, or jurisdictional conference, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

Licensed clergy who fulfill the requirements of ¶ 35 may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and central or jurisdictional conferences.⁸

>VII: 313.001<

GBOD ¶ 313.1 = 316.1; 313.2=316.5; 313.3=316.6

7. See Judicial Council Decision 694.

8. See Judicial Council Decision 1181 and ¶ 35.

¶ 314. *Categories of Local Pastor*—Each central conference shall establish what categories of local pastor will be recognized, as well as educational or other requirements necessary for each category. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 314.001<

GBOD ¶ 314=318Intro

¶ 315. *Continuance as a Local Pastor*—1. Upon successful continuance or completion of required studies, and other qualifications, a local pastor may be recommended for continuance by the Board of Ordained Ministry to the clergy session of the annual conference for annual approval.⁹

2. None of the provisions in this legislation shall be interpreted to change or limit authorizations to local pastors ordained as deacon prior to 1996.¹⁰

>VII: 315.001<

GBOD ¶ 315.1-2=319.2+5

9. Judicial Council Decision 1076.

10. Judicial Council Decision 1076.

¶ 316. *Exiting, Reinstatement, and Retirement of Local Pastors*—1. *Discontinuance of Local Pastors*—Whenever a local pastor retires or is no longer approved for appointment by the annual conference, whenever any local pastor severs relationship with The United Methodist Church, whenever the appointment of a local pastor is discontinued by the bishop, or whenever the Board of Ordained Ministry does not recommend continuation of license, license shall be surrendered to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference.

After consultation with the district superintendent and the pastor, the former local pastor shall designate the local church in which membership shall be held. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall file with the resident bishop a permanent record of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of local pastor status.

2. *Withdrawal Under Complaints and Charges*—When a local pastor is accused of a chargeable offense under ¶ 2702 and desires to withdraw from the church, the procedures described in Judicial Administration shall apply.

3. *Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status*—Local pastors who have been discontinued from an annual conference of The United Methodist Church may be reinstated only by the annual conference that previously approved them, or its legal successor, only upon recommendation by the respective Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet. Persons seeking reinstatement shall provide evidence

that they have been members of a local United Methodist church for at least one year prior to their request for reinstatement and have been recommended by its charge conference. When approved by the clergy session of the annual conference, their license and credentials shall be restored, and they shall be eligible for appointment.

4. *Retirement of Local Pastor*—Upon retirement, a local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study may be recognized as a retired local pastor. Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice but not vote. A retired local pastor may be appointed by the bishop to a charge.

>VII: 316.001<

GBOD ¶ 316.1-4 = 320.1-2+4 - 5

Section IV. Associate Membership

¶ 317. *Eligibility and Rights of Associate Members*—

1. Associate members of an annual conference are in the itinerant ministry of the church (see ¶ 334) and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop. They shall be amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their ministry.¹¹

2. Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

3. Associate members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of an annual conference. They shall not be eligible for election as delegates to the General or central or jurisdictional conferences.

4. Associate members shall be subject to the provisions for ordained elders governing sabbatical leave, leave of absence, location, retirement, minimum salary, and pension.

GBOD ¶ 317.1-4 = 321.Intro+.1-3

>VII: —<

11. See Judicial Council Decision 1226.

¶ 318. *Requirements for Election as Associate Members*—1. Local pastors may be elected to associate membership by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session of the annual conference, upon recommendation by a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry, when they have met the following conditions:

They shall have: (1) served four years as full-time local pastors; (2) completed the educational requirements for the Course of Study; (3) have reached the age requirements; and (4) fulfilled the requirements stated in ¶ 320.4-8, applicable to associate membership. >VII: 318.001<

2. Each central conference shall establish provisions for such requirements or delegate it to its annual confer-

ences. Annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

GBOD ¶ 318.1 = 322.1; 318.2=new

¶ 319. *Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members*—Each annual conference shall organize a Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members or, where numbers are too small, combine activities with the clergy orders.

>VII: 319.001<

GBOD ¶ 319 = 323Intro

Section V. Provisional Membership

¶ 320. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*—1. A person shall be eligible for election to provisional membership in the annual conference by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session on recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry after meeting the following qualifications:¹² >VII: 320.001<

2. *Candidacy Requirement*: Each candidate shall have been a certified candidate for at least one year. Those appointed as local pastors are clergy members of the annual conference and are no longer certified candidates.

3. *Service Requirement*: Each candidate shall have demonstrated his or her gifts for ministries of service and leadership to the satisfaction of the Board of Ordained Ministry as a condition of provisional membership.

4. Each candidate shall file with the board a written, concise, autobiographical statement regarding age, health, family status, Christian experience, call to ministry, educational record, formative Christian experiences, and plans for service in the church. >VII: 320.002<

5. Each candidate shall submit documentation that shall include but is not limited to psychological reports, criminal background, an official statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

6. *Educational Requirement*: Candidates shall have completed theological studies in the Christian faith. These studies shall include United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history. Each central conference shall establish provisions for its educational requirements.

Annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 320.003<

7. Local pastors may fulfill the educational requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

a) completed four years of full-time service or the equivalent and

b) completed the Course of Study and the Advanced Course of Study.

c) Each central conference shall establish provisions for its educational requirements for local pastors seeking provisional and full membership.¹³ Annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 320.004<

8. Each candidate shall respond to a doctrinal examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The examination shall cover the following:

a) Describe your personal experience of God and the understanding of God you derive from biblical, theological, and historical sources.

b) What is your understanding of evil as it exists in the world?

c) What is your understanding of humanity, and the human need for divine grace?

d) How do you interpret the statement *Jesus Christ is Lord*?

e) What is your conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit in personal faith, in the community of believers, and in responsible living in the world?

f) What is your understanding of the kingdom of God; the Resurrection; eternal life?

g) How do you intend to affirm, teach, and apply Part III of the *Discipline* (Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task) in your work in the ministry to which you have been called?

h) The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the church?

i) Describe the nature and mission of the church. What are its primary tasks today?

j) Discuss your understanding of the primary characteristics of United Methodist polity.

k) Explain your understanding of the distinctive vocations of the Order of Elder and the Order of Deacon. How do you perceive yourself, your gifts, your motives, your role, and your commitment as a provisional deacon or provisional elder in The United Methodist Church?

l) Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church, and the servant ministry of the provisional member.

m) What is the meaning of *ordination* in the context of the general ministry of the church?

n) Describe your understanding of an inclusive church and ministry.

o) You have agreed as a candidate for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness of the gospel, and in consideration of the influence as a clergy, to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, and to this

end agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God. What is your understanding of this agreement?

p) Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called.

9. Each candidate shall have a personal interview with the Board of Ordained Ministry to complete his or her candidacy.

10. Each candidate shall have been recommended to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

GBOD ¶ 320.1 = 324Intro; 320.2=324.1; 320.3=324.2; 320.4=324.13; 320.5=324.12; 320.6=324.5; 320.7=324.6; 320.8=324.9; 320.9=324.11; 320.10=324.14

12. See Judicial Council Decision 318.

13. See Judicial Council Decisions 823, 1077.

¶ 321. *Commissioning*—Commissioning is the act of the church that publicly acknowledges God's call and the response, talents, gifts, and training of the candidate. The church invokes the Holy Spirit as the candidate is commissioned to be a faithful servant leader among the people, to lead the church in service, to proclaim the Word of God, and to equip others for ministry. Commissioning of provisional members for ministry as elders by a bishop implies the authority of a license for pastoral ministry for the time of provisional membership.

>VII: 321.001<

GBOD ¶ 321 = 325

¶ 322. *Service of Provisional Members*—All persons who are provisional members shall be appointed by a bishop (¶ 406) and serve as a provisional member of the annual conference for a minimum of two years following the completion of education requirements for full connection. >VII: 322.001<

GBOD ¶ 322 = 326.Intro

¶ 323. *Eligibility and Rights of Provisional Membership*—1. Provisional members are on probation as to character, servant leadership, and effectiveness in ministry in preparation for membership in full connection in the annual conference as deacons or elders. They are accountable to the annual conference, through the clergy session. Annually, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall review and evaluate their relationship and make recommendation to the clergy session of the annual conference regarding their continuance. No member shall be continued on

provisional membership beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership.

2. Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:

- a) constitutional amendments;
- b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

3. Provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and central or jurisdictional conferences.¹⁴

4. Provisional members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of the annual conference except the Board of Ordained Ministry.

5. *Discontinuance from Provisional Membership*

a) Provisional members may request discontinuance of this relationship or may be discontinued by the clergy session upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

(1) *Voluntary Discontinuance*—When provisional members in good standing withdraw to unite with another denomination or to terminate their membership in The United Methodist Church, their action shall be considered a request for discontinuance of their relationship and their credentials shall be surrendered to a district superintendent.

(2) *Involuntary Discontinuance*—In the case of discontinuation without consent, prior to any final recommendation, a provisional member will be advised of the right to a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry. A report of the action will be made to the full board for final action. The provisions of fair process (§ 352.2) shall be observed.

(3) *Discontinuance Due to Time Limit*—No member shall be continued on provisional membership beyond the eighth regular session following their admission to provisional membership.

b) When this relationship is discontinued, they shall no longer be permitted to exercise ministerial functions and shall return their credentials to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference, and their membership shall be transferred by the district superintendent to the local church they designate after consultation with the pastor.

c) The Board of Ordained Ministry shall file with the resident bishop and the secretary of the conference a permanent record of the circumstances relating to discontinuance as a provisional member.

d) After discontinuance, provisional members may be classified and approved as local pastors in accordance with the provisions of *BOD* § 313.

6. Provisional members may not be retired under the provisions of § 349. Provisional members who have reached the mandatory retirement age shall be automatically discontinued. Provisional elders may be classified as retired local pastors under the provisions of *BOD* § 320.5. >VII: 323.001<

>VII: —<

GBOD § 323.1=327Intro; 323.2-3=327.2; 323.4=327.3; 323.5-6=327.6-7

14. See Judicial Council Decision 1181 and § 35.

¶ 324. *Requirements for Ordination as Deacon or Elder and Admission into Full Connection*—1. Provisional

members who are applying for admission into full connection and who have been provisional members for at least two years following the completion of educational requirements as specified in § 324.4 may be admitted into membership in full connection in an annual conference upon recommendation by a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry and elected by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.¹⁵ This process shall be informed by guidelines in Part III of the *Discipline* and shall focus upon the covenantal ministry of all Christians and the particular ministry to which the person has been ordained. Qualification requirements are:

2. *Membership Requirement*—Each candidate for ordination and full membership shall have been previously elected as a provisional member.

3. *Service Requirements*—They shall have served under episcopal appointment for at least two full annual conference years following the completion of the educational requirements. >VII: 324.001<

4. *Educational Requirements*—Prior to ordination and election to full membership all provisional members shall have fully completed the educational requirements.

5. The following questions are guidelines for the preparation of the examination:

a) Theology

(1) Give examples of how the practice of ministry has affected your experience and understanding of:

(a) God

(b) Humanity

(c) The need for divine grace

(d) The Lordship of Jesus Christ

(e) The work of the Holy Spirit

(f) The meaning and significance of the sacraments

(g) The kingdom of God

(h) Resurrection and eternal life

(2) How do you understand the following traditional evangelical doctrines: (a) repentance; (b) justification;

(c) regeneration; (d) sanctification? What are the marks of the Christian life?

(3) What are its primary challenges today?

(4) The United Methodist Church holds that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are sources and norms for belief and practice, but that the Bible is primary among them. What is your understanding of this theological position of the church, and how has your practice of ministry been affected by this understanding?

(5) How has the practice of ministry enriched your understanding of the meaning and significance of the sacraments?

b) Vocation

(1) How has the experience of ministry shaped your understanding of your vocation as an ordained deacon?

c) The Practice of Ministry

(1) Do you offer yourself to be appointed by the bishop to a service ministry?

(2) Describe and evaluate your personal gifts for ministry and how they have resulted in fruitful ministry. What would be your areas of strength and areas in which you need to be strengthened in order to be more fruitful in ministry?

(3) For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of your influence as an ordained clergy, are you willing to make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life; and to this end will you agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to physical health, intentional intellectual development, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, integrity in all personal relationships, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge of the love of God?¹⁵

(4) Provide evidence of your willingness to relate yourself in ministry to all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic condition, or disability.

(5) Will you regard all pastoral conversations of a confessional nature as a trust between the person concerned and God?

(6) Provide evidence of experience in peace and justice ministries.

6. A deacon shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Ordination of Deacons (§ 405.5). The bishop shall be assisted by other deacons and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the church community. Bishops in other communions may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating deacons and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.

7. An elder shall be ordained by a bishop by the laying on of hands, employing the Order of Service for the Ordination of Elders (§ 405.5). The bishop shall be assisted by other elders and may include laity designated by the bishop representing the church community. Bishops in other communions may join the ordaining bishop in laying hands on the head of the candidate, while participating elders and laity may lay hands on the back or shoulders of the candidate.

8. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 324 = 330+335

GBOD ¶ 324.7 = new; 324.8=330.7; 324.9=333.3; 324.10=330.6/333.2

15. See Judicial Council Decisions 157, 344, 1199.

16. See Judicial Council Decision 542.

¶ 325. *Historic Examination for Admission into Full Connection*—The bishop as chief pastor shall engage those seeking to be admitted in serious self-searching and prayer to prepare them for their examination before the conference. At the time of the examination the bishop shall also explain to the conference the historic nature of the following questions and seek to interpret their spirit and intent. The questions are these and any others that may be thought necessary:

1. Have you faith in Christ?
2. Are you going on to perfection?
3. Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?
4. Are you earnestly striving after it?
5. Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work?
6. Do you know the General Rules of our church?
7. Will you keep them?
8. Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?
9. After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?
10. Will you preach and maintain them?
11. Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity?
12. Do you approve our church government and polity?
13. Will you support and maintain them?
14. Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
15. Will you visit from house to house?

16. Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example?

17. Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?

18. Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?

19. Will you observe the following directions?

a) Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.

b) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.¹⁷

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 325 = 330.5.d + 336

17. These are the questions that every Methodist preacher from the beginning has been required to answer upon becoming a full member of an annual conference. These questions were formulated by John Wesley and have been little changed throughout the years.

Section VI. The Order of the Deacon

¶ 326. *The Ministry of a Deacon*—1. From among the baptized, deacons are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop. Deacons give leadership in the church's life: in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship, and in assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, or in presiding at the celebration of the sacraments when contextually appropriate and duly authorized; in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; in embodying the church's mission to the world; and in leading congregations in interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. For the sake of extending the mission and ministry of the church and offering the means of grace to the world, the resident bishop of the annual conference in which the deacon is appointed may authorize the deacon to preside at the celebration of the sacraments.

2. Deacons are accountable to the annual conference and the bishop for the fulfillment of their call to servant leadership.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 326 = 328

¶ 327. *Authority and Responsibilities of Deacons in Full Connection*—1. Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two.

2. The deacon in full connection shall have the right of voice and vote in the annual conference where membership is held; shall be eligible to serve as clergy on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference and hold office on the same; and shall be eligible for election as a clergy delegate to the General, central, or jurisdictional conference. The deacon in full connection shall attend all the sessions of the annual conference and share with elders in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 330.1).

3. As members of the Order of Deacons, all deacons in full connection are in covenant with all other such deacons in the annual conference and shall participate in the life of their order.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 327.1-3 = 329.1-3

¶ 328. *Appointment of Deacons and Provisional Deacons to Various Ministries*—1. Deacons and provisional deacons may be appointed to serve in the following settings.

2. *Deacons and Provisional Deacons Appointed Beyond the Local Church*—Deacons and provisional deacons may be appointed to settings not connected to either The United Methodist Church or ecumenical agencies when the appointment is approved by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry as a ministry beyond the local church that is a witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world.

3. *Charge Conference Membership of Deacons and Provisional Deacons*

a) Deacons and provisional deacons who are appointed to a local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish, shall be members of that charge conference.

b) Deacons and provisional deacons who are appointed to settings beyond the local church shall, after consultation with the pastor in charge, and the district superintendent designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference in which they shall hold membership and to which they shall submit an annual report.

4. Each central conference shall determine the process for deacons' appointments, equitable compensation, pension and health benefits, and the procedures when a deacon is not appointed. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 328.001<

GBOD ¶ 328.1 = 331.1; 328.2=331.4; 328.3=331.9; 328.4 (new)

Section VII. The Order of the Elder

¶ 329. *Elders in Full Connection*—Elders in full connection with an annual conference by virtue of their election and ordination are bound in special covenant with all the ordained elders of the annual conference. In the keeping of this covenant they perform the ministerial duties and maintain the ministerial standards established by those in the covenant. They offer themselves without reserve to be appointed and to serve, after consultation, as the appointive authority may determine.¹⁸

>VII: 329.001<

GBOD ¶ 329 = 333.1

18. See Judicial Council Decision 492.

¶ 330. *Ministry, Authority, and Responsibilities of an Elder in Full Connection*—1. An elder in full connection is authorized to give spiritual and temporal servant leadership in the church in the following manner:

2. Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the General and central or jurisdictional conferences and shall share with deacons in full connection responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. This responsibility shall not be limited by the recommendation or lack of recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry, notwithstanding provisions that grant to the Board of Ordained Ministry the right of recommendation.¹⁹ They shall be eligible to hold office in the annual conference and to be elected delegates to the General and central or jurisdictional conferences under the provision of the Constitution (¶ 35). Every effective elder in full connection who is in good standing shall be continued under appointment by the bishop.²⁰

3. There are professional responsibilities (¶ 334) that elders are expected to fulfill and that represent a fundamental part of their accountability and a primary basis of their continued eligibility for annual appointment.²¹

Each central conference shall establish regulations on the evaluation process for fulfilling these professional responsibilities.

Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 330.001<

4. When an elder's effectiveness is in question, the bishop shall complete the procedures in place (¶ 349). Each central conference may establish its provisions. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

GBOD ¶ 330.1-4 = 334.Intro+1-3

19. See Judicial Council Decision 690.

20. See Judicial Council Decisions 462, 492, 534, 555.

21. See Judicial Council Decision 492.

¶ 331. *General Provisions for Appointments of Elders, Provisional Elders, Associate Members, and Licensed Ministers*—1. All elders in full connection who are in good standing in an annual conference shall be continued under appointment by the bishop unless they are granted a leave, retirement, or have failed to meet the requirements for continued eligibility.²² (¶ 330).>VII: 331.001<

2. In addition to ordained elders, persons who have been granted a license for pastoral ministry may be appointed to local churches as pastors in charge.²³ All clergy members and licensed local pastors to be appointed shall assume a lifestyle consistent with Christian teaching as set forth in the Social Principles.

3. Elders in effective relationship, associate members, provisional elders, and persons licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to ministry settings that extend the ministry of The United Methodist Church and the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world beyond the local church. Persons in these appointments remain within the itineracy and shall be accountable to the annual conference. Institutions, agencies, or clergy desiring such appointment shall consult with the clergy person's bishop and/or district superintendent prior to any interviews relative to such an appointment. >VII: 331.002< GBOD ¶ 331.1-3 = 337.1-3

GBOD ¶ 331.3 see also 343.1 (+references in 326 Intro, 331.4) and 343.2+3+344.1(d)

22. See Judicial Council Decisions 380, 462, 492, 524, 702, 985, 1226.

23. See Judicial Council Decision 1226.

¶ 332. *The Itinerant System*—1. The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor.²⁴ All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments.²⁵ Bishops and cabinets shall commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. The nature of the appointment process is specified in ¶ 406. >VII: 332.001<

2. When an elder, provisional elder, or associate member is appointed to full-time service, that person's entire vocational time, as defined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations, is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which one is appointed by the bishop. >VII: 332.002<

3. At the initiative of the bishop and cabinet, or when an elder, provisional elder, or associate member requests, or declares in writing that itineracy is limited, he or she may be appointed to a less than full-time appointment. >VII: 332.003<

4. Elders and associate members in appointments extending the ministry of the local United Methodist church are full participants in the itinerant system. Therefore, a conference member in an appointment beyond the local United Methodist church must be willing upon consultation to receive an appointment in a pastoral charge.

GBOD ¶ 332.1 = 338.Intro; 332.2-3=338.1-2; 332.4=344 Intro

24. See Judicial Council Decision 713.

25. See Judicial Council Decision 492.

¶ 333. *Definition of a Pastor*—A pastor is an elder, associate member, provisional elder, or local pastor approved by vote of the clergy session of the annual conference and may be appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a local church or an extension ministry.

>VII: 333.001<

GBOD ¶ 333 = 339

¶ 334. *Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors*—1. The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.

2. The responsibilities and duties of elders and licensed pastors are:

a) *Word and ecclesial acts*:

(1) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.

(a) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith.

(b) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.

(2) To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.

(3) To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.

(a) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.

(b) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.

(4) To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.

(5) To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

b) *Sacrament*:

(1) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance.

(a) To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.

(b) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.

(c) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith, after instruction, so that they might become professing members of the church.

(d) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.

(e) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated Communion elements.

(2) To encourage the private and congregational use of the other means of grace.

c) *Order*:

(1) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.

(a) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.

(b) To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use of United Methodist literature and media.

(c) To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning, and evaluation.

(d) To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors, and other church-related ministries.

(2) To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.

(a) To administer the provisions of the *Discipline*.

(b) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference. Central conferences may establish provisions for this. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 334.001<

(c) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation. To ensure membership care including compliance with charitable giving documentation requirements and to provide appropriate pastoral care, the pastor, in cooperation with the financial secretary, shall have access to and responsibility for professional stewardship of congregational giving records.

(d) To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving.

(e) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.

(f) To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.

(3) To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities.

(a) To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.

(b) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.

(4) To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness.

d) *Service:*

(1) To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.

(2) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.

(3) To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.

(4) To participate in community, ecumenical and interreligious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.

GBOD ¶ 334.1-2 = 340.1-2

¶ 335. *Unauthorized Conduct*—1. Pastors shall first obtain the written consent of the district superintendent before engaging for an evangelist any person who is not a

general evangelist in the connection, a clergy member of an annual conference, a local pastor, or a certified lay servant in good standing in The United Methodist Church.

2. No pastor shall discontinue services in a local church between sessions of the annual conference without the consent of the charge conference and the district superintendent.

3. No pastor shall arbitrarily organize a pastoral charge.

4. No pastor shall hold a religious service within the bounds of a pastoral charge other than the one to which appointed without the consent of the pastor of the charge, or the district superintendent. >VII: 335.001<

5. All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences, except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.²⁵

6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.²⁶

7. No pastor shall re-baptize. The practice of re-baptism does not conform with God's action in baptism and is not consistent with Wesleyan tradition and the historic teaching of the church. Therefore, the pastor should counsel any person seeking re-baptism to participate in a rite of re-affirmation of baptismal vows.

GBOD ¶ 335.1-7 = 341.1-7

25. See Judicial Council Decision 936.

26. See Judicial Council Decision 1115.

Section VIII. Clergy from Other Annual Conferences, Other Methodist and Christian Denominations

¶ 336. *Provisions for Clergy from Outside the Annual Conference*—1. Ordained clergy or provisional members from other annual conferences and Christian denominations may receive an appointment in the annual conference in the following manner:

2. *Ordained Clergy or Provisional Members from Other Annual Conferences and Other Methodist Denominations*—With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, ordained clergy or provisional members from other annual conferences or other Methodist churches may receive appointments while retaining their home conference membership or denominational affiliation. >VII: 336.001<

3. *Elders or Ordained Clergy from Other Denominations*—On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy session of the annual conference may approve annually clergy in good standing from other

Christian denominations to receive appointments within the bounds of the annual conference while retaining their denominational affiliation, provided they meet all requirements for certified candidates, except church membership; present suitable credentials; have given evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity; and have been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

When the Board of Ordained Ministry certifies that their credentials are at least equal to those of United Methodist elders, the clergy session of the annual conference may grant them the same rights in the annual conference as provisional members. While under appointment, they are subject to the provisions of the *Discipline*, but are not part of the itinerant system.

>VII: 336.002<

GBOD ¶ 336.1-3 = 346.Intro+1-2

¶ 337. *Transfers*—1. *From Other Annual Conferences*—Ordained clergy or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into provisional or full membership with the consent of the bishops involved. Recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approval of the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer.

Transfers are conditioned on the passing of their character by the conference to which they are amenable. Members on transfer shall not vote twice on the same constitutional amendment, nor be counted twice, nor vote twice for delegates to the same General, jurisdictional, or central conferences.

Whenever clergy members are transferred to another annual conference, either in connection with a transfer of the pastoral charge to which they are appointed or by reason of the dissolution or merger of the annual conference, they shall have the same rights and obligations as the other members of the conference to which they are transferred.

2. *From Other Methodist Denominations*—Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Methodist churches may be received by transfer into provisional or full conference membership or as local pastors, with the consent of the bishops or other authorities involved, without going through the process required for ministers from other denominations. Prior consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be held in order to determine that the clergy meets the educational requirements and standards for conference membership established by the *Discipline* and the annual conference.

3. *From Other Denominations*—a) On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy ses-

sion of the annual conference may recognize the orders of ordained clergy from other denominations and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. They shall present their credentials for examination by the bishop and Board of Ordained Ministry. They shall give assurance of their Christian faith and experience, and their willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity. They shall meet the educational requirements and standards for conference membership.

b) Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Christian denominations shall serve as provisional members for at least two years and complete all the requirements, including courses in United Methodist history, doctrine, and polity, before being admitted into full conference membership.

c) Following the provisional member's election to full conference membership as a deacon or elder, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference.

4. The Board of Ordained Ministry of an annual conference is required to ascertain from an ordained clergy person seeking admission into its membership on credentials from another denomination whether or not membership in the effective relation was previously held in an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors, and if so, when and under what circumstances the ordained clergy's connection with such annual conference was severed.

5. Ordained clergy seeking admission into an annual conference on credentials from another denomination who have previously withdrawn from membership in the effective relation in an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors shall not be admitted or readmitted without the consent of the annual conference from which they withdrew or its legal successor, such consent to be granted upon recommendation of its Board of Ordained Ministry.

6. After the orders of an ordained minister of another church shall have been duly recognized, and the minister has been approved for full membership, the certificates of ordination by said church shall be returned to the minister with the following inscription written plainly on the back:

These orders are recognized by the _____ Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, this _____ day of _____, _____ [year].

_____, *President*

_____, *Secretary*

GBOD ¶ 337.1 = 347.1+604.6+7; 337.2=347.2a; 337.3-6=347.3-6

Section IX. Mentoring, Evaluation, Continuing Education, and Sabbatical Leave

¶ 338. *Mentors*—1. Mentoring occurs within a relationship where the mentor takes responsibility for creating a safe place for reflection and growth. An effective mentor has a mature faith, models effective ministry, and possesses the necessary skill to help individuals discern their call in ministry. Mentoring is a part of the preparation and growth for inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry, local pastors, and provisional members of an annual conference. Mentoring is distinct from the evaluative and supervisory process that is a part of preparation for ministry.

2. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained, and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Each central conference shall establish a mentoring program for candidates and provisional members, and for local pastors who have not completed educational requirements. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 338.001<

GBOD ¶ 338.1+2 = 348.2+ 1Intro

¶ 339. *Evaluation*—1. Evaluation is a continuous process for formation in servant ministry and servant leadership that must take place in a spirit of understanding and acceptance. Evaluation serves as a process for clergy to assess their effectiveness in ministry and to discern God's call to continue in ordained ministry.

2. The district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor-parish relations committee, will evaluate the clergy's effectiveness for ministry, using criteria, processes, and training developed by the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

>VII: 339.001<

GBOD ¶ 339.1-2 = 349Intro+1

¶ 340. *Continuing Education and Spiritual Growth*—Throughout their careers, clergy shall engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ.

>VII: 340.001<

GBOD ¶ 340.1-5 = 350-3+5-6

¶ 341. *Sabbatical Leave*—A sabbatical leave should be allowed for a program of study or travel approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Clergy members in full connection, or in associate membership, who have been serving in a full-time appointment for six consecutive years or in a less than full-time appointment equivalent to six

consecutive full-time years, from the time of their reception into full or associate membership, may be granted a sabbatical leave for up to one year.²⁷ The appointment to sabbatical leave is to be made by the bishop holding the conference, upon the vote of the annual conference after recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

>VII: 341.001<

GBOD ¶ 341 = 351

27. See Judicial Council Decision 473.

Section X. Changes of Conference Relationship

¶ 342. *General Provisions for Changes in Conference Relationship*—1. When a change in conference relationship is deemed necessary or desirable by a clergy in full connection, or a provisional or associate member, whether for a short or long term, the person requesting the change shall make written request to the Board of Ordained Ministry stating the reasons for the requested change of relationship. >VII: 342.001<

2. *Conference Relationship in Voluntary Leaves and Retirement*—In voluntary leaves of absence, maternity or paternity leaves, medical leaves, and any form of retirement, clergy members remain members of the annual conference, and eligible for membership on annual conference units, and eligible to serve as delegates to General or central or jurisdictional conferences.²⁸ With regard to their respective charge conference, the following regulations shall be followed:

a) *Voluntary Leaves of Absence*—With the written consent of the pastor in charge and the staff-parish relations committee, and the approval of the district superintendent, clergy members shall designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference to which they shall relate and submit an annual report of their ministerial activities to the charge conference. Their ministerial activities shall be limited to that charge conference, under the supervision of its pastor in charge. With the permission of the bishop and under the supervision of the respective district superintendent, they may exercise ministerial activities outside of their charge.²⁹

b) *Retirement*—All retired clergy members in full or associate membership who are not appointed as pastors of a charge, after consultation with the pastor in charge and the district superintendent, shall have a seat in the charge conference and all the privileges of membership in the church where they elect to hold such membership except as set forth in the *Discipline*. They shall submit an annual report of their ministerial activities to the charge conference.

If they reside outside the bounds of the annual conference, they shall forward their report to the charge conference where membership is held, signed by the pastor in charge of the affiliate charge conference where they reside. >VII: 342.002<

3. *Conference Relationship in Honorable Location*—In honorable location, clergy members shall not continue to hold membership in the annual conference. With the written consent of the pastor in charge and the staff-parish relations committee, and the approval of the district superintendent, located clergy members shall designate the local church in which they shall hold membership. They shall relate and submit an annual report of their ministerial activities to the charge conference and forward the report to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Failure to submit the report for two consecutive years may result in termination of orders upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and vote of the clergy session.

The ministerial activities of located clergy shall be limited to that charge conference, under the supervision of its pastor in charge. With the permission of the bishop and under the supervision of the respective district superintendent, they may exercise ministerial activities outside of their charge. When approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, a clergy on honorable location may be appointed ad interim by the bishop as a local pastor. >VII: 342.003<

4. *Conference Relationship in Involuntary Leave*—In involuntary leaves of absence, clergy members remain members of the annual conference, but shall not be members on annual conference units, nor elect delegates or be eligible as delegates to General or central or jurisdictional conferences.

With the written consent of the pastor in charge and the staff-parish relations committee, and the approval of the district superintendent, clergy members shall designate a charge conference within the bounds of the annual conference to which they shall relate and submit an annual report of their ministerial activities to the charge conference. Their ministerial activities shall be limited to that charge conference, under the supervision of its pastor in charge.

5. *Conference Relationship in Administrative Location*—In administrative location, clergy members shall not continue to hold membership in the annual conference. With the written consent of the pastor in charge and the staff-parish relations committee, and the approval of the district superintendent, located clergy members shall designate the local church in which they shall hold membership. They shall relate and submit an annual report of their ministerial activities to the charge conference and forward the report to the Board of Ordained Ministry. Failure to submit the report for two consecutive years may result in

termination of orders upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry and vote of the clergy session.

The ministerial activities of located clergy shall be limited to that charge conference, under the supervision of its pastor in charge. >VII: 342.004<

GBOD ¶ 342.1 = 352; 342.2=353.7+8+357.5;
342.3=358.2; 342.4=354.8+7; 342.5=359.3

28. See Judicial Council Decision 473.

29. See Judicial Council Decision 581.

¶ 343. *Voluntary Leave of Absence*—1. Members in full connection, or provisional or associate members of the annual conference who for sufficient reason choose to temporarily take leave from their ministerial appointment may request in writing with a copy to the bishop and their district superintendent a voluntary leave through the Board of Ordained Ministry. The leave is granted or renewed annually by vote of the clergy session of the annual conference upon recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry.

2. Each central conference shall determine a procedure for granting voluntary leaves of absence. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 343.001<

GBOD ¶ 343.1 = 353.1; 344.2=new

¶ 344. *Involuntary Leave of Absence*—1. The bishop and the district superintendents may request an involuntary leave of absence without the consent of the provisional, associate, or full member. They shall give to the clergy member and the Board of Ordained Ministry in writing specific reasons for the request. The request shall be referred to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The fair process for administrative hearings as set forth in ¶ 352.2 shall be followed in any involuntary leave of absence procedure.

2. Involuntary leave of absence shall be approved by two-thirds vote of the clergy session of the annual conference,³⁰ renewable annually for a maximum of three years.

3. Between sessions of the annual conference, the bishop and cabinet may request that an involuntary leave of absence be granted or terminated by the Board of Ordained Ministry. This interim action shall be subject to the approval of the clergy session of the annual conference at its next session.

4. Each central conference shall determine a procedure for granting voluntary leaves of absence. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 344.001<

GBOD ¶ 344.1 = 354;1; 344.2-3=354.4-5; 344.3=new

30. See Judicial Council Decision 782.

¶ 345. *Maternity or Paternity Leave*—Maternity or paternity leave will be available and shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the Board of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption, subject to keeping minimum standards of civil law. >VII: 345.001<
GBOD ¶ 345 = 355.Intro

¶ 346. *Medical Leave Due to Medical and Disabling Conditions that Prevent Performance of Ministerial Duties*—1. When clergy who are members of an annual conference (¶ 308) are unable to perform their ministerial duties because of medical and disabling conditions, upon recommendations of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the appropriate board of pensions, and by a majority vote of the clergy session of the annual conference who are present and voting, they may be granted annual medical leave without losing their relationship to the annual conference; provided, however, that such leave may be granted or renewed upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case by the appropriate committee, or in its absence by the Board of Ordained Ministry. >VII: 346.001<

2. When clergy who are members of an annual conference are unable to perform their ministerial duties between sessions of the annual conference on account of medical conditions, with the approval of a majority of the district superintendents, after consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry a medical leave may be granted by the bishop for the remainder of the conference year; provided, however, that such leave may be granted upon reasonable and appropriate investigation of the case. >VII: 346.002<

3. The policies for termination of medical leave shall follow procedures in compliance with local and national civil laws. >VII: 346.003<

4. Any person eligible to receive an appointment from a bishop and able to perform ministerial duties may not be placed on involuntary medical leave solely because of a medical condition. All reasonable accommodations should be made to enable qualified clergy with disabilities to serve in ministry settings compatible with their gifts and graces.

GBOD ¶ 346.1-2 = 356.1-2; 346.3=356.3+new;
346.4=356.5

¶ 347. *Honorable Location*—An annual conference may grant clergy members in full or associate membership certificates of honorable location at their own request, provided that the Board of Ordained Ministry shall have first examined their character and found them in good stand-

ing, and provided that the clergy session shall also pass on their character after the request is made, and provided further, that this relation shall be granted only to one who intends to discontinue service in the itinerant ministry. Upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, an annual conference may offer transition assistance. >VII: 347.001<

GBOD ¶ 347 = 358.1

¶ 348. *Administrative Location*—1. When the effectiveness of a clergy in associate or full membership is in question, the bishop shall complete the following procedure:

a) Identify the concerns on failed professional responsibilities or vocational ineffectiveness.

b) Hold supervisory conversations with the clergy-person that identifies the concerns and designs collaboratively with the clergy-person a corrective plan of action.

c) Evaluate whether the plan of action has produced fruit that gives a realistic expectation of future effectiveness.

2. If the process defined above (§1) has been completed and has failed to produce sufficient improvement, the bishop and the district superintendents may request that an associate or full member be placed on administrative location without the consent of the clergy member. They shall provide to the clergy member and the Board of Ordained Ministry, in writing, specific reasons for the request. The conference relations committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall conduct a fair process hearing as set forth in ¶ 352.2 in any administrative location procedure. The committee shall report the result of the hearing to the full Board of Ordained Ministry for its action. Any recommendation to administrative location shall be presented from the Board of Ordained Ministry at the next following meeting of the clergy session for final action. Between sessions of the annual conference, an associate or full member may be placed on administrative location by the Board of Ordained Ministry. This interim action shall be subject to the approval of the clergy session of the annual conference at its next session.³¹ >VII: 348.001<

GBOD ¶ 348.1-2 = 359.1-2

31. See Judicial Council Decision 695.

¶ 349. *Retirement*—1. Retired clergy members are those who have been placed in the retired relation either at their own request or by action of the clergy session upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry.³² Requests for retirement shall be stated to the bishop, cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry at least one hundred twenty days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective unless waived by the bishop and cabinet. The

Board of Ordained Ministry shall provide guidance and counsel to the retiring member and family as they begin a new relationship in the local church.³³ >VII: 349.001<

2. *Mandatory Retirement*—Every clergy member of an annual conference who will have attained age seventy-two on or before the end of the month in which the conference session is concluded shall automatically be retired.³⁴ Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 349.002<

3. *Voluntary Retirement—With Twenty Years of Service*—Any clergy members of the annual conference who have completed twenty years or more of service under appointment as ordained clergy or as local pastors may request the annual conference to place them in the retired relation.³⁵ Each annual conference within central conferences may establish further provisions for when and how voluntary retirement can take place. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 349.003<

4. *Involuntary Retirement*—By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, the clergy session of the annual conference may place any clergy members in the retired relation with or without their consent and irrespective of their age if such relation is recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet.³⁶ The procedures for fair process shall be followed in any involuntary retirement procedure. Written notice of the intended action shall be given to such member by the Board of Ordained Ministry at least 180 days prior to annual conference. >VII: 349.004<

5. *Appointment of Retired Clergy*—All retired clergy members in full or associate membership shall be eligible to receive an appointment when requested by the bishop and cabinet.³⁷ >VII: 349.005<

6. *Return to Effective Relationship*—A clergy member in full or associate membership who has retired under the provisions of §2 may at his or her own request be made an effective member upon recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop and cabinet, and by majority vote of the clergy session of the annual conference and thereby be eligible for appointment so long as he or she remains in the effective relation or until §1 applies. Each clergy member requesting return to effective relationship after voluntary retirement must meet the following conditions: (1) presentation of their certificate of retirement; (2) a satisfactory certificate of good health. >VII: 349.006<

GBOD ¶ 349.1-2 = 357Intro+1; 349.3=357.2a;
349.4=357.3; 349.5-6=357.6-7

34. See Judicial Council Decisions 7, 165, 413, 578.

35. See Judicial Council Decision 717.

36. See Judicial Council Decisions 522, 769.

37. See Judicial Council Decisions 87, 531, 558.

¶ 350. *Withdrawal*—1. *Withdrawal to Unite with Another Denomination*³⁸—When ordained members in good standing withdraw to unite with another denomination or to terminate their membership in the denomination, their certification of conference membership, and their written request to withdraw shall be deposited with the conference secretary.

2. *Withdrawal from the Ordained Ministerial Office*—Ordained members of an annual conference in good standing who desire to leave their ministerial office and withdraw from the conference may be allowed to do so by the annual conference at its session. The clergy's certifications of ordination and conference membership, and their written request to withdraw, shall be given to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference, and his or her membership may be transferred to a church that he or she designates, after consultation with the pastor, as the local church in which he or she will hold membership.³⁹

3. *Withdrawal Under Complaints or Charges*—When clergy members are named as respondents to a complaint under ¶ 353 and desire to withdraw from the membership of the annual conference, it may permit them to withdraw under the provisions of ¶ 2703.2. The clergy member's certifications of ordination and conference membership shall be surrendered to the district superintendent for deposit with the secretary of the conference, and their membership may be transferred to a local church that they designate, after consultation with the pastor.⁴⁰ Withdrawn under complaint or withdrawn under charges shall be written on the face of the credentials.

4. *Withdrawal Between Conferences*—In the event that withdrawal by surrender of the ministerial office, to unite with another denomination, or under complaints or charges, should occur in the interval between sessions of an annual conference, the clergy member's credentials, under the provisions of §1 and §3, shall be surrendered to the bishop or district superintendent along with a letter of withdrawal from the ordained ministry, for deposit with the secretary of the conference. This action shall be reported by the Board of Ordained Ministry to the annual conference at its next session.⁴¹ The effective date of withdrawal shall be the date of the letter of withdrawal.⁴²

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 350.1-4 = 360.1-4

32. See Judicial Council Decisions 87, 88, 531.

33. See Judicial Council Decision 995.

38. See Judicial Council Decision 696.

39. See Judicial Council Decisions 552, 695, 1055.

40. See Judicial Council Decision 691.

41. See Judicial Council Decision 552.

42. See Judicial Council Decision 691.

¶ **351. *Readmission to Provisional Membership***—Each central conference shall establish procedures for readmission to conference relationship for each of the following categories: termination of provisional membership, honorable or administrative location, leaving the ministerial office, termination by action of the annual conference, and involuntary retirement. All readmission procedures shall require readmission in the conference in which clergy membership was previously held or, in the case of readmission for transfer to a new conference, consultation with the bishops and Boards of Ordained Ministry for each conference involved in the readmission procedure. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 351.001-351.005<

GBOD ¶ 351 = 364

Section XI. Administrative Fair Process and Complaint Procedure

¶ **352. *Involuntary Status Change and Fair Process***—

1. When there is a request for an involuntary status change, the bishop and cabinet, and Board of Ordained Ministry shall take action in a timely manner. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline* in regard to the conference relations committee.
>VII: 352.001<

2. *Fair Process*—As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of The United Methodist Church, each central conference shall develop a method for the disposition of requests for involuntary status changes, excluding complaints, for the protection of the rights of individuals and for the protection of the church. These procedures shall be written and applied consistently to all requests for involuntary status change and shall include but not be limited to the following:

a) In any administrative proceeding the bishop or the bishop's designee and the respondent (the person against whom involuntary action [excluding complaints] is directed) shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken.

b) Notice of any hearing shall advise the respondent of the reason for the proposed procedures with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty days prior to the hearing.

c) The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied to any hearing by a clergyperson who is a member in full connection of the respondent's annual conference, in

accordance with the appropriate disciplinary provisions. The clergyperson accompanying the respondent shall have the right to voice.⁴³

d) In any administrative hearing, under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the pending hearing body. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body.

e) The respondent shall have access, at least seven days prior to the hearing, to all records relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the administrative process.⁴⁴

f) In the event that a clergyperson fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the bishop or district superintendent, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official administrative committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the additional procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 352.002<

3. *Immunity from Prosecution*—In order to preserve the integrity of the church's administrative process and ensure full participation in it at all times, the bishop, cabinet, Board of Ordained Ministry, witnesses, advocates, administrative review committee, clergy in full connection voting in executive session, and all others who participate in the church's administrative process shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular administrative process, unless they have committed a chargeable offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant/plaintiff in any proceeding against any such person related to their role in a particular judicial process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person's actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

GBOD ¶ 352.1 = 361.2; 352.2a-d=362.2Intro+a+c+d+f; 352.3=362.3

43. See Judicial Council Decisions 921, 972.

44. See Judicial Council Decision 974.

¶ **353. *Complaint Procedures***—1. *Review*—Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in the *Discipline*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Je-

sus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. >VII: 353.001<

2. *Supervision*—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. The person filing the complaint and the clergyperson shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

3. *Supervisory Response*—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal com-

plaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. Each central conference shall develop a method for the disposition of judicial complaints. These procedures shall be written and applied consistently to all judicial complaints. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or her with the right to voice.

The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop's designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergyperson named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the additional procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 353.002<

4. *Suspension*—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a period not to exceed ninety days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period of thirty days.⁴⁵ >VII: 352.003<

GBOD ¶ 353.1=362.1Intro; 353.2=362.1a; 353.3=362.1b; 353.4=362.1d

45. See Judicial Council Decision 776.

Chapter Three

The Superintendency

Section I. The Nature of Superintendency

Section II. The Council of Bishops and the Role of a Bishop

Section III. The Responsibilities of a Bishop

Section IV. Election, Assignment, and Termination of Bishops

Section V. Cabinet and District Superintendency

Section VI. Ecumenical Relationships

Section VII. Committee on Faith and Order

Section I. The Nature of Superintendency

¶ 401. *Nature*—1. From apostolic times, persons have been entrusted with particular tasks of oversight within the body of Christ. In The United Methodist Church, this oversight, or superintendency, resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendent for the purpose of equipping the church in its disciple-making ministry for the transformation of the world. Bishops possess distinct and collegial responsibilities, working together to order the life of the church, to enable the gathered church to worship and evangelize faithfully, and to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for extending the service in the church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. The office of bishop is a particular ministry, not a separate order. Bishops are elected from the group of elders in full connection who are ordained to the ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. They participate in the servant ministry of Christ, in sharing a royal priesthood that has apostolic roots (1 Peter 2:9; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 401.1 = 401; 401.2=402

Section II. The Council of Bishops and the Role of a Bishop

¶ 402. *The Council of Bishops*—1. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops are members of the Council of Bishops and are bound in special covenant with all other bishops. In keeping with this covenant, bishops fulfill their servant leadership and express their mutual accountability. The Council of Bishops is a faith community of mutual trust and concern responsible for the faith development and continuing well-being of its members.

2. The Council of Bishops is thus the collegial expression of episcopal leadership in the church and through the church into the world. The church expects the Council of

Bishops to speak to the church and from the church to the world and to give leadership in the quest for Christian unity and interreligious relationships.

3. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the Council of Bishops is to meet at stated intervals. The Council of Bishops is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the whole church, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the church.

4. The Council of Bishops may assign one of its members to visit another episcopal area or Methodist-related church. When so assigned, the bishop shall be recognized as the accredited representative of the Council of Bishops, and when requested by the resident bishop or president in that area or church, may exercise therein the functions of episcopacy.

5. The Council of Bishops may provide, if and when necessary, for episcopal visitation of mission fields not included in central or provisional central conferences.

6. Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. Further provisions shall be according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R 412).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 402.1-4 = 422.1-4; 402.5=567; 402.6=409

¶ 403. *Role of a Bishop*—1. Bishops undertake a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision. They are authorized to guard the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and *Discipline* of the church.

2. Additionally, the role of a bishop includes the following:

a) To faithfully practice, model, and lead the spiritual disciplines of our faith and to call and inspire the clergy and laity within the church to practice the Christian disciplines in their individual lives through the Wesleyan tradition of personal holiness. The bishop is to lead in public worship, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in the commendation of our faith.

b) To continue to learn and to teach how to make disciples and lead faithful and fruitful congregations using Scripture, spiritual disciplines, our Wesleyan heritage, and the history and doctrines of the church.

c) To work in partnership with the Council of Bishops, the cabinet and lay and clergy leadership of the annual conference, and the professing members of the church, to urge the whole church to move toward the vision of sharing Christ with the world in fulfillment of our

mission, faithful discipleship, and “an even better way” of being Christ’s people in the world.

d) To be a prophetic voice for justice in a suffering and conflicted world through the Wesleyan tradition of social holiness, encouraging and modeling the mission of witness and service in the world through proclamation of the gospel and alleviation of human suffering.

e) To have a passion for the unity of the church in being the shepherd of the whole flock and thereby providing leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation, and unity within the church—The United Methodist Church and the church universal.

f) To uphold the *Discipline* and order of the church by consecrating, ordaining, commissioning, supervising, and appointing persons in ministry to the church and the world. As the presiding officer of the annual conference, the resident bishop provides order and leads in new opportunities for ministry within the annual conference. The bishop shares with other bishops the oversight of the whole church through the Council of Bishops and is held accountable through the Council of Bishops in collaboration with committees on episcopacy.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 403Intro = 403.1; 403.a-f=403.1a-1f

Section III. The Responsibilities of a Bishop

¶ 404. *Leadership Responsibilities*—1. To lead and oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church in a manner that acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding, while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the church.

2. To guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically.

3. To teach and uphold the theological traditions of The United Methodist Church.

4. To travel through the connection at large as the Council of Bishops to implement strategy for the concerns of the church.

5. To promote and support the evangelistic witness of the whole church.

6. To provide liaison and leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry, mission, and structure and in the search for strengthened relationships with other faith communities.

7. To strengthen the local church, giving spiritual leadership to both laity and clergy; and to build relationships with people of local congregations of the area.

8. To convene the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders and work with the elected chairperson of each order.

9. To promote, support, and model generous Christian giving, with special attention to teaching the biblical principles of giving.

10. To discharge such other duties as the *Discipline* may direct.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 404.1 = 414.1+401; 404.2=414.3; 404.3=414.5; 404.4=414.4; 404.5=414.8; 404.6=414.6; 404.7=414.2; 404.8=414.10; 404.9=414.11; 404.10=414.9

¶ 405. *Presidential Responsibilities*—1. To preside in the General, jurisdictional, central, and annual conferences.¹

2. To provide general oversight for the fiscal and program operations of the annual conference(s). This may include special inquiry into the work of agencies to ensure that the annual conference and general church policies and procedures are followed.

3. To ensure fair process for clergy and laity as set forth in ¶ 2701 in all involuntary administrative and judicial proceedings through monitoring the performance of annual conference officials, boards, and committees charged with implementing such procedures.²

4. To form the districts after consultation with the district superintendents and after the number of the same has been determined by vote of the annual conference.³

>VII: 405.001<

5. To consecrate bishops, to ordain elders and deacons, to commission deaconesses, home missionaries and missionaries. As these services are acts of the whole church, the text and rubrics approved by General Conference shall be used (see ¶ 512.6 for central conferences).

GBOD ¶ 405.1-4 = 415.1-4; 405.5=415.6

1. See Judicial Council Decision 395.

2. See Judicial Council Decision 524.

3. See Judicial Council Decision 422.

¶ 406. *Appointment-making Responsibilities*—1. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible. The bishop is empowered to make and fix all appointments of clergy in the episcopal area.

The United Methodist Church promotes and holds in high esteem the opportunity of an inclusive church (¶ 4) with the formation of open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic or tribal origin, gender, being differently abled, marital status, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.

Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God’s grace of those appointed,

to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itinerary.⁴

2. A change in appointment of pastors may be initiated by a pastor, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a district superintendent, or a bishop.

3. A change in appointment of deacons may be initiated by a deacon, an agency seeking their service, a district superintendent, or a bishop. The appointment shall reflect the particular nature of the ministry of a deacon.

4. Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments.

5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments to a congregation in which the majority of its constituency is different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. They are made as a creative response to increasing racial and ethnic diversity. When such appointments are made, cabinets and boards of ordained ministry shall provide specific training for the clergypersons so appointed and for their congregations.

6. As part of the appointment-making process, the bishop is responsible for:

a) Dividing or uniting a circuit(s), station(s), or mission(s) as judged necessary for missional strategy and then to make appropriate appointments.

b) Appointing the district superintendents annually.

c) Fixing the charge conference membership of all ordained clergy appointed to ministries other than the local church in keeping with ¶ 331.3.

d) Fixing the appointments of deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries.

e) Transferring, upon the request of the receiving bishop, clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, provided said member(s) agrees to said transfer.⁵
>VII: 406.001<

7. The process of consultation shall be mandatory in every annual conference.⁶ Consultation is the process whereby the bishop and/or district superintendent confer with the pastor and committee on pastor-parish relations, taking into consideration a performance evaluation, needs of the appointment under consideration, and mission of the church. The role of the committee on pastor-parish relations is advisory. [JC Decisions 492, 1174?] Each central

conference shall establish its minimum standards for the consultation process. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 406.002<

GBOD ¶ 406.1 = 425.1+3; 406.2=428.1; 406.3=430; 406.4=425.1+4 406.5=425.4; 406.6a=416.2; 406.6b=415.5; 406.6c=416.4; 406.6d=416.3; 406.6e=416.5; 406.7=426.1+Intro

4. See Judicial Council Decision 492.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 114, 254, 554.

6. See Judicial Council Decision 701.

Section IV. Election, Assignment, and Termination of Bishops

¶ 407. *Provisions for Episcopal Areas*—The number of bishops shall be determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the proper committees, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters or jurisdictional conferences, according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R 407).⁷

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 407 = 404

7. See Judicial Council Decision 1312.

GC-R ¶ 407. Provisions for Episcopal Areas—1. *In Central Conferences*—In central conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional potential, as approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Before recommending changes in the number of episcopal areas, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall:

a) consider these criteria in the following order of priority:

(1) the number of charge conferences and the number of active clergy in episcopal areas;

(2) the geographic size of episcopal areas, measured by the square miles/square km, and the numbers of time zones and nations;

(3) the structure of episcopal areas, measured by the number of annual conferences, and the overall church membership in all annual, provisional annual, and missions in episcopal areas.

b) conduct a further analysis of the context and missional potential of changes in episcopal areas.

2. *In Jurisdictions*—In the jurisdictions, the number of bishops shall be determined on the following basis:

a) Each jurisdiction having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to five bishops and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall

be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof.

b) If the number of church members in a jurisdiction shall have decreased by at least 10 percent below the number of church members which had previously entitled the jurisdiction to its number of bishops, then the number of bishops to which it shall be entitled shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General Conference on the recommendation of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, provided however that said jurisdiction shall be entitled to no less than the number of bishops to which it would be entitled under subparagraph a) above. It shall be the responsibility of the affected jurisdiction, through its Committee on Episcopacy, to request consideration of its missional need for an exception, and in the absence of such a request, there shall be no obligation on the part of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy to consider such an exception nor to make any report on such an exception to General Conference. In no case shall there be any constraint on General Conference's power to act in the absence of such a recommendation or to reject any recommendation that might be received.

c) If a jurisdiction, as a result of the provisions of this paragraph, shall have the number of bishops to which it had previously been entitled reduced, then the reduction in the number of bishops to which it is entitled shall be effective as of September 1 of the calendar year in which said reduction has been determined by the General Conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 407.1-2 = 404.1-2

¶ 408. *Election and Consecration of Bishops*—1. Each central conference—in cooperation with their committee on episcopacy shall fix a procedure for the election of their bishops according to their own context. It may fix the tenure and term of office. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

The following minimum standards shall be followed in central and jurisdictional conferences:

a) Balloting shall not be limited to nominees of annual conferences nor shall any delegate be bound to vote for any specific nominee.

b) Delegates, in electing bishops, shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church.

c) The conferences are authorized to fix the percentage of votes necessary to elect a bishop. It is recommended that at least 60 percent of those present and voting be necessary to elect. >VII: 408.001<

2. It is strongly urged that the consecration service also include representatives from other Christian communions.

3. *Expiration of Terms in Central Conferences*—In a central conference where term episcopacy is in practice, bishops whose term of office expires prior to the time of their retirement and who are not reelected by the central conference shall be returned to membership as traveling elders in the annual conference (or its successor) of which they ceased to be a member when elected bishop. Outgoing bishops are entitled to participate as a bishop in the consecration of their successor.

The credentials of office as bishop shall be submitted to the secretary of the central conference, who shall make thereon the notation that the bishop has honorably completed the term of service for which elected and has ceased to be a bishop of The United Methodist Church.⁸
GBOD ¶ 408.1 = 405.1-2b; 408.2=405.2c; 408.3=411

8. See Judicial Council Decisions 61, 236, 370.

¶ 409. *Assignment Process*—1. The central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, after consultation with the College of Bishops, shall recommend the assignment of the bishops to their respective residences for final action by the central or jurisdictional conference.
>VII: 409.001<

2. Special assignments shall be done according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R 409).

GBOD ¶ 409 = 406

GC-R ¶ 409. *Assignment Process for Special Assignments*—The Council of Bishops may, with consent of the bishop and the concurrence of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, assign one of its members for one year to some specific churchwide responsibility deemed of sufficient importance to the welfare of the total church. In this event, a bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area for that term. Another bishop or bishops, active or retired, and not necessarily from the same central or jurisdictional conference, shall be named by the Council of Bishops on recommendation of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction involved to assume presidential responsibilities during the interim. In the event that more than one retired bishop is assigned to fulfill presidential responsibilities in one episcopal area, the Episcopal Fund shall be responsible only for the difference between the pensions paid the retired bishops and the remuneration of one active bishop. This assignment may be renewed for a second year by a two-thirds vote of the Council of

Bishops and majority vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, and the consent of the bishop and the College of Bishops involved. The bishop so assigned shall continue to receive regular salary and support.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 409 = 406.3

¶ 410. *Review and Evaluation of Bishops*—The central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy shall establish and implement processes that provide, at least once each quadrennium, for each active bishop, a full and formal evaluation that will include self-evaluation, assessment by episcopal peers, and comment by persons affected by his or her superintendency. >VII: 410.001<
GBOD ¶ 410 = 412

¶ 411. *Leaves*—1. *Renewal Leave*—Every bishop in the active relationship shall take up to three months' leave from his or her normal episcopal responsibilities for purposes of reflection, study, and self-renewal during each quadrennium. The College of Bishops, in consultation with the respective central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, shall coordinate details pertaining to such leaves.

2. *Generalities for Leaves Exceeding Three Months*—Leaves exceeding three months may be granted for a justifiable reason for not more than six months in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities. Another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the Council of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area.

3. *Leave of Absence of Up to Six Months*—a) Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund.

b) Such leave may be granted including for medical reasons. If, due to impaired health, the bishop is still unable to perform full work after the six-month period is over, disability benefits through the benefit program provided to the bishop should be applied for.

4. *Sabbatical Leave*—A bishop who has served for at least two quadrennia may be granted a sabbatical leave of not more than one year for a program of study or renewal. The bishop shall receive one-half salary and, where applicable, housing allowance for the period of the leave.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 411.1 = 410.2; 411.2=410.1+3+4; 411.3a=410.1; 411.3b=410.4; 411.4=410.3

¶ 412. *Retirement of Bishops*—1. An elder who served as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.⁹

2. A retired bishop is a bishop of the church in every respect and continues to function as a member of the Council of Bishops in accordance with the Constitution and other provisions of the *Discipline*.

3. A retired bishop may be considered a member of an annual conference, without vote, for purposes of appointment to a local charge within the said conference.

4. *Mandatory Retirement*—a) In jurisdictional conferences, a bishop shall be retired on August 31 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference if the bishop's sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1 of the year in which the jurisdictional conference is held.

b) In central conferences, a bishop shall be retired at the end of the month following the scheduled session of the central conference if the bishop's sixty-eighth birthday is reached on or before the opening day of the scheduled session of the central conference.¹⁰

5. *Voluntary Retirement*—Bishops who have attained age sixty-two or have completed thirty years of service under full-time appointment as an elder or a bishop may request the central or jurisdictional conference to place them in the retired relation. They shall notify their respective committee on episcopacy and the president of the Council of Bishops at least six months prior to the General Conference.

6. *Involuntary Retirement*—A bishop may be placed in the retired relation regardless of age by a two-thirds vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy if, after not less than a thirty-day notice in writing is given to the affected bishop and hearing held, such relationship is found by said committee to be in the best interests of the bishop and/or the church. The reason for the action must be clearly stated in the report of the committee. The provisions for fair process in administrative hearings (¶¶ 349.4 & 352.2) shall apply to this administrative process. >VII: 412.001<

7. *Resignation*—A bishop may voluntarily resign from the episcopacy at any time, by submitting his or her resignation to the Council of Bishops. The consecration papers of a bishop in good standing so resigning shall be properly inscribed by the secretary of the Council of Bishops and returned, together with a certificate of resignation, which shall entitle him or her to membership as a traveling elder in the annual conference (or its successor) in which membership was last held. Notification of this action shall be given by the secretary of the Council of Bishops to the chairperson and secretary of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy.

8. *Further Provisions*—All further provisions shall be according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R 412).

GBOD ¶ 412.1 = 408Intro; 412.2=409Intro; 412.3=409.2; 412.4a=408.1a; 412.4b=408.1b(BOD2012); 412.5=408.2c+d; 412.6=408.3; 412.7=408.4; 412.8=new

9. See Judicial Council Decisions 361, 407.

10. See Judicial Council Decisions 1248, 1370.

GC-R ¶ 412. Retirement of Bishops—1. *General Provisions*

a) Pension, as provided under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply, shall be payable as provided in such plan or program following the close of the central or jurisdictional conference.

b) If, however, the retired bishop accepts any one of the following assignments of churchwide responsibility, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall set a level of compensation not to exceed a maximum determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration, with the compensation costs borne by the Episcopal Fund: (1) assignment of a special nature with direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops, or (2) assignment to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education. Assignment of retired bishops to United Methodist Church-related institutions of higher education must be at the initiative of the institutions, with service not to exceed the mandatory retirement ages of the institutions.

If a bishop is assigned to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education, that agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education will pay 50 percent of the compensation established by GCFA for the position. The general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall further assume all responsibility for the bishop's operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (¶ 412.3) or completes the assignment, whichever comes first, except that retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as Executive Secretary and Ecumenical Officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms of office. No assignment to a jurisdiction, central

conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph. The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

2. *Voluntary Retirement*

a) Bishops who have completed twenty years or more of service under full-time appointment as ordained ministers or as local pastors with pension credit prior to the opening date of the session of the central or jurisdictional conference, including at least one quadrennium as bishop, may request the central or jurisdictional conference to retire them with the privilege of receiving their pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

b) *Vocational Retirement*—A bishop who has served at least eight years in the episcopacy may seek retirement for vocational reasons and may be so retired by the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy on recommendation by the involved College of Bishops. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided in §2a) above. If the employing entity provides or makes health insurance available to employees, then the bishop who retires under this provision will be insured under that program, whether or not the bishop is required to pay the premium for that coverage, and the Episcopal Fund will assume no future obligation to provide health insurance for the bishop or the bishop's family. If the employing entity does not provide or make health insurance available to employees, either while employed or in retirement, then the bishop retiring under this provision will be provided with health and welfare benefits for retirees as specified from time to time by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

c) Bishops who have attained age sixty-two or have completed thirty years of service under full-time appointment as an elder or a bishop may request the central or jurisdictional conference to place them in the retired relation with the privilege of receiving their pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

d) Any bishop who seeks a voluntary retired status shall notify the president of the Council of Bishops at least six months prior to the General Conference.

e) A bishop may seek voluntary retirement for health reasons and shall be so retired by the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy upon recom-

mentation by the involved College of Bishops and upon presentation of satisfactory medical evidence. Such bishops shall receive their pensions to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

3. *Involuntary Retirement*—A bishop, for health reasons, may be retired between sessions of the central or jurisdictional conference by a two-thirds vote of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy upon the recommendation of one third of the membership of the involved College of Bishops. The affected bishop, upon request, shall be entitled to a review of his or her health condition by a professional diagnostic team prior to action by the involved College of Bishops. Notification of action to retire shall be given by the chairperson and secretary of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy to the secretary of the Council of Bishops and the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund. Appeal from this action may be made to the Judicial Council with the notice provisions being applicable as set forth in ¶ 2712. Upon such retirement, the bishop shall receive a pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

4. *Resignation*—Pension benefits will be payable to the resigned bishop to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

5. *Status of Retired Bishops*—a) Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. They may preside over sessions of an annual conference, provisional annual conference, or mission if requested to do so by the bishop assigned to that conference, or in the event of that bishop's incapacity, by the president of the College of Bishops to which the conference is related. Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops may serve as the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the council. In emergency situations, where the resident bishop is unable to preside, the College of Bishops shall assign an effective or retired bishop to preside over the sessions of the annual conference (¶ 48). They may not make appointments or preside at the central or jurisdictional conference. However, when a retired bishop is appointed by the Council of Bishops to a vacant episcopal area or parts of an area, that bishop may function as a bishop in the effective relationship.¹¹

b) A bishop retired under ¶ 412.4, .5 may be appointed by the Council of Bishops upon recommendation of the

involved College of Bishops to presidential responsibility for temporary service in an area in the case of death, resignation, disability, or procedure involving a resident bishop (¶ 2705.1). This appointment shall not continue beyond the next central or jurisdictional conference.

c) Colleges of Bishops are encouraged to work with prospective retirees and institutions across the connection on possible retirement assignments (e.g., bishop-in-residence), particularly assignments expressive of the office's residential, presidential, and missional nature.

6. *Retirement After Term Episcopacy*—An ordained minister who has served a term or part of a term as a bishop in a central conference where term episcopacy has prevailed shall, upon retirement from the effective relation in the ministry, be paid an allowance from the General Episcopal Fund in such sum as the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine for the years during which the ordained minister served as a bishop.¹²

7. *On Becoming an Autonomous or United Church*—When former central conferences of The United Methodist Church become or have become autonomous churches or entered into church unions, retired bishops therein shall continue to have membership in the Council of Bishops if the retired bishops involved so desire.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 412.1a+b = 408.1c+d; 412.2=408.2;
412.3=408.3b; 412.4=408.4; 412.5=409.1+3+4;
412.6=548.1; 412.7=548.2

11. See Judicial Council Decision 248.

12. See Judicial Council Decision 394.

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*—1. Episcopal leadership in The United Methodist Church shares with all other ordained persons the sacred trust of their ordination. Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized.

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted in a written statement to the president of the College of Bishops in that central or jurisdictional conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the College of Bishops or, if non-existing in a central conference, to the chair of the central conference committee on episcopacy. The bishop to whom the complaint has been submitted shall inform the chair of the central or jurisdictional conference committee on episcopacy within ten days.¹³

3. Each central conference shall make provisions for complaint procedures, including suspension, supervisory response, just resolution, administrative complaint, and reporting, as well as a protocol for the caring of the affected episcopal area. Such provisions shall follow, as appropriate, the complaint procedures for ordained clergy (§ 353) and shall define the role of the central conference committee on episcopacy in complaints against a bishop. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 413.001<

GBOD ¶ 413.1-2 = 413.1-2; 413.3=413.3-5

13. See Judicial Council Decision 1149.

¶ 414. *Vacancy in the Office of Bishop*—A vacancy in the office of bishop due to death, leave of absence, medical leave, retirement, resignation, or judicial procedure, shall be filled by the Council of Bishops on nomination of the active bishops of the respective College of Bishops, after consultation with the respective committee(s) on episcopacy.

>VII: 414.001<

GBOD ¶ 414 = 407

Section V. Cabinet and District Superintendency

¶ 415. *The Cabinet*—1. Oversight, or superintendency, resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendency for the purpose of equipping the church in its disciple-making ministry. Like bishops, district superintendents possess distinct and collegial responsibilities, working together with bishops to order the life of the church, to enable the gathered church to worship and evangelize faithfully, and to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for extending the service in the church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. Like the office of bishop, the district superintendency is a particular ministry, not a separate order. Bishops appoint superintendents from the group of elders in full connection who are ordained to the ministry of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order. >VII: 415.001<

3. Under the leadership of the bishop, the cabinet is the expression of superintending leadership in and through the annual conference. It is expected to speak to the conference and for the conference to the spiritual and temporal issues that exist within the region encompassed by the conference.

4. As all ordained ministers are first elected into membership of an annual conference and subsequently appointed to pastoral charges, so district superintendents become through their selection members first of a cabinet before they are subsequently assigned by the bishop to service in districts. District superintendents appointed and

assigned to districts are also to be given conference-wide responsibilities as members of the cabinet. The cabinet is thus also the body in which the individual district superintendents are held accountable for their work, both for conference and district responsibilities.

5. In order to exercise meaningful leadership, the cabinet is to meet at stated intervals. The cabinet is charged with the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a conference, to be executed in regularized consultation and cooperation with other councils and service agencies of the conference. Central conferences may determine how best to implement the ministry of the cabinet according to their regional contexts. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 415.002<

GBOD ¶ 415.1 = 401; 415.2=402.1; 415.3=424.2; 415.4=415.1; 415.5=424.4

¶ 416. *Selection and Term of District Superintendents*—

1. *Selection*—District superintendents are elders in full connection appointed by the bishop in consultation with the cabinet. They serve under the supervision of the resident bishop. In the selection of superintendents, bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church (§ 4). >VII: 416.001<

2. *Term of Service*—The central conference shall determine the maximum term for district superintendents. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.¹⁴ >VII: 416.002<

GBOD ¶ 416.1 = 417; ¶416.2=418+new

14. See Judicial Council Decisions 368, 512.

¶ 417. *Duties*—1. The district superintendent shall oversee the total ministry of the clergy (including clergy in extension ministry and ministry beyond the local church) and of the churches in the communities of the district in their missions of witness and service in the world. This oversight requires the superintendent to use his or her gifts and skills related to spiritual and pastoral leadership, personnel leadership, administration, and program.

2. Superintendents are the chief missional strategists of their respective districts. They shall be committed to living out the values of the church, including a mandate of inclusiveness, modeling, teaching, and promoting generous Christian giving, cooperating to develop Christian unity, and ecumenical, multicultural, multiracial, and cooperative ministries. Superintendents work with persons across the church, including clergy in settings beyond the local church, to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into and across the world.

>VII: 417.001<

3. Superintendents shall work with the bishop and cabinet in the process of appointment and assignment for ordained and licensed clergy, or assignment of qualified and trained lay servant ministries. Within their district, they are the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. They shall establish working relationships with pastor-parish relations committees, clergy, and lay leadership, to develop faithful and effective systems of ministry within the district.

4. Superintendents shall work with the Board of Ordained Ministry to develop an effective process for recruitment, mentoring, and examination of candidates for ordained or licensed ministry. >VII: 417.002<

5. In the framework of their supervisory responsibility, superintendents shall offer support, care, and counsel to clergy. >VII: 417.003<

6. Superintendents shall maintain appropriate records of all clergy on the district, including clergy in extension ministry, as well as records dealing with property, endowments, and other tangible assets of The United Methodist Church within the district.

7. Superintendents shall interpret and decide all questions of church law and discipline raised by the churches in the district, subject to review by the resident bishop of the annual conference.

8. Superintendents shall serve at the pleasure of the bishop and assume other leadership responsibilities as the bishop determines for the health and effectiveness of the district and annual conference.

9. Central conferences may establish further provisions, including renewal and study leaves for superintendents. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 417.004<

GBOD ¶ 417.1 = 419Intro; 417.2=419.1;
417.3=419.2+Intro+4; 417.4=419.3; 417.5=419.6;
417.6=419.8; 417.7=419.10; 417.8=419.12; 417.9=new

Section VI. Ecumenical Relationships

¶ 418. *Council of Bishops, Ecumenical Officer, and Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships*—

1. The Council of Bishops shall be the primary liaison in formal relations with other churches and/or ecclesial bodies.

2. In pursuit of its responsibilities and in order to deepen and expand the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of The United Methodist Church, the Council of Bishops shall receive the input of the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR).

3. Funding for the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of the church shall be provided by the Council of

Bishops in one or more clearly identified line items in the Episcopal Fund budget request to General Conference.

4. OCUIR shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 418).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 418 = 436; 418.2=437; 418.3=440; 418.4=new

GC-R 418. *Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR)*—1. *Responsibilities and Powers*—The responsibilities and powers of OCUIR shall be assigned by the Council of Bishops.

2. *Membership*—The OCUIR shall be composed of one episcopal member from a jurisdictional conference and one episcopal member from a central conference, one of whom shall be the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops, and of one person from each jurisdiction and one person from each of the following regions: Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. The bishop who is not the ecumenical officer shall be counted as one of these eight persons. In aiming at inclusiveness, each central or jurisdictional conference will nominate two candidates, and the Council of Bishops will elect seven members from this pool of nominees. Two additional members with voice and vote will be from churches in full communion, nominated by them.

3. *Staff*—a) There shall be an ecumenical staff officer of The United Methodist Church to be selected by the Council of Bishops. The work of the OCUIR shall be facilitated by the ecumenical staff officer who shall be in charge of the day-to-day work of the OCUIR. The ecumenical staff officer shall be the OCUIR's principal administrative and executive officer and report to the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops. b) Additional staff shall be selected in number and responsibility as determined by the Council of Bishops and serve at the pleasure of the ecumenical staff officer. c) The staff of the OCUIR shall be positioned in locations to be determined by the Council of Bishops.

4. *Interdenominational Cooperation Fund*—The OCUIR shall consult with the Council of Bishops in establishing the guidelines for the administration of the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund. Financial support of ecumenical organizations, ecumenical dialogues, and multilateral conversations, approved by the Council of Bishops, shall be remitted from this fund in accordance with ¶ 814.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 418.1 = 441; 418.2=438; 418.3=439; 418.4=431.3+432

¶ 419. *Ecumenical Agreements and Full Communion*—

1. The Council of Bishops shall have the authority to enter

into ecumenical agreements with other Christian bodies. However, all proposed denominational level agreements of formal “full communion” relationships and permanent membership in ecumenical organizations must be approved and ratified by General Conference, before coming into effect.

2. A formal “full communion” relationship is one that exists between two or more Christian churches that:

a) recognize each other as members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, the body of Christ, as described in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the church’s historic creeds;

b) recognize the authenticity of each other’s sacraments and welcome one another to partake in the Eucharist;

c) affirm the authenticity of each church’s Christian ministry;

d) recognize the validity of each other’s offices of ministry.

3. A formal “full communion” relationship commits the churches to working together as partners in mission toward fuller visible unity. The Council of Bishops is charged to implement this relationship.

4. A formal “full communion” relationship does not mean there are no differences or distinctions between churches; but does mean that these differences are not church dividing.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 419.1 = 431.1a; 419.2-4=431.1b, c, +e

¶ 420. *Methodist Unity*—1. *World Methodist Council*—

a) The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Methodist Council, its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body. The council is a significant channel for United Methodist relationships with other Methodist churches and with autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated united churches formerly part of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations, and other churches with a Wesleyan heritage.

b) Each affiliated autonomous Methodist church and each affiliated united church that is a member of the World Methodist Council may choose to send delegates either to the General Conference or to the World Methodist Council (receiving from the General Administration Fund the expense of travel and per diem allowances thereto for one of the two events in a quadrennium).

2. *Pan-Methodist Commission*—Given the relationship and shared history of the denominations of the Wesleyan tradition in the United States, there shall be a Pan-Methodist Commission established jointly among

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, and The United Methodist Church. >VII: 420.001<

3. *Conference of Methodist Bishops*—There may be a conference of Methodist bishops, composed of all the bishops elected by the central and jurisdictional conferences and one bishop or chief executive officer from each affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, which shall meet on call of the Council of Bishops after consultation with other members of the Conference of Methodist bishops. The travel and other necessary expense of bishops of affiliated autonomous Methodist or united churches related to the meeting of the Conference of Methodist Bishops shall be paid on the same basis as that of bishops of The United Methodist Church.

4. *Striving Toward Union*—As a result of our heritage as a part of a people called Methodist, The United Methodist Church commits itself to strive toward closer relationship with other Methodist or Wesleyan churches wherever they may be found (¶ 6).

GBOD ¶ 420.1 = 433.1; 420.2=433.2Intro; 420.3=433.3

¶ 421. *Relationships with Churches of the Wesleyan Tradition and United Churches*—1. *Autonomous Methodist Churches*—Autonomous Methodist churches are self-governing churches of the Wesleyan tradition that may or may not have entered into the Act of Covenanting with The United Methodist Church. They are not entitled to send delegates to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

2. *Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches*—Affiliated autonomous Methodist churches are self-governing churches in whose establishment The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches has assisted and which by mutual agreement has entered into a Covenant of Relationship (in effect from 1968 to 1984) or an Act of Covenanting (GC-R 421.5) with The United Methodist Church.

3. *Affiliated United Churches*—Affiliated united churches are self-governing churches formed by the uniting of two or more denominations, at least one of which was related to The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches.

4. *Covenanting Churches*—A covenanting relationship, whose elements were adopted by the 1992 General Conference in an action called an “Act of Covenanting Between Christian Churches and The United Methodist Church” may be established between autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated autonomous Methodist church-

es, affiliated united churches, or other Christian churches and The United Methodist Church.

5. *Methodist Churches with Concordat Agreements*—A Methodist church that has Methodist heritage in common with The United Methodist Church or one of its predecessor churches and that has entered into concordat agreements with the purpose of manifesting the common Methodist heritage, affirming the equal status of the two churches, expressing mutual acceptance and respect, and creating opportunities for closer fellowship between the two churches, especially on the leadership level becomes a concordat church.

6. Relationships with these churches shall be organized according to the provisions of General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 421).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 421.1-3 = 570.1-3; 421.4=573.1; 421.5=570.5; 421.6=New

GC-R ¶ 421. Relationships with Churches of the Wesleyan Tradition and United Churches—1. *Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches*—Each affiliated autonomous Methodist church shall be entitled to send two delegates, one clergy and one layperson to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to one additional delegate, if the church has more than 70,000 full members. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or the president of the affiliated autonomous Methodist churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

2. *Affiliated United Churches*—Each affiliated united church shall be entitled to send two delegates, one clergy and one layperson, to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to one additional delegate, if the church has more than 70,000 full members. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or the president of the affiliated united churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

3. *Transfers and Cooperation with Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, and Affiliated United Churches*—a) Certificates of church membership given by clergy in one church shall be accepted by clergy in the other church.

b) When the requirements of such a Methodist church for its ordained ministry are comparable to those of The United Methodist Church, clergy may be transferred between its properly constituted ministerial bodies and the

annual and provisional annual conferences of The United Methodist Church and their ordination(s) recognized as valid, with the approval and consent of the bishops or other appointive authorities involved in compliance with ¶ 331.

c) A program of visitation may be mutually arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the autonomous Methodist church, affiliated autonomous Methodist church, and/or affiliated united church.

d) The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, shall work out plans of cooperation with these churches. The General Board of Global Ministries shall serve as the agent of The United Methodist Church for a continuing dialogue looking to the establishment of mission priorities with special reference to matters of personnel and finance.¹⁵

4. *Covenanting Churches*—a) The purpose of an Act of Covenanting with another Christian church is to encourage a new sense of global common cause, mutual support, mutual spiritual growth, common study of Scripture and culture, creative interaction as ministers in the mission of God's church, cross-fertilization of ideas about ways to be in that mission, sharing of resources, and exploration of new forms of service directed at old and emerging needs.

b) An Act of Covenanting will include recognition of our respective baptisms as different facets of the one baptism; recognition of one another as authentic expressions of the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Jesus Christ; recognition of the ordained ministries of the two churches; commitment to systematic participation in full Eucharistic fellowship; and commitment to function in new ways of partnership, visitations, and programs.

c) For The United Methodist Church, oversight of the covenantal relationships is the responsibility of the Council of Bishops, while participation in specific projects is the responsibility of the appropriate general agency or agencies.

d) The Council of Bishops shall represent The United Methodist Church in developing an Act of Covenanting with a prospective partner church. It shall make recommendations to General Conference as to the specific covenanting agreements. When approved by General Conference and by the chief legislative body of the partner church, the Act of Covenanting becomes effective when signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church and by the authorized persons in the covenanting church. The text of each Act of Covenanting as

adopted shall be printed in the appropriate General Conference journal or equivalent.¹⁶

e) The Act of Covenanting does not warrant that the covenanting churches shall be entitled to delegates at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, or at the equivalent body of the covenant partner.

6. *Methodist Churches with Concordat Agreements*—a) Concordat agreements may be initiated by a Methodist church or by The United Methodist Church through the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops who shall, in cooperation with the Methodist church in question, ascertain that all disciplinary conditions are met and then prepare the necessary enabling legislation for adoption by the General Conference.

b) When such concordat agreement has been approved by the General Conference, the Council of Bishops shall prepare a statement of the concordat agreement to be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops, the secretary of the General Conference, and two representatives of the Methodist church with whom the concordat agreement is made. Such concordats shall be printed in the appropriate General Conference journal or equivalent.

c) Such concordat agreement shall entitle the two churches to the following rights and privileges:

(1) A program of mutual visitation may be arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the other concordat church. The Council of Bishops may assign one or more of its members for episcopal visitation to concordat churches.

(2) Clergy may be transferred between the two churches in accordance with ¶ 337.2.

d) Concordat churches, with the exception of The Methodist Church of Great Britain (see ¶ 13.3), shall be entitled to two delegates, one clergy and one lay, to be seated in each other's General Conference or equivalent bodies with all rights and privileges. The agreements with the Methodist Church of Mexico and the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas shall be honored. The host church shall make provisions for hospitality, including room and board, for the delegates of the other concordat church. Travel and other expenses shall be the responsibility of the visiting church.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 421.1 = 570.2b; 421.3 = 570.3b; 421.3 = 571; 421.5 = 573 + 570.4b; 421.6 = 574 + 570.5b

15. See Judicial Council Decision 692.

16. See Judicial Council Decision 692.

lationships. Permanent membership in ecumenical organizations shall be approved and ratified by the respective conference, worldwide by General Conference, regional by central conferences, and where within the boundaries of one single annual conference by the respective annual conference.

1. *The World Council of Churches*—The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Council of Churches, its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body.

2. *Other Worldwide Ecumenical Organizations*—The Council of Bishops shall lead the church in sending observers or prepare membership in other worldwide ecumenical organizations.

3 The Council of Bishops shall be in dialogue with United Methodists in whatever countries they may reside and shall coordinate, explore, and advocate United Methodist participation in regional ecumenical and interreligious organizations. >VII: 422.001<

4. Further regulations shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (see GC-R ¶ 422).

GBOD ¶ 422Intro = 434Intro+434.2b; 422.1=434.3a; 422.2=434.3b+c; 422.3=434.2b; 422.4=New

GC-R ¶ 422. *Ecumenical Relationships*—1. The United Methodist representatives to ecumenical organizations shall be selected by the Council of Bishops and reflect consideration of balances required both by The United Methodist Church and the respective ecumenical organization.

2. When proxies are needed to substitute for United Methodist representatives to a specific ecumenical organization, the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops is authorized to name such proxies and shall report their names at the next meeting of the Council of Bishops.

3. The Council of Bishops shall receive reports of the ongoing partnership of The UMC in the central conferences that are in full communion with Lutheran Churches and other denominations in order to learn from each other how to “[provide] leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation, and unity within the church—The United Methodist Church and the church universal” (¶ 403.2e).

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 422.1-2 = 431.4; 422.3=442.2

Section VII. Committee on Faith and Order

¶ 422. *Ecumenical Relationships*—The United Methodist Church strives toward greater Christian unity through its participation in councils of churches and/or covenantal re-

¶ 423. *Committee on Faith and Order*—1. There shall be a Committee on Faith and Order related and amenable to the Council of Bishops. This relationship shall be collab-

orative, with attention paid in particular to working with the persons designated by the Council of Bishops.

2. *Purpose*—The Committee on Faith and Order shall give leadership to The United Methodist Church in reflecting upon, discerning and living out matters of faith, doctrinal teaching, order, and discipline in the midst of mission and ministry in the church and world. The committee shall be a visible expression of the commitment of The United Methodist Church to carry on informed theological reflection for the present time in dynamic continuity with the historic Christian faith, our common heritage as Christians grounded in the apostolic witness, and our distinctive Wesleyan heritage. The committee shall be charged with three broad responsibilities:

a) Upon request of the Council of Bishops, to support and provide resources to the council in its responsibility to “guard, transmit, teach, and proclaim, corporately and individually, the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and tradition, and, as they are led and endowed by the Spirit, to interpret that faith evangelically and prophetically” (§ 404.2).

b) To lead and coordinate studies commissioned by the General Conference in matters related to faith, doctrine, order, and discipline of the church.

c) To prepare and provide resources and study materials to The United Methodist Church as deemed appropriate.

3. *Responsibilities*—The Committee on Faith and Order shall have the authority and power to fulfill all the responsibilities according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R § 423).

>VII: —<

GBOD § 423.1 = 443; 423.2=444; 423.3=446=>445

GC-R § 423. Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the Committee on Faith and Order shall be:

1. To provide a venue and context for ongoing conversation on matters of faith, doctrine, order, and discipline.

2. To draw upon scholars and scholarship in biblical studies, biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, Christian ethics, Wesleyan studies, practical theology, missiology, and other areas, thereby providing expertise and knowledge to lead and assist the church in addressing matters of faith and order critical to the life, ministry, and mission of the church.

3. To provide research and resourcing for the Council of Bishops upon their request in matters related to faith, doctrine, order, and discipline.

4. To receive and administer mandates from the General Conference for studies on matters that require significant inquiry into and application of the faith and order of the church.

5. To bring studies, materials, or publications as appropriate to the Council of Bishops or to the General Conference for approval and action.

6. To make provision for the preparation and dissemination of study documents and materials for the church upon request of the Council of Bishops or the General Conference.

7. To coordinate and provide for effective interaction and communication among various study committees, commissions, and teams when multiple studies have been mandated.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R § 423=445

§ 424. Organization—1. The Committee on Faith and Order (CFO) shall be composed of sixteen persons.

2. It shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (see GC-R § 424).

3. In collaboration with the Council of Bishops, it shall propose its budget as part of the Episcopal Fund, to be approved by General Conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 424.1 = 447Intro; 424.2=>447, 448, 449; 424.3=450

GC-R § 424. Organization of the Committee on Faith and Order—1. *Membership*—a) Nominations to the CFO shall be made by the CFO Executive Committee, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, and sent to the Council of Bishops and to the entire Committee on Faith and Order for their review.

(1) Four bishops shall serve as members, one of whom shall be the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church and three other bishops as assigned by the Council of Bishops. At least one of the bishops shall be from central conferences.

(2) New members of the committee shall be elected by the Council of Bishops at its spring meeting in the year of the General Conference. Election shall be for a term of eight (8) years, and no person shall serve as a member of the Committee on Faith and Order for more than sixteen (16) years in succession. The classes of membership shall be established so that the terms of service of 50 percent of the membership expire when their successors are seated at the organizational meeting of the committee following each General Conference.

b) The composition of the committee, and all subcommittees and teams, shall attend to lay and clergy status, racial/ethnic and gender diversity, and regional representation. It shall model effective representation of the

theological diversity of The United Methodist Church. The Council of Bishops shall exercise oversight in the nomination and election of members with regard to inclusiveness, diversity, and representation. Vacancies occurring during any quadrennium shall be filled by the CFO Executive Committee in consultation with the Council of Bishops.

c) The committee may, in consultation and collaboration with the Council of Bishops, carry out any mandated study internally or may create such subcommittees and teams using members from within the committee and others beyond the committee as may be required by the volume and complexity of work.

d) Membership on the board of directors of any other general agency, or serving as a staff member of a general agency, does not make one ineligible to serve as a member of this committee, ¶¶ 710.5 and 715.6 to the contrary notwithstanding, and the limitations specified in ¶ 710.4 for membership on general agencies shall not apply to anyone as a result of membership on this committee.

2. *Organization and Meetings*—a) The committee shall elect from its episcopal membership a chairperson and from its total membership other officers as it may determine.

b) There shall be an executive committee of the CFO with powers as determined by the CFO.

c) The committee shall meet for organizational purposes each quadrennium prior to the end of the first quarter of the year following the year in which the General Conference is held.

d) The committee shall meet at least annually and at such other times as it shall deem necessary. A majority of members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

3. *Staffing*—Staff for the work of the Committee on Faith and Order shall be provided as determined by the Council of Bishops in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Committee on Faith and Order. The Council of Bishops may request staff assistance and consultation from agencies and other bodies of the Church.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 424.1 = 447.1-6; 424.2=448; 424.3=449

Chapter Four

The Conferences

Section I. The General Conference (§§ 501-507)

Section II. Jurisdictional Conferences (§§ 508-509)

Section III. Central Conferences (§§ 511-517)

Section IV. Provisional Central Conferences (§§ 521-527)

Section V. Annual Conferences (§§ 531-539)

Section VI. Provisional Annual Conferences (§§ 541-547)

Section VII. District Conferences (§§ 551)

Section VIII. Missions (§§ 561-564)

Section IX. Joining The United Methodist Church (§§ 571)

The United Methodist Church is a connectional structure maintained through its chain of conferences.

Section I. The General Conference

¶ **501. Purpose**—The General Conference serves God's mission for the Church on its worldwide, connectional level. It gathers the delegates, as representatives of the church, for worship, prayer, fellowship, and legislative action in a spirit of Christian conferencing.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶501 = new

¶ **502. Powers**—1. The General Conference has full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional (¶ 16). It has no executive or administrative power.

2. Only General Conference has the authority to speak officially for The United Methodist Church. Any written public policy statement issued by a general church agency shall clearly identify either at the beginning or at the end that the statement represents the position of that general agency and not necessarily the position of The United Methodist Church.¹

3. Any individual member called to testify before a legislative body to represent The United Methodist Church shall be allowed to do so only by reading, without elaboration, the resolutions and positions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶502.1 = 501; 502.2+3=509.1+2

1. See Judicial Council Decision 458.

¶ **503. Membership**—1. The voting membership of the General Conference shall consist of:

a) An equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual conferences as provided in the *Discipline*. The missionary conferences and provisional annual conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for

the purposes of this paragraph. Annual conferences are urged to seek inclusiveness in the election of delegates.²

b) Delegates from The Methodist Church in Great Britain and other autonomous Methodist churches with which concordat agreements have been established providing for mutual election and seating of delegates in each other's highest legislative conferences.

2. The number of delegates to which an annual conference is entitled shall be computed on a two-factor basis: the number of clergy members of the annual conference, and the number of members of local churches in the annual conference.³

3. Delegates to the General Conference shall be elected at the session of the annual conference held not more than two annual conference sessions before the calendar year preceding the session of the General Conference.⁴

4. Procedures shall be according to provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 503).⁵

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 503.1-3 = 502.1-3; 503.4=new

2. See Judicial Council Decisions 435, 592.

3. See Judicial Council Decisions 327, 333, 1051.

4. See Judicial Council Decisions 435, 592.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 435, 592.

GC-R ¶ 503. Membership—1. At least thirty days prior to the beginning of the earliest possible calendar year for election of delegates, the secretary of the General Conference shall notify the bishop and the secretary of each annual conference of the number of delegates to be elected by that annual conference.⁶

2. The secretary of each annual conference, using the certificate of election form supplied, shall report to the secretary of the General Conference the names, addresses, and such other information as may be required for delegates and reserves elected by the annual conference.

3. The secretary of the General Conference shall prepare and send to each annual conference secretary credentials to be signed and distributed to the delegates and reserves elected by the annual conference.

4. The secretary, in cooperation with the General Commission on the General Conference, shall initiate procedures to prepare delegates from central conferences for full participation in the General Conference by providing information concerning both the operation of the General Conference and materials it will consider. As far as possible, the materials should be provided in the languages of the delegates.

5. After consultation with the Council of Bishops, the secretary of the General Conference shall issue invitations to ecumenical representatives.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 503.1-3 = 502.3-5; 503.4-5=504.3

6. See Judicial Council Decisions 435, 592.

¶ 504. Conference Session—1. Rules of Order—The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference shall be as approved by the preceding General Conference until they have been modified by the action of the General Conference.

2. Commission on the General Conference—There shall be a Commission on the General Conference, hereinafter called the commission.

a) It shall select the site and set the dates of the General Conference up to four quadrennia in advance.

b) It shall plan the General Conference program, including the opening day, special events, and orders of the day.

c) It shall, in cooperation with The United Methodist Publishing House, make all necessary arrangements for the publication of the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate*.

d) It shall organize a Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order from within its membership. The committee shall study any proposed amendments to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order to be presented to the commission for approval and submission to the General Conference.

e) The voting members of the commission shall be elected quadrennially by the General Conference from the elected delegates to the General Conference for a term of eight years. They shall consist of twenty-five members as follows: one person from each U.S. jurisdiction, one person from each central conference, one young adult, one youth, the chairperson of the host committee, and ten additional members. The additional members shall be allocated to reflect the proportionate jurisdictional membership based upon combined clergy and lay membership of the church.

3. Presiding Officers—The bishops shall be the presiding officers at the General Conference.

4. Secretary-Designate—The General Conference elects a secretary-designate.

5. Petitions to General Conference—Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference according to the prescribed format.

6. The General Conference session shall be organized according to provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 504).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 504.1 = 505; 504.2Intro=511Intro;
504.2a=511.4a; 504.2b=511.4b; 504.2c=511.4c;
504.2d=511.3b; 504.2e=511.1a-b; 504.3=503;
504.4=504.2; 504.5=507Intro; 504.6=new

GC-R ¶ 504. Conference Session—1. Commission on the General Conference—*a) Membership—*(1) Members shall be nominated from the elected delegates to the General Conference by the Council of Bishops prior to General Conference and elected by the General Conference for a term of eight years. Additional persons who meet the qualifications may be nominated from the floor of General Conference. The commission shall reflect a balance of clergymen and clergywomen, laywomen and laymen, and the diverse character of The United Methodist Church. Approximately half of the commission shall be elected by the General Conference each quadrennium.

(2) If vacancies occur, the Council of Bishops shall elect geographically appropriate successors to serve through the next session of the General Conference and then nominate for election by the General Conference persons to serve any remainder term.

(3) The secretary of the General Conference, the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration, the business manager of the General Conference, and a bishop named by the Council of Bishops shall have the right to the floor without the privilege of voting. The business manager of the General Conference shall be the chief administrative officer of the commission.

*b) Officers—*The officers of the commission shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary, all of whom shall be elected by the commission at the quadrennial organizational meeting. They shall serve until the adjournment of the next succeeding quadrennial session of the General Conference and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

c) Committees—(1) *Executive Committee—*There shall be an executive committee of the commission, consisting of the officers of the commission, the chairperson of the host committee, the bishop serving on the commission, the secretary of the General Conference, the business manager of the General Conference, and the chairperson and secretary of the Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order.

(2) *Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order—*The commission shall organize a Committee on the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order from within its membership. The committee shall be organized at the initial meeting of the commission following General Conference. It shall elect its own chairperson and secretary, who will serve on the commission's executive committee.

The committee shall study any proposed amendments to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order to be presented to the Commission on the General Conference for approval and submission to the General Conference. Any other matters relating to parliamentary order or procedure in the business of the General Conference may be referred to this committee.

d) Responsibilities—(1) The commission shall select the site and set the dates of the General Conference up to four quadrennia in advance and shall send an official notice to all elected delegates announcing specifically the opening day and hour of the General Conference and anticipated time of adjournment.

(2) The commission shall advise the delegates in advance of all special events and orders of the day in order that the delegates may have an overview of the General Conference program.

(3) The commission, in cooperation with The United Methodist Publishing House, shall make all necessary arrangements for the publication of the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* and quadrennial reports of the Connectional Table and the general agencies of the church in English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili, and for all delegates to have timely (90-day period) and convenient access to the most linguistically appropriate translation of these documents. The commission shall also make arrangements for daily schedules, petition lists, nominations information, and other high-importance information published in the English version of the *Daily Christian Advocate* to also be made available in each of these languages in a timely and convenient way.

(4) The commission shall take necessary measures to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates including but not limited to providing accommodation for languages and physical challenges of the delegates, and access to approved licensed childcare during the session at or near the site of the General Conference for children of General Conference delegates.

(5) The commission shall recommend to the General Conference the per diem allowance to be paid to the elected delegates for housing and meals.

(6) The commission shall set the number of legislative committees and the assignment of legislative materials to those committees in consultation with the secretary of the General Conference and the business manager of the General Conference.

e) The secretary of the General Conference shall calculate the number of delegates to be elected by each annual conference, based on the factors specified in ¶ 503.2, using the most recent clergy and professing lay membership figures reported by the local congregation to the annual conference and from the annual conference to the

General Council on Finance and Administration through their conference journals, as follows:

(1) One clergy delegate for the first 375 clergy members of the annual conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 375 clergy members or major fraction thereof,⁷ and

(2) One clergy delegate for the first 26,000 members of local churches of the annual conference and one clergy delegate for each additional 26,000 local church members or major fraction thereof, and

(3) A number of lay delegates equal to the total number of clergy delegates authorized as above.

(4) Every annual conference shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate.

(5) This formula is designated to comply with the Constitution (¶ 13), which defines the minimum and maximum number of delegates to a General Conference. Should the computations provided in the paragraph result in a figure below the prescribed minimum or above the prescribed maximum for delegates, the Commission on the General Conference shall be authorized to remedy the situation by adjusting up or down the numbers of clergy members and members of local churches of the annual conference necessary to entitle an annual conference to elect delegates, any such adjustment to be proportionally the same for the two factors.⁸

2. *Quorum*—When the General Conference is in session, it shall require the presence of a majority of the whole number of delegates to the General Conference to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business; but a smaller number may take a recess or adjourn from day to day in order to secure a quorum, and at the final session may approve the journal, order the record of the roll call, and adjourn *sine die*.

3. *Secretary-Designate*—*a)* The Council of Bishops shall present a nomination from the ordained ministry or lay membership of The United Methodist Church for secretary-designate. Other nominations shall be permitted from the floor. The election, if there be two or more nominees, shall be by ballot.

b) Assumption of Office—The secretary-designate shall assume the responsibilities of the office of secretary as soon after the adjournment of the General Conference as all work in connection with the session has been completed, including the corrections to the *Daily Christian Advocate*, which serves as the official journal of the General Conference. Upon publication, all translations of the *Daily Christian Advocate* shall be made available as a daily downloadable file, free of charge, on the denominational website. The exact date of the transfer of responsibility to the secretary-designate shall be determined by the Commission on the General Conference, but shall not be

later than December 31, following the adjournment of the General Conference.

4. *Petitions to General Conference*—A petition to the General Conference shall be submitted in the following manner:

a) It must be sent in writing according to the format officially approved by the secretary of the General Conference.

b) Each petition must address only one issue if the *Discipline* is not affected; if the *Discipline* is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the *Discipline*, except that, if two or more paragraphs in the *Discipline* are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another. Petitions dealing with more than one paragraph in the *Discipline* that do not meet these criteria are invalid. Petitions that meet these criteria (composite petitions) shall not be separated into pieces.

c) Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification and return address, according to the prescribed format.

d) All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, that call for the establishment of new programs or the expansion of existing programs will be invalid unless accompanied by supporting data that address the issue of anticipated financial requirements of the program.

e) Petitions must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 230 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference. If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 230 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

f) Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.

g) Petitions adopted and properly submitted by annual conferences, central and jurisdictional conferences, the Division on Ministries with Young People, or general agencies or councils of the church, and petitions properly submitted by individual members (either clergy or lay) of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, provided that they have been received by the petitions secretary or secretary of the General Conference no later than 230 days before the opening of General Conference, shall be printed in the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate*.

h) Petitions and/or resolutions not printed in the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* shall be printed or copied and provided to all delegates. Where the content of petitions is essentially the same, the petition will be printed once, with the first author named and the number of additional copies received printed. Upon publication, all translations of the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* shall be made available as a downloadable file, free of charge, on the denominational website

i) The secretary of the General Conference shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference action and the resulting impact on the *Discipline* throughout the General Conference session. This access shall be available until the publication of the new edition of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Following General Conference 2020, the new *General Book of Discipline* shall be published in all languages used in the publication of the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate*.

Implementation shall be according to guidelines established by the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order.

j) All petitions that have been approved by a legislative committee shall receive a vote by the plenary session at that year's General Conference.

k) All petitions that have been submitted to the General Conference shall receive a vote of a legislative committee.

5. *Legislation Effective Date*—All legislation of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church shall become effective January 1 following the session of the General Conference at which it is enacted, unless otherwise specified for central conferences.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 504.1 = 511; GC-R 504.2=506; GC-R 504.3=504.1-2; GC-R 504.4=507; GC-R 504.5=508

7. See Judicial Council Decisions 327, 558.

8. See Judicial Council Decisions 687, 1274.

¶ 505. *Records and Archives*—1. The secretary of the General Conference shall be responsible for the permanent record of the General Conference, according to provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 505).

2. All original documents of a General Conference shall be filed with the General Commission on Archives and History.

>VII: —<

¶ 505.1 = 510Intro; 505.2=510.4

GC-R ¶ 505. *Records and Archives*—The permanent record of the General Conference shall include:

1. Corrections to the *Daily Christian Advocate*. The editor will file with the Commission on Archives and History two bound copies of the *Daily Christian Advocate* and corrections as the official record of General Conference. Bound copies shall also be made available at cost by The United Methodist Publishing House.

2. A *Book of Resolutions* to be edited by The United Methodist Publishing House. The book shall contain all valid resolutions of the General Conference. The preface of the *Book of Resolutions* shall include the guidelines for writing resolutions.

a) All valid resolutions of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church shall be published in each edition of the *Book of Resolutions*. There shall be a complete subject index and index of Scripture passages to all valid resolutions of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in each edition of the *Book of Resolutions*. Resolutions are official expressions of The United Methodist Church for eight years following their adoption, after which time they shall be deemed to have expired unless readopted. Those that have expired shall not be printed in subsequent editions of the *Book of Resolutions*. The *Book of Resolutions* shall be made available on the official website of The United Methodist Church.

b) The program boards and agencies shall review all valid resolutions and recommend to the General Conference the removal of time-dated material.

c) Resolutions to be an official part of the *Book of Resolutions* will require a 60 percent affirmative vote at General Conference.

3. The *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* and the *Daily Christian Advocate*.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 505.1-3 = 510.1-3

¶ 506. *Conference Agencies*—Chapter 5 *Administrative Order* makes provisions for General Conference agencies.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 506 = new

¶ 507. *Property*—Chapter 6 *Property* makes provisions for church property in The United Methodist Church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 507 = new

Section II. Jurisdictional Conferences

¶ 508. Within the boundaries of the United States, there shall be jurisdictional conferences and interjurisdictional committees according to legislation enacted by General Conference in its *Discipline*, Part VII.

>VII: 508.001-508.007<

GBOD ¶ 508 = new

¶ 509. *Missionary Conferences*—Within the boundaries of the United States, there may be missionary conferences, according to legislation enacted by General Conference in its *Discipline*, Part VII.

>VII: 509.001-509.007<

GBOD ¶ 509 = new

Section III. Central Conferences

¶ 511. *Purpose*—1. The purpose of the central conference is to connect regionally annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions, for common mission and ministry; to establish episcopal supervision as an expression of the General Superintendency; and to facilitate worldwide connections.

2. The General Conference, by a two-thirds vote, may organize annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions into central conferences, subject to the provisions of the Constitution. Thus, The United Methodist Church shall have central conferences with territorial boundaries and numbers of bishops as listed in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 511).⁹

3. A provisional central conference may become a central conference upon the fulfillment of the necessary requirements and upon the authorization of the General Conference, including the number of bishops to be elected according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 407.1).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 511.1 = new; 511.2=540.1; 511.3=540.4

9. See Judicial Council Decision 371.

GC-R ¶ 511. *Boundaries of Central Conferences and Numbers of Bishops*—General Conference, by a two-thirds vote, has organized the following central conferences and has authorized, by majority vote, the election of the following number of bishops:

1. *Africa Central Conference*: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe; with the authority to elect five bishops.

2. *Central and Southern Europe Central Conference*: Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Tunisia; with the authority to elect one bishop.

3. *Congo Central Conference*: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia; with the authority to elect four bishops.

4. *Germany Central Conference*: Germany; with the authority to elect one bishop.

5. *Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference*: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; with the authority to elect two bishops.

6. *Philippines Central Conference*: Philippines; with the authority to elect three bishops.

7. *West Africa Central Conference*: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone; with the authority to elect four bishops.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 511.1-7 = 540.3

¶ 512. *Powers and Duties*—1. Central conferences are organized with such duties, privileges, and powers as hereinafter conferred by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference.

2. To a central conference shall be committed, for supervision and promotion, the missionary, educational, evangelistic, industrial, publishing, medical, and other connectional interests within its boundaries. It shall provide suitable organizations for such work and elect the necessary officers for the same.

3. a) A central conference shall fix the boundaries of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions within its boundaries, proposals for changes first having been submitted to the annual conferences concerned, and provided that only General Conference can establish provisional annual conferences.¹⁰

b) In central conferences no annual conference shall be organized with fewer than thirty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium, which shall not reduce the number below twenty-five. Nor shall an annual conference be continued with fewer than twenty-five clergy members except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium.

4. A central conference may elect bishops from among the ordained elders in full connection of The United Methodist Church, according to the number of bishops determined by the General Conference. It shall have power to fix the tenure of bishops elected by the said central conference and shall assign bishops to their respective residences.¹¹

5. a) A central conference shall have authority to engage in dialogue with other Christian bodies within its boundaries, to enter into interim ecumenical agreements with them, and to negotiate unions, provided that all proposed ecumenical agreements are submitted to the Council of Bishops for approval, and all proposals for church

union are submitted to the General Conference for approval before consummation.¹²

b) When conferences outside the United States that are parts of The United Methodist Church desire to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church, approval shall first be secured from the central conference involved and this decision be ratified by the annual conferences within the central conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the annual conferences, and shall respect the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 512).¹³

6. a) Upholding the *General Book of Discipline*, Parts I - VI, a central conference shall have authority to establish and publish legislation and provisions pertaining to the annual, district, and charge conferences within its boundaries, including educational requirements of clergy and specialized lay ministries, and forms of organization according to the laws of the country. In establishing such legislation and provisions, it is authorized to make such changes and adaptations of the *Discipline*, Part VII, as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the *General Book of Discipline*, Parts I - VI. Subject to this restriction, a central conference may delegate to an annual conference within its boundaries the power to make one or the other of the changes and adaptations referred to in this paragraph, upon request of such annual conference.¹⁴

b) The central conference is authorized to interpret Article XXIII of the Articles of Religion so as to recognize the governments of the country or countries within its boundaries.

c) In a central conference using a language other than English, changes in the *General Book of Discipline*, Parts I - VI, passed by the General Conference shall take effect at the latest on July 1st of the year following the General Conference year in order to afford the necessary time for translation.

7. a) A central conference is authorized to edit a simplified, revised, and translated ritual as it may deem necessary, such changes to require the approval of the resident bishop or bishops of the central conference.

b) It is authorized to conform the detailed rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage to the statute laws of the country or countries within its boundaries.

8. A central conference shall have authority to adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy, including bishops, and lay members of the church and to provide the necessary means and methods of implementing the said rules; provided, however, that

clergy shall not be deprived of the right of trial by a clergy committee, and lay members of the church of the right of trial by a duly constituted committee of lay members; and provided also, that the rights of appeal shall be adequately safeguarded.¹⁵

9. A central conference is authorized to establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the central conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action, and of any decision of law by the presiding bishop, pertaining to legislation and provisions as mentioned in §6.

10. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the apportionment amounts for the annual conferences of the central conferences for the succeeding quadrennium based on calculation methodology approved by the General Conference upon recommendation by the council. This determination shall be informed by consultation with the Council of Bishops.

11. Each central conference within the boundaries of which the General Board of Global Ministries has work shall maintain a cooperative and consultative relationship with the said general board; but the legal distinction between the General Board of Global Ministries and the organized church on the field shall always be kept clear.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 512.1 = 540.1; 512.2=543.1+6; 512.3=543.8;
512.4=543.2+3; 512.5=543.20+21+572 Intro;
512.6=543.7+9+16+10+15+18+17; 512.7=543.13+14;
512.8=543.12; 512.9=547.3; 512.10=543.4;
512.11=542.6

10. See Judicial Council Decisions 525, 541, 549.

11. See Judicial Council Decisions 311, 430.

12. See Judicial Council Decision 350.

13. See Judicial Council Decisions 548, 1062.

14. See Judicial Council Decision 313.

15. See Judicial Council Decisions 310, 595.

GC-R ¶ 512. *Becoming an Autonomous Methodist, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist, or Affiliated United Church from Central Conferences*—1. The conference(s) involved shall prepare a historical record with reasons why affiliation and/or autonomy is requested and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (BOD ¶ 2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.

2. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the conference(s) involved shall mutually agree on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. These shall be prepared with care and shall be approved by the conference(s) involved.

3. Preparation of its *Discipline* is the responsibility of the conference(s) desiring affiliation and/or autonomy.

4. Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for affiliated and/or autonomous relationship have been met, the General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the conference(s) involved to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church.

5. Then the central conference involved shall meet, declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the conference(s) involved dissolved, and reorganize as an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church in accordance with the enabling act granted by the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops. The proclamation of affiliated and/or autonomous status shall then be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference.

6. A plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with ¶ 421.3d.

GBOD ¶ GC-R 512 = 572.1-6

¶ 513. Membership—1. a) The membership of a central conference shall consist of an equal number of clergy and lay delegates elected by the annual and provisional annual conferences.

b) By ballot, the clergy members shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual or provisional annual conferences and the lay members by the lay members thereof.

c) Each annual and provisional annual conference shall be entitled to at least two clergy and two lay delegates, and no other selection of delegates shall be authorized that would provide for more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an annual or provisional annual conference; except that a majority of the number fixed by a central conference as the ratio of representation shall entitle an annual or provisional annual conference to an additional clergy delegate and to an additional lay delegate.¹⁶

d) Delegates to the central conferences shall be elected at the session of the annual conference held not more than two annual conference sessions preceding the session of the General Conference. The secretary of the central conference shall notify the bishop and the secretary of each annual conference of the number of delegates to be elected by that annual conference.

2. Each mission is authorized to elect and send one lay and one clergy to the central conference concerned as its representative, with voice but not vote.

3. No central conference shall be established with less than thirty clergy and thirty lay delegates on the basis of representation as set forth in §1, except as provided by an enabling act for the quadrennium.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 513.1-1c = 541.1; 513.1d=new; 513.2=541.1; 513.3=540.2

16. See Judicial Council Decision 371.

¶ 514. *Conference Session*—1. *Convening Date*—a) Each central conference shall meet within the year succeeding the session of the General Conference at such time and place as the central conference itself or its bishops may determine.

b) *Special Session*—(1) The central conference may order a special session. Such session cannot transact any other business than that indicated in the call.

(2) The College of Bishops, with the concurrence of the executive committee, shall have the authority to call a special session of the central conference to be held at the time and place designated by them.

(3) The delegates to a special session of the central conference shall be the delegates last elected by each annual or provisional annual conference.

2. *Rules of Order*—The central conference shall adopt its own procedure, rules, and plan of organization.

3. *Presiding Officers*—a) A bishop shall be the presiding officer.

b) The bishop acting as presiding officer shall decide questions of law, subject to an appeal to the Judicial Council, or the Judicial Court of the central conference.¹⁷

c) The Council of Bishops may assign one or more of its members to visit a central conference. When so assigned, the bishop shall be an accredited representative of the general church, and when requested by a majority of the bishops resident in that conference may exercise therein the functions of the episcopacy.

4. The central conference shall provide for the expenses of its sessions.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 514.1 = 542.2; 514.2=new; 514.3=new+542.4+3; 514.4=new

17. See Judicial Council Decisions 375, 376, 381.

¶ 515. *Records and Archives*—1. The central conference shall keep an exact record of its proceedings. If there are no archives of the central conference, the secretary shall keep the bound copy or copies to be handed on to the succeeding secretary.

2. Each central conference shall send without charge to the General Commission on Archives and History

a copy of its journal, of every translation of the *General Book of Discipline*, including its adapted Part VII, in printed or electronic format. Other general agencies may request such material as needed at their expense.

3. The secretary of a central conference in which one or more bishops have been elected shall report to the secretary of the General Conference the names of the bishop(s) and the residences to which they have been assigned by the central conference.

4. A central conference may examine and acknowledge the journals of the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions located within its boundaries and to make rules for the drawing up of the journals as may seem necessary.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 515.1 = new; 515.2-3=545.3+2; 515.4=543.11

¶ 516. *Conference Agencies*—1. Central conferences may create agencies, structures, or committees with such duties and mandates as the central conference may determine to carry out their mission. >VII: 516.001<

2. Upon nomination of their respective annual conference delegations, each central conference shall elect a committee on episcopacy consisting of at least one clergy and one lay delegate from each annual or provisional annual conference. The committee shall:

a) review and evaluate at least once each quadrennium the work of the bishops, pass on their character and ministry, and report such evaluations and other findings to the central conference for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power; such review and evaluation may be organized by episcopal areas, in which case the central conference decides on the enlargement of membership of subcommittees in episcopal areas;

b) It shall, after consultation with the College of Bishops, recommend to the central conference for its approval the boundaries of the episcopal areas and the assignments of the bishops;

c) It shall receive and act upon requests for possible voluntary or involuntary retirement of bishops.

d) The central conference shall provide funding for the expenses of its committee on episcopacy.

3. Each central conference shall establish a board of pensions or make provisions for the creation of boards of pensions on the level of the annual conferences, episcopal areas, or countries within its boundaries. These boards of pensions are responsible for the long-term sustainability of their plans, administration of their pension programs in accordance with plan provisions, investment of pension funds, and proposing plan amendment.

GBOD ¶ 516.1 = 547+new; 516.2=543.5+new; 516.3=new

¶ 517. *Property*—1. A central conference, through a duly incorporated property-holding body or bodies, shall have authority to purchase, own, hold, or transfer property for and on behalf of all the unincorporated organizations of The United Methodist Church within its boundaries or on behalf of other organizations of The United Methodist Church that have entrusted their property to that central conference.

2. A central conference shall have authority to make the necessary rules and provisions for the holding and management of such properties; provided, however, that *a)* all procedure shall be subject to the laws of the country or countries concerned; and *b)* no action shall be taken transferring or alienating property or proceeds of property without due consideration of its trusteeship for local churches, annual conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries, and other organizations, local or general, of the church.

3. A central conference or any of its incorporated organizations shall not involve a general agency of the church in any financial obligation without the official approval of said agency or organization. All invested funds, fiduciary trusts, or property belonging to an annual conference, a provisional annual conference, or a mission, or any of its institutions, acquired by bequest, donation, or otherwise and designated for a specific use, shall be applied to the purpose for which they were designated. They shall not be diverted to any other purpose, except by the consent of the conference or mission involved and with the approval of the central conference concerned and civil court action when necessary. The same rule shall apply to similar funds or properties acquired by a central conference for specific objects. In cases involving the diversion of trust funds and properties within the boundaries of a central conference, the central conference concerned shall determine the disposition of the interests involved, subject to an appeal to the judicial court of the central conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 517.1 = 546.1; 517.2=546.2+3; 517.3=546.4

Section IV. Provisional Central Conferences

¶ 521. *Purpose*—Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions outside the United States that are not included in central conferences and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be organized into provisional central conferences by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference. Thus, The United Methodist Church may have provisional central conferences with territorial boundaries as listed in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 521).¹⁸

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 521 = 560

18. See Judicial Council Decision 525.

GC-R ¶ 521. *Purpose*—General Conference, by a two-thirds vote, has organized the following provisional central conferences:

The United Methodist Church shall have a provisional central conference with ministries in the following countries:

a) Southeast Asia and Mongolia Provisional Central Conference: Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 521 = 560

¶ 522. *Powers and Duties*—The General Conference may grant to a provisional central conference any of the powers of a central conference except that of electing bishops.¹⁹

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 522 = 562

19. Judicial Council Decision 403.

¶ 523. *Membership*—Membership of a provisional central conference shall be according to the enabling act by the General Conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 523 = new

¶ 524. *Conference Session*—1. *Episcopal Supervision*—The General Conference shall make provision for the episcopal supervision of work in a provisional central conference.

2. *Organization*—*a)* The organization of a provisional central conference shall conform to the provisions prescribed for central conferences insofar as they are considered applicable by the bishop in charge.

b) The first organizational meeting of a new provisional central conference shall take place within the quadrennium after General Conference action.

c) Ad Interim Provisions—In the interval between General Conferences, the General Board of Global Ministries, upon the recommendation of the bishops in charge and after consultation with the annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, and missions concerned, may make changes in the boundaries of a provisional central conference. All changes in boundaries shall be reported to the ensuing session of the General Conference and shall expire at the close of that session unless renewed by the General Conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 524.1 = 566; 524.2a=561; 524.2b=new; 524.2c=563

Section V. Annual Conferences

¶ 531. *Purpose*—1. The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God.

2. Annual conferences are the fundamental bodies of the church (¶ 11).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 531 = 601

¶ 532. *Powers and Duties*—1. The annual conference for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.²⁰ >VII: 532.001<

2. An annual conference cannot financially obligate any organizational unit of The United Methodist Church except the annual conference itself.²¹

3. a) The clergy session of the annual conference shall have power to make inquiry into the moral and official conduct of its clergy members. Subject only to the provisions on Judicial Administration, the clergy session of the annual conference shall have power to hear complaints against its clergy members and may try, reprove, suspend, deprive of clergy office and credentials, expel, or acquit any against whom charges may have been preferred. The clergy session of the annual conference shall have power to locate a clergy member for failure to perform effectively and competently the duties of itinerant ministry. The actions of the clergy session shall be for and on behalf of the annual conference.²²

b) All clergy members of the annual conference and the lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry may attend and shall have voice in the clergy session. Only the ordained clergy in full connection and the members of the Board of Ordained Ministry may vote. Others may be admitted by express action of the clergy session, but shall not have vote, nor, unless specifically granted by the clergy session, shall have voice.²³

4. The annual conference shall have power to make inquiry into the financial status of the local churches and shall provide counsel to help a local church overcome a deficit position.

5. The annual conference shall have the power to make inquiry into the membership status of the local churches, particularly if no members have been received on confession of faith during the year.

6. The annual conference shall give recognition to any new churches that have been organized during the year. >VII: 532.002<

7. The annual conference shall make provision for legal counsel applicable to its legal context. >VII: 532.003<

8. If any annual conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in the *Book of Resolutions* should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church. >VII: 532.004<

9. The annual conference may choose to adopt a conference-wide plan for compensation of pastors. Such a plan shall provide the method for setting and funding the salaries, and/or other compensation elements as specified in the plan, of the pastors appointed to the charges of the annual conference.

GBOD ¶ 532.1-2=604.1-2; 532.3=604.4+605.7; 532.4-6=604.8-10; 532.7=603.8; 532.8=603.8/new; 532.8-9=604.12-13 BOD604.6-7 → see GBOD335.1!

20. See Judicial Council Decisions 43, 74, 141, 318, 367, 373, 432, 435, 476, 536, 584, 590, 592, 699, 876, 1198.

21. See Judicial Council Decisions 707, 440.

22. See Judicial Council Decisions 534, 782.

23. See Judicial Council Decisions 686, 690.

¶ 533. *Membership*—1. The clergy membership of an annual conference shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, affiliate members, and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment, each with their respective voting rights. The term *clergy members* shall refer to both active and retired members of the annual conference.²⁴ >VII: 533.001<

2. a) The lay membership of the annual conference shall consist of a professing member elected by each charge, diaconal ministers, deaconesses, home missionaries, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the president or equivalent officer of the conference young adult organization, the president of the conference youth organization, one youth and one young adult from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference according to the age provisions of the central conference or outside central conference boundaries by other legislation enacted by General Conference. If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize lay and clergy membership of the annual conference.²⁵

b) Each charge served by more than one clergy member under appointment (including deacons in full connection for whom this is their primary appointment) shall be

entitled to as many lay members as there are clergy members under appointment.

c) The lay members shall have been members of The United Methodist Church for the two years preceding their election and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years preceding their election. The four-year participation and the two-year membership requirements may be waived for young persons under thirty years of age. Such persons must be members of The United Methodist Church and active participants at the time of election. >VII: 533.002<

3. The lay member or alternate, whoever was last seated in the annual conference, shall be seated in a special session of the annual conference when convened, provided that no local charge shall be deprived of its lay member.²⁶

4. The lay members of the annual conference shall participate in all deliberations and vote upon all measures except on the granting or validation of license, ordination, reception into full conference membership, or any question concerning the character and official conduct of clergy, except those who are lay members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and committee on investigation. Lay members shall serve on all committees except those on ministerial relations.²⁷

5. It is the duty of every member to attend the sessions of the annual conference.

6. Officers who are not members of the annual conference and such additional persons as the annual conference may decide shall have voice but not vote. >VII: 533.003< GBOD ¶ 533.1 = 602.2+502.2; 533.2=602.4; 533.3-4=602.5-6; 533.5=602.8; 533.6=602.9+10

24. See Judicial Council Decisions 477, 555, 1062.

25. See Judicial Council Decision 1212.

26. See Judicial Council Decision 319.

27. See Judicial Council Decisions 109, 505.

¶ 534. *Conference Session*—1. The bishop shall appoint the times for holding the annual conference.²⁸

2. The annual conference or a committee thereof shall select the place for holding the conference session. Each central conference may provide for minimum standards for places and sites in which to hold annual conference sessions. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 534.001<

3. The agenda of the session shall be prepared by the bishop, the district superintendents, the conference lay leader, and such others as the conference may name and shall be submitted to the conference for adoption. >VII: 534.002<

4. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been de-

termined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call.²⁹

5. The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall arrange for another bishop to preside. In the absence of a bishop, the conference shall by ballot, without nomination or debate, elect a president *pro tempore* from among the ordained elders. The president thus elected shall discharge all the duties of a bishop except ordination.

6. At the conclusion of the examination of the standing of the clergy members or at such later times as the bishop may designate, the presiding bishop may call to the bar of the conference the class to be admitted into full connection and receive them into conference membership after asking the questions of the historic examination. >VII: 534.003<

7. The annual conference shall adopt a comprehensive policy for handling sexual and gender harassment of clergy when laypersons are the perpetrators. This policy shall guide the local church in how to handle the report, how to care for the accuser and the accused, the victim and the perpetrator, the findings and settlement. It shall make provision for support of the pastor and for care of church members.

8. Members for committees, boards, and commissions of the annual conference shall be selected in such manner as the *Discipline* may specifically require or as the annual conference may determine. Attention shall be given to inclusiveness.³⁰ >VII: 534.004<

9. The annual conference at the first session following the General Conference or central or jurisdictional conference shall elect a secretary, a conference lay leader, a statistician, and a treasurer/director of administrative services to serve for the succeeding quadrennium. In the case of a vacancy in either office, the bishop, after consultation with the district superintendents, shall appoint a person to act until the next session of the annual conference. Quadrennial elections for conference agencies shall take place the same year as the election of officers.

a) *The conference lay leader*—The conference lay leader shall be a professing member of a local church in the annual conference, shall be the chairperson of the conference board of laity, or its equivalent structure, and participate in annual conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the bishop.

The conference lay leader is the elected leader of conference laity and has responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace,

community, and world in achieving the mission of the church and enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the annual conference in cooperation with the bishop and district superintendents. >VII: 534.005<

b) The treasurer/director of administrative services is directly amenable to the conference council on finance and administration and may sit with the council and its committees at all sessions and have the privilege of voice but not vote. The treasurer/director may serve as treasurer for any or all agencies served by a conference central treasury and report of all receipts, disbursements, and balances of all funds under his or her direction. The treasurer/director shall perform such other staff services as the council on finance and administration may require in the fulfillment of its functions and responsibilities.

>VII: 534.006<

GBOD ¶ 534.1 = 603.2; 534.2=603.3+4; 534.3=605.2; 534.4-5=603.5-6; 534.6-7=605.8+9; 534.8=605.3; 534.9=603.7+619 534.9a=607.1; 534.9b=619 Intro+1b+1c(2)+1f

28. See Judicial Council Decision 1206.

29. See Judicial Council Decision 397.

30. See Judicial Council Decision 559.

¶ 535. *Records and Archives*—1. The annual conference shall keep an exact record of its proceedings according to the forms provided by the General, central, and jurisdictional conferences. If there are no archives of the annual conference, the secretary shall keep the bound copy or copies or a digital version to be handed on to the succeeding secretary.

2. Each annual conference shall send without charge to the General Commission on Archives and History, a copy of its annual journal, in printed or electronic format. Other general agencies may request such material as needed at their expense.

3. The annual conference journal shall include at least the following divisions:

- a) Officers of annual conference,
- b) Boards, commissions, committees; rolls of conference members,
- c) Daily proceedings,
- d) Business of the annual conference report (formerly known as the disciplinary questions),
- e) Appointments,
- f) Reports as ordered by the annual conference,
- g) Clergy record,
- h) Roll of deceased clergy members,
- i) Memoirs,
- j) Statistics,

k) Miscellaneous,

l) Index.

>VII: 535.001<

4. The secretary, or other administrative officer named by the annual conference, shall keep a complete service record of clergy and diaconal ministry personnel in the annual conference. Service records shall include but not be limited to biographical information supplied by the individual, a list of appointments, a record of annual conference actions with regard to conference relationships, and in addition descriptions of circumstances related to changes in conference relationships, credentials surrendered to the bishop or district superintendent, and confidential trial records.

5. The local church report to the annual conference shall be submitted as per the requirements of the annual conference.

6. In central conferences, official records of secretaries, statisticians, and treasurers shall be kept according to basic forms prepared by the General Council on Finance and Administration in cooperation with the central conferences so that elementary statistical data can be collected from all annual conferences. The General Council on Finance and Administration may recommend the use of more developed forms where applicable. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

7. All records of candidates and clergy and diaconal ministry personnel maintained by the conference secretary, or other administrative officer named by the annual conference, Board of Ordained Ministry, and board of pensions, are to be kept on behalf of the annual conference, subject to the laws of the country, in conformity with guidelines provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and the following principles:

a) The annual conference is the owner of its personnel records and files;

b) Individuals in whose name a record is kept shall have access to the information contained in a record or file, with the exception of surrendered credentials and information for which a right-of-access waiver has been signed;

c) Access to unpublished records by persons other than the bishop, district superintendent, conference secretary, treasurer, or other administrative officer or the Board of Ordained Ministry, through its chair, board of pensions, through its chair, counsel for the church, and committee on investigation, through its chair, shall require written consent of the person in whose name a record is kept; ac-

cess to trial records shall be governed by the provisions of the chapter on Judicial Administration.³¹

GBOD ¶ 535.1-3 = 606.1-3; 535.4-7=606.6-9

31. See Judicial Council Decisions 751, 765, 1024.

¶ 536. *Conference Agencies*—1. The annual conference is responsible for structuring its ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose. In so doing it shall provide for the connectional relationship from the annual conference to the district and the local church, as well as to the central, jurisdictional and General conference and their respective agencies. >VII: 536.001<

2. a) Annual conferences are given flexibility to design conference and district structures in ways that best support the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ in an increasingly diverse global community, except for the mandated entities. In doing so, an annual conference shall provide for such functions of and connections with the agencies of central, jurisdictional or General conference as help develop its mission.

b) Conferences are permitted to create contextually appropriate structures that encourage collaboration and partnerships among all program, administrative, and financial entities. Annual conferences may fund their ministries in ways that reflect conference priorities and structures, as approved by the annual conference in the budgeting process.

c) It is recommended that each annual conference have a director of connectional ministries or designated person to focus and guide the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church within the annual conference. The director may be lay or clergy, shall serve as an officer of the annual conference, and shall sit with the cabinet when the cabinet considers matters relating to coordination, implementation, or administration of the vision and program of the annual conference. Whether appointed or elected to this position, the director shall be amenable to the bishop, in consultation with the appropriate annual conference personnel body. >VII: 536.002-536.027<

3. In central conferences, the mandated entities for each annual conference shall be the Council on Finance and Administration (¶ 538) and the Board of Ordained Ministry (¶ 539). Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

4. Provisions for membership of mandated entities shall be made by each central conference, or in territories outside central conference boundaries by other legislation enacted by General Conference, provided that:

a) among the members in all mandated entities shall be at least one member of the cabinet as expression of its ministry of general oversight and superintendency;

b) members in the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board.³²

GBOD ¶ 536.1 = 610Intro; 536.2=610.1+608.after§6; 536.3=new+611+635; 536.4b=635.1a

32. See Judicial Council Decisions 446, 558.

¶ 537. *Property*—1. Annual conferences, or sub-units authorized by them, may become several bodies corporate under the law of the countries, states, and territories within whose bounds they are located.³³

2. The annual conferences, or sub-units authorized by them, may create boards of trustees, and incorporate property-holding bodies, under the law of the countries, states, and territories within whose bounds they are located, to hold and administer real and personal property, receive and administer church extension and mission funds, and exercise such other powers and duties as may be set forth in its charter or articles of incorporation as authorized by the annual conference, subject to the provisions of chapter 6 on *Church Property*.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 537.1 = 603.1; 537.2=640+cf. 659.4

33. See Judicial Council Decision 108.

¶ 538. *Council on Finance and Administration*—1. In each annual conference there shall be a conference council on finance and administration, hereinafter called the council, or other structure to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationships. The council shall be amenable and report to the annual conference. >VII: 538.001<

2. *Purpose*—The purpose of the council shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference.³⁴

3. *Responsibilities*—The council shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions, to which others may be added by the annual conference:

a) To recommend to the annual conference for its action and determination budgets of anticipated income and proposed expenditures for all funds that provide for annual conference clergy support, annual conference administrative expenses, and annual conference benevolence and program causes.³⁵

b) To receive, consider, report, and make recommendations to the annual conference regarding the following, prior to final decision by the annual conference: (1) any proposal to raise capital funds for any purpose; (2) funding considerations related to any proposal that may come

before the conference; (3) any requests to conduct a special conference-wide financial appeal.

c) To recommend to the annual conference for its action and decision the methods or formulas by which apportionments to churches, charges, or districts for duly authorized funds shall be determined.³⁶

d) To develop policies and practices in the employment and compensation of personnel, in accordance with the Social Principles.

e) To develop policies governing the construction, renovation, and managing of church property, in consultation with boards of trustees where they exist.

f) To develop policies governing the investment of conference funds (except for pension funds managed by the applicable board of pensions), in a manner consistent with the preservation of capital, the Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments, and the Social Principles of the church.

g) To develop policies governing the auditing of the financial records of the conference, its agencies and entities within its boundaries.

h) To develop policies governing the bonding of conference and conference agency officers and staff whose responsibilities include the custody or handling of conference funds or other negotiable assets.

>VII: 538.002-538.006<

GBOD ¶ 538.1 = 611+612.6; 538.2=612.1;

538.3=613.1-3+13+7+5+617Intro+618Intro

34. See Judicial Council Decision 1054.

35. See Judicial Council Decisions 521, 551, 560, 590, 744.

36. See Judicial Council Decision 983.

¶ 539. Board of Ordained Ministry—1. Organization—In each annual conference there shall be a Board of Ordained Ministry. In central conferences, the annual conference, upon recommendation of its Board of Ordained Ministry, may create an executive committee of the board, district committees on ordained ministry, or other appropriate structure, as it serves the need to carry out the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry, and assign and delegate to such structures the appropriate tasks and responsibilities it chooses. With regard to mandated sub-units of the Board of Ordained Ministry and their respective tasks and responsibilities, jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. The board shall be amenable and report to the annual conference. >VII: 539.001-539.002<

2. Purpose—The purpose of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be to develop, oversee, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated approach to all matters related to the ordained ministry. Concerning all matters of

ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy it brings recommendations directly to the clergy session of the annual conference.

3. Responsibilities—The Board of Ordained Ministry shall have authority and responsibility to perform the following functions, to which others may be added by the annual conference:

a) To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of licensed and ordained clergy. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, and every clergy of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins for the ordained ministry and guide those persons in the process of education, training, licensing, and ordination;

b) To relate to, and develop cooperation with, theological institutions and programs approved for the training of United Methodist clergy;

c) To examine and make full inquiry as to the fitness of candidates for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to associate membership; (3) election to provisional membership; and (4) election to full conference membership;

d) To evaluate and make recommendations concerning character and effectiveness of clergy, and to equip, train, and elect mentors;

e) To evaluate and make recommendations for all elections to, renewal of, and changes concerning certified candidates and conference relationship of clergy;³⁷

f) To keep records of all changes of conference relationship and place a copy in the permanent records of the annual conference, and to ensure confidentiality in relation to the interview and reporting process. There are occasions when the Board of Ordained Ministry would not report privileged information, which in the judgment of the board, if revealed in the clergy session of the annual conference, would be an undue invasion of privacy without adding measurably to the conference's information about the person's qualifications for ordained ministry. However, it is the right of the clergy session of the annual conference to receive all pertinent information, confidential or otherwise, related to the qualifications and/or character of any candidate or clergy member of the conference, subject to the laws of the country;³⁸

g) To report in a timely manner any change in the conference relationship of a clergy member of the conference to the applicable board of pensions;

h) To be in consultation with the bishop through the chairperson regarding transfers. This consultation is to be at the bishop's initiative;

i) To provide support services for the clergy, including counseling, continuing education, continuing spiritual

growth in Christ, evaluating the effectiveness, and assistance in preparation for retirement;

j) To work with and support the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders, and the Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members. >VII: 539.003-539.004<

4. *Membership*—The membership of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall consist of at least six ordained clergy in full membership and at least one-fifth laypersons. All laypersons shall be professing members of local churches in the annual conference.

>VII: 539.005<

GBOD ¶ 539.1 = 635.1+1b+NEW305.6; 539.2=new; 539.3a=635.2a; 539.3b=new; 539.3c=635.2h; 539.3d=635.new+2f; 539.3e-f=635.2j-m; 539.2g=635.2z; 539h-k=635.2n-p; 539.4=635.1

37. See Judicial Council Decisions 405, 1263.

38. See Judicial Council Decision 406.

Section VI. Provisional Annual Conferences

¶ 541. *Purpose*—A provisional annual conference shares the same purpose with an annual conference, but because of its limited membership, does not qualify for annual conference status. The creation of a provisional annual conference is part of a missional development that should lead to an annual conference within twelve years.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 541 = 580

¶ 542. *Powers and Duties*—1. Any mission established under the provisions of the *Discipline*, and any geographical part of an annual conference may be constituted as a provisional annual conference by the General Conference, upon recommendation by the central conference or provisional central conference, within which it is located, and in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, provided that:

a) No provisional annual conference shall be organized with fewer than ten elders in provisional or full connection, or be continued, after completion of the initial quadrennium, with fewer than six elders in full connection.

b) Membership, worship attendance, leadership development, and financial contributions have shown a reasonable progress during the previous quadrennium and give evidence for continued growth toward becoming an annual conference.

2. A provisional annual conference shall be organized in the same manner and have the same powers and functions as an annual conference, subject to the approval of the bishop in charge.

3. If a provisional annual conference, after three quadrennia, does not show progress toward becoming an annual conference, the following session of the central conference shall review said conference, consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and recommend to the following General Conference on continuation or discontinuation as a provisional annual conference. The provisional annual conference shall only be continued with sufficient missional, geographical, and contextual reasons.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 542.1+a+b = 581Intro+1+3; 542.2=582Intro; 542.3=new

¶ 543. *Membership*—A provisional annual conference shall be organized with the same provisions for membership as an annual conference.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 543 = new

¶ 544. *Conference Session*—1. A provisional annual conference shall be organized with the same provisions for a conference session as an annual conference insofar as they are considered applicable by the bishop in charge.

2. The bishop in charge may appoint a superintendent to whom may be committed specific responsibility as liaison to the General Board of Global Ministries.

3. In a provisional annual conference receiving major funding from the General Board of Global Ministries, the assigned staff of the board shall provide consultation and guidance in setting up the annual budget and Advance projects within the conference, aiming to increase self-support.

4. A provisional annual conference shall elect one clergy and one layperson as delegates to the General Conference. Delegates to central conferences shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 513.1.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 544.1 = new; 544.2=582.1; 544.3=582.3; 544.4=582.4

Section VII. District Conferences

¶ 551. *District Conferences*—Each central conference shall establish provisions for organizing within annual conferences district conferences, district administrative structures, and district agencies, or delegate such power to the annual conferences within its boundaries. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 551.001-551.007<

GBOD ¶ 551 = new, cf. 658+659.1

Section VIII. Missions

¶ 561. *Purpose*—1. The purpose of a mission is to provide and develop ministry with a particular group or region whose potential and need cannot be met within the existing structures and resources of annual or district conference(s). A mission may also be the initial stage in moving toward the formation of a provisional annual conference.

2. In accordance with the Wesleyan ecumenical spirit, in all phases of mission development, the initiating United Methodist entities will consult with, and where possible create cooperative relationships with, Wesleyan communions. They will promote relationships with other denominations serving in the area, and with interdenominational and ecumenical organizations. Where appropriate, they will engage in dialogue with interfaith agencies and organizations.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 561 = 590

¶ 562. *Powers and Duties*—1. A mission is an organizational body for a field of work inside, outside, or across the structures of annual conferences, or provisional annual conferences.

2. A mission may be established by the General Board of Global Ministries, or by a central or annual conference in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries.

3. The boundaries for a mission established by a central or annual conference(s) in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries are to be determined by the central or annual conference(s) and the General Board of Global Ministries. If a mission is established by the General Board of Global Ministries outside territories of a central or provisional central conference, the General Board of Global Ministries will establish the boundaries.

4. a) When the mission lies within the bounds of one episcopal area, the resident bishop shall preside over the mission.

b) When the mission crosses the boundaries of one or more episcopal areas, central or jurisdictional conferences, the College(s) of Bishops, in consultation with the general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, shall assign a bishop to the mission.

c) When the mission lies outside the bounds of an established episcopal area in central or jurisdictional conferences, the Council of Bishops, in consultation with the general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, will assign a bishop to be its presiding officer.

5. The entity or entities establishing a mission, in collaboration with the assigned bishop will seek a cooperative agreement with an annual conference that will serve as the correspondent annual conference to the mission for the purposes of ordination and conference membership as well as for local pastor licensing.

6. The annual meeting of the mission shall have the power to certify candidates for the ordained ministry, to receive and to examine mission pastors and local elders in mission, and to recommend to an annual conference proper persons for provisional or full membership and ordination.

7. The entity or entities initiating a mission shall be responsible for its administration and development and for making sure that the mission sets up, organizes, and implements the necessary mechanisms and processes to fulfill the functions of the mission.

8. Neither the mission nor its officers shall assume financial obligations or make financial commitments on behalf of the General Board of Global Ministries without the board's written authorization.

9. Recommendations for a change of status of a mission shall be made by the entity or entities that established the mission.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 562 = 591

¶ 563. *Membership*—1. A mission shall be made up of all regularly appointed missionaries, both lay and clergy, local elders in mission, mission pastors, and other lay members. The mission shall determine the number of lay members and the method of their selection. In so doing, it shall ensure that all aspects of the mission's work are represented.³⁹

2. In territories outside the boundaries of central or annual conferences, the bishop assigned to the mission and the General Board of Global Ministries recommend the educational requirements for local elders in mission and mission pastors. Such recommendations and requirements shall be approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

a) Local elders in mission are ordained members of the mission and are not members of an annual conference. Local elders in mission are limited in their itineration and sacramental authority to the bounds of the mission and as such are not eligible to transfer their credentials to another annual conference.

b) Mission pastors are members of the mission without being members of an annual conference. The mission shall determine the requirements for a mission pastor in order to most effectively utilize the indigenous leader-

ship. Mission pastors are limited in their itineration to the bounds of the mission.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 563 = 592

39. See Judicial Council Decision 341.

¶ 564. *Annual Meeting*—1. A mission shall meet annually at the time and place designated by the bishop in charge, who shall preside. In the absence of the bishop, a superintendent of the mission shall preside. The presiding officer shall bring forward the regular business of the meeting and arrange the work.

2. The assigned bishop, in consultation with the entity or entities establishing the mission, may appoint one or more superintendents of the mission.

3. At the annual meeting, the bishop shall assign the missionaries, local elders in mission, and mission pastors to the several charges for the ensuing year; provided that transfer of missionaries related to the General Board of Global Ministries shall be completed only after consultation with the board.

4. A mission related to a central conference is authorized to elect and send one lay and one clergy to the central conference as its representative, with voice but not vote.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 564 = 593

Section IX. Joining The United Methodist Church

¶ 571. *Joining The United Methodist Church*—1. A church outside the United States may join The United

Methodist Church when all of the following requirements are fulfilled:

a) Said church shall accept and approve the Constitution, Articles of Faith, *Discipline*, and polity of The United Methodist Church.

b) Said church, if it is within the boundaries of a central or provisional central conference, shall apply for membership in that conference. Such application shall be reviewed and recommended by the central or provisional central conference. In the event that said church is not within the boundaries of an existing central or provisional central conference, then its membership application shall be reviewed and recommended by the Council of Bishops.

c) Said church shall declare that, upon consummation of becoming an integral part of The United Methodist Church, its former constitution and church order becomes null and void.

2. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall advise and assist said church in the process of joining The United Methodist Church and prepare the necessary enabling act for approval by the General Conference, including necessary adjustments in the organization of the central or provisional central conferences.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 571.1 = 575Intro+.1-3; 571.2=575.4-5

New Part VI

General Organization and Administration

Important note on the draft for Chapter 5:

For Chapter 5, the Standing Committee presents some samples of its ongoing work. The samples indicate the direction of the transformative work needed in this chapter for discerning essentials that shall bind us connectionally together in being agents of God's mission on all levels of conferencing. There has been a clear realization that the existing Chapter 5 is an extremely U.S.-created and driven chapter. In order to give contextual freedom to adapt, there must be a clearly stated way in which that contextualization can occur (e.g., below ¶ 821 United Methodist Women).

The core values for the revision work are:

- Alignment (with the mission);
- Global (in scope);
- Simplification (of the various elements);
- Focus (on the specifics);
- Creativity (of the ministries);
- Relevance (to the context);
- Consistency (of the format).

The main focus of these samples is not “how” an agency should work, but “why” the work of an agency is essential to creating a Methodist ethos and presence in

diverse settings across the world. Therefore, the ongoing work on chapter 5 has developed the following minimum description for the new Part VI with samples in a consistent format:

- Provision with Scriptural/Theological/Wesleyan grounding;
- Purpose/Mission;
- Goals/Strategies;
- Amenability and Accountability.

Additional elements (e.g., membership; organizational, or legal, etc.) will be needed for a finalized draft. They may be contained in GC-R paragraphs (General Conference-Regulations) within this new Part VI, or may be moved to the new Part VII (Additional Organization and Administration).

This unfinished draft gives an idea of what a consistent structuring of Chapter 5, with a focus on “why,” might look like.

As this chapter contains samples and no finalized draft, Judicial Council Decisions are not yet updated. Furthermore, no additional versions for a full comparison to the *BOD* 2016 with tracking changes have been produced so far.

Chapter Five

Administrative Order

“God’s self-revelation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ summons the church to ministry in the world through witness by word and deed in light of the church’s mission. . . . United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission . . .” (§§ 124-125).

Section I. General Provisions

[BOD §§ 701-724 → GBOD §§ 711ff]

¶ 701. *General Provisions for Administrative Order*—

1. The connectional covenant (§§ 124-125) refers to the specific way The United Methodist Church lives in community and continuous interconnection. It is the embodiment of biblical metaphors such as the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), and the vine and the branches (John 15). In this connectional relationship, each and every part of the body has particular and specific responsibilities.

2. Often, within the church, the term *agency* is limited in usage, referring to an organizational structure of the general church. However, the word *agency* refers to the God-given ability and authority to act. Thus, individuals, congregations, and conferences all exercise agency. Furthermore, all agency is grace induced, which means that all agency is an expression of human activity participating in God’s work of grace in all creation. Such empowerment happens best in a spirit of partnership.

3. This ability to participate in God’s grace-filled work requires authority and freedom. At its best, agency means communal participation, offered and enacted with humility (Philippians 2:3-8). As agents in a worldwide ecclesiological framework, United Methodists (as individuals, congregations, or designated connectional units) are called to mirror vital aspects of redeemed humanity as a whole: reconciled diversity, intercultural sensitivity, and commitment to peace and justice.

GBOD ¶ 701 = New

¶ 702. *Provisions for General Agencies*—Based on this understanding of agency, the administrative units known as general agencies are called into being and authorized by the General Conference and given particular and distinctive responsibilities. They uniquely serve between the global and the local. They seek to collaborate with other agencies within The United Methodist Church, the worldwide Methodist relationships, and ecumenical partnerships in fulfilling its vocation of spreading scriptural

holiness across the land and around the globe. All agency ministries are grounded in God’s word and grace, seek to be accountable, transparent, and leave room for contextual application.

GBOD ¶ 702 = New

Section II. Programmatic Ministries I— General Board of Church and Society

[BOD §§ 1001-1011 → GBOD §§ 711ff]

¶ 711. *Provision*—1. There shall be a General Board of Church and Society in The United Methodist Church.

2. The work and ministry of the general board is shaped by Christ’s command to love neighbor as one-self (Mark 12:31), and the admonition from the prophets for justice, righteousness, and mercy (Micah 6:8; Amos 5:24). The prophets and Jesus consistently warned leaders who would oppress and deny justice to others.

3. Wesley worked tirelessly for justice in all domains. From John Wesley’s charge to “*reform the nation and, in particular, the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land,*” Methodism is rooted in a call to transform the world through personal and social holiness.

GBOD ¶ 711 = 1001+new

¶ 712. *Purpose*—The purpose of the general board shall be to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to the members of the church and to the persons and structures of the communities, nations, and world in which they live. It shall seek ways to bring the whole of human life—activities, possessions, use of resources and community and world relationships—into conformity with the will of God. It shall witness to the members of both church and society that the reconciliation that God effected through Christ involves personal, social, and civic righteousness.

GBOD ¶ 712 = 1002

¶ 713. *Goals*—The following goals enable the general board in achieving its purpose:

1. Analyze local and global issues that confront persons, communities, nations, and world.

2. Encourage Christian lines of action that assist humankind to move toward a world in which peace and justice are achieved.

3. Assist district and annual conferences in the U.S., and central conferences in Africa, Asia, and Europe with needed and requested resources in areas of such concern.

4. Develop plans and programs that challenge members of The UMC to work through their local churches,

ecumenical channels, and community efforts toward personal, social, and civic righteousness.

5. Seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on social concerns for Christians.

GBOD ¶ 713 = 1003 (partly new)

¶ 714. *Scope and Strategies*—1. The scope of the general board's work includes those outlined in the Social Principles. These include civil and human rights, economic justice, environmental justice, health and wholeness, and well-being of women and children in the social community. The general board shall be an advocate for justice and peace, integrating personal responsibility with social policy and spiritual transformation with institutional change.

2. The following strategies shall help the general board to fulfill the goals:

a) Implementation and promotion of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns throughout the global church;

b) Witness and action on issues of human well-being, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation;

c) Analysis of long-range social trends, the underlying ethical values, and exploration of strategies for alternative futures, speaking its convictions and concerns to the church and world;

d) Development of faith-based coalitions and networks (local, ecumenical, regional, national, and international) in which multiple agencies exchange ideas, strategies, and advocacy for a more just and caring world.

e) Development and distribution of contextually relevant resources and programs that inform, motivate, train, and build networks for action toward social justice;

f) Educating, equipping, and connecting advocates of United Methodists in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America to form a global network for justice in every nation;

g) Facilitate and coordinate the legislative advocacy activities in the United States Congress of other general agencies of The United Methodist Church that receive general church funds. (This is currently a separate item in ¶ 1004.)

h) Offering opportunities for learning and engagement for youth, young clergy, and emerging leadership in the U.S. and central conferences to awaken a desire for justice and peace in the world.

GBOD ¶ 714 = 1004 (partly new)

¶ 715. *Amenability and Accountability*—The general board shall have a board of directors that establishes its

bylaws, which shall not violate any provision of the *Discipline*. The board shall be amenable to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Between sessions of the General Conference, it shall be accountable to the Connectional Table for its work, its report, and its evaluation, based on its purpose, goals, and other legislated responsibilities.

GBOD ¶ 715 = 1006+1011+new

Section III. Programmatic Ministries II— General Board of Discipleship

[BOD ¶¶ 1101-1126 → GBOD ¶¶ 721ff]

¶ 721. *Provision*—1. There shall be a General Board of Discipleship, also known as Discipleship Ministries, in The United Methodist Church.

2. The work and ministry of the general board is grounded by the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded (Matthew 28:19); and to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ to attain unity of faith (Ephesians 4:12-13).

3. Wesley envisioned various ways to equip the saints and grow in Christlikeness including the Oxford Holy Club, and later band and class meetings in the Methodist societies.

GBOD ¶ 721 = 1101+new

¶ 722. *Purpose*—The purpose of the general board shall be to support the nurturing, and caring ministries of all congregations in The United Methodist Church. The general board shall seek ways to assist annual and central conferences, districts, and local churches of all membership sizes to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Further, it shall provide leadership and resources that persons may grow in faith as children of God and members of the global Christian community to fulfill their common discipleship in the world.

GBOD ¶ 722 = 1101+new

¶ 723. *Goals*—The following goals shall enable the general board to achieve its purposes:

1. Provide publications directed for local church nurture, outreach, and witness, within the framework of cultural differences across the global faith community;

2. Manage the publications of *The Upper Room* and other resources in multiple languages to help people grow in their relationship with God;

3. Facilitate areas that expand knowledge and strategic conversation for contextualized ministries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America;

4. Provide leadership and resources for local churches for the areas of Christian education, worship, music, evangelism, new church development, stewardship, lay leadership development, all age-level and family ministries, small group ministries, and spiritual formation, as appropriate within the ethnic, cultural, and contextual frameworks in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America;

5. Develop contextual ministries for the laity that nurture faith, and build a global Christian community;

6. Provide research and innovation for the global faith community for creation of new effective programs, resources, and methods of faith formation and intentional discipleship;

7. Equip and empower Ministries with Young People.
GBOD ¶ 723 = 1102+new

¶ 724. *Amenability and Accountability*—The general board shall have a board of directors that establishes its bylaws, which shall not violate any provision of the *Discipline*. The board is amenable to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Between sessions of the General Conference, it shall be accountable to the Connectional Table for its work, its report, and its evaluation, based on its purpose, goals, and other legislated responsibilities.

GBOD ¶ 724 = 1103, 1104, 1105

Section IV. Programmatic Ministries III— General Board of Global Ministries

[BOD ¶¶ 1301-1315 → GBOD ¶¶ 731ff]

¶ 731. *Provision*—1. There shall be a General Board of Global Ministries in The United Methodist Church.

2. Missional mandates are throughout Scripture, constantly calling the church to care for people beyond the gathered community: “Go, make disciples of all nations . . .” (Matthew 28); “as you have done it to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me” (Matthew 25) and “bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind . . . let the oppressed go free” (Isaiah 61/Luke 4).

3. Wesley’s vision was social and sacramental, with the world being the parish. The United Methodist mission is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (¶ 120). The transforming power belongs to God. Global Ministries is in mission to learn and witness to what God has done and is doing in every land where disciples gather in the name of Jesus Christ. God’s mission is theologically perceived from creation to completion (¶ 124).

GBOD ¶ 731 = 1301+new

¶ 732. *Purpose*—1. The purpose of the general board shall be to discern those places where the gospel has not been heard or heeded and to witness to its meaning throughout the world, inviting all persons to newness of life in Jesus Christ and to express the mission of the church by sending and connecting the global church in mission through a variety of programs and partnerships.

2. The general board shall engage in global mission by alleviating human suffering and seeking justice, freedom, and peace. This engagement in mission shall be a sign of God’s continuing presence in the world. The general board shall include the United Methodist Committee on Relief or UMCOR, providing nonsectarian disaster response and sustainable development worldwide.

GBOD ¶ 732.1 = 1302; 732.2 = 1315

¶ 733. *Goals*—The following goals shall enable the general board to achieve its purpose:

1. To engage in a range of missional efforts and persons of various professions, including pastors, educators, agriculturalists, health coordinators and doctors, congregation and leadership developers;

2. To respond to natural disasters through UMCOR and address issues of hunger, health, and immigration including uprooted people;

3. To develop Advance Special Projects that enable and support mission projects and missionaries throughout the world;

4. To design and oversee short- and long-term Volunteer-in-Mission opportunities;

5. To explore a new vision of partnership with churches and missionaries around the world, focusing on mutual relationships based on respect, service, support, and prayer;

6. To create Mission Opportunities for Young People.
GBOD ¶ 733 = 1303

¶ 734. *Strategies*—The following strategies shall help the general board fulfill the goals by:

1. Engaging annual conferences in North America and central conferences in Africa, Asia, and Europe to explore ways to support current work in mission;

2. Building relationships and capacities among global mission partners to assist each to establish, lead, and grow churches in their regions;

3. Emphasizing the importance of global missionaries, young adult missionaries, and volunteer laity to serve by increasing recruitment and places of assignment;

4. Promoting health for all, especially children, establishing and expanding lifesaving and health promoting measures, with special attention to the economically vulnerable;

5. Increasing humanitarian assistance more fully and regularly by integrating immediate disaster response with long-range sustainable development;

GBOD ¶ 734 = 1303+new

¶ 735. *Amenability and Accountability*—The general board shall have a board of directors that establishes its bylaws, which shall not violate any provision of the *Discipline*. The board shall be amenable to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Between sessions of the General Conference, it shall be accountable to the Connectional Table for its work, its report, and its evaluation, based on its purpose, goals, and other legislated responsibilities

GBOD ¶ 735 = 1305+1311+new

Section V. Programmatic Ministries IV— General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

[BOD ¶¶ 1401-1423 → GBOD ¶¶ 741ff]

¶ 741. *Provision*—1. There shall be a General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in The United Methodist Church.

2. The work and ministry of the general board is grounded in Scripture, including passages such as “. . . you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with . . . all your mind . . .” (Matthew 22:37-40 NRSV) and “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12 NRSV). Jesus emphasized that these words are the root of all the commandments that are given to the disciples.

3. A distinctive Wesleyan emphasis is understanding that Christian faith is revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. The general board shall be an advocate for the intellectual opportunities of and for the church and its leadership.

GBOD ¶ 741 = 1401+new

¶ 742. *Purpose*—1. The purpose of the general board shall be to prepare leaders for a global church and ministry in and for the world. The general board shall provide general guidance and care for campus ministries and institutions of higher education, including schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools, in the U.S. and, as appropriate in central conferences.

2. The general board shall recognize the call and the gifts of the whole church, and affirm those who respond to God’s call by offering themselves in leadership as set-

apart ministers. It shall provide training and resources as persons discover their call, claim it, and flourish by fulfilling their ministry in Christ through the several special ministries, ordained and diaconal. Further, it will interpret the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world for the ordering of ministry to the global church. The distinctive functions of the orders are Service, Word, Sacrament, Order, Compassion, and Justice, all of which can be both contextual and incarnational.

GBOD ¶ 742 = 1404+new

¶ 743. *Goals*—The following goals shall enable the general board to achieve its purpose:

1. To study, interpret, understand, communicate, and promote the significance of higher education and ministry in Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America;

2. To develop guidelines, standards, criteria, and procedures for certification in professional ministerial careers and for ordination into the ordained ministry;

3. To provide trainings, counsel, guidance, and assistance to annual conferences in North America, and central conferences in Asia, Africa, and Europe through their boards of ordained ministry and higher education and campus ministry;

4. To explore new types of ministries, to study and creatively develop relevant resources for ordained and diaconal ministries, in both the central conference and American contexts;

5. To educate and provide evaluation tools for clergy, their continuing education, professional growth, quality of performance, and assessment of effectiveness for the mission of the church.

GBOD ¶ 743 = 1405

¶ 744. *Amenability and Accountability*—The general board shall have a board of directors that establishes its bylaws, which shall not violate any provision of the *Discipline*. The board shall be amenable to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Between sessions of the General Conference, it shall be accountable to the Connectional Table for its work, its report, and its evaluation, based on its purpose, goals, and other legislated responsibilities.

GBOD ¶ 744 = 1409

Section VI. Focused Ministries I—Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

[BOD ¶ 2201 → GBOD ¶¶ 801ff]

(or option to move to chapter 4, section I, General Conference, and add to ¶ 504 and GC-R ¶ 504)

¶ 801ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability***Section VII. Focused Ministries II—
Ministries with Young People**

[BOD ¶¶ 1201-1212 → GBOD ¶¶ 811ff]

¶ 811ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability***Section VIII. Focused Ministries III—
United Methodist Women**

[BOD ¶¶ 1901-1918 → GBOD ¶¶ 821ff]

¶ 821ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability*

¶ 821. Provision—1. There shall be an organization called United Methodist Women in The United Methodist Church.

2. The New Testament has many references to women in ministry. Luke refers to women who were healed and provided for Jesus' ministry out of their resources (Luke 8:3). Lydia was a businesswoman in Thyatira (Acts 18) who, after she was baptized, offered hospitality to the apostle Paul. Paul also had a commendation for Phoebe, a deacon in the early church (Romans 16). These ministries of women in the early church are extended, expanded, and continued through United Methodist Women.

3. Women in each of the central conferences of The United Methodist Church, in the United States, and in each of the annual conferences of The United Methodist Church, shall have the right to organize for the purposes set forth below, to use the name United Methodist Women or another one deemed suitable, to organize at local, district, circuit levels and in other configurations that help women further the purpose, and to elect their own leaders through processes that they develop and manage. Annual conference UMW organizations shall be directly related to their central conference structure outside the U.S. and in their jurisdiction and national structure in the U.S.

GBOD ¶ 821 = 1901+new

**Section IX. Focused Ministries III—United
Methodist Men**

[BOD ¶¶ 2301-2303 → GBOD ¶¶ 831ff]

¶ 831ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability***Section X. Focused Ministries IV—
General Commission on Religion and Race**

[BOD ¶¶ 2001-2008 → GBOD ¶¶ 841ff]

¶ 841ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability*

¶ 841. Provision—1. There shall be a General Commission on Religion and Race in The United Methodist Church.

2. The work and ministry of the commission is shaped by the Great Commandment of loving God and loving people. The early church realized the importance of caring for others: "If then there is any encouragement in Christ, . . . let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:1-4 NRSV). The Great Commission of going to all nations can also be understood as going into every ethnic community and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

3. The commission's work is informed by the teachings of John Wesley, who embraced the diversity of God's world as his parish. John Wesley and Charles Wesley established class meetings to address social issues such as class, race, and ethnicity in church and society. Given the undergirding of Scripture, the work of the commission expresses the core values: Love, Grace, Equity, Justice, Respect, and Mutual Accountability.

GBOD ¶ 841 = 2001+new

**Section XI. Focused Ministries V—General
Commission on the Status and Role of Women**

[BOD ¶¶ 2101-2109 → GBOD ¶¶ 851ff]

¶ 851ff.*Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)**Purpose**Responsibilities/Goals**Amenability and Accountability*

¶ **851. Provision**—1. There shall be a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women in The United Methodist Church.

2. Faith communities are called to live fully into the biblical promise that “there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28 NRSV). The Scripture offers clear and unequivocal commitment to the equality of women and their full inclusion in all faith communities as the Spirit falls indiscriminately upon all flesh, male and female (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17).

3. Susanna Wesley was known for spiritual development for her children through weekly one-on-one time for spiritual direction. John Wesley was a reformer regarding women in ministry as he encouraged women to preach in cells and society meetings. Leadership by men and women was a key component of the early Methodist movement. GBOD ¶ 851 = 2101+new

Section XII. Focused Ministries VI—JustPeace

[BOD ¶¶ 2401 → GBOD ¶¶ 861ff]

¶ **861ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XIII. Organizational Ministries I—General Commission on Archives and History

[BOD ¶¶ 1701-1712 → GBOD ¶¶ 901ff]

¶ **901ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XIV. Organizational Ministries II—General Commission on Communication

[BOD ¶¶ 1801-1808 → GBOD ¶¶ 911ff]

¶ **911ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XV. Organizational Ministries III—General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

[BOD ¶¶ 1501-1509 → GBOD ¶¶ 921ff]

¶ **921ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XVI. Organizational Ministries IV—The United Methodist Publishing House

[BOD ¶¶ 1601-1641 → GBOD ¶¶ 931ff]

¶ **931ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XVII. Organizational Ministries V—Connectional Table

[BOD ¶¶ 901-907 → GBOD ¶¶ 941ff]

¶ **941ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Section XVIII. Organizational Ministries VI—General Council on Finance and Administration

[BOD ¶¶ 801-824 → GBOD ¶¶ 951ff]

¶ **951ff.**

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

Chapter Six

Church Property

Section I. All Titles—In Trust

Section II. Compliance with Law

Section III. General Provisions for Church Officers

Section IV. Annual Conference, District, Local Church, and General Agency Property

Section I. All Titles—In Trust

¶ 2501. Requirement of the Trust Clause for All Property—1. All properties of United Methodist local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions are held, in trust, for the benefit of the entire denomination, and ownership and usage of church property is subject to the *Discipline*, and is to be in compliance with applicable local laws. This trust requirement is an essential element of the historic polity of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations or communions and has been a part of the *Discipline* since 1797. It reflects the connectional structure of the church by ensuring that the property will be used solely for purposes consonant with the mission of the entire denomination as set forth in the *Discipline*. The trust requirement is thus a fundamental expression of United Methodism whereby local churches and other agencies and institutions within the denomination are both held accountable to and benefit from their connection with the entire worldwide church.

In consonance with the legal definition and self-understanding of The United Methodist Church (see ¶ 141), and with particular reference to its lack of capacity to hold title to property, The United Methodist Church is organized as a connectional structure, and titles to all real and personal, tangible and intangible property held at central, jurisdictional, annual, or district conference levels, or by a local church or charge, or by an agency or institution of the church, shall be held in trust for The United Methodist Church and subject to the provisions of its *Discipline*. Titles are not held by The United Methodist Church (see BOD ¶ 807.1) or by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, but instead by the incorporated conferences, agencies, or organizations of the denomination, or in the case of unincorporated bodies of the denomination, by boards of trustees established for the purpose of holding and administering real and personal, tangible and intangible property.

2. The trust is and always has been irrevocable, except as provided in the *Discipline*. Property can be released from the trust, transferred free of trust or subordinated to the interests of creditors and other third parties only to the extent authority is given by the *Discipline*.

3. Local churches and other United Methodist agencies and institutions may acquire, hold, maintain, improve, and sell property for purposes consistent with the mission of the church, unless restricted or prevented by the *Discipline*.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2501.1-3 = 2501.1-3

¶ 2502. Registration of the Name United Methodist—The words *United Methodist* are not to be used as, or as a part of, a trade name or trademark or as a part of the name of any business firm or organization, except by corporations or other business units created for the administration of work undertaken directly by The United Methodist Church. The General Council on Finance and Administration is charged with supervision and registration of “United Methodist” and the denomination’s insignia (BOD ¶ 807.10 and ¶ 807.11).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2502 = 2502

¶ 2503. Trust Clauses in Deeds—1. Except in conveyances that require that the real property so conveyed shall revert to the grantor if and when its use as a place of divine worship has been terminated, all written instruments of conveyance by which premises are held or hereafter acquired for use as a place of divine worship or other activities for members of The United Methodist Church shall¹ ensure that said premises shall be used, kept, and maintained as a place of divine worship of the United Methodist ministry and members of The United Methodist Church; subject to the *Discipline*, usage, and ministerial appointments of said church as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference and by the annual conference within whose bounds the said premises are situated. This provision is solely for the benefit of the grantee, and the grantor reserves no right or interest in said premises.

2. All written instruments by which premises are held or hereafter acquired as a parsonage for the use and occupancy of the clergy of The United Methodist Church shall ensure that said premises shall be held, kept, and maintained as a place of residence for the use and occupancy of the clergy of The United Methodist Church who may from time to time be entitled to occupy the same by appointment; subject to the *Discipline* and usage of said church as from time to time authorized and declared by the General Conference and by the annual conference within whose bounds the said premises are situated. This provision is

solely for the benefit of the grantee, and the grantor reserves no right or interest in said premises.

3. In case the property so acquired is to be used for both a house of worship and a parsonage, the provisions of both trust mandates specified in §1 and §2 above shall be included in the conveyance.

4. In case the property so acquired is not to be used exclusively for a place of worship, or a parsonage, or both, all written instruments by which such premises are held or hereafter acquired shall ensure that said premises shall be kept, maintained, and disposed of for the benefit of The United Methodist Church and subject to the usages and the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. This provision is solely for the benefit of the grantee, and the grantor reserves no right or interest in said premises.

5. When property is acquired from another United Methodist entity or organization, whether it is to be used as a place of divine worship, parsonage, or for other use, all written instruments by which such premises are held or hereafter acquired shall ensure that said premises shall be held, kept, maintained, and disposed of for the benefit of The United Methodist Church and subject to the usages and the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church.

6. The failure to meet the requirements of §§1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 above in deeds and conveyances executed previously or in the future shall in no way exclude a local church or church agency, or the board of trustees of either, from or relieve it of its connectional responsibilities to The United Methodist Church. Nor shall it absolve a local church or church agency or the board of trustees of either, of its responsibility and accountability to The United Methodist Church, including the responsibility to hold all of its property in trust for The United Methodist Church; provided that the intent of the founders and/or a later local church or church agency, or the board of trustees of either, is shown by any or all of the following:

a) the conveyance of the property to a local church or church agency (or the board of trustees of either) of The United Methodist Church or any predecessor to The United Methodist Church;

b) the use of the name, customs, and polity of The United Methodist Church or any predecessor to The United Methodist Church in such a way as to be thus known to the community as a part of such denomination; or

c) the acceptance of the pastorate of clergy appointed by a bishop or employed by the superintendent of the district or annual conference of The United Methodist Church or any predecessor to The United Methodist Church.

7. It shall be the responsibility of each central conference, to apply the provisions in this paragraph above to meet the legal requirements and ministry needs of the

various legal central conference structures and annual conferences within its boundaries. These revisions and applications shall be reported to the General Council on Finance and Administration by the secretary of the central conference within 60 days after the close of its regular quadrennial session.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2503.1-6 = 2503.1-6; 2503.7=new

1. See Judicial Council Decision 668.

¶ 2504. *Effect of Union*—Nothing in the Plan of Union at any time after the union is to be construed so as to require any existing local church of any predecessor denomination to The United Methodist Church to alienate or in any way to change the title to property contained in its deed or deeds at the time of union, and lapse of time or usage shall not affect said title or control. Title to all property of a local church, or charge, or agency of the church shall be held subject to the provisions of the *Discipline*, whether title to the same is taken in the name of the local church trustees, or charge trustees, or in the name of a corporation organized for the purpose, or otherwise.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2504 = 2504

¶ 2505. *Oil, Gas, and Mineral Leases*—Subject to and in accordance with the laws of the state, province, or country, the governing body of any church unit or agency owning land in trust for The United Methodist Church as provided in the *Discipline* may lease said land for the production of oil, gas, coal, and other minerals, upon such terms as it may deem best; provided, however, that such production shall not interfere with the purpose for which said land is held. The moneys received from such leases as rentals, royalties, or otherwise shall be used so far as practicable for the benefit of the church unit and for the promotion of the interests of The United Methodist Church. The lessee shall have no control over or responsibility for the payments made under such lease.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2505 = 2505

Section II. Compliance with Law

¶ 2506. *Conformity with Local Law—Church Corporations*—1. All provisions of the *Discipline* relating to property, both real and personal, and relating to the formation and operation of any corporation, and relating to mergers are conditioned upon their being in conformity with the local laws, and in the event of conflict therewith the local laws shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of

The United Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by state statute where such regulation violates the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the church to maintain its connectional structure. Local laws shall be construed to mean the laws of the country, state, or other like political unit within the geographical bounds of which the church property is located.²

2. Any corporation that is or has been formed or is controlled by a church agency (§ 702), acting alone or with another church agency, shall include in its articles of incorporation (or charter) and its bylaws (“corporate documents”) the following:

a) identification of the sponsoring church agency or agencies (“sponsor(s)”) to which it relates and the relationship of the corporation to its sponsor(s),

b) recognition that its corporate powers are subject to the *Discipline* to the same extent as its sponsor(s), and

c) recognition that the corporation’s powers cannot exceed those given by the *Discipline* to its sponsor(s).

3. The corporate documents shall contain language consistent with the appropriate taxation authority to protect its tax-exempt status, where applicable. Also, the corporate documents shall name the corporation’s sponsor(s) as the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, discontinued, or ceases to exist as a legal entity. The corporate documents shall also include a reference to the provisions of § 2501.

4. The corporate documents shall contain provisions prohibiting the corporation’s trustees, directors, or officers from changing the corporation’s connectional relationship to its sponsor(s) without the sponsor(s)’ consent, or otherwise acting in a manner contrary to the purpose of its sponsor(s) or the *Discipline*.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 2506 = 2506

2. See Judicial Council Decision 315.

§ 2507. *The Terms* Trustee, Trustees, and Board of Trustees—*Trustee, trustees, and board of trustees*, as used herein or elsewhere in the *Discipline*, may be construed to be synonymous with director, directors, and board of directors applied to corporations, or such other terms as in compliance with applicable local law.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 2507 = 2507

§ 2508. *Conformity of Deeds and/or Other Ownership Documents, Conveyances with Local Law*—In order to secure the right of property, with the appurtenances thereof,

of the churches and parsonages of The United Methodist Church, care shall be taken that all conveyances and deeds be drawn and executed in due conformity to the laws of the respective states, provinces, and countries in which the property is situated and also in due conformity to the laws of The United Methodist Church. Deeds shall be registered or recorded directly upon their execution.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 2508 = 2508

§ 2509. *Instituting and Defending Civil Action*—Because of the nature of The United Methodist Church (§ 141), no individual or affiliated church body or unit, nor any official thereof, may commence or participate in any suit or proceeding in the name of or on behalf of The United Methodist Church, excepting, however, the following:

1. The General Council on Finance and Administration or any person or church unit served with legal process in the name of The United Methodist Church may appear for the purpose of presenting to the court the non-jural nature of The United Methodist Church and to raise issues of lack of jurisdiction of the court, lack of capacity of such individual or unit to be served with process, and related constitutional issues in defense of denominational interests.

2. Any denominational unit authorized to hold title to property and to enforce trusts for the benefit of the denomination may bring suit in its own name to protect denominational interests.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 2509 = 2509

§ 2510. *Limitation of Financial Obligations*—No conference, council, board, agency, local church, or other unit can financially obligate the denomination or, without prior specific consent, any other organizational unit thereof.

>VII: —<

GBOD § 2510 = 2510

Section III. General Provisions for Church Officers

§ 2511. *Auditing and Bonding*—All persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to the General, central, jurisdictional, annual, or provisional annual conferences or to organizations under the control of the General, central, jurisdictional, annual, or provisional annual conferences shall be bonded by a reliable company in such good and sufficient sum as the conference may direct. The accounts of such persons shall be audited at least annually by a recognized public or certified public accountant. A report to an annual conference containing

a financial statement that the *Discipline* requires to be audited shall not be approved until the audit is made and the financial statement is shown to be correct. Other parts of the report may be approved pending such audit.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2511 = 2511

¶ **2512.** *Trustees of Church Institutions*—Trustees of schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, homes, orphanages, institutes, and other institutions owned or controlled by any annual, jurisdictional, or central conference or any agency of The United Methodist Church shall be at least the legal majority of age according to the laws of the country. At all times, not less than three-fifths of them shall be members of a local church and/or members of an annual conference or the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, and all must be nominated, confirmed, or elected by such conference or agency of the church or by some body or officer thereof to which or to whom this power has been delegated by such conference or agency; provided that the number of trustees of any such institution owned or controlled by any annual conference or conferences required to be members of a local church and/or annual conference or the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church may be reduced to not less than the majority by a three-fourths vote of such annual conference or conferences; and provided further, that when an institution is owned and operated jointly with some other religious organization, said requirement that three-fifths of the trustees shall be members of a local church and/or annual conference or the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church shall apply only to the portion of the trustees selected by the United Methodist agency or annual, ju-

risdictional, or central conference. It is recognized that there are numerous educational, health-care, and charitable organizations that traditionally have been affiliated with The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations, which are neither owned nor controlled by any unit of the denomination.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2512 = 2552

Section IV. Annual Conference, District, Local Church, and General Agency Property

¶ **2513.** 1. *Central Conference Authority*—Each central conference shall have authority to organize the structures and provisions necessary for the annual conferences, districts, local churches, and other United Methodist-related entities within its boundaries to receive, collect, and hold in trust for the benefit of those entities any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind or character, real or personal, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purpose, and shall administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, or testator and in the interest of the church, society, institution, or agency contemplated by such donor, trustor, or testator, provided that any provisions established conform to the provisions of ¶¶ 2501-2510 above.

2. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*. >VII: 2513.001-2513.040<

3. For authority regarding property held by general agencies of the church, see BOD ¶ 807.6, .8.

GBOD ¶ 2513.1-2 = new; 2513.3=footnote 3 of section IV

Chapter Seven

Judicial Administration

Section I. The Judicial Council

Section II. Fair Process in Judicial Proceedings

Section III. Procedures for Referral and Investigation of a Judicial Complaint

Section IV. Trials

Section V. Appeals

¶ **2601. Preamble and Purpose**—1. In fulfillment of its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, The United Methodist Church has found it prudent to establish judicial structures and processes. We recognize that God has given authority to the state to make laws and render judgments for the sake of preserving the common good (cf. Romans 13:1-7). For this reason, we affirm the legitimacy of the civil courts and the importance of cooperating with these. At the same time, we understand judicial administration as a proper ministry of The United Methodist Church. Against the legalism that has from time to time been mistaken for holiness, Methodists have emphasized the universal, free, and abounding grace of God. However, over and against a cheapening of this grace, Methodists have always insisted that laws can be divine gifts and discipline can be life giving. When conflicts arise in the fellowship of believers, The United Methodist Church as representative of Christ, the Prince of Peace, prefers to pursue and promote just resolution and reconciliation. Trials and judicial processes are in this sense instruments of last resort. However, these instruments are not to be disdained. This work is necessary to protect vulnerable members of the body from harm, as well as to preserve the theological and moral integrity of the church's witness to the world.

2. The exercise of judicial functions by the general church and by annual and central conferences is not to be understood as essentially punitive. Instead, these activities aim at sustaining the health and welfare of the body of Christ. Such activities are modeled for us already in the Gospels, where we find Jesus offering patterns for responding to and healing offenses within the community of faith (Matthew 18:15-18). Similar concerns are taken up by Paul in his writings to the churches under his leadership (e.g., 1 Corinthians 5:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-8). In light of these and other texts of both the Old and New Testaments, the judicial functions of church leadership should be understood as an aspect of mutual care and admonition, part of the "watching over one another in love" that Wesley commended to his followers in the name of growing together in holiness. These processes and struc-

tures have as their goal the building up of the sacred trust that binds its members as the people called Methodist. It is important to remember that human judgments are always provisional. God alone is the judge of the living and the dead. Hence, the judicial administration of The United Methodist Church is to be carried out in humility knowing that "all of us make many mistakes" (James 3:2 NRSV).

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2601.1-2 = New

Section I. The Judicial Council

¶ **2602. Duties and Responsibilities of the Judicial Council**—The Judicial Council is the highest judicial body in The United Methodist Church. The Judicial Council shall have authority as specified in the Constitution, ¶¶ 55-57, and in ¶¶ 2607-2610.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2602 = 2601

¶ **2603. Members**—1. *Composition and Term*—The Judicial Council shall be composed of nine members and should reflect the diversity of The United Methodist Church, including racial, age, ethnic, gender, central and jurisdictional conferences, and congregational size. On nominations and election, alternates, vacancies, and expiration of term, further provisions according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 2603) shall be followed.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2603 = 2602

GC-R ¶ 2603. Further Provisions on Membership—

1. *Terms of Office*—In the year 2000 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be elected three laypersons and two ordained clergy other than bishops. In 2004 and each eight years thereafter, there shall be elected two ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. In 2008 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be three ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. The laypersons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. Elections shall be held at each session of the General Conference for only the number of members whose terms expire at such session. A member's term of office shall be eight years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive eight-year terms, with a minimum of four years before reelection to the council.

2. *Nominations and Election*—Members of the council shall be nominated and elected in the manner following: At each quadrennial session of the General Confer-

ence, the Council of Bishops shall nominate by majority vote three times the number of ordained ministers and laypersons to be elected at such session of the General Conference. The number to be elected shall correspond to the number of members whose terms expire at the conclusion of such session. Each of the central and jurisdictional conferences as a group shall be represented by at least one nominee, but it shall not be a requirement that each of the central or jurisdictional conferences as a group be represented by an elected member.¹ At the same daily session at which the above nominations are announced, nominations of both ministers and laypersons may be made from the floor, but at no other time. The names of all nominees, identified with the conference to which each belongs, and a biographical sketch that does not exceed one hundred words shall be published by the *Daily Christian Advocate* at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election, which shall be set by action of the General Conference at the session at which the nominations are made; and from these nominations the General Conference shall elect without discussion, by ballot and majority vote, the necessary number of ministerial and lay members.

3. *Alternates*—There shall be six alternates for the clergy members and six alternates for the lay members, and their qualifications shall be the same as for membership on the Judicial Council. The term of the alternates shall be for four years.

The alternates shall be elected in the following manner: From the clergy and lay nominees remaining on the ballot after the election of the necessary number of members of the Judicial Council to be elected at sessions of the General Conference, the General Conference shall by separate ballot, without discussion and by majority vote, elect the number of clergy and lay alternates to be chosen at such session of the General Conference.

4. *Vacancies*—a) If a vacancy in the membership of the council occurs during the interim between sessions of the General Conference, a clergy vacancy shall be filled by the first-elected clergy alternate and a lay vacancy by the first-elected lay alternate. The alternate filling such vacancy shall hold office as a member of the Judicial Council for the unexpired term of the member whom the alternate succeeds. In the event of any vacancy, it shall be the duty of the president and secretary of the council to notify the alternate entitled to fill it.

b) In the event of an absence of one or more members of the council during a session of the Judicial Council, such temporary vacancy among the clergy members may be filled for that session or the remainder thereof by the clergy alternates in order of election who can be present, and such temporary vacancy among the lay members by the lay alternates in order of election who can be present;

but inability or failure to fill a vacancy does not affect the validity or any action of the council so long as a quorum is present.

5. *Expiration of Term*—The term of office of the members of the council and of the alternates shall expire upon the adjournment of the General Conference at which their successors are elected.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 2603 = ¶¶ 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605

1. See Judicial Council Decision 540.

¶ 2604. *Ineligibility of Members*—Members of the council shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General, central, or jurisdictional, conference or to serve in any General, central, or jurisdictional, conference board or agency.²

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2606 = 2604

2. See Judicial Council Decision 196; and Decision 3, Interim Judicial Council.

¶ 2605. *Confidentiality and Ex Parte Communication*—The members of the Judicial Council will not permit discussion with them on matters pending before them or that may be referred to them for determination, save and except before the Judicial Council in session. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the Judicial Council. On confidentiality and *ex parte* communication, further provisions according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 2605) shall be followed.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2605 = 2607

GC-R ¶ 2605. *Further Provisions on Confidentiality and Ex Parte Communication*—1. While strictly observing the intent of the preceding paragraph, a member of the council to whom a case has been assigned by the president may request that the secretary secure from persons and agencies concerned directly or indirectly with the case pertinent facts, briefs, and statements shall be sent promptly by the secretary of the council to other members of the council as is deemed necessary.³

2. Prior to the decision of a case in question, members of the Judicial Council shall not discuss with any party matters of substance pending in the judicial process unless all parties are privy to the discussion. Nor shall members of the Judicial Council or staff allow to be published or communicated, including electronic communications, to third parties any matters of substance pending in the judicial process.

3. The Judicial Council shall in all cases in which a decision or memorandum is issued set forth the specific provisions of the Constitution or the *Discipline* that provide the basis of the decision and the rationale that led to the conclusion.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 2605 = 2607

3. See Judicial Council Decision 763

¶ **2606. *Organization and Procedure***—1. The Judicial Council shall provide its own method of organization and procedure, both with respect to hearings on appeals and petitions for declaratory decisions. All parties shall have the privilege of filing briefs and arguments and presenting evidence under such rules as the council may adopt from time to time; provided that at the time of filing, copies of such briefs are delivered to all parties of record. On organization and procedure, further provisions according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 2606) shall be followed.

2. *Time and Place*—The council shall meet at the time and place of the meeting of the General Conference and shall continue in session until the adjournment of that body, and at least one other time in each calendar year and at such other times as it may deem appropriate, at such places as it may select from time to time. Seven members shall constitute a quorum except on questions of the constitutionality of acts of General Conference in which case a quorum shall be nine members or alternates duly seated according to the rules established by the Judicial Council. An affirmative vote of at least six members of the council shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional. On other matters, a majority vote of the entire council shall be sufficient. The council may decline to entertain an appeal or a petition for a declaratory decision in any instance in which it determines that it does not have jurisdiction to decide the matter.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2606 = 2608

GC-R ¶ 2606. *Further Provisions on Procedure*—1. The complete wording in the document requesting an appeal, declaratory decision, or ruling on a question of law shall be posted on the Judicial Council website no less than thirty (30) days prior to the deadline for submitting briefs and arguments to allow for the filing of *amicus curiae* briefs. The council shall employ a part-time clerk to assist the council in all matters designated by the council as needed, but no more than an average twenty hours per week, and shall in consultation with the General Council on Finance and Administration provide an office for the clerk suitable

to maintain records and conduct business as the council shall direct.

2. Funds for the operations of the clerk's office shall be appropriated by the General Conference. In selecting the location of the clerk's office, consideration shall be given to a location that provides visibility and reasonable accessibility to the church and parties. The council shall also give consideration to visibility and accessibility to the church and parties in selecting the places it holds sessions.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 2606 = 2608

¶ **2607. *Jurisdiction and Powers***—1. The Judicial Council shall determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal by a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference.

2. The Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of any proposed legislation when such declaratory decision is requested by the General Conference or by the Council of Bishops.

3. The Judicial Council shall determine the constitutionality of any act of a central or jurisdictional conference upon an appeal by a majority of the bishops of that central or jurisdictional conference or upon an appeal by one-fifth of the members of that central or jurisdictional conference.⁴

4. The Judicial Council shall hear and determine the legality of any action taken by any body created or authorized by the General Conference or any body created or authorized by a central or jurisdictional conference, upon appeal by one-third of the members thereof or upon request of the Council of Bishops or a majority of the bishops of the central or jurisdictional conference wherein the action was taken.

5. The Judicial Council shall hear and determine the legality of any action taken by any body created or authorized by a General Conference or any body created or authorized by the central or jurisdictional conference on a matter affecting an annual or a provisional annual conference, upon appeal by two-thirds of the members of the annual or provisional annual conference present and voting.

6. The Judicial Council shall pass upon and affirm, modify, or reverse the decisions of law made by bishops in central, jurisdictional, annual, or district conferences upon questions of law submitted to them in writing in the regular business of a session; and in order to facilitate such review, each bishop shall report annually in writing to the Judicial Council on forms provided by the council all the bishop's decisions of law. No such episcopal decision shall be authoritative, except in the case pending, until it has been passed upon by the Judicial Council, but

thereafter it shall become the law of the church to the extent that it is affirmed by the council. Normally, the bishop shall rule before the close of the annual conference session during which the question was submitted, but in no case later than thirty days after the close of the session. The annual conference secretary shall enter in the annual conference journal an exact statement of the question submitted and the ruling of the bishop.⁵

7. The Judicial Council shall hear and determine any appeal from a bishop's decision on a question of law made in a central, jurisdictional, annual, or district conference when said appeal has been made by one-fifth of that conference present and voting.

8. The Judicial Council shall have power to review an opinion or decision of a committee on appeals of a central or jurisdictional conference if it should appear that such opinion or decision is at variance with the *Discipline*, a prior decision of the Judicial Council, or an opinion or decision of a committee on appeals of another central or jurisdictional conference on a question of church law. In the event the committee on appeals' decision appears to be at variance with the decision of another committee on appeals, then the following procedure should be followed:

a) Any party to the opinion or decision may appeal the case to the Judicial Council on the ground of such conflict of decisions; or

b) The committee on appeals rendering the last of such opinions or decisions may certify the case to, and file it with, the Judicial Council on the ground of such conflict of decisions; or

c) The attention of the president of the Judicial Council being directed to such conflict or alleged conflict of decisions, the president may issue an order directing the secretaries of the committees on appeals involved to certify a copy of a sufficient portion of the record to disclose the nature of the case and the entire opinion and decision of the committee on appeals in each case to the Judicial Council for its consideration at its next meeting.

The Judicial Council shall hear and determine the question of church law involved but shall not pass upon the facts in either case further than is necessary to decide the question of church law involved. After deciding the question of church law, the Judicial Council shall cause its decision to be certified to each of the committees on appeals involved, and such committees on appeals shall take such action, if any, as may be necessary under the law as determined by the Judicial Council.

d) All opinions and decisions of central or jurisdictional and central conference committees on appeal shall be sent to the secretary of the Judicial Council within thirty days after a decision. These decisions shall be made available to those who are involved in trials and appeals

when needed and for those preparing for trial or appeal, but not otherwise.

9. The Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all appeals from decisions of the jurisdictional appeals committee.⁶

10. The Judicial Council shall have other duties and powers as may be conferred upon it by the General Conference.

11. All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be final.

12. The Judicial Council shall not have the authority to grant or award compensation to cover or reimburse attorney fees to a party to an appeal in a matter of church law.⁷

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2607 = 2609

4. See Judicial Council Decision 338.

5. See Judicial Council Decisions 153, 747, 762, 763, 799, 1004, 1078, 1120, 1130, 1161, 1166, 1167, 1188.

6. See Judicial Council Decision 1276.

7. See Judicial Council Decision 1230.

¶ 2608. *Declaratory Decisions*—1. The Judicial Council, on petition as hereinafter provided, shall have jurisdiction to make a ruling in the nature of a declaratory decision as to the constitutionality, meaning, application, or effect of the *Discipline* or any portion thereof or of any act or legislation of a General Conference; and the decision of the Judicial Council thereon shall be as binding and effectual as a decision made by it on appeal.

2. The following bodies in The United Methodist Church are hereby authorized to make such petitions to the Judicial Council for declaratory decisions:

a) the General Conference;

b) the Council of Bishops;

c) any body created or authorized by the General Conference on matters relating to or affecting the work of such body;

d) a majority of the bishops assigned to any central or jurisdictional conference on matters relating to or affecting said body or the work therein;

e) any central or jurisdictional conference on matters relating to or affecting said body or the work therein;

f) any body created or authorized by the central or jurisdictional conference on matters relating to or affecting the work of such body; and

g) any annual conference on matters relating to annual conferences or the work therein.

3. When a declaratory decision is sought, all persons or bodies who have or claim any interest that would be affected by the declaration shall be parties to the proceeding, and the petition shall name such parties. Any interested party may, on the party's own motion, intervene and

answer, plead, or interplead. On the process for the secretary to follow regarding parties to the declaratory decision, further provisions according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 2608) shall be followed.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2608 = 2610

GC-R ¶ 2608. *Additional Procedures*—After receiving such request the secretary of the Judicial Council shall publish on the official United Methodist internet pages a brief statement of the question involved. If the president of the council determines that other parties not named by the petition would be affected by such a decision, such additional parties shall also be added, and the petitioner or petitioners, upon direction of the secretary of the Judicial Council, shall then be required to serve all parties so joined with a copy of the petition within fifteen days after such direction by the secretary of the Judicial Council.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 2608 = 2610.3

¶ 2609. *Precedential Value*—The decisions of the Judicial Council of The Methodist Church heretofore issued shall have the same authority in The United Methodist Church as they had in The Methodist Church, persuasive as precedents, except where their basis has been changed by the terms of the Plan of Union or other revisions of church law.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2609 = 2611

¶ 2610. *Notification and Publication*—The decisions of the Judicial Council on questions of church law, with a summary of the facts of the opinion, shall be filed with the secretary of the General Conference and with the bishop, chancellor, and secretary of each annual conference. On publication of decisions, further provisions according to General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 2610) shall be followed.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2610 = 2612

GC-R ¶ 2610. *Further Provisions on Publication*—1. The decisions of the Judicial Council shall be posted on the official United Methodist internet pages as soon as practicable, no later than ninety days following each meeting.

2. When the Judicial Council shall have declared unconstitutional any provision of the *Discipline*, the secretary of the Judicial Council shall notify the chairperson of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision and the editor of the *Discipline* which phrase or sentence was found to violate the Constitution so that it will not appear

in the next edition. All such deletions also shall appear in the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate* or successor publication of the next General Conference for information purposes.

3. When the Judicial Council shall declare any act of the General Conference then in session unconstitutional, that decision shall be reported to that General Conference immediately.

>VII: —<

GBOD GC-R ¶ 2610.1-2 = 2612.1-2; 2610.3=2609.11

Section II. Fair Process in Judicial Proceedings

¶ 2701. *Generalities on Fair Process*—1. *Preamble and Purpose*—The judicial proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from the counsel for the church to the committee on investigation. The judicial process terminates at the end of any appeal or right of appeal. The judicial process shall have as its purpose a just resolution of judicial complaints, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Jesus Christ. The following procedures are presented for the protection of the rights of individuals guaranteed under Section III, Article IV, of our Constitution and for the protection of the church. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained until the conclusion of the trial process. Special attention should be given to ensuring racial, ethnic, age, and gender diversity of boards, committees, and courts and the timely disposition of all matters.

2. *Rights of the Complainant* (the person filing the complaint):

a) *Right of Impartiality*—In any judicial proceeding, the complainant shall have a right to investigation and judgment by impartial and independent parties.

b) *Right to Be Heard*—In any judicial proceeding, the complainant shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken.

c) *Right to Notice of Hearings*—Notice of any hearing shall advise the complainant about proposed procedures, with sufficient detail to allow the complainant to prepare. Notice shall be given not less than twenty (20) days prior to the hearing. The complainant shall have the right to be present at any judicial process hearing.

d) *Right to Be Accompanied*—The complainant shall have the right to be accompanied by another person to any interview or hearing to which they are subject. The person accompanying the complainant may be an attorney, but shall not have the right to voice. In no instance and under no circumstances shall the complainant be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement

of any expenses or fees associated with the complainant's use of an attorney.

e) Right to Be Informed of Resolution—The complainant shall have the right to be informed of the disposition of the complaint of the judicial proceeding as part of a holistic process of healing. Church officials are encouraged, as may be permissible, to include rationale.

3. *Rights of the Respondent* (the person to whom the procedure is being applied):

a) Right of Impartiality—In any judicial proceeding, the respondent shall have a right to investigation and judgment by impartial and independent parties.

b) Right to Be Heard—In any judicial proceeding, the respondent shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken.

c) Right to Notice of Hearings—Notice of any judicial process hearing shall advise the respondent of the reason for the proposed procedures, with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty (20) days prior to the hearing. The respondent shall have the right to be present at any judicial process hearing.

d) Right to Be Accompanied—The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied by a clergyperson in full connection. The clergyperson accompanying the respondent shall have the right of advocacy. The respondent shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney. In no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

e) Right Against Double Jeopardy—No bill of charges shall be certified by any committee on investigation after an earlier bill of charges has been certified by a committee on investigation based on the same alleged occurrences.

f) Right of Access to Records—The respondent and the church shall have access to all records relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the committee on investigation, trial court, or appeal committee or body.⁸

4. *Rights of the Church:*

a) Right to Be Heard—In any judicial proceeding, the church shall have the right to be heard before any final action is taken.

b) For other rights and responsibilities of the church and counsel for the church see ¶ 2706.

5. *Process and Procedure*

a) Failure to Appear or Respond—In the event that the respondent fails to appear for any judicial process hearing, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the bishop or district superintendent, or otherwise fails to respond to requests from official judicial committees, such

actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual.

b) Evidence—Only evidence that is material to the complaint and deemed reliable shall be considered.

c) Communications—In any judicial proceeding, under no circumstances shall one party or counsel, in the absence of the other party or counsel, discuss substantive matters with members of the pending hearing, trial, or appellate body while the case is pending. Questions of procedure may be raised and discussed *ex parte*, but only with the presiding officer or secretary of the hearing or appellate body.

d) Healing—As a part of the judicial process, the bishop and cabinet, in consultation with the presiding officer of the pending hearing, trial, or appellate body then sitting, shall provide for healing if there has been significant disruption to the congregation, the annual conference, or the context of ministry by the judicial matter. This may include a just resolution process for unresolved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for all who are involved. This process may also include the sharing of information by the bishop or a cabinet member about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts underlying the complaint that might compromise the judicial process.

e) Immunity of Participants—In order to preserve the integrity of the church's judicial process and ensure full participation in it at all times, the resident bishop, the cabinet, the presiding officer of the trial, trial officers, trial court, witnesses, counsels, assistant counsels, advocates, complainant, committee on investigation, and all others who participate in the church's judicial process shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular judicial process, unless they have committed a chargeable offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant in any proceeding against any such person related to their role in a particular judicial process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person's actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

f) Records of Judicial Proceedings—At the conclusion of all judicial proceedings, where allowable by civil law, complete and accurate records shall be maintained by the secretary of the annual conference, or the central or jurisdictional conference in the case of a complaint against a bishop. Records of investigations are to be held in a confidential file and shall not be released except for purposes

of trial and then only to counsels for the church and the respondent and to the presiding officer of the trial court.

6. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

7. *Central Conferences*—A central conference shall have authority to adopt rules of procedure governing the investigation and trial of its clergy, including bishops, and lay members of the church in accordance with ¶ 512.8.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2701 = 2701

8. See Judicial Council Decisions 691, 765.

¶ 2702. *Chargeable Offenses and the Statutes of Limitations*—1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 308.1), local pastor,⁹ clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4)¹⁰ with one or more of the following offenses:

a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage;¹¹

b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings,¹² including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies that celebrate ho-

mosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;¹³

c) crime;

d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church;

e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church;

f) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;¹⁴

g) child abuse;¹⁵

h) sexual abuse;¹⁶

i) sexual misconduct¹⁵ including the use or possession of pornography,

j) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment;

k) racial or gender discrimination; or

l) fiscal malfeasance.

2. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, or diaconal minister may be brought to trial when the appropriate body recommends involuntary termination.¹⁷

3. A professing member of a local church may be charged with the following offenses, and, if so, may choose a trial:

a) immorality;

b) crime;

c) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church;

d) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church;

e) sexual abuse;

f) sexual misconduct;¹⁸

g) child abuse;

h) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment;

i) racial or gender discrimination;

j) relationships and/or behaviors that undermine the ministry of persons serving within an appointment; or

k) fiscal malfeasance.

4. *Statute of Limitations*—No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint, except in the case of sexual or child abuse and in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse, there shall be no limitation.¹⁵

Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

5. *Time of Offense*—A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the

time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of the *Discipline* in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred except in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of the *Discipline* in effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in the *Discipline*.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2702 = 2702

9. See Judicial Council Decision 982.

10. The statute of limitations went into effect as law on a prospective basis starting on January 1, 1993. All alleged offenses that occurred prior to this date are time barred. See Judicial Council Decisions 691, 704, and 723.

11. The language beginning “including but not limited to . . .” first appeared in the 2004 *Discipline*, effective January 1, 2005.

12. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 984, 985, 1185.

13. The language beginning “including but not limited to . . .” first appeared in the 2004 *Discipline*, effective January 1, 2005.

14. See Judicial Council Decision 702.

15. This offense was first listed as a separate chargeable offense in the 1996 *Discipline* effective April 27, 1996. See Judicial Council Decision 691.

16. See Judicial Council Decisions 736, 768.

17. See Judicial Council Decision 767.

18. This offense was first listed as a separate chargeable offense in the 2000 *Discipline*, effective January 1, 2001. See Judicial Council Decision 691.

¶ 2703. *Miscellaneous Provisions*—1. Any clergy members residing beyond the bounds of the conference in which membership is held shall be subject to the procedures of fair process in judicial proceedings exercised by the appropriate officers of the conference in which he or she is a member, unless the presiding bishops of the two annual conferences and the clergy member subject to the procedures agree that fairness will be better served by having the procedures carried out by the appropriate officers of the annual conference in which he or she is serving under appointment, or if retired, currently residing.

2. When a bishop, clergy member, or diaconal minister is the respondent to a complaint under ¶ 353 and desires to withdraw from the church, the central or jurisdictional conference in the case of a bishop, the annual conference in the case of a clergy member, or the district conference (where there is no district conference, the charge conference) in the case of a diaconal minister will ask him or her to surrender his or her credentials and will remove his or her name from professing membership; in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under complaints” or “Withdrawn under charges,” whichever is appropriate.

3. When a professing member of the church is charged with an offense and desires to withdraw from the church,

the charge conference may permit such member to withdraw his or her name from the roll of professing members, in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under complaints.” If formal charges have been presented, such member may be permitted to withdraw, in which case the record shall be “Withdrawn under charges.”

4. In all matters of judicial administration, the rights, duties, and responsibilities of clergy members, local pastors, clergy on honorable or administrative location, and diaconal ministers of missions, missionary conferences, and provisional annual conferences are the same as those in annual conferences, and the procedure is the same.

5. For procedural purposes, the judicial process shall be governed by the *Discipline* in effect on the date a complaint is forwarded to the counsel for the church.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2703 = 2719

Section III. Procedures for Referral and Investigation of a Judicial Complaint

¶ 2704. *Generalities on Investigation*—The role of the committee on investigation is to conduct an investigation into the allegations made in the judicial complaint and to determine if reasonable grounds exist to bring a bill of charges and specifications to trial. If so, it shall prepare, sign, and certify a bill of charges and specifications. The committee’s duty is only to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to support the charges. It is not the committee’s duty to determine guilt or innocence.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2704 = 2706.1

¶ 2705. *Committee on Investigation*—1. There shall be a committee on investigation elected by each central or jurisdictional conference, becoming active when the respondent is a bishop.

2. There shall be a committee on investigation in each annual conference, elected quadrennially by the annual conference, becoming active when the respondent is a clergyperson.

3. The district superintendent shall appoint a committee on investigation when the respondent is a layperson.

4. Central conferences shall establish provisions for committees on investigation on central and annual conference levels. Committees on investigation shall consist of no less than seven members. Jurisdictional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII: 2705.001<

GBOD ¶ 2705.1=2703.1; 2705.2=2703.2; 2705.3=2703.3; 2705.4=new

¶ 2706. *Procedures for Investigations*—Central conferences shall establish provisions on procedures for investigations of a judicial complaint. Jurisdictional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII:2706.001-2706.003<

GBOD ¶ 2706 = new

Section IV. Trials

¶ 2707. *Generalities on Trials*—1. *Fundamental Principles for Trials*—Church trials are to be regarded as an expedient of last resort. Only after every reasonable effort has been made to correct any wrong and adjust any existing difficulty should steps be taken to institute a trial. No such trial as herein provided shall be construed to deprive the respondent or the church of legal civil rights, except to the extent that immunity is provided as in ¶ 2701.4e. All trials shall be conducted according to the *Discipline* in a consistent Christian manner by a properly constituted court after due investigation.

2. *Open or Closed Trials*—The deliberations of the trial court shall be closed. All other sessions of the trial shall be open. The presiding officer may, in extenuating circumstances, in his or her judgment on motion of counsel for either party or on the presiding officer's own motion, declare a particular session of the court to be closed. At all times, however, in the hearing portion of the trial, the presiding officer, the members of the trial court, the person(s) making the original complaint, the person representing the church as well as counsel for the church, the respondent, and counsel for the respondent shall have a right to be present.

>VII: —<

GBOD ¶ 2707.1 = 2707.1; 2707.2=2708.12

¶ 2708. *Trial Court*—1. The presiding officer of the court shall be a bishop when the respondent is a bishop or a clergyperson, and the district superintendent or another clergyperson in full connection designated by the district superintendent when the respondent is a layperson.

2. No one can serve in the same case as a member both of the committee on investigation and of the trial court.

3. Central conferences shall establish provisions for a trial court. The trial court shall consist of no less than seven members. Jurisdictional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII:2708.001-2708.002<

GBOD ¶ 2708.1 = 2708.1+new; 2708.2+3 = new

¶ 2709. *Procedures in Trials*—Central conferences shall establish provisions on procedures for trials. Jurisdic-

tional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII:2709.001-2709.005<

GBOD ¶ 2709 = new

Section V. Appeals

¶ 2710. *Generalities on Appeals*—1. In all judicial procedures, the rights of appeal shall be adequately safeguarded.

2. The appellant shall within thirty days give written notice of appeal and at the same time shall furnish a written statement of the grounds of the appeal, and the hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.²⁰

3. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel at the investigation and the trial.

4. The records and documents of the trial, including the evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

5. The appellate body shall determine two questions only: a) Does the weight of the evidence sustain the charge or charges? b) Were there such errors of church law as to vitiate the verdict and/or penalty? The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses.

>VII: 2710.001<

GBOD ¶ 2710.1 = 543.12; 2710.2 = 2715.1; 2710.3 = 2715.3; 2710.4-5 = 2715.6-7

20. See Judicial Council Memorandum 826.

¶ 2711. *Committee on Appeals*—1. There shall be a committee on appeals elected by each central or jurisdictional conference, becoming active when the appellant is a bishop or a clergyperson.

2. When the appellant is a layperson, the district superintendent shall appoint a committee on appeals from among lay leaders or lay members of the annual conference.

3. No one who has already served as a member of the committee on investigation or the trial court on the case concerned can serve as a member of the committee on appeals on the same case.

4. Central conferences shall establish provisions for a committee on appeals. The committee on appeals shall consist of no less than seven members. Jurisdictional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.

>VII:2711.001-2711.002<

GBOD ¶ 2711.1 = 2716.1; 2711.2=2717.3; 2711.3+4 = new

¶ 2712. *Procedures in Appeals*—Central conferences shall establish provisions on procedures for appeals. Jurisdictional conferences and annual conferences in jurisdictions

shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the *Discipline*.
>VII:2712.001<
GBOD ¶ 2712 = new

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶28.

Petition Number: 20514-ST-¶28-C-G; Barrett, Joy - Chelsea, MI, USA for Michigan Annual Conference.

Create Central Conference in North America

Amend ¶ 28, Article 1 to read:

There shall be central conferences for the work of the church ~~outside the United States of America~~ with such duties, powers, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth. The number and boundaries of the central conferences shall be determined by the Uniting Conference. Subsequently the General Conference shall have authority to change the number and boundaries of the central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.

Rationale:

Today we live in an incredibly complex world that requires incredibly complex approaches in which the gospel can be effectively shared. The church today must be structured so as to meet these various cultures, world views and philosophies if it is to remain relevant to the world and impactful in

¶540.

Petition Number: 20515-ST-¶540-G; Thomas, Wilton Odongo - Nairobi, Kenya for Nairobi, Kenya-Ethiopia Conference.

Move Tanzania into Africa Central Conference

Suggested Title: Move Tanzania into Africa Central Conference

Discipline Paragraph: ¶ 540

General Church Budget Implications: None

Global Implications: Yes

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 540.3 as follows:

3. The United Methodist Church shall have central conferences with ministries in the following countries:

a) Africa Central Conference: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe;

b) Central and Southern Europe Central Conference: Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Tunisia;

c) Congo Central Conference: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, ~~Tanzania~~, Zambia;

d) Germany Central Conference: Germany;

e) Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan;

f) Philippines Central Conference: Philippines;

g) West Africa Central Conference: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.

Rationale:

Geographically, Tanzania borders with Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya. They are all in the East African Community (EAC) and share English and Kiswahili as official languages, with no visa entry requirement for their citizens. Therefore, Tanzania would fit better within the Africa Central Conference.

¶540.3.

Petition Number: 20516-ST-¶540.3-1-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Comprehensive Plan for Alignment of Countries and Central Conferences in Africa

Amend ¶ 540.3 as follows:

Section III. Central Conferences

3. The United Methodist Church shall have central conferences with ministries in the following countries:

a) Southern Africa Central Conference: Angola, Botswana, ~~Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya~~, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, ~~Rwanda~~, Swaziland, South Africa, ~~South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia~~, Zimbabwe;

b) Central and Southern Europe Central Conference: Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Tunisia;

c) Congo Central Africa Central Conference: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia;

d) Germany Central Conference: Germany;

e) Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan;

gystan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan;

f) Philippines Central Conference: Philippines;

g) West Africa Central Conference: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone;

h) East Africa Central Africa Central Conference: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda.

Rationale:

African central conferences are renamed and the composition of the countries in each realigned with the creation of a new central conference. It's dependent upon the creation of an additional central conference in Africa. The petition received unanimous support from the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

¶540.3f.

Petition Number: 20088-ST-¶540.3f-\$-G; Osias, Darryl - Manila, Philippines for Philippines Annual Conference.

Inclusion of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to the Philippines Central Conference

Amend ¶ 540.3 (f); *f) Philippines Central Conference:* Philippines, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar;

Rationale:

The mission works in these countries were initiated by Knox United Methodist Church in Manila in 2007 to extend its ministries to the overseas Filipino workers stationed there. The first local church was organized in Dubai in 2009. Since then five additional local churches in Doha, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi,

¶541.1.

Petition Number: 20517-ST-¶541.1-G; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Composition of Central Conferences

Action desired: Amend ¶ 541.1:

¶ 541. *Composition*—1. The central conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members in equal numbers, the clergy members elected by the clergy members of the annual conference and the lay members by the lay members thereof. Their qualifications and the manner of election shall be determined by the central conference itself, subject only to constitutional requirements. Each annual conference and provisional annual conference shall

be entitled to at least two clergy and two lay delegates, and no other selection of delegates shall be authorized that would provide for more than one clergy delegate for every six clergy members of an annual conference; except that a majority of the number fixed by a central conference as the ratio of representation shall entitle an annual conference to an additional clergy delegate and to an additional lay delegate. Each missionary conference that has established the right of full ministerial membership (¶ 586.4.a) and has a minimum of six full ministerial members shall be entitled to at least one clergy and one lay delegate. Each missionary conference that has not established the right of full ministerial membership (¶ 586.4.c and g) and mission is authorized to elect and send one of its members to the central conference concerned as its representative, said representative to be accorded the privilege of sitting with the committees of the central conference, with the right to speak in the committees and in the regular sessions of the central conference, but without the right to vote. Representatives of missionary conferences or missions shall have the same claim for payment of expenses as is allowed to members of the central conference.

Rationale:

The Constitution ¶ 13.1, ¶ 14 and ¶ 15 were amended in 1976.

I move that the consequences of these 1976 amendments shall be implemented in the central conference section ¶ 541.1

¶543.7.

Petition Number: 20179-ST-¶543.7-\$-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

Amend 543.7

Amend ¶ 543.7 by addition such that it would read:

A central conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the *Book of Discipline* as the special conditions and the mission of the church in the area require . . . connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. The central conference shall prepare and the General Council on Finance and Administration shall publish online the *Book of Discipline* as adapted operative in each central conference or an annual conference in the central conference within 120 days of the conclusion of each central conference session. Subject to this restriction . . .

Rationale:

The adaptations in central conferences should be known by all to assure consistency in administration. Online publishing is affordable and makes decisions of central conferences known to the whole church.

¶543.17.

Petition Number: 20180-ST-¶543.17-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Remove Traditional Plan Language

Amend ¶ 543.17

17. In a central conference or provisional central conference using a language other than English, legislation passed by a General Conference shall not take effect until eighteen (18) months after the close of that General Conference in order to afford the necessary time to make adaptations and to publish a translation of the legislation that has been enacted, the translation to be approved by the resident bishop or bishops of the central conference. This provision, however, shall not exclude the election of delegates to the General Conference by annual conferences within the territory of central conferences or provisional central conferences. Legislation passed at the 2019 called session of General Conference shall not take effect in central conferences until twelve months after the close of the 2020 General Conference in order to afford the necessary time to organize a central conference and “to make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective areas may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference” (¶ 31.5 of the Constitution), without regard to the language used in a central conference.

¶547.4.

Petition Number: 20518-ST-¶547.4-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Update 547.4 to Reflect Proposed Changes to Division on Ministries with Young People

Amend ¶ 547.4 as follows:

4. A central conference may have a standing committee on young people’s ministry. This committee shall be composed of youth, young adults, and adult leaders of youth or young-adult ministry from each annual conference in the central conference. The duty of this committee shall be to study the relation of young people to the church and to devise ways and means of developing the church’s

ministry for, with, and by young people. The committee shall make recommendations to the central conference regarding youth and young-adult organizations within its areas as well as nominate one youth, one young adult, and one adult worker to apply to serve on the Young People’s Connectional Network of the General Board of Discipleship for a four-year term (¶ 1206). elect delegates to the Global Young People’s Convocation (¶ 1210).

¶548.1.

Petition Number: 20519-ST-¶548.1-G; Kumar, Moses - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Finance and Administration.

Retirement and Term Episcopacy

Modify ¶ 548.1 as follows:

An ordained minister who has served a term or part of a term as a bishop in a central conference where term episcopacy has prevailed shall, upon retirement from the effective relation in the ministry, be paid a retirement benefit from the Global Episcopal Pension Program, in accordance with its terms, an allowance from the General Episcopal Fund in such sum as the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine for the years during which the ordained minister served as a bishop.²⁰

Rationale:

This amendment updates language to reflect the adoption of the Global Episcopal Pension Program, covering retirement benefits for central conference bishops, as outlined in ¶ 408 (e.g., ¶¶ 408.1c and .2-.4).

¶581.

Petition Number: 20092-ST-¶581-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Powers and Duties of Provisional Annual Conferences Amendment

Amend ¶ 581 incorporating current ¶ 582 language as follows:

¶ 581. ~~Provisions~~ Powers and Duties—Any missionary conference or mission established under the provision of the *Discipline* and/or part of an annual conference may be constituted as a provisional annual conference by the General Conference, ~~in consultation with~~ upon recommendation by the central conference, provisional central conference, or jurisdictional conference within which it is located, in consultation with the General Board of Global

Ministries and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, provisional central conference, or jurisdictional conference within which the missionary conference or mission is located; provided that:

1. No provisional annual conference shall be organized with fewer than ten clergy members elders in provisional or full connection, and or Local Elders in Mission (members) or nor be continued after completion of the initial quadrennium with fewer than six elders in full connection clergy members.

2. The total financial support from the General Board of Global Ministries, including the Advance, shall not exceed an appropriate percentage as determined in consultation with the board.

2. 3. ~~The m~~ Membership, worship attendance, leadership development, and financial contributions of the conference have shown a reasonable progress increase during the previous quadrennium and be indicative of give evidence of an aggressive program for continued progress in both areas growth toward becoming an annual conference.

~~¶582. Organization 3.~~ A provisional annual conference shall be organized in the same manner and have the same powers and functions as an annual conference, subject to the approval of the presiding bishop in charge; ~~and its members shall share prorate in the proceeds of The United Methodist Publishing House with members of the annual conferences, with the following exceptions:~~

4. If a provisional annual conference, after three quadrennia, does not show progress toward becoming an annual conference, the following session of the central conference shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and recommend to the following General Conference continuation or discontinuation as a provisional annual conference. It shall only be continued with sufficient missional, geographical, and contextual reasons.

Rationale:

Establishes process from mission to provisional annual conferences with membership and ordination authority. Specifies minimum number of elders, instead of clergy, ensuring credentialed leaders required for self-governance. Establishes process when provisional annual conferences do not develop into annual conferences within three quadrennia. Amendments to ¶¶ 580-583

¶586.3.

Petition Number: 20095-ST-¶586.3-G; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Missionary Conferences Delegates to Central Conferences

¶ 586.3. Missionary conferences shall elect clergy and lay delegates to General and jurisdictional conference on the same basis as annual conferences as provided in ¶¶ 502 and 514; and to central conference on the basis provided in ¶ 541.1.

Rationale:

The Constitution ¶ 13.1, ¶ 14, and ¶ 15 were amended in 1976.

I move that the consequences of these 1976 amendments shall be implemented in the missionary conference section ¶ 586.3.

¶586.4.

Petition Number: 20096-ST-¶586.4-G; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Missionary Conference Delegates to Central Conferences

Action desired: Amend ¶ 586.4.d:

¶ 586.4.d) Affiliated relationship shall entitle the ordained minister to the fellowship of the conference, to full participation in its activities, including holding office and representing the missionary conference in General, ~~and~~ jurisdictional, and central conferences. An affiliate member of a missionary conference shall not vote in his or her annual conference while retaining the affiliate relationship to a missionary conference. Such affiliate relationship to a missionary conference shall be only for the duration of the ordained minister's appointment to the conference.

An affiliate member elected to a General or jurisdictional or central conference from a missionary conference shall not be eligible to be elected to such position from the conference where his or her membership is held.

Rationale:

The Constitution ¶ 13.1, ¶ 14, and ¶ 15 were amended in 1976.

I move that the consequences of these 1976 amendments shall be implemented in the missionary conference section ¶ 586.4.d.

¶817.

Petition Number: 20208-ST-¶817-\$-G; Thomas, Wilton Odongo - Nairobi, Kenya. 1 Similar Petition

Strengthen the Central Conference Theological Fund

¶ 817 is hereby revised by additions and deletions, as follows ;

¶ **817. Central Conference Theological Education Fund**—There shall be a Central Conference Theological Education Fund. Funds for this purpose shall be provided from the World Service Fund and, withstanding all other paragraphs, the Ministerial Education Fund, at \$15 million per quadrennium. These allocations shall be a priority and shall supersede allocations related to any other disciplinary paragraph.

a) There shall be a Commission on Central Conference Theological Education Fund ~~elected by the Council of Bishops~~ to determine policies and procedures for this fund. It shall approve disbursements from this fund. ~~The commission will include one person from each central conference, and shall include members of the Council of Bishops, members of Boards of Ordained Ministry, representatives of theological schools, representatives from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. The Council of Bishops shall take into consideration both geographical and proportional representation when selecting the members of the commission. There shall be one member from Europe/Eurasia, one from the Philippines, and two members from each central conference within Africa. The members shall be appointed each quadrennium by the College of Bishops of each area and must be persons experienced and fully engaged in the administration of schools of theology in their central conferences. The Council of Bishops shall, in addition, name a president and vice-president of this commission who shall be experienced and fully engaged in the administration of schools of theological education. GBHEM shall provide staff support for this commission and shall be assisted by GBGM, GCFA, and GBOD.~~

b) It shall be used in central conferences outside the United States to in any or all of the following ways at the discretion of the commission: (1) development of theological schools; (2) development of courses of study; (3) development of libraries and contextually developed resources; (4) scholarships and faculty development; (5) support for associations and networks of faculty and schools; (6) support for new and innovative approaches to theological education. However, transfers from this fund to endowment funds are discouraged given the severe need for immediate development of theological schools in the central conferences, needed repairs to aging infrastructure, and textbooks. All funds available shall be disbursed annually

either by a grant process, or by administration of a formula based on graduates, ordinations, faculty qualifications, history, or other appropriate criteria, as recommended by staff and approved by the Commission. GBHEM shall prepare a quadrennial report to the General Conference listing each school of theology and course of study and presenting the comparative facts about each, the grants received by each, and summarizing the effectiveness and progress of this Fund under their administration.

c) The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will administer this fund.

d) All money collected from the central conference apportionments for the General Administration Fund in excess of \$750,000 (the costs of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, including its work on the *General Book of Discipline*) is to be directed to the Central Conference Theological Education Fund.

Rationale:

Fifteen million dollars quadrennially is much less than the \$70 million spent from MEF on the USA's 13 schools of theology. Central conferences have 45 percent of our membership and fewer resources. The CCTEF must be administered by experienced leaders fully engaged with the immediate needs and priorities of suffering

¶817.

Petition Number: 20209-ST-¶817-!-G; Chijika, Kongolo - Mulungwishi, DRC for Africa Association of Methodist Institutions of Higher Education.

Establish Central Conference Higher Education Fund

Insert a new paragraph immediately following ¶ 817:

¶ **NEW. Central Conference Higher Education Fund**—There shall be a Central Conference Higher Education Fund. Funds for this purpose shall be provided from the World Service Fund.

1. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, will select the commission's members and leadership. It shall approve disbursements for this fund. Membership shall include: one representative from each of the central conferences outside the United States; one representative each from the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and from the Council of Bishops; and one representative from each of the Methodist Associations of Higher Education related to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Council of Bishops

shall take into consideration both geographical and proportional representation when selecting members of the commission.

2. It shall be used in central conferences outside the United States in any or all of the following ways at the discretion of the commission: (1) to facilitate the establishment of high educational standards; (2) to improve staff and faculty capacities; (3) to improve educational technology and libraries; (4) to provide scholarships to develop the future leadership of the church and world.

3. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will administer this fund.

4. The fund for the 2021-2024 quadrennium shall be a minimum of five million dollars.

5. All money collected from the central conference apportionments for the General Administration Fund in excess of \$750,000 (the costs of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, including its work on the General Book of Discipline) is to be split evenly between the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (§ 817) and the Central Conference Higher Education Fund.

Rationale:

Four Methodist higher educational associations in central conferences represent 96 institutions striving to improve Methodist higher education's quality. This education produces Christian servant leaders for churches, communities, countries. Constrained budgets, underdeveloped facilities, and the need for leadership training limit its impact. This fund will enhance Methodist values, education, and leadership.

§818.6.

Petition Number: 20210-ST-§818.6-G; Kumar, Moses - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Finance and Administration.

Official Travel of Bishops

Modify the second sentence of § 818.6 as follows:

Official travel of an effective bishop shall be interpreted to include: (1) all visitations to local churches and to institutions or enterprises of The United Methodist Church within the area; (2) such travel outside the area, but within the jurisdiction or central conference, as is approved by the College of Bishops; and (3) such other travel as may be consistent with guidelines approved by the General Conference as being within the meaning of official travel.

Rationale:

This change makes it clear that "official travel" applies equally to bishops in the jurisdictions and central conferences.

¶1116.

Petition Number: 20137-ST-¶1116-!; Mafunda, Simon - Harare, Zimbabwe.

Global Justice for Lay Leaders

Amend ¶ 1116.7 as follows:

7. Provide support services to conference and district lay leaders and conference and district boards of laity or equivalent structures, to the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, and to other appropriate associations and conference and district officers and agencies. The board shall support travel and accommodation of at least two lay leaders from each central conference for them to attend the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders meeting each year. The board shall further support the accommodation and meals of all lay leaders attending the meeting up to a maximum of four days.

Rationale:

The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders is the highest and most important body of laity that meets each year to transact its business and deserves support by the General Board of Discipleship. It has remained an American association because central conference lay leaders cannot afford annual travel to America.

¶2201.

Petition Number: 20522-ST-¶2201-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Restoration of General Conference Legislative Authority

Amend ¶ 2201.2 by as indicated herein following:

¶ 2201.2. . . . All resolutions and petitions related to central conferences presented to the General Conference shall be referred to the committee for consideration, and the committee shall report its recommendations directly to the General Conference. However, General Conference's failure to follow this procedure shall not invalidate any action that General Conference chooses to take on any proposal before it related to central conferences. On matters dealing with the determination of episcopal areas (§ 404.1), affiliation and autonomy (§ 572), and joining

The United Methodist Church (§ 575), the committee shall report directly to the General Conference.

Rationale:

The General Conference as the sole body of the church charged with full legislative authority for the whole connection ought to be able to proceed with or without the recommendations of a subordinate body. This legislation will reverse the effect of Judicial Council Decision 1370.

¶2201.

Petition Number: 20523-ST-¶2201-G; Kilpatrick, Joe Wesley - Tucker, GA, USA.

Remove the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Amend ¶ 2201 by deletion in its entirety:

Amend ¶ 572.1 by deletion: “. . . ~~and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (¶2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.~~”

Amend ¶ 572.2 by deletion: “~~The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and. . .~~”

Amend ¶ 572.4 by deletion: “~~Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters~~” when . . .

Amend ¶ 572.5 by deletion: “. . . ~~The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and when the plans . . .~~”

Amend ¶ 575.4 by deletion and substitution: ~~The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters . . .~~
The General Board of Global Ministries . . .

Amend ¶ 575.6 by deletion and substitution: ~~The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters . . .~~
The General Board of Global Ministries . . .

Financial Implications: There will be considerable cost saving, eliminating global travel for this 43-member, four-year operational, legislative committee of the GC and all its related operating expenses.

Rationale:

This privileged committee failed to represent Africa's needs for increased theological education funds, recommending instead diminished funding. It allowed Africa only 30 percent of the committee membership, and only 20 percent of the Council of Bishops membership, keeping Africa's five-million UM voices diminished; consistently failing to correct injustices; giving mostly

¶2201.2

Petition Number: 20521-ST-¶2201.2-G; Henry, Stephanie - Shoreline, WA, USA.

Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Amend BOD ¶ 2201

1. . . . There shall be a Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters serving as an independent coordinating body. . . . The standing committee shall serve as the coordinating body to study the structure and supervision of The United Methodist Church in its work outside the United States and its territories and its relationships to other church bodies.

2. The standing committee shall meet at least twice within the quadrennium in order to review, consider, and develop resolutions and petitions related to central conferences and may be called into session during General Conference as needed. It shall review and prepare such recommendations as it considers necessary for presentation directly to the General Conference. The committee shall submit its report and recommendations in accordance with the timelines governing general agencies for submission of petitions and resolutions. All resolutions and petitions related to central conferences presented to the General Conference shall be referred to the committee for consideration, and the committee shall report its recommendations directly to the assigned legislative committee of the General Conference. On matters dealing with the determination of episcopal areas (§ 404.1), affiliation and autonomy (§ 572), and joining The United Methodist Church (§ 575), the committee shall report directly to the General Conference.

¶2201.3.

Petition Number: 20520-ST-¶2201.3-G; Jernigan, Jeff - Powder Springs, GA, USA.

Membership on the Standing Committee

Amend ¶ 2201.3 as follows:

3. Other paragraphs of the *Discipline* notwithstanding, members may serve for three (3) four-year terms and may serve on one other general agency. The standing committee shall be composed of one bishop ~~from each jurisdiction~~ and from each central conference named by the Council of Bishops; ~~one ordained minister and one layperson from each jurisdiction and from each central conference who are delegates to the General Conference and named by the Council of Bishops;~~ central conferences with more than three episcopal areas shall elect additional members;

lay or clergy, up to the total number of episcopal areas in the central conference; one bishop, one ordained minister, and one layperson who are members of the General Board of Global Ministries and named by the General Board of Global Ministries and individuals from each jurisdiction and central conference who are delegates to the General Conference elected by their respective jurisdictional and central conferences in the following manner: one member from each European central conference, rotating between ordained ministers and laypersons; one ordained minister and one layperson each from each episcopal area of the Philippines Central Conference; one ordained minister and one layperson from the Southeastern Jurisdiction; one member each from each other U.S. jurisdiction rotating between ordained ministers and laypersons; and sixteen (16) members allocated among the central conferences of Africa proportional to the combined lay and clergy membership of the African central conferences, maintaining as close a balance as possible between elected laypersons and elected ordained ministers.. The central conference bishop assigned to the Office of Christian Unity and Inter-

religious Relationships General Council on Finance and Administration shall also be a member of this committee. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of women, lay, clergy, youth, and young adults. The chairperson of the committee shall be a central conference bishop and shall also serve as a member of the Connectional Table. Members of the committee shall serve until their replacements are named or elected. (This legislation will shall take effect immediately upon action by the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference for the membership of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters for 2021-2024.)

Rationale:

The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters should be composed primarily of persons from the central conferences, since it is primarily their voice to the General Conference. This petition reduces U.S. membership and increases central conference membership in relative proportion to the membership of the various central conferences.

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20649.

Petition Number: 20649-ST-NonDis-\$-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Comprehensive Plan for New Episcopal Areas and Bishops in Africa

The 2020 General Conference shall give the following authorizations for the numbers of their bishops, raising the total from thirteen to eighteen, as follows:

1. A total of eighteen episcopal areas in Africa, authorizing episcopal elections as follows in the actual three central conferences:

a) The present Congo Central Conference to elect two additional bishops, bringing the total number of episcopal areas to six (recommending for two new episcopal areas created from parts of North Katanga and South Congo episcopal areas);

b) The present Africa Central Conference to elect two additional bishops, bringing the total of episcopal areas to seven (recommending for a new episcopal area in Burundi and a new episcopal area in Zimbabwe).

c) The West Africa Central Conference to elect one additional bishop, bringing the total episcopal areas to five (recommending for a new episcopal area in Nigeria)

Rationale:

Five new episcopal areas in Africa allow for focused leadership to sustain transformational growth in the church and community. Additional petitions correct representation on denominational bodies due to the new central conference and the alignment of countries in the four Central Conferences in Africa

Petition 20650.

Petition Number: 20650-ST-NonDis-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Comprehensive Plan for a New Central Conference and Renaming of Central Conferences in Africa

The 2020 General Conference shall give the following authorizations for the creation and renaming of central conferences in Africa, raising the total from three to four central conferences as follows:

1. A total of four central conferences in Africa, authorizing central conferences as follows:

a) The present Congo Central Conference shall become the “Central Africa Central Conference”—consisting of Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zambia—with a total of six bishops;

b) Part of the present Africa Central Conference shall become the new “East Africa Central Conference”—consisting of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda—with a total of two bishops;

c) The other part of the present Africa Central Conference shall become the “Southern Africa Central Conference”—consisting of Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe—with a total of five bishops;

d) West Africa Central Conference (without name change)—consisting of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone—with a total of five bishops.

2. Recommending the following procedures for name changes and constituting sessions of central conferences:

a) As far as possible, it is recommended that the regular sessions of the central conferences in Africa should be held after January 1, 2021, but within a year following the 2020 General Conference, in order to be in line with the general church budget for the quadrennium 2021-2024 for the financing of additional bishops;

b) The present Congo Central Conference shall take action for changing its name to “Central Africa Central Conference” during its regular session of the central conference within one year following the 2020 General Conference;

c) The present Africa Central Conference shall meet according to its regularly planned session within one year following the 2020 General Conference, proceed to the election of bishops, and finish all business, whereupon it shall decide on its dissolution in order to create two central conferences out of the existing one. Whereupon the bishop(s) in charge (see ¶ 542.1) for the two new central conferences, the East Africa Central Conference and the Southern Africa Central Conference, shall immediately call the constituting session of the respective central conference, elect their respective officers, and proceed to all business needed for the mission of The United Methodist Church in their respective central conference for the forthcoming quadrennium.

Rationale:

A new central conference in Africa will provide greater opportunity for indigenous leadership and self-sustainability for mission and ministry.

Additional petitions correct representation on denominational bodies due to the new central conference and the alignment of countries in the four central conferences in Africa.

Petition 20660.

Petition Number: 20660-ST-NonDis-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

General Book of Discipline**General Book of Discipline—drafts of Part VI, chapters 1-7**

As we learn to live into our reality of being a culturally complex worldwide denomination and into a vision of a *General Discipline* that respects diverse legal and cultural contexts around the world, it is critical that the 2020 General Conference delegates lead the study and discussion process on the draft of a *General Discipline*. Following General Conference, delegations are asked to lead a consultation process on the *General Book of Discipline Draft* in their respective annual conference and provide feedback to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

In partial fulfillment of the mandate given in the *Book of Discipline* 2016, ¶ 101, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters presents to the 2020 General Conference the draft of a *General Book of Discipline*, Part VI, chapters 1-7, based on the *Book of Discipline* 2016. This draft includes those sections of the *Book of Discipline* that cannot be changed without General Conference action. All other material currently found in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* would be published in a new Part VII and could be adapted by central conferences to fit their culture and context. Without official action during central conference sessions, Part VII would still be disciplinary. The draft can be found in the *ADCA*.

The 2020 General Conference celebrates the progress achieved in clarifying what is “distinctively connectional” in a worldwide United Methodist Church. It approves the direction taken by the Standing Committee in the draft of an upcoming “*General Book of Discipline*” which will be submitted to the 2024 General Conference for legislative action. It invites The United Methodist Church to live into our worldwide covenant and to engage in holy conferencing on a *Book of Discipline* that truly enables mission and ministry in diverse, worldwide contexts.

Therefore, General Conference asks for a churchwide consultation process in all annual conferences on the draft of a “*General Book of Discipline*, Part VI, *General Organization and Administration*, chapters 1–7” (see the draft in the *ADCA*). The consultation shall be done according to the outline given by the Standing Committee and with feedback to the Standing Committee by November 30, 2021.

Questions for the feedback will be:

1. What elements of the proposed Part VI do not reflect essentials for a worldwide connection of The UMC and/or are not applicable in your own context and mission?
2. What essentially connectional elements are missing in the proposed Part VI?
3. What inconsistencies or inaccuracies are found in the proposed Part VI and are thus in need of correction?

The feedback on Part VI shall inform the Standing Committee in preparing revised drafts of Part VI and Part VII, based on the *Book of Discipline* 2020, as initial versions of a “*General Book of Discipline*” Parts VI and VII to be submitted in petition format to the 2024 General Conference.

Rationale:

The petition affirms the direction of the *General Book of Discipline* draft Part VI chapters 1-7 and proposes a deliberative consultation process to gather insights for the 2024 “*General Book of Discipline*” legislation. The work is included in the budget request of the Standing Committee on Central Conference

Independent Commissions

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 1

Nashville, Tennessee

The Council of Bishops' Leadership in Ecumenical and Interreligious Ministries

Quadrennial Report to the 2020 General Conference

Introduction

Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you base this confidence of yours? (2 Kings 18:19b NRSVA)

When Hezekiah became King of Judah, things changed. Hezekiah loved the Lord and wanted to walk in God's ways. That desire did not make the challenges stop, though, and when a high-ranking official in the Assyrian army ridiculed Judah's God, it was understandably disheartening. But that same official clearly saw something in Hezekiah and asked him, "On what do you base this confidence of yours?" His confidence was clearly in God. Hezekiah continued to turn to God and to God's prophet for strength, hope, and guidance. His faith proved to be well-founded as Judah was spared and the Assyrian king met a sad end.

This passage was the grounding theme of the 2019 Protestant Kirchentag in Dortmund, Germany, and helped the thousands of Christian participants call to mind in what they put their confidence. It remains a good theme for the Council of Bishops and the whole of The United Methodist Church, as we seek together to put our confidence in God through Christ, who is powerful, righteous, overwhelmingly loving, and full of grace. We are called to be assured there is hope in God and therefore, to live our lives as confident examples of God's grace to others.

Ecumenical Officer Bishop Mike Watson recently said, "United Methodist Christians believe that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' [John 3:16 NRSV]. As disciples of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are sent in love to love the world as God loves the world. Our Christian faith gives us confidence that when we truly live as examples of God's eternal love, great mercy, and reconciling grace, God is pleased and brokenness is healed." This defines well the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of the Council of Bishops.

Biblical, Disciplinary, and Theological Foundations

Our ecumenical and interreligious ministries are one strong way the Council of Bishops offers a witness of God's unifying love to the world. We are confident in Scripture. We claim the Bible is first among our sources for authority and speaks strongly to a witness of unity among God's people. Passages such as Psalm 133, John 17:20-23, Acts 2:1, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Ephesians 2:11-22, and Ephesians 4:1-6 undergird the bishops' ecumenical and interreligious leadership, believing United Methodists are called to unity in all our relationships.

The *Book of Discipline* also undergirds the ministry, making it clear that ecumenism and interreligious engagement are priorities for United Methodists. The Constitution (§ 6, Article VI) says, ". . . The United Methodist Church believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life. . . ." As ecclesial leaders, bishops must have a "passion for the unity of the church" as one of their disciplines (§ 403.1.e). Further, "the role of the bishop is to be shepherd of the whole flock and thereby provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation, and unity within the Church—The United Methodist Church and the church universal." And, in "Our Theological Task" (§ 105, p. 90), all United Methodists are reminded, "Christian unity is founded on the theological understanding that through faith in Jesus Christ we are made members-in-common of the one body of Christ. Christian unity . . . is a gift to be received and expressed."

Unity is a gift received when we are baptized and become a part of the family of Christ. It is also a gift to be shared with others, as we join together in worship and ministry, for study, and for solidarity of voice. Unity is not uniformity, or sameness of belief or practice. Instead, unity celebrates diversity. It is a thread joining all Christians together regardless of those things that often threaten to divide us. The United Methodist Council of Bishops con-

tinues to have confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to unite us as one under Christ Jesus.

Organization of the Ministry

The history of ecumenical and interreligious ministry within The United Methodist Church is wide and varying. From the beginning of his movement, John Wesley confidently welcomed Jesus-followers who were of diverse denominational backgrounds into his societies as full participants. He maintained conversations with other Christian leaders throughout the eighteenth century, including early ecumenical connections with Moravian pietists in Europe and Calvinist evangelicals in Britain and America. Similar relationships were built across the boundaries of traditions by leaders of what would become the Evangelical United Brethren Church in America. Bishop Martin Boehm, for example, regularly invited other preachers (among them Methodists) to preach to his fellow Mennonites.

A more formalized ecumenical ministry was activated in The United Methodist Church with its beginning in 1968, when the Council of Bishops created an ecumenical committee. Eventually, the position of Ecumenical Officer was established, as it was clear our denomination needed someone to take the lead in this ministry. The position was filled by a retired bishop elected by the Council of Bishops. As the need for connection and communication with other persons of faith grew, a general agency of the church called The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) was created to walk alongside the bishops in what quickly became a very large ministry. However, a few years ago, the commission itself began to explore how best to serve the ecumenical and interreligious commitments of The United Methodist Church. Since our *Discipline* calls our episcopal and superintending leaders to shepherd our faith communion in this ministry, the General Conference of 2012 dissolved the agency and moved the ministry completely under the purview of the Council of Bishops.

An office, called the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (OCUIR), was formed by the Council of Bishops, and the transition began. In the last four years that transition has been completed, with the office moving from New York to Washington, DC, and the former staff positions of the council joining together with the former staff positions of OCUIR. They are now all together as one staff of the Council of Bishops and work as a team to serve the needs of the bishops, including their shepherding of ecumenical and interreligious ministries. Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst and Rev. Dr. Kyle Tau have served as our Ecumenical Staff Officers, assisting and empowering us in this ministry.

Now, the Council of Bishops collectively leads The United Methodist Church in ecumenical and interreligious ministries. We have designated one person to assist us in connecting with our staff concerning ecumenical and interreligious ministries and opportunities. For this quadrennium that person has been Bishop B. Michael Watson, and we express our deep gratitude to him for his leadership. However, each of us is an ecumenical officer in our annual conference(s), and we strive to lead confidently in our area(s). We appoint a person in our annual conference(s) to be the official connection between our COB staff and our conference staff. Our district superintendents, as extensions of our offices, are also ecumenical officers within their districts. And, every local congregation has one person named to be the connector for their group of members.

Within the Council of Bishops there is a team designated to set a vision for, give approvals to, and discern local leadership for ecumenical and interreligious ministries. They are the direct voice of the council with the staff and the ministry. This quadrennium the Leadership Team on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations (LTEIR) has been made up of the following bishops:

Bishop B. Michael Watson, Ecumenical Officer
 Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, LTEIR Chair, Boston Area
 Bishop Eduard Kheday, Secretary, Eurasia Area
 Bishop Kenneth H. Carter, President of the Council of Bishops, Florida Area
 Bishop Albert Frederick Mutti, Ecumenical Officer Emeritus
 Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Ecumenical Officer Emeritus, WCC Vice-Moderator
 Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, Ecumenical Officer Emeritus
 Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, World Methodist Council Geneva Secretary
 Bishop Gaspar João Domingos, West Angola Episcopal Area
 Bishop Mande Muyombo, North Katanga Episcopal Area
 Bishop Patrick Streiff, OCUIR Representative, Central and Southern Europe Area
 Bishop James E. Swanson, South Carolina Episcopal Area
 Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton, Retired
 Bishop Heinrich Bolleter, Retired
 Bishop Ann B. Sherer-Simpson, Retired

The Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relations (OCUIR), per the *Book of Discipline*, continues to exist, however it has also transitioned into an advisory

team for the bishops. It is a diverse group of laity and clergy and meets together twice a year, often with the LTEIR and the bishops' staff. The members of OCUIR include:

Bishop B. Michael Watson, Ecumenical Officer
 Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, LTEIR Chair, Boston Area
 Bishop Eduard Khegay, LTEIR Secretary, Eurasia Area
 Bishop Patrick Streiff, Central and Southern Europe Area
 Rev. Amanda Liggett, Ecumenical Representative from the ELCA
 Rev. Lisa Lewis, Ecumenical Representative from the CME Church
 Mr. Byrd Bonner, Texas
 Mr. Guy Gutangiza, Democratic Republic of Congo
 Mrs. Lisa Hunt, Washington, DC
 Mrs. Cindy Thompson, North Carolina
 Rev. Mercy Rivera, Antipolo, Philippines
 Rev. Charles Brower, Alaska

Vastness of the Ministry

Ecumenical and interreligious ministry is confidently vast in scope. Through the power of the Spirit, United Methodists take leadership in national councils of churches, in neighborhood interfaith organizations, and in connecting with the houses of worship down the street. All of these are valid and valuable ecumenical and interreligious ministries. By *Discipline* the Council of Bishops formally engages in several organizations. These include (but are not limited to):

- The World Council of Churches
- The World Methodist Council
- The Global Christian Forum
- Religions for Peace
- The Parliament of the World's Religions
- The World Holiness Connection
- The National Association of Evangelicals
- The National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
- Christian Churches Together
- Churches Uniting in Christ
- The Pan-Methodist Commission
- Many other regional organizations and councils.

Every quadrennium one of those groups, The Pan-Methodist Commission, requests the privilege of sharing their report with the whole United Methodist Church. It is attached to this report as Addendum A.

Ecumenical Dialogues, Coordinating Committees, and Interreligious Engagements

Formal dialogues between and among faith communities are also an important part of the ecumenical and interreligious ministry of the Council of Bishops. Our bilateral dialogue with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has been moving forward for over fifty years, and the dialogue team is currently working on the creation of: a document recognizing the core elements of faith we share; a resource book for shared worship and prayer; and the creation of joint liturgies for weddings and funerals between Roman Catholics and United Methodists in the United States. Our bilateral dialogue with the Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Provinces) has concluded with an acceptance of full communion, and this quadrennium a Moravian-United Methodist Coordinating Committee has been formed. We have continued to grow into our full communion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with ongoing consultation through a coordinating committee and by the exchange of liaisons between the ELCA Church Council and our Connectional Table. Finally, we have continued our dialogue with The Episcopal Church this quadrennium and are hopeful the fruits of this dialogue will lead our churches into a new full communion relationship. The full report from this dialogue committee, offering a proposal for full communion between The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church, is attached to this report in Addendum B, and an implementing resolution has been submitted to this General Conference.

Our multilateral dialogue with the other five Pan-Methodist churches concluded with a full communion agreement among all the denominations involved. The conversation continues through the Pan-Methodist Commission, whose aforementioned report is included at the end of this report in Addendum A. And, we continue to participate in the conversations and ministries of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), a multilateral gathering of ten Protestant denominations.

To date, the decision of the Council of Bishops has been to engage in interreligious dialogues ecumenically. In other words, we join together with other Christians to dialogue with Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs most notably through the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. The vision of our interreligious engagement will be a topic of visioning over the upcoming quadrennium.

Leadership and Formation

With the transition of leadership of ecumenical and interreligious ministry to the Council of Bishops, a new

training ministry has been established. United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT) is now available in five different forms and can be initiated by any of our bishops:

- UMEIT: Young Adult Network – a two-year video conference training for young adults.
- UMEIT: Ecumenical and Interreligious Plunge – a two-year pilgrimage-based training for young adults.
- UMEIT: Global – an annual training somewhere in the world within a host annual conference.
- UMEIT: USA – an annual training somewhere in the USA in conjunction with the National Workshop on Christian Unity.
- UMEIT: Annual Conference – a flexible training event hosted by an annual conference.

Additionally, the Council of Bishops offers grants and scholarships for ecumenical and interreligious ministry by groups and individuals in order to encourage formation. Some of these include:

- The Bossey Scholarship – an annual grant for a student to attend the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute.
- UMEIT: Global grant – an annual grant given to the annual conference sponsoring this form of UMEIT.
- UMEIT: USA Scholarships – partial scholarships granted to students and first-time attenders to UMEIT: USA.
- PWR Scholarships – partial scholarships granted to students and first-time attenders to the Parliament of the World's Religions.
- Local Initiative Grants – annual gifts given to groups in annual conferences who are taking leadership in ecumenical or interreligious ministries in their contexts.

Interdenominational Cooperation Fund

The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund (ICF) was established to help The United Methodist Church support much of the aforementioned ministry. Specifically, it is designed to help support budgets of organizations that relate to the ecumenical responsibilities of the bishops and to provide for the expenses of representatives engaging in various organizations and ministries. Over the years the ICF has funded United Methodist participation in global ecumenical and interreligious events. It has funded our United Methodist fair share of support for several global ecumenical and interreligious organizations, councils, and

fellowships. It has funded dialogues, trainings, pilgrimages, and other vital ministries. United Methodists have faithfully and confidently given to the fund to ensure these kinds of ministries continue.

For the upcoming quadrennium, delegates to this General Conference will vote on a budgetary proposal to reduce the previous allotment to the ICF of \$8 million US to \$1 million US. The rationale behind the proposal is to reduce the reserves in the fund to what has been deemed a reasonable amount. The Council of Bishops will be able to continue funding the ministries of the current quadrennium into the upcoming quadrennium, but in several cases, at a reduced rate. In the following four years, however, the allotment will need to be increased again in order for United Methodist participation in these vital ministries to continue.

The Council of Bishops confidently moves forward, knowing we will do our part to get the ICF to an appropriate level and believing these ministries will be funded in the future.

Committee on Faith and Order

The Council of Bishops also provides oversight for The United Methodist Committee on Faith and Order (CFO). The CFO exists to aid The UMC in its teaching and theological discernment and as an expression of our ongoing denominational commitment to be engaged in serious theological reflection. During this quadrennium, members of the CFO consulted with the Commission on a Way Forward, the Ministry Study Commission, and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters in its work on a *General Book of Discipline*. The CFO has offered vital perspective and material support to these distinct working bodies of The UMC.

In addition to consulting on these projects, the CFO has produced two resources for The UMC. First, the CFO has created a basic teaching resource on United Methodist identity, belief, and practice. This resource will be a ten-chapter book in the question-and-answer format of a catechism, which will hopefully be available to the denomination by early next quadrennium.

Second, the General Conference of 2016 received and commended to the whole church a document produced by the CFO in the previous quadrennium entitled *Wonder, Love, and Praise: Sharing a Vision of the Church*. The General Conference commissioned the CFO to engage the denomination in study and feedback on this report in order to produce an official teaching document on United Methodist ecclesiology that will stand alongside other official theological statements of the church such as *By Water and the Spirit* and *This Holy Mystery*. After a year

of study and receiving feedback, the CFO drafted a new statement entitled *Sent in Love: A United Methodist Understanding of the Church*. A resolution to adopt this document as an official theological statement of The UMC has been submitted to this General Conference. The full statement can be found in the ADCA in a separate report submitted directly by the Committee on Faith and Order (ADCA p. 589).

Conclusion

When the high-ranking official in the Assyrian army looked at King Hezekiah, he saw something worthy of comment. “On what do you base this confidence of yours?” the official asked. We, the Council of Bishops,

base our confidence in God: The Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Through the power of the Spirit and the call of Christ, we take leadership in the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of The United Methodist Church, because we believe Christ has given this faith communion something to offer the church universal. We believe we can learn from our brothers and sisters of other Christian communions and other religions. We believe unity is a gift given to us to celebrate and strengthen. And, we believe as we work together to strengthen this gift, we will come to experience the deepest blessings of the church. In the coming quadrennium, may these blessings be revealed to us; may we confidently love the church Christ has given us; and may we walk in relationship with all persons of faith, so the world may be transformed.

Addendum A

Quadrennial Report of the Pan-Methodist Commission to the 2020 General Conference



Pan-Methodism is the face of oneness within the Methodist family. Growth in creative collaborative ventures of intentional ministry marks this quadrennium. We celebrate the accomplishments and reflect on the history of this body as it celebrates its thirty-fifth anniversary in 2020. The mission statement of the Pan-Methodist Commission calls us to *“work to define, determine, plan, and in cooperation with established agencies of the several denominations, execute activities to foster meaningful cooperation among the Methodist denominations in the collaborations. Such cooperation shall include, but not be limited to, evangelism, missions, publications, social concerns, and higher education.”*

We celebrate the Pan-Methodist journey and rejoice each time Pan-Methodist cooperation occurs on various fronts. The level of commitment to this work is increasing and some of the highlights of the 2017-2020 journey are given below.

We celebrated the life and legacy of bishops from the Methodist denominations who have exchanged life for eternity:

- **A. M. E.** – Bishop John Hurst Adams (1/10/18), Mrs. Mary Ann Norris—wife of Bishop Richard F. Norris, Bishop C. Garnett Henning (5/15/18), Bishop McKinley Young (1/16/19)
- **A. M. E. Z.** – Bishop Richard Keith Thompson (7/16/17)
- **U. M. C.** – Bishop Charles Wilbourne Hancock (3/13/15), Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt (11/26/15), Bishop William Morris (1/24/16), Bishop Franz W. Schaffer (7/14/16), Bishop Emerson S. Colaw (10/11/16), Bishop Felton E. May (2/27/17), Mrs. Gwen White – wife of retired Bishop C. Dale White, Bishop Moises Domingo Fernandes (4/6/17), Mrs. Thelma H. Newman – spouse of the late Bishop Newman, Bishop John Wesley Hardt (6/18/17), Mrs. Angelina

Nacpil – wife of Bishop Emertio Nacpil, Mrs. Dorothy Lee – wife of Bishop Clay F. Lee, Bishop Ruediger R. Minor (9/3/17), Mrs. Jean Stockton – wife of Bishop Thomas Barber Stockton, Mrs. Lucile Wheatley – wife of Bishop Mel Wheatley, Bishop Bevel L. Jones, III (3/6/18), Bishop Ben R. Chamness (12/22/18), Bishop William Oden (12/22/18), Bishop Judith Craig (1/18/19)

- **U. A. M. E.** – Bishop Michael Moulden (12/24/17), Bishop George W. Poindexter (3/8/2019)

We celebrated the election of new bishops:

- **A. M. E.** – Bishop Harry Lee Seawright, Bishop Michael Leon Mitchell, Bishop E. Anne Henning-Byfield, Bishop Ronnie E. Brailford, Sr., Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker, and Bishop Frank Madison Reid – Ecumenical Officer
- **A. M. E. Z.** – Bishop Staccato Powell, Bishop George Crenshaw, Bishop Hillard Dogbe, and Bishop U. U. Effiong
- **U. A. M. E.** – Bishop Adolphus Scott, Jr. and Bishop Charles Amos
- **U. M. C.** – Bishop David Bard, Bishop Frank Beard, Bishop Tracy S. Malone, Bishop Laurie Haller, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, Bishop Ruben Saenz, Jr., Bishop Robert Farr, Bishop James G. Nunn, Bishop David Graves, Bishop Leonard Fairley, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Bishop Lawson Bryan, Bishop Sharma Lewis, Bishop Karen Oliveto, and Bishop Samuel J. Quire, Jr.

We celebrated the retirement of the following bishops:

- **A. M. E.** – Bishop John Richard Bryant, Bishop William Phillips DeVeaux, Bishop Theodore Larry Kirkland, Bishop Richard Franklin Norris, and Bishop Preston Warren Williams II
- **A. M. E. Z.** – Bishop Louis Hunter, Sr.
- **U. A. M. E.** – Bishop Michael Moulden
- **U. M. C.** – Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr., Bishop Young Jin Cho, Bishop Michael J. Coyner, Bishop G. Lindsey Davis, Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster, Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr., Bishop John Hopkins, Bishop Janice Riggles Huie, Bishop John G. Innis,

Bishop Jonathan Keaton, Bishop Deborah Kieseey, Bishop James R. King, Bishop Marcus Matthews, Bishop B. Michael Watson, Bishop Kainda Katembo, and Bishop Nkulu Ntambo

We celebrated the life and contribution of Pan-Methodist Commission members, Rev. Dr. Donnell Williams (A. M. E. Z.) and Rev. Dr. Albert Tyson III (A. M. E.) who exchanged life for eternity.

We welcomed new members to the Pan-Methodist Commission:

- From the A. M. E. Church: Bishop Frank Madison Reid - Ecumenical Officer, Bishop William Phillip DeVeaux, Dr. Erika Crawford, Rev. Melvin Wilson, Ms. Martinique Mix, and Mr. Matthew Douglass
- From the U. A. M. E. Church: Bishop Adolphus Scott and Bishop Charles Amos
- From the A. M. E. Z. Church: Bishop Warren Brown and Dr. J. Elvin Sadler
- From the C. M. E. Church: Bishop Marvin Thomas, Dr. Lisa Allen McLaurin, Ms. Ada Suarez, Rev. Amina McIntyre, Dr. Pene' Woods, and Rev. Leon C. Moore, Jr.
- From the U. M. Church: Bishop Jonathan Holston, Bishop B. Michael Watson – Ecumenical Officer, Rev. Dr. Marvin A. Moss, Rev. Samuel Needham, and Mrs. Mariellyn Dunlap Grace

Pan-Methodist Leadership during the 2017-2020 quadrennium was shared and passed from Bishop Alfred Lloyd Norris (U. M. C.) to Bishop Linwood Rideout (U. A. M. E.) to Bishop Reginald Jackson (A. M. E.) to Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton (C. M. E.) and to Bishop Kenneth Monroe (A. M. E. Z.).

We expressed appreciation and encouragement to areas where Pan-Methodist events are being held, such as a Pan-Methodist Revival in the Detroit area; cooperative ministry for the sake of children in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina; a Pentecost Explosion in Montgomery, Alabama; an Emancipation Proclamation event in the Missouri area; and a Martin Luther King, Jr. event in Louisville, Kentucky. The Pan-Methodist bishops in the Ohio area led five Advent services and the ministerial alliance in the Chicago area held a Pentecost service. Bishops in the Florida and South Carolina areas joined ranks on political issues, race, and emergency concerns such as the Charleston Massacre, the Pulse nightclub shooting, and the Orlando school shooting. In some instances, funds generated from these events were given to the Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty.

We developed a Pan-Methodist Collaboration for Endorsement that streamlines the process for persons seeking to serve as chaplains in military, professional, civilian, or volunteer fields. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Endorsing Agency aided in this venture under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Michael Lewis. The Pan-Methodist Endorsement forms are located at <https://methodist.smapply.io> and are branded with the Pan-Methodist logo.

We received a template showing the cross sections of judicatories to aid in the planning of Pan-Methodist activities. This was created by Dr. Kyle Tau – Ecumenical Staff Officer for Faith and Order and Theological Development for the Council of Bishops of The UMC.

We continued to operate on the budget approved in 2004. However, the giving to the Children's Campaign has increased because of intentional giving from areas and the offerings received at the Methodist Gatherings.

The Higher Education Committee is encouraging Pan-Methodist institutions to be intentional in recognizing Pan-Methodist presence. The committee desires to be informed of Pan-Methodist activity on campuses. A goal is also to involve Pan-Methodist students in the work and meetings of the Pan-Methodist Commission, plus establish lines of communication and opportunities to work with the Children's Campaign. Bishop Marvin Thomas (C. M. E.) chairs this committee, however recognition is given to Mrs. Harriet McCabe (U. M. C.) for her leadership until she faced health challenges.

We acknowledged the innovative contributions of Dr. Luther Smith (C. M. E.) in the work for the Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty. Staff has been added to assist in the work, which has made possible a higher electronic presence, including the addition of a twitter account – @PMC4Children. Making a difference in the lives of children, especially those who are vulnerable, is the primary focus.

Some Pan-Methodist seminaries are participating in the campaign and are actively involved in finding creative ways to minister to children and persons who work with children. Hood Seminary in Salisbury, NC, is noted for providing Children's Summits in three states: Alabama (Montgomery), South Carolina (Rock Hill and Columbia), and North Carolina (Salisbury, Whiteville, Southern Pines, and Charlotte). They are also engaged in partnership to provide a sustained ministry presence to two communities located in Charlotte and Salisbury, NC.

Pan-Methodist annual conferences are requested to appoint liaisons who are expected to shepherd the work of the Children's Campaign in their area. They are charged to be intentional in making a difference in the lives of children in their communities. Currently, there are sixteen

A. M. E., fifteen A. M. E. Z., two U. A. M. E., forty-six C. M. E., and twenty-three U. M. C. liaisons. There are also global liaisons in the following continents:

- African countries of Ghana/Togo, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Congo/Zambia (three C. M. E., one U. A. M. E., and two U. M. C.), South-west and Northeast Central Zimbabwe, Malawi
- Europe – Germany and Eurasia (three U. M. C.)
- India—one A. M. E. Z., Jamaica—one U. A. M. E., Philippines—one U. M. C.

A campaign website, www.panmethodistcampaignforchildren.org, continues to provide reports from congregations, districts, and conferences, and gives information regarding the campaign. This site also provides *The Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty* booklet in digital format. The booklet will not be reprinted for distribution. Information will be provided in a brochure format. Frequent visits to the website are welcome. Examples of some of the unique yet essential work reported are given below:

- Work of Bishop Johnathan Holston (U. M. C.) and Bishop James Walker (C. M. E.) in South Carolina to address immediate daily concerns and long-term systemic issues that impact children.
- Work of the Desert Southwestern Conference of The U. M. C. for children facing homelessness and immigration issues.
- The linking with the Interfaith Children's Movement in Georgia and a summer feeding program in Macon, GA.
- The Mission-Minded Church School partnership in the Minnesota Conference of The U. M. C.
- Celebrating the Children's Sabbath, in North Alabama (U. M. C.) and Kentucky (A. M. E. Z.).
- Meeting the needs of children in DMV area by the 7th Episcopal District (C. M. E.).
- Halos of Help – North Alabama U. M. C.
- Reading Rewards Program at Cleaves Memorial C. M. E. Church in Columbia, SC
- The Georgia area has a focus on the School to Prison Pipeline noting children who are suspended and become candidates for the pipeline. Collaboration is occurring with the U. M. C. General Board of Church and Society on this impact upon children.

We continued the practice of gathering as Methodists in various cities to foster the development of Pan-Methodist relationships and ministries. At each Methodist Gathering, the hymn, "Christ, the Church You Gave Is Broken,"

written by Bishop William Boyd Grove (U. M. C.) is used. Commendations are given to the following congregations for their service as hosts to the Methodist Gatherings:

- Emanuel A. M. E. Church (Charleston, SC), 2016
- St. Phillip A. M. E. Church (Atlanta, GA), 2017
- Miles College (Fairfield, GA), 2018
- West Side Community C. M. E. Church (Atlanta, GA), 2019

We experienced tremendous Pan-Methodist participation on Ecumenical Day at the General Conference of the C. M. E. Church in 2018.

The 2020 General Conference of the A. M. E. Church will be held July 8-15, 2020, at the Rosen Hotels and Resort in Orlando, FL. The A. M. E. Z. General Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta on July 22-28, 2020.

We viewed the documentary *The American Spirit: Underground*, prepared by commission member Mrs. Mariellyn Grace (U. M. C.) and her husband, Rev. Ryan Grace. They noted the reluctance of churches who are unwilling to address the issues of race and disparities in America. The film is designed to bring awareness to the issues and encourage dialogue.

We acknowledged with appreciation the tremendous contributions of all members of the commission for their commitment to the Pan-Methodist mission, especially in providing leadership in various areas. Bishop Jonathan Holston (U. M. C.) serves as vice chair of the commission and shared in the planning of the 2019 Consultation of Methodist Bishops. Mr. Byrd Bonner (U. M. C.) serves as treasurer. Bishop Sylvester Williams (C. M. E.) served as chair of the Steering Committee and led the planning for the 2017 Consultation of Methodist Bishops. Dr. Pamela Lightsey (U. M. C.) led the work of establishing a strategic plan for the commission. Mrs. Harriet McCabe (U. M. C.) served as chair for the Higher Education Committee. Dr. Luther Smith (C. M. E.) serves as the coordinator for the Children in Poverty Campaign. Dr. Jeanette Bouknight (C. M. E.) served as chair of the Social Concerns Committee and passed the chairing to Ms. Martinique Mix (A. M. E.). Ms. Elizabeth Reid (A. M. E. Z.) serves as financial secretary. Ms. Dee Hicks (U. M. C.) serves as chair of the Wesleyan Heritage and Missions Committee. Ms. Martinique Mix is currently chairing the Committee on Social Concerns.

The commission maintains a Facebook page and a website.

We participated in the Thirteenth (2017) Consultation of Methodist Bishops using the theme, "*Methodism Demonstrating Faith in the Face of Fear*."

- Bishops attending from the A. M. E. Church included Reginald Jackson, McKinley Young, Jeffery Leath, and Frank Madison Reid.
- Bishops attending from the A. M. E. Z. Church included Bishops Kenneth Monroe, Daryl Starnes, George Crenshaw, Staccato Powell, Warren Matthew Brown.
- Bishops attending from the C. M. E. Church included Lawrence L. Reddick, Thomas L. Brown, Kenneth Wayne Carter, Sylvester Williams, James B. Walker, Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, C. James King, Marvin Frank Thomas, and Bobby Best.
- Bishops attending from the U. A. M. E. Church included Bishops Adolphus Scott and Linwood Rideout.
- Bishops attending from the U. M. Church included Debra Wallace-Padgett, Sally Dyck, Sue Haupt-Johnson, Frank Beard, Jonathan L. Holston, Mary Ann Swenson, David Alan Bard, Jane Allen Middleton, Bruce R. Ough, Alfred F. Norris, Gary Mueller, and Scott Jones.
- Presentations were given as noted below:
 - *“Methodism Demonstrating Faith in the Face of Fear”* – Bishop Jonathan Holston (U. M. C.)
 - *“The Response of Faith: Enthusiastic Evangelism and Witness”* – Rev. Dr. Brian R. Thompson – pastor, Simon Temple A. M. E. Z. Church – Fayetteville, NC
 - *“The Response of Social Activism for Social Justice”* – Dr. Raymond Sommerville (C. M. E.), former professor at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN
 - *“Reclaiming Our Prophetic Voice”* – Bishop McKinley Young (A. M. E.)
 - *“Wesleyan Communion Responding with Next Steps in Addressing Racism”* – Panel of Senior Bishops – How do we do this in our local communities?
- Shared reports from the 2016 General Conferences of the Pan-Methodist member denominations and other meetings or information of note.
- Intentionally promoted the increase of young adults in Pan-Methodist activities including the commission. Member denominations appointed at least one youth or young adult to the commission. A Young Adult Committee works under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden (A. M. E. Z.) chair, with Bishop Marvin Thomas (C. M. E.) as consultant. United Methodist appointees were Rev. Samuel Needham and Mrs. Mariellyn Grace.

We participated in the Fourteenth (2019) Consultation of Methodist Bishops using the theme, *“Building Relationships and Collaborative Ministries which Transform Communities.”*

Other actions taken at the 2017 consultation included:

- Established a strategic plan with the goal of affirming Full Communion practices among the participating denominations, providing a visible witness to Full Communion; broadening the work on the children in poverty initiative; and improving the use of technological tools to improve communication and branding. This effort was first chaired by Dr. Pamela Lightsey (U. M. C.) and transferred to Rev. Dr. Albert Tyson III [deceased] (A. M. E.).
- Bishops attending from the A. M. E. Church included Adam J. Richardson and Reginald Jackson.
- Bishops attending from the A. M. E. Z. Church included Bishops Kenneth Monroe, Daryl Starnes, Dennis Proctor, George Crenshaw, Staccato Powell, Warren Matthew Brown.
- Bishops attending from the C. M. E. Church included Lawrence L. Reddick, Thomas L. Brown, Sylvester Williams, James B. Walker, Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, C. James King, Marvin Frank Thomas, Othall Lakey,
- Bishops attending from the U. A. M. E. Church included Bishops Adolphus Scott and Charles Amos.
- Bishops attending from the U. M. Church included Sandra L. Steiner Ball, Frank Beard, W. Earl Bledsoe, Kenneth H. Carter, Sudarshana Devadhar, Sally Dyck, Robert “Bob” Farr, David Graves, Cynthia F. Harvey, Jonathan Holston, Tracy Malone, Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, Gary Mueller, Bruce R. Ough, Julius Trimble, Debra Wallace-Padgett, B. Michael Watson (Retired).
- Presentations were given as noted below:
 - *“Building Relationships and Collaborative Ministries which Transform Communities”* Bishop Staccato Powell (A. M. E. Z.)
 - *“Building Relationship: The Ministry of Reconciliation among the Episcopacy”* Bishop Tracey Smith Malone (U. M. C.)
 - *“Pan-Methodist: An Influential Witness in the Community”* Bishop C. James King (C. M. E.)
 - *The Role of the Episcopacy in the Call of Ministry* Bishop Adam L. Richardson (A. M. E.)

- Actions included (1) issuing a press release to address the mass shootings at the mosques in Christ Church, New Zealand; (2) encouraging all bishops to continue to support the Pan-Methodist Campaign for Children in Poverty; and (3) find ways to intentionally work Pan-Methodistically.

Joyously, we welcome all newly elected bishops to the Pan-Methodist Episcopal ranks and encourage their participation in the biannual Consultations of Methodist Bishops. The Fifteenth Consultation of Methodist Bishops will be held March 14-16, 2021, in Atlanta, GA. **The United Methodist Church will be the host for the March 13-14, 2020 meeting of the Pan-Methodist Commission, which will be its thirty-fifth anniversary.**

Each strand of the Methodist tradition is valued. We can all learn from each other and develop a greater appreciation for the history and contributions of each strand. It is anticipated that the work of Pan-Methodism will continue to grow and bear fruit that points to our commitment to God and to each other. *To God be the glory!*

Respectfully submitted:

Bishop Kenneth Monroe – Chair

Bishop Jonathan Holston – Vice Chair

Rev. Dr. Letitia Williams-Watford – Secretary

Mr. Byrd Bonner – Treasurer

Ms. Elizabeth Reid – Financial Secretary

Dr. Mary Love – Administrative Secretary

Mr. Chad Bumgardner – Assistant Administrative Secretary

The Pan-Methodist Commission

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Frank Madison Reid III – Pikesville, MD, Ecumenical Officer

Bishop Reginald Jackson – Atlanta, GA

Bishop William Phillips DeVaux – Mableton, GA

Rev. Dr. Albert D. Tyson III – Chicago, IL (Deceased)

Dr. Letitia Williams-Watford – Montgomery, AL

Rev. Dr. Erica D. Crawford – Rahway, NJ

Rev. Melvin Wilson – Yonkers, NY

Ms. Martinique Mix – Atlanta, GA

Mr. Matthew Douglass – Elkridge, MO

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Bishop Kenneth Monroe – Raleigh, NC

Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. – Charlotte, NC

Bishop Warren M. Brown (Retired) – Austell, GA
Rev. Dr. Donnell Williams – Tuscaloosa, AL (Deceased)

Rev. Dr. Rita Colbert – Mitchellville, MD

Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler – Charlotte, NC

Mrs. Lula Howard – Louisville, KY

Mrs. Elizabeth Reid – Heath Springs, SC

Mrs. Loretta Goff – Washington, DC

Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden – Rock Hill, SC

Rev. Haven Anderson – Huntersville, NC (Proxy)

Dr. Mary A. Love (Staff) - Charlotte, NC

African Union Methodist Protestant Church

Bishop Delbert Jackson - Newark, DE

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Sylvester Williams – St. Louis, MO

Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton – Birmingham, AL, Ecumenical Officer

Bishop Marvin Thomas – Cincinnati, OH

Dr. Luther Smith, Jr. – Atlanta, GA

Dr. Leo Pinkett – Atlanta, GA

Ms. Ada Suarez – South Windsor, CT

Rev. Amina McIntyre – Atlanta, GA

Dr. Pene' Woods – Cordova, TN

Rev. Leon C. Moore, Jr. – Atlanta, GA

Union American Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Linwood Rideout – Wilmington, DE

Bishop Adolphus Scott – Woodstown, NJ

Mr. Asa Cort – Middletown, CT

Bishop Charles L. Amos – Wilmington, DE

United Methodist Church

Bishop B. Michael Watson – Birmingham, AL, Ecumenical Officer

Bishop Jane Allen Middleton – Woodstock Valley, CT

Bishop Jonathan Holston – Columbia, SC

Bishop Minerva Carcaño – Sacramento, CA

Ms. Mariellyn Dunlap Grace – Westerville, OH

Ms. Dee Hicks – Las Vegas, NV

Rev. Victoria Baldwin – Mt. Olive, MS

Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey – Boston, MA

Dr. Byrd Bonner – San Antonio, TX

Rev. Dr. Marvin Anthony Moss – New York, NY

Rev. Samuel Needham – Bristol, IN

Mr. Chad Bumgardner (Staff) – Charlotte, NC

Addendum B

A Gift to the World: Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church A Proposal for Full Communion

Preamble

In the fractured human community there is a great need for the realization of the unity among the followers of Christ Jesus. This proposal for full communion between The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church is an effort to bring our churches into closer partnership in mission and witness to the love of God and thus labor together for the healing of divisions among Christians and for the well-being of all. The vision of Revelation 22 is of the tree of life planted on both sides of a river, “and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2 NRSV). Faithful to Jesus’ prayer that his disciples be one so that the world may believe (John 17: 20-23), may this proposal be an expression of God’s will for the churches.

1. Introduction: The Nature of the Communion We Seek

Since 2002, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have been engaged in bilateral dialogue, setting full communion as the goal. We understand the relationship we seek as follows:

Full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct ecclesiastical bodies in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of each would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and ordained ministers may officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically, this includes transferability of members, mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries, mutual enrichment by one another’s traditions of hymnody and patterns of liturgy, freedom to participate in each other’s ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops, and structures for consultation to express, strengthen, and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

We seek to draw closer in mission and ministry, grounded in sufficient agreement in the essentials of

Christian faith and order and assisted by interchangeability of ordained ministries. This full communion agreement is not proposing a merger of our churches. Yet we seek to live into the vision given to us by Jesus, who prayed that we may all be one (John 17:21 NRSV), and strive for the day when we may be drawn into more visible unity for the sake of mission and ministry, “so that the world may believe.” We see this relationship of full communion as a step on the journey, and trust in the Holy Spirit to continue to guide us in more visible expressions of unity. We are blessed in that neither of our churches, or their predecessor bodies, have officially condemned one another, nor have they formally called into question the faith, the ministerial orders, or the sacraments of the other church.

2. Background: Anglican-Methodist Dialogues

The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Church bilateral dialogue began in 2002. In 2006, The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church entered into a relationship of Interim Eucharistic Sharing, a step on the way toward full communion that allows for clergy of the two churches to share in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper under prescribed guidelines.¹ In 2010, it issued a summary of its theological work, *A Theological Foundation for Full Communion Between The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church*. Both of these documents have been sent to bishops and deputies to General Convention in The Episcopal Church and to the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, and should be read in conjunction with this proposal. They are available online at <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sceir/methodist>.

The first round dialogue committee noted in *A Theological Foundation for Full Communion* that it sees no church-dividing issues between the two churches.

The second round of bilateral dialogue commenced in 2015 to prepare the way for a full communion proposal to be presented to the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to assist members in both churches to understand the closer relationship and its relevance to the

1. See Resolution A055 from the 2006 General Convention and Resolution 81456-IC-NonDis of the 2008 United Methodist General Conference.

lives of persons in local communities in which it will be lived out.

This proposal for full communion is the fruit of over fifty years of formal dialogues between our two churches. In the 1950s, there were substantive conversations between the (then) Methodist Church and the (then) Protestant Episcopal Church. However, these bilateral conversations were set aside in favor of both churches' membership in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU). For nearly forty years, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church related to one another by means of our participation in COCU. Following COCU's reconstitution as Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) in 1999, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church each decided in 2000 to commence the first direct bilateral dialogue with one another in nearly fifty years.

The United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue also benefits from the fact that we are members, through the Anglican Communion and the World Methodist Council, of an international dialogue and are informed by the fruits of those conversations. The first round of an international dialogue mutually sponsored by the World Methodist Council and the Anglican Communion produced a theological statement, *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, issued in 1996. This landmark document noted that Anglicans and Methodists shared the "core doctrine" of the Christian faith and need "no further doctrinal assurances" from one another.² Both church families inaugurated a second round of conversations in 2007, the Anglican Methodist International Consultation on Unity and Mission (AMIC-UM), and have issued a report, *Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches*.

3. Relationship with Historically African American Methodist Churches

We are cognizant of the fact that The United Methodist Church is one of several expressions of Methodism. Our two churches have been in dialogue with historically African American Methodist churches for nearly forty years. The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion (AME Zion), and Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (CME) have been constituent members of COCU and CUIC along with The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church. Through the Pan-Methodist Commission, The United Methodist Church, AME, AME Zion, CME, African Union Methodist Protestant Church (AUMP), and Union American Methodist Episcopal Church (UAME) worked to formalize a full communion agreement among these

churches in 2012. The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church have consulted with the AME, AME Zion, and CME churches in 2006, 2008, and 2009.

The United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue laments that church divisions in the U.S. have reflected racial and socioeconomic divisions. The dialogue committees have been adamant that conversations between Anglicans and Methodists must address racism as a church-dividing issue. In addition to our common forebears John and Charles Wesley, we also have common forebears in Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, both members of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Due to policies of racial exclusion, Richard Allen would go on to found what would become the African Methodist Episcopal Church, while Absalom Jones would become the first African American priest ordained in The Episcopal Church. We recognize the lasting sin of racism in our society and our churches, and affirm the need for ongoing repentance, truth telling, and work for racial justice and healing.

4. Foundational Principles

We seek the greater unity between our two churches because we believe this is a mandate grounded in Scripture. Jesus calls us into unity for the sake of mission and ministry, so that the world may believe:

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one." (John 17:20-21a NRSV).

Our unity is also grounded in our common baptism:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6 NRSV)

The United Methodist Church engages other Christian churches on the basis of its constitutional affirmation that "The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world, and its very dividedness is a hindrance to its mission in that world" (2016 *Book of Discipline*, Constitution, Preamble). The United Methodist Church understands itself "to be part of Christ's universal church when by adoration, proclamation, and service we become conformed to Christ. We are initiated and incorporated into this community of faith by baptism" (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 102, page 49). Therefore, The United Methodist Church "believes that the Lord of the church is calling Christians

2. See *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, particularly ¶¶ 15-17.

everywhere to strive toward unity; and therefore it will pray, seek, and work for unity at all levels of church life” (2016 *Discipline*, Constitution, Article VI, ¶ 6).

The United Methodist Church seeks formal, full communion relationships with other Christian churches based on the following: a mutual affirmation of one another’s membership in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church “described in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the church’s historic creeds,” recognition of the authenticity of one another’s sacraments and Christian ministry, and a recognition of the validity of each other’s offices of ministry (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 431.1). These relationships commit us to active sharing in mission and ministry as a visible witness to Christian unity.

For over a century, The Episcopal Church has engaged in dialogue with other churches on the basis of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, taking agreement on these foundation principles as the essentials for sharing in mission and ministry with other Christian communions:

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as “containing all things necessary to salvation,” and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ’s Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into Unity.

It is important to note the term used in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral is “historic episcopate.” In its ecumenical dialogues, The Episcopal Church has made important clarifications regarding the historic episcopate, historic succession, and apostolic succession. This term is referenced in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as “the historic episcopate,” with the two terms “historic episcopate” and “historic succession” understood synonymously.

In addition, a major ecumenical breakthrough has been acknowledging the differences between “apostolic succession” and “historic episcopate.” We understand “apostolic succession” to be succession in the apostolic

faith—that is, to believe, preach, and teach the faith that the apostles held. Some churches have retained the apostolic succession of the faith proclaimed by the apostles as well as bishops in historic succession; others have not. The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church have affirmed the relationship between episcopacy and apostolic succession as described in the seminal ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (1982):

The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole. . . . The orderly transmission of the ordained ministry is therefore a powerful expression of the continuity of the Church throughout history; it also underlines the calling of the ordained minister as guardian of the faith. . . . Under the particular historical circumstances of the growing Church in the early centuries, the succession of bishops became one of the ways, together with the transmission of the Gospel and the life of the community, in which the apostolic tradition of the Church was expressed. This succession was understood as serving, symbolizing and guarding the continuity of the apostolic faith and communion.³

Both churches affirm the historic episcopate, in the language of the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* statement, as a “sign, but not a guarantee, of the catholicity, unity, and continuity of the church,” and that the historic episcopate is always in a process of reform in the service of the gospel.

The United Methodist Church provides *episcopē* through an “itinerant general superintendency.” The Council of Bishops provides oversight to the spiritual and temporal work of the church, and bishops are elected in regional representative conferences and subject to assignment.

We declare that we recognize one another as members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in which the gospel is rightly preached and taught; and that the basic teaching of each respective church is consonant with the gospel and is sufficiently compatible.

Affirmations

Both The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church affirm common doctrines and practices on the basis of our authoritative historic documents and formularies:

Our churches proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

3. *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, ¶¶ M35 and M36.

Our churches worship one God as the divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we baptize those who enter the Christian community in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our churches affirm the Holy Scriptures as “containing all things necessary for salvation,” and as the primary rule for the life of the church.

Our churches affirm and use the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds as sufficient summaries of the Christian faith.

Our churches understand and practice the sacrament of holy baptism as initiation into the life of Christ through the church.

Our churches understand and practice the sacrament of the Eucharist (the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion) as a means of divine grace that sustains and deepens our faith.

Our churches continue to worship in ways that reflect our common liturgical and sacramental roots in our authorized liturgies.

Our churches affirm the role of bishops as leaders of the life, work, and mission of the church, as symbols of unity, and as guiding and maintaining the church’s apostolic faith and work.

Our churches affirm the gifts and ministries of all persons as grounded in the grace given in baptism.

Our churches have worked in the last half century to restore the office of deacon as a permanent order for servant ministry in the life of the church.

Our churches affirm the need for prayer and holiness of heart and life as ways of growth in the Christian faith.

Our churches pursue social action and justice as inherent practices of Christian discipleship.

Our churches affirm the unity of the church as the will of Christ for the sake of mission, service, and evangelism.

Our churches affirm that the Scriptures are to be understood today in the light of reasoned reflection on our contemporary experience.

(*Theological Foundation for Full Communion*, pp. 14-15)

5. The Ministry of Laypersons

Our churches believe that the ministry of all people is grounded in baptism, where we share in Christ’s eternal priesthood. We recognize one another’s baptisms into the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. In addition, over the years, we have developed a number of lay ministries. From its beginning as a movement in the Church of England, Methodism has recognized the central importance of lay leadership. In The United Methodist Church, every layperson is called by virtue of baptism to participate in the mission of the Church (2016 *Discipline*, ¶¶ 126, 129). The Church affirms that “the ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ’s outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (2016 *Discipline*, ¶ 127). Lay leaders serve at congregational, district, and conference levels. Laypersons may be trained and certified as lay servants, lay speakers, lay missionaries, lay ministers, and as deaconesses and home missionaries.

The Catechism of The Episcopal Church states that “The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons” (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 855). Baptism is understood as foundation for the ministry of all the baptized, as the people pray that the newly baptized “Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood” (*BCP*, p. 308). In The Episcopal Church, persons may be trained and licensed as a Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist, and Catechist. The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church acknowledge the interchangeability of one another’s lay ministries, always according to the standards and polity of the *Book of Discipline* and the *Constitution and Canons* of the Episcopal Church.

6. The Ministry of Deacons

The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have witnessed a revival of the office of deacon. These are persons ordained to a ministry of Word and Service, serving as icons of the servant ministry of Jesus Christ. As a result of the actions taken by both churches in section 9 below, we affirm the mutual interchangeability of deacons, always according to the standards and polity of each church. We also note that The Episcopal Church has retained the office of deacon for those persons called to the priesthood, while The United Methodist Church no longer ordains persons called to be elders as deacons.

7. The Ministry of Presbyters/Elders

Both of our churches ordain persons to the office of presbyter to exercise a ministry of Word and Sacrament. In The Episcopal Church, the terms *presbyter* and *priest* are most commonly used. In The United Methodist Church, the synonymous term *elder* is used (though presbyter is used by some member churches of the World Methodist Council). The Episcopal Church speaks of clergy “in good standing,” either canonically resident in a diocese or licensed to preside in a particular diocese. The United Methodist Church speaks of elders “in full connection.” We affirm the mutual interchangeability of priests/presbyters in good standing and elders in full connection, always according to the standards and polity of each church.

8. The Ministry of Bishops

We acknowledge and recognize that both churches have adapted the episcopacy to particular circumstances of mission, ministry, and witness. Following the American Revolution, The Episcopal Church adapted the office of bishop to its new missional context: bishops were elected by representative bodies (Diocesan Conventions) and exercised oversight in conjunction with clergy and laypersons. After the American Revolution, Methodists also adapted the episcopal office to the missional needs of their ministerial circumstances and settings. Early Methodism adapted the office of bishop as an itinerant general superintendency, and the name of the largest Methodist body incorporated the word: Methodist Episcopal Church, reflecting this choice of episcopal governance. The United Methodist Church includes among its antecedent denominations the Methodist Protestant Church resulting from a merger in 1939. The Methodist Protestant Church incorporated the Methodist episcopacy at that time as it did not have the office of bishop in its structure. In 1968, The United Methodist Church was created through the merger of The Methodist Church with The Evangelical United Brethren Church, which also had bishops, at which time the churches’ episcopacies were brought together into a unified whole.

In The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church, bishops are consecrated by other bishops and ordain presbyters/elders and deacons. They exercise oversight in a specific geographic area—the diocese or annual

conference—and in conjunction with clergy and laypersons.

We affirm the ministry of bishops in The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church to be adaptations of the episcopate to the needs and concerns of the post-Revolutionary missional context. We recognize the ministries of our bishops as fully valid and authentic.⁴

We lament any ways, whether intentionally or unintentionally, explicitly or implicitly, that Episcopalians may have considered the ministerial orders of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor bodies to be lacking God’s grace.

It is our hope and prayer that in this full communion proposal we may heal these divisions, right the sin of separation from the 1780s, and share in these mutual adaptations of the episcopate for the greater unity of the church in mission and ministry.

9. Actions of Both Churches

Action concerning elders and deacons in full connection of The United Methodist Church

Having affirmed in this proposal the full authenticity of existing ordained ministries in The United Methodist Church, having reached sufficient agreement in faith with the same Church, having declared one another to be members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church (A055, 2006 General Convention), and having agreed that the threefold ministry of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in historic succession will be the future pattern of the one ordained ministry shared corporately within the two Churches in full communion, The Episcopal Church authorizes service of United Methodist deacons and elders as permitted under Article VIII of the Constitution, which permits the service of clergy not ordained by bishops authorized to confer holy orders that are “designated as part of the Covenant or Instrument by which full communion was established, shall be eligible to officiate under this Article.” By sharing in the historic episcopate, we will have fulfilled all four elements of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. The purpose of this action will be to recognize the authenticity of elders and deacons in The United Methodist Church and to permit the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all United Methodist elders in full connection as priests, and all United Methodist deacons in full connection as deacons, in The Episcopal Church

4. *Into All the World*, the 2014 report of the international Anglican-Methodist dialogue, includes an extensive discussion of the distinct exercise of *episcopē* in the Anglican and Methodist traditions (§§ 75-127), concluding that “in light of everything that we have learned about each other . . . there are no church-dividing differences between us in faith, in ordered ministry, in the succession of such ministries, and in the value of episcopacy. . . . To be plain, only one thing remains for churches in our two traditions in order to manifest our unity in Jesus Christ through the interchangeability of ordained ministry, namely for Methodists and Anglicans to come together under the sign of the historic episcopate, for that represents the larger history of transmission of which Methodist Churches are already a part” (§§ 123-124).

without any further ordination or re-ordination or supplemental ordination whatsoever, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation.⁵

Action concerning priests and deacons of The Episcopal Church

Upon adoption of this agreement by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, all priests and deacons of The Episcopal Church are granted full interchangeability and reciprocity as elders and deacons, respectively, in The United Methodist Church without any further action, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation. There are no restrictions requiring a temporary suspension.

Actions concerning bishops of both churches

The two churches pledge to draw closer together by mutually honoring their respective adaptations of the episcopate according to the following pattern:

To share in our mutual adaptations of the episcopate, to embody our conviction that our ministries of bishops are fully valid and authentic, and to broaden and deepen our ecumenical partnerships, both churches commit to the following actions:

The United Methodist Church pledges that, effective January 1, 2022,⁶ consecrations of United Methodist bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full communion partners with The Episcopal Church (the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). One of these three shall be a bishop in The Episcopal Church. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands.

The Episcopal Church pledges that, effective January 1, 2022, ordinations and consecrations of Episcopal bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full communion partners with The United Methodist Church (the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and with at least one United Methodist bishop present. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands.

5. Authorized through Article VIII of the Constitution, this recognition is based on acceptance of all points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, including sharing in the historic episcopate, and is consistent with broader Anglican practice. Furthermore, in 2014, the Church of Ireland recognized Methodist presbyters (elders) as eligible for service as part of a process of sharing in the historic episcopate adopted by the Methodist Church in Ireland, and the Church of England is proposing recognition of Methodist presbyters (elders) as part of sharing in the historic episcopate with the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

6. This date assumes an affirmative vote at the 2021 General Convention of The Episcopal Church and the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. It may need to be adjusted to reflect the year of the actual endorsement and acceptance of this proposal by General Convention and General Conference.

10. Joint Commission

To assist in joint planning for mission, both churches will authorize the establishment of a joint commission, fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches.

This commission will be charged with planning an appropriate liturgy to celebrate the full communion inaugurated by this agreement. This liturgy will acknowledge the pain of division, call for reconciliation and forgiveness for any sins of the past, and look with hope to celebrate the common mission and witness to which we commit ourselves.

Its purpose will also be consultative, to facilitate mutual support and advice as well as common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future. The joint commission will work with the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and liturgical matters as may arise, always subject to approval by the appropriate decision-making bodies of the two churches.

11. Other Relationships

The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church agree to cultivate and maintain active partnership and consultation with one another in the promotion of unity with other churches and closer relations with other faith traditions. Ecumenical and interreligious agreements entered into by one church represented in this agreement with another church or religious group shall not be understood to impose or imply any formal relationship with the other.

12. Conclusion

We give thanks for the gift of unity that is given us through the love of Christ Jesus. We rejoice that this relationship will empower us to more authentically witness to the gospel.

Charles Wesley, a priest in the Church of England, and co-leader with his brother John in the Methodist movement in eighteenth-century England, wrote:

Blest be the dear uniting love
that will not let us part;
our bodies may far off remove,
we still are one in heart.

We all are one who him receive,
and each with each agree,
in him the One, the Truth we live,
blest point of unity!

Partakers of the Savior's grace,
the same in mind and heart,
nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
nor life, nor death can part.

Quadrennial Report of the General Commission on Archives and History

Ponder the rock from which you were cut,
the quarry from which you were dug.
—Isaiah 51:1 *The Message*

The *Book of Discipline* (§ 1703) sets forth the mandate of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) “to promote and care for the historical interests of The United Methodist Church [UMC] at every level.” The commission uniquely blends best-practice archival and records management disciplines alongside creative programmatic offerings that engage the wealth of resources to be found in the denomination’s rich history. The commission’s work is more than passive data collection, maintenance, and management. GCAH collects, safeguards, documents, and communicates source information key to understanding, interpreting, and experiencing authentic United Methodist ethos.

Functionally speaking, the commission archives the records of the General Conference, The UMC’s thirteen general boards and agencies, the Connectional Table, the Council of Bishops, individual episcopal offices, the Judicial Council, and personal papers of nationally and internationally renowned leaders of the church. It is the repository for the seminal Methodist *Books of Discipline* and journals from the late eighteenth century. This archive is the basis for responding to numerous church, nonreligious, and genealogical research requests. The Archives Center is a climate-controlled, secure, state-of-the-art facility that can be digitally accessed anywhere. The commission’s work is done in a professional, competent manner according to the standards of the Society of American Archivists and related organizations. In fulfilling this task, GCAH maintains the transparency, integrity, and accountability expected from the leadership spheres of the denomination and the secular world.

Of equal importance is the commission’s programmatic role. GCAH is tasked with the transmission and interpretation, via all media, of the history of The UMC with special attention to the historic witness made by women and racial and ethnic persons (§ 1703.1,4,5). This task is fulfilled in numerous ways: annual Heritage Sunday resources bring denominational history and tradition to life locally; historical societies exist across the global church; jurisdictional and annual conference Commissions on Archives and History and local church historians are supported and resourced to fulfill disciplinary functions; *Methodist History*, an academic journal for Wesley and Methodist studies, is published quarterly; an exten-

sive awards program encourages students and scholars in research and writing about United Methodist studies; Historic sites and Heritage Landmarks worldwide are registered (§ 1712). Stories about the intersection of past history, present experience, and future impact are published. Fledgling archival centers in Africa and the Philippines have been improved and various historic sites in Central Europe have been cataloged.

Located at the United Methodist Archives Center on the campus of United Methodist Church-related Drew University in Madison, NJ, the commission is home to 35,000 volumes in print and microfilm, 10,000 pamphlets published by Methodist-affiliated traditions, 4,000 hymnbooks and hymnals, 2,000 Methodist-related periodicals, over 150 John Wesley and Wesley family related letters, and 9,000 cubic feet of archival storage including nearly 300,000 photographs. Thus the commission offers a vital connecting link with specialists in the fields of Wesleyan and Methodist studies to its wide range of clients.

Partnership with others for this work is how the agency accomplishes its mission with great efficiency and fiscal prudence. GCAH staff total six—four full time, two part-time (plus a cadre of up to six work-study students). Reserves are invested to generate income. The Archives Center is owned by Drew University. The commission pays for its share of the building costs at a rate of \$10 per square foot, an amount below market rate. Collaboration between Drew University and GCAH has been positive and advantageous since the relationship’s inception in 1982. A careful analysis of fees during this quadrennium resulted in substantial savings to GCAH.

Of The UMC’s Four Areas of Focus, GCAH is most actively engaged in the *Developing Principled Christian Leaders* and *Creating New Places for New People* foci. Effective leadership is grounded in the origins and authentic interpretation of the Wesleyan DNA. Likewise, seekers are drawn to faith communities keenly aware of and faithful to their identity. As caretakers and promoters of the denominational ethos, GCAH continues to develop resources that get to the heart of where United Methodist identity meets everyday life and faith. The commission also awards \$20,000 per year in scholarships, awards, and grants, including one given to a person of color engaged in graduate-level archival study and a new award for development of a UMC history curriculum targeting children and youth.

Other GCAH missional fruitfulness this quadrennium include: award-winning video production celebrating

the 300th anniversary of Bishop Francis Asbury and the 50th anniversary of the birth of The UMC; an Amazing (g)RACE geocaching campaign leading to UMC Heritage sites; processing 800 cubic feet (equivalent to 80 stories in height) of archival material; adding 15 new annual conference historic sites and 5 new Heritage Landmarks—including in the central conferences; providing resource materials for local churches celebrating The UMC's 50th anniversary; hosting best-practice training for conference archivists and conference Commissions on Archives and History; assisting in the publication of 23 books about Methodist history; collaborating on the collection of ethnic church histories in The UMC via The African American Heritage Center and The Committee for the Study of the Hispanic Latino UMC; telling UMC history on social media via a *United Methodist Almanac* featuring the denomination's heroes and memorable events; and providing leadership, with Discipleship Ministries, in an annual Wesley Pilgrimage in England.

Looking to the new quadrennium, GCAH will continue all the above and establish a Local Church Historians

School, connecting congregational heritage with its present mission; discover new revenue streams to strengthen commission sustainability; explore archiving partnerships with other historically Wesleyan denominations; and, at an uncertain and decisive time for The UMC, raise the denomination's resourceful, rich history as a compass and guide for whatever future lies ahead.

Far more than the passive collectors and protectors of old records, the commission's place at the table makes "memory" active and experiential, awakening points of contact between past and present, building toward a future grounded in the best of Wesleyan ethos. GCAH resources The UMC in understanding its past in order to authentically engage the present and build for the future in ways true and faithful to our sources.

Bishop Jeremiah Park, President

Rev. Alfred T. Day, III, General Secretary

The African American Methodist Heritage Center Quadrennial Report 2017-2020

African American Methodist Heritage Center
36 Madison Avenue
PO Box 127
Madison, NJ 07940
(973) 408-3862
aamhc@aol.com
Website: aamhc-umc.org
Established 2001, Advance Code #3020514

Mission Statement: The African American Methodist Heritage Center (AAMHC) provides research, preserves artifacts and other memorabilia, and preserves, protects, and promotes the stories of African American people in Methodism.

Recovering, preserving, and telling the story of African Americans in Methodism is a pilgrimage that challenges the soul, the heart, and the body. Embedded within our souls are the untold struggles for freedom and possibility. Secreted in our hearts are the hopes for opportunity and reality. Wrapped around our bodies are the struggles to realize the full personhood we understand God promises to all believers.

The concept for the AAMHC originated with the National Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) in 2001. Under the leadership of Bishop Forrest C. Stith and Barbara Ricks Thompson, a small group of people moved the concept to reality. With the endorsement of BMCR, the AAMHC was incorporated with an independent board of directors and received IRS approval as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization. From its inception, AAMHC has worked closely with the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH). In 2008, AAMHC entered into a partnership relationship with GCAH and co-located its office on the campus of Drew University. That partnership enables a supportive relationship between the two entities and avoids duplication and replication of ministries.

During these past years there have been several foci on our pilgrimage. One emphasis was on expanding our knowledge base on how to be more proficient in pursuing our mission “. . . to provide research, preserve artifacts . . . and protect and promote the stories of African Americans in Methodism.” Staff participated in several educational experiences, including a Black Archives Matters Seminar at Birdwell Library at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. Rev. Dr. Ian Straker and former board member, Rev. Dr. James Shopshire also participated in the Merging Streams Conference sponsored by the General Commission on Archives and History in Dayton, Ohio. Staff also

participates in an ongoing Pilgrimage Task Force of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference to ensure that local historic African American churches are included in pilgrimage sites. It is a practice that needs to be more widely adopted by the denomination. These experiences and others stress the importance of meaningful goals and persistence in pursuing them. They also provided techniques and contacts for encouraging the recovery of historical evidence.

We have been more intentional about seeking ways to publicize the importance of recovering and appreciating our history. There has been a continuous presence in “By Faith Magazine” so that the African American constituency remembers “to remember.” We publish an online journal and maintain a social media presence, including an updated website and Facebook postings with consistent messages of historical significance. Staff participate in the Black Staff Association as a way of keeping abreast of relevant “happenings” in the denomination while helping sensitize staff to the interests of the center. The “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” video series was developed and produced by AAMHC and continues to be used across the denomination for confirmation and small group studies. The series is available for purchase from our website.

One of the most important (and yet more difficult) efforts is providing consultative services to groups, churches, and pastors across the denomination. The AAMHC has initiated an oral history project to recover from African American lay- and clergypersons and episcopal leaders the stories of their journeys within The United Methodist Church and its predecessor structures. This is, and will be, an ongoing project. Not only will collecting and sharing the stories help us know from whence we have come, but the stories also will help us understand better where we are today. Even more important is that the stories will help guide us to ministries yet undreamed of.

There are so many other initiatives AAMHC seeks to undertake. However, financial constraints are major roadblocks. The center no longer receives funding from the general church, except the grant from the General Commission on Archives and History, which declines annually until it ends in 2020. The limited resources seriously hamper the center’s ability to get out to where people are, to make personal contacts, and to build the historical collection. We understand that memorabilia are personal, almost sacred to people. It is essential to encourage people to share their artifacts with “history” so the future will be informed; it is a challenging endeavor that exceeds our

limited resources. Yet, the AAMHC presses on trusting in God to direct our work so our plans will succeed.

We are extremely grateful to Rev. Fred Day, General Secretary, General Commission of Archives and History, and his team of outstanding professionals, for their continuous support, encouragement, and commitment to telling our story and preserving our history. Current board of trustee members are Rev. Alexis Brown, Rev. David Brown, Dr. Angella Current Felder, Rev. Alfred Day, Dr. Cynthia Bond Hopson, Dr. Jacqui King, Ms. Ruth Lawson, Dr. Tamara Lewis, Rev. Antoine Love, Bishop Ernest Lyght, Dr. Arnold Parks, Dr. Kimberly Russaw, Ms. Mollie Stewart, Dr. Ian Straker, and Dr. John Wright. Ms.

Stewart is the president and Bishop Forrest Stith is the president emeritus. Administrative support is provided by a part-time person, Ms. Carol Travis.

Please visit our website and Facebook page to keep up-to-date with the center's ministry. We welcome your ideas, especially about possible additions to the historical collection, possible sources of financial support, and other ways of helping ensure that the presence of African Americans in Methodism lives into the future.

Ms. Mollie Stewart, President

Ms. Carol Travis, Executive Assistant

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Yesterday, Today, and Forever

A Report of the General Commission on Religion and Race

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2 NIV)

Born of Resistance

By the time the commission was created by action of the 1968 General Conference, the tumultuous winds of change that marked the first half of the twentieth century had upended the conventions, structures, and assumptions of the world's institutions—including the church.

In spring 1968, just days before church lawmakers engaged in their final, contentious debates to end legal, institutionalized racial segregation within and to “unite” the former Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.—the face of the U.S. Civil Rights movement—was assassinated. Coming after decades of demonstrations, community organizing, and protest actions by Black people and supporters who had long battled racial violence and discrimination, the outrage over King's murder ignited rioting and resistance movements across the United States and the world.

Those acts of rage, hope, and determination became center stage at the 1968 General Conference in Dallas. Black church members, joined by young people of various races and other supporters, swarmed the floor of the church's legislative assembly, demanding change. The new United Methodist Church, they declared, must bend to the will of God and God's justice and become a reliable witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of repentance, recompense, and restoration.

It was in that spirit that the delegates in 1968 created the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR). The agency's central mandate was to set a course of action by which The United Methodist Church might raze existing structures and systems that fostered racism, thereby building new ways of being that would include all people and foster equity in every aspect of church life. GCORR was started because United Methodists were being challenged to reckon with their own complicity with deeply rooted, institutionally embedded, and church-sanctioned racialized exclusion of and violence toward Black Americans in particular.

Within five years of its creation, however, emerging voices and critical concerns of other people of color compelled the church, through GCORR, to engage and confront the struggles of all people affected by racism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of injustice.

United Methodist racial/ethnic caucuses, supported by GCORR, emerged in concert with the struggles in the larger society, such as the 1969 walk-out by Mexican-American students in Los Angeles, who were protesting racial inequity in public education. Coupled with an expanding concern about Hispanic immigrants' rights and the rights of migrant farm workers and the birthing of a new “Brown Movement,” or *El Movimiento*, Hispanic United Methodists also formed the MARCHA caucus.

A coalition of Native American United Methodists came together as a church caucus during the same era that Native American activists Leonard Pelletier and Dennis Banks were in the midst of a stand-off at Wounded Knee, on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The stand-off at Wounded Knee opened the eyes of the world to the oppression and marginalization imposed on indigenous people across the Americas.

Meanwhile, with the 1965 repeal of anti-immigration laws that had imposed restrictive immigration quotas aimed at Chinese immigrant workers—and with the later repeal of laws banning mixed-race marriages—Asian and Pacific Island citizens and immigrants also lent their voices to the anti-racism movements of the 1960s and 1970s. College and high school students especially began to coalesce as pan-Asian-American and Pacific Island advocacy groups, a development that was punctuated by a five-month-long strike at San Francisco State University in 1968-69. There, these students joined with Black, Latinx, Native American, and White students in calling for open admissions and establishment of ethnic studies at the university. Not long after, Asian and Pacific Island United Methodists organized, too, and worked in concert with GCORR.

These new movements within and beyond the church gained support, and further pushed the church to reevaluate and challenge its colonial-era mission models, which had promoted charity by White people and assimilation by people of color as the only models for Christianity. They pointed to new models of mission and ministry, citing the biblical ideals of spiritual empowerment, self-determination, and culturally relevant expressions of faith and discipleship.

And so, this crossroads, where old ways of being in church and society were giving way to new realities—from Civil Rights to women's liberation; from protests against the Vietnam War to the emerging awareness of global inequality and the rise of Christian theological perspectives that challenged prevailing Western thought—provided the

backdrop for GCORR's work in the early days. Over the next fifty years, GCORR has served as a champion of anti-racism and racial/ethnic self-determination and empowerment, by providing training, funding, and leadership in elevating the concerns and causes of people of color while challenging the policies, processes, and systems that oppress them.

Today's Realities

In our Spirit-fed, if naïve hope, we United Methodist Christians know that our work of inclusion, diversity, and flourishing for all people remains unfinished, even after fifty years of labor. Immigrants and refugees around the world are shuffled about, shunned, and subjected to sometimes lethal violence by those—including too many people of faith—who stereotype them as grasping, acquisitive, and dangerous beings who threaten to drain resources from their host communities.

Black and Brown people in the United States—especially young males—are still disproportionately locked up in jails and prisons and die of violence at a much higher rate than that of their White counterparts. And those who live in poverty are even more at risk. Yet, too many United Methodist clergy, laity, and faith communities struggle to intercede with authentic concern, prayer, partnership, and courageous action.

Meanwhile, in communities across the globe, yawning poverty, hunger, disease, inter-ethnic violence, and racially motivated exploitation by corporate predators threaten the very lifeblood of whole communities. How are United Methodists employing God's prophetic word and actions on behalf of the suffering?

And what are laity and clergy doing in their own congregations, conferences, and at the denominational level to complete our work of tearing down institutional and ideological walls so that we, the body of Christ, might get on with the work and witness on behalf of the God of the ages?

GCORR has stayed the course of calling out racial injustice and working with congregational and connectional leaders to dismantle institutional racism and eradicate White supremacy, so that The United Methodist Church can get on with the work of nurturing souls for Christ.

Further, GCORR is now a sought-after partner in other anti-bias efforts within and beyond our church. After the specially called 2019 General Conference imposed more strident prohibitions against full participation of LGBTQIA+ persons in the life of the church, GCORR vowed publicly to embrace and stand with all members of God's family who experience oppression of any kind.

Most recently, in support of—and in cooperation with—United Methodists with physical, developmental, and mental disabilities, GCORR is partnering with the Disability Ministries Committee. This churchwide entity will operate under the auspices of the General Commission on Religion and Race, in concert with other global denominational agencies and annual conferences.

Additionally, during the 2017-2020 quadrennium, the commission has connected two hundred United Methodist clergy in cross-racial/cross-cultural ministries for mutual learning and networking. The commission also created resources to help seminarians, clergy, and laity identify and address "implicit bias" through a workbook and online course.

GCORR often collaborates with annual conferences across the connection, like the Upper New York Annual Conference where the agency developed a six-session anti-racism curriculum for congregations and the three episcopal areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo where GCORR helped to lead conversations addressing intertribal conflict. In addition, GCORR has coached bishops and cabinets on how to foster successful cross-racial clergy appointments and cross-cultural ministries, and engaged the perspectives of U.S. people of color and people from Africa and the Philippines into the church's ongoing discourse about the status and role of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex by creating a series of TED Talk-styled online videos with study guides. These are but a few of GCORR's accomplishments this quadrennium.

Battling Retrenchment in the Fight Against Racism

The commission's foundational work to address systemic racial and cultural bias took on renewed urgency, starting in 2016, with the increased global strife and subsequent displacement of people forced to flee political violence and economic crises.

The call for stronger human rights protections for people immigrating to the United States and economic fears by U.S. citizens has led to cultural and political clashes even in our church pews, while refugee families faced a backlash of anti-immigrant sentiment across Europe and the United States.

GCORR staff members, board members, and supporters tackled these concerns head-on, by both joining in and leading churchwide learning opportunities to help United Methodist Christians better understand and take action according to the calling of their faith. In an unprecedented move, the commission suspended business as usual during its February 2017 meeting to meet with

people at the U.S.-Mexico border, including United Methodists and other Christians in ministry with refugees and U.S. military personnel affected by the strife.

The commission also joined with Native American activists to champion the sovereignty of indigenous lands, particularly during 2016-2017 protests against a corporation attempting to pump crude oil across Native land in South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois. Commission General Secretary Erin M. Hawkins joined the Rev. David Wilson of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and other Native leaders in opposing the pipeline because it threatened local water supplies and threatened the religious rights of the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes.

The Movement Will Never Die

For more than fifty years, GCORR has worked for greater inclusion and equity at all levels of the church. It has highlighted patterns of racial bias, spoken truth to denominational powers about the destructive impact of racism on the church, and equipped United Methodist and other leaders to combat racism and to embrace cultural diversity.

Yet, at the time when the world desperately needs a prophetic, nimble, mission-focused, loving body of Christ to embrace unity of purpose and disciple-making, The United Methodist Church is, again, preoccupied with division and exclusion. Instead of leaning on God's understanding of how we might live and work together in love and charity with our neighbors, and instead of turning our eyes outward to God's hungry and hurting, United Methodists are, as is our tendency, inwardly focused on how to preserve the institution in the midst of an impending denominational split or splinter. And the often unexpressed but deeply held conviction of many who have historically lived on the margins of this denomination is that our current state as a church is motivated less by theological and ideological disagreements and more by the ongoing exercise of White supremacy and colonialism, which seeks to hoard power, protect privilege, and amass proceeds (par-

ticularly money and property) at the expense of whoever lives outside of the protection that the insidious construct of whiteness offers. Our current experience is simply a repeat of our split over slavery in 1844 and the jettisoning of Blacks when the Central Jurisdiction was created in 1939.

This denomination as we have known it, like other social institutions, is crumbling around us because of our continued disobedience to the commandment to love God and love neighbor as we love ourselves, which is the spiritual root of all oppression. Therefore, the renewing work of followers of Jesus Christ must become larger and more urgent than trying to convince a resistant denomination to deal with its insidious attachment to power and domination, and to join with the voices in our churches and communities that believe and are proactively engaging the conviction that we must actively resist evil in all of its forms. The General Commission on Religion and Race is preparing for a future where the mission and work is owned by the people, not systems, and true self-determination is a core principle that defines our organizing.

The good news is that people all over the church are waking up to the destructive nature of oppression. United Methodists of good will around the world are fully aware that our unwillingness to reason together as God's inextricably joined family must give way to full obedience to God. It is only when the church and its people start living into the full promise of God's love, God's grace, and God's justice intended for the flourishing of all God's people, that we will be the church we are all called to be and that we know we can become.

But first, love must replace fear. Love must replace legal wrangling. Love must replace hate. Love must replace the false narrative that there is not enough grace, divinity, welcome, or resources for all people to live together in a way that honors the God-given gift of diversity.

Perhaps the division that we are experiencing in The United Methodist Church is an opportunity to recognize and address once and for all the insidious realities of racialized power and privilege that have been a dominating force in this denomination and its predecessor bodies and instead choose a more excellent way.

Report of United Methodist Communications to the 2020 General Conference

United Methodist Communications uses the power of communication to enhance ministry, utilizing all available means to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Like John Wesley, we look upon the world as our parish. Communication touches virtually every ministry of the church. Here are some of the highlights as we lived out our mission this quadrennium.

Engaging People with the Story of God's Work through The UMC

We tell the stories of how the denomination is making disciples of Jesus Christ, changing lives, and working in the Four Areas of Focus. We provide information, inspiration, and news that share the life and ministry of local churches across the globe.

Through our national advertising/evangelism campaign for spiritual seekers, we have been able to keep the awareness levels of denomination high at 94 percent of U.S. adults surveyed. In 2017 and 2018, our TV, radio, print, digital, and outdoor advertising created nearly 923 million impressions. This quadrennium, we expanded our advertising internationally into the Philippines and Nigeria.

We create and place stories in the mainstream media to raise awareness of our ministries and our values, reflect the church to the world, and amplify its voice. Experiential campaigns like the True Meaning of Christmas tour provide opportunities to meet people in their communities. The tour also garnered over two hundred positive media placements.

We focus on maintaining clear channels for communicating with our distinct audiences: church members, church leaders, and spiritual seekers. This delineation allows us to serve groups with different needs in ways that are relevant and useful for each, yet unified by a comprehensive strategy. Delivery channels for each audience include a website, an e-newsletter, and social media. We also created a separate channel to differentiate the independent journalism work of United Methodist News, which offers objective coverage of the denomination.

Nearly nine million people visit our member website, UMC.org, every year. With the addition of new websites for ResourceUMC.org and UMNews.org, our total reach is approximately double that number.

In a survey of recipients of our member e-newsletter, UMNOW, 88 percent said it increased a feeling of connection with other United Methodists, while 81 percent said

it helped them grow in their faith. Ninety-seven percent of respondents to a survey about the UMNews Daily/Weekly Digest said they were more informed on denominational news, and 93 percent felt more connected to The UMC.

Our social media following has tripled over the last four years with 1.575 million followers on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram, and we continue to see high engagement rates.

We use many different storytelling formats: short and long form content, animation, photography, audio, and video. As a global church, we've placed a new focus on communicating in the languages of the church. Each of our core communication channels is multilingual. We develop and distribute content in English, French, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Our hope is that these stories engage people, nourish their spiritual lives, and move them to action: to be in relationship with Jesus Christ; to volunteer, give, or get involved through local churches.

Equipping Leaders at All Levels of the Church

We work to equip leaders of The United Methodist Church at all levels to be effective communicators as we seek to grow the church in the twenty-first century. Eighty-seven percent of pastors surveyed said United Methodist Communications' work is valuable to the church.

We provide online and face-to-face training across the global UMC connection—approximately 4,500 people annually. Courses included social and digital media ministry, internal and external communications, and marketing, engaging volunteers and seekers, welcoming, and more. Additionally, awareness campaigns, resource kits, and training opportunities equip church leaders to encourage connectional giving, including recent workshops in Africa and the Philippines.

We provide communication resources and tools for church leaders, including a new leader-focused website, ResourceUMC.org, a centralized portal that provides quick access to ministry resources from across the general church. The easy-to-navigate website saves time and provides a robust mix of insightful materials that encourage and inspire those in leadership roles. Companion Facebook and Twitter channels provide a place for leaders to interact, share with, and learn from one another, while "The Source" e-newsletter updates users about timely content.

The MyCom e-newsletter delivers communication-focused tips and tools to more than fifty thousand subscribers. Sixty-two percent of recipients credit this e-newsletter for improvement in their church's outreach and communications.

Claiming Our Role as the Strategic Communications and Marketing Agency for the Global United Methodist Church

United Methodist Communications employs research to assess changing communications needs, behaviors, and attitudes. Using these insights, we developed a comprehensive strategy to guide the communication efforts of the denomination and coordinate communication.

We work collaboratively with other church agencies to provide strategic direction and consultation to support the initiatives and ministries of the global church, including the Areas of Focus. For example, we work with the General Board of Global Ministries to provide marketing support for the Abundant Health Initiative. We also work in partnership with other agencies to promote the apportioned funds and Special Sundays.

As part of our strategy, we invested in new customer relationship management and web content management systems. These systems enable us to customize communications based on each person's preferences and deliver dynamic content to the appropriate audiences. As a result, we've seen exceptionally high open rates in our email communications.

We are working in partnership with other general agencies to further align communications efforts and have offered these systems to other agencies as a way to reduce redundant costs and streamline communications.

We've gone more digital in our strategy, making difficult decisions along the way such as ending our print publications to be good stewards of church resources and discontinuing efforts not at the core of our communications ministry.

Supporting Local Churches

We place a focus on supporting local churches through communication, outreach, and marketing services. These include social media consultation and audits, website development, media buying and graphic design, training on web/social analytic tracking, and event consultation.

We served 5,298 churches over the past 36 months. As an example, 92 percent of those who used our Advent materials said they helped improve their church communications.

Growing Our Global Footprint

We seek to meet the communications challenges and needs of a diverse, worldwide, and multilingual church. Our website and social media channels have global reach.

From internet connectivity for episcopal offices to our partnership with the United Methodist Radio Network, we are building capacity for the church to communicate and share the gospel better globally. We offer the UMConnect text and voice message platform to reach more people in the central conferences.

One of our ongoing goals is to include information on every local church in The United Methodist Church connection in our Find-A-Church online database. We are working diligently to add central conference churches.

Partnerships with church communicators around the world have enhanced news and information sharing, representing all the faces and voices of our global church. We work with correspondents across Europe, Africa, and the Philippines, as well as in other autonomous global Methodist and Wesleyan denominations.

As we move forward, we will seek to fulfill our mission of communicating all the good we can, in all the ways we can, to all the people we can, in all the places we can.

Quadrennial Report of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

General Conference 2020

In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal.

—Galatians 3:28 *The Message*

The purpose of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) is to “challenge The United Methodist Church . . . to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the Church's life” (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 2102). We began the quadrennium by examining our mandates and evaluating their relevance, as well as our capacity to create and deliver resources capable of making a difference across the connection.

The quadrennium had barely begun when awareness of the continued inequity of women in the church and in the world increased dramatically due to the #metoo movement. The timing of this movement coincided with our receipt of a grant from the Connectional Table for expansion of our Leadership and Sexual Ethics work into the central conferences. We honored this grant as an opportunity to multiply our work akin to Jesus' directive in the parable of the talents, Matthew 25:14-30.

Leadership and Accountability

Challenging The UMC requires that we collect and evaluate data to determine whether a challenge is justified. Data frames our monitoring work. This quadrennium we completed multiple research projects and provided traditional monitoring at General Conference 2019.

In 2017 in collaboration with Wespeth, GCSRW completed a salary study that indicated that female clergy within the United States were paid \$.84/\$1.00 compared with male clergy. The results of this study were published in our “Women by the Numbers” series, causing several bishops to ask us to repeat this study and annual conferences to explore their inequities.

We also performed a sexual harassment study to compare the current state of sexual misconduct within The UMC to the findings in prior studies. The results were published and indicated that the abuse of power exhibited through sexual misconduct continues across the church and in the world. Our initial study was limited to the Unit-

ed States as it was intended to be a comparative study, but the climate of the #metoo and #churchtoo movements exposed the need to collect data in the central conferences. We began collection of data and published preliminary findings indicating the existence of sexual misconduct across the global church.

Our free trainings and resources are available to all. They were specifically shared with bishops, annual conferences, the African Clergy Women's Association, the North Katanga Annual Conference, and the summit for Women Leaders in Eurasia, and they will be shared at the Women's Leadership Summit to be held in Chicago in August of 2020.

One of our profound discoveries this quadrennium was that key paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline* which relate to the equality of women are not translated into the official languages for use in trainings. We had the sections translated and they are available on our website. We continued providing additional translations of our *Women Called to Ministry* theological study and created a video to accompany our expansive language resource, *God of the Bible*.

At General Conference 2019, our president, Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, led a plenary training that explained monitoring and raised awareness of being intentional in how we treat, listen to, and speak with one another. We collected data on those chosen to speak and reported the findings to the church through the *Daily Christian Advocate*. We will be providing trainings to leadership and monitoring the body at General Conference 2020 and issuing reports of our findings.

Finally, we supported the collection and publication of the stories of *Women Bishops of The United Methodist Church: Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit*. This collection represents messages of hope exhibited by the example and perseverance of our female episcopal leadership.

Sexual Ethics and Advocacy

Our Sexual Ethics and Advocacy ministry is only as effective as the support of episcopal leadership. A pivotal moment occurred this quadrennium with the issuance of a joint statement by the Council of Bishops and our agency naming sexual misconduct as a sin. In response to the #metoo and #churchtoo movements, the statement identified the ministry of GCSRW as providing trainings

and resources seeking both accountability for perpetrators and healing for victims and committing The UMC to justice. The Council further identified the need for trainings, policies, and resources within its own ranks and GCSRW assisted with development of those.

GCSRW provided help and guidance to victims and church leaders through the confidential “hotline” and the umsexualethics.org website. GCSRW coordinated the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force, which convened the “Do No Harm” event in 2018. All but four annual conferences in the United States sent representatives to be trained. Sessions included clergy self-care and personal boundaries, development and staffing of response teams, supervisory and judicial complaint processes, advocacy and healing for the victims, and providing pastoral ministry to the accused.

The need for this training to be replicated across the central conferences led to our development of a strategic plan to expand our sexual ethics and advocacy work within the capacity of our staff and agency through the following steps: 1) listening to identify and assess pilot areas with supportive episcopal leadership; 2) providing scholarships for representatives to attend “Do No Harm”; 3) developing contextual resources; 4) supporting local trainings; 5) guiding development of strategic plans for ministry.

Our work in the pilot areas included the following: boundaries trainings in Peru (in collaboration with Global Ministries), Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, North Katanga; and a mini version of “Do No Harm” in the Philippines Central Conference with all three episcopal areas represented.

The trainings from the “Do No Harm” event together with the following resources are available for free on our website: the *#MeToo* tool kit; the *Integrity in Ministry* study, which explores being in right relationship with God, self, and others; the *Understanding the Role of Power* brochure; and the animated film *Whisper with Stones*,

which explores the abuse of power manifested through sexual misconduct (translated into ten languages).

Legislation, Past and Present

In 2016, General Conference passed legislation promulgated by GCSRW that sought to affirmatively end discrimination against women in the membership of The UMC by adding the classification of “gender” to Paragraph 4, Article IV of the Constitution. The amendment passed, but when the votes were taken across the connection, ratification failed. The results were devastating to women (and men who support equality) across the church. Our Board of Directors is again proposing legislation to amend Paragraph 4, Article IV to affirmatively state that we as a church will not discriminate against women because of their gender in determining membership within The United Methodist Church.

We are also proposing legislation related to several resolutions: Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct (#2043), Sexual Misconduct within the Ministerial Relationship (#2044), Prevention of the Use of Pornography within the Church (New), Eradication of Sexism within the Church (#3443), and an Apology to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC (New).

Conclusion

Our mantra at GCSRW is “our programs are our people.” This quadrennium has given us the opportunity to maximize the talents of our staff and the resources entrusted to us by developing productive ministries for the broader connection. We continue to take what has been invested in our ministries and create free resources for use across the church. In multiplying the talents that we have been given, we trust that Christ and the church find us faithful.

For links to the stories and resources identified in this report, please visit www.gcsrw.org and open the tab labeled General Conference.

United Methodist Women 2017-2020 Quadrennial Report

A Summary

The 2017-2020 quadrennium was a time of celebration and building for United Methodist Women, as we commemorated our 150th anniversary by gleaning lessons from our history, innovating our programs, organizing for growth, and strengthening relationships with U.S. and international partners.

United Methodist Women is the women's mission organization within The United Methodist Church. It is guided by a twenty-five-member board of directors comprised of United Methodist Women members and an eighty-member Program Advisory Group with representatives from each conference's United Methodist Women and key United Methodist and international partners. Our total program is mission, and for 150 years and counting United Methodist Women has been member-supported, receiving no World Service funds. We are financially independent, and focused on our work of turning our faith, hope, and love into action to improve life for women, children, and youth. On the local, district, and conference levels, United Methodist Women members commit to a purpose:

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the Church. (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 256.5, Article 3)

As members, we gather to grow in our faith together as we reach out to our communities as volunteers and supporters of local domestic violence shelters, senior residences, food pantries, public schools, and National Mission Institutions (NMI).

On the national level, United Methodist Women is charged with interpreting the purpose for the organization and pushing out its ministries:

. . . United Methodist Women shall support ministry with and advocate for the oppressed and dispossessed with special attention to the needs of women, children and youth; shall work to build a supportive community among women; and shall engage in activities that foster growth in the Christian faith, mission education, and Christian social involvement throughout the organization. (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 1902)

United Methodist Women fulfills this charge with programs reflective of our **core commitments to spiritual growth, leadership development, transformative education, and service and advocacy**, and with organizing to enhance membership and strengthen relationships with United Methodist and ecumenical mission partners. From 2017 to 2020 United Methodist Women allocated more than \$40 million for member development programs, support for the more than ninety NMIs and projects, and international ministries and scholarships, as well as worked on our priority issues. Our 2017-2020 priority issues were Climate Justice; Maternal and Child Health; Ending Mass Incarceration/Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline; and Economic Inequality/A Living Wage for All.

Assembly

The quadrennial Assembly is a comprehensive experience of United Methodist Women's purpose, priorities, and programs.

More than six thousand members and friends came to "The Power of Bold" 2018 United Methodist Women Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, May 18-20. About six hundred of us came a day early for a pre-Assembly Ubuntu Day of Service and Advocacy to volunteer at local nonprofits and later join thirteen area faith, labor, and community groups at a Living Wage for All rally in front of the Ohio Statehouse.

Assembly featured daily plenary Bible studies on the story of Jesus' mother, Mary, with tap dancers helping interpret the scriptural text. Participants also heard from climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee, Children's Defense Fund President Marian Wright Edelman, *The New Jim Crow* author Michelle Alexander, and young women activists Tamika Mallory, national co-organizer of the Women's March, and United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Hannah Bonner.

Assembly offered more than ninety different workshops, an Experience Hall with action stations on the priority issues, and opportunities for conversation with Regional Missionaries, international guests, NMI leaders, and other members engaged in local mission.

During Assembly, twenty-four women from nineteen U.S. conferences were consecrated as deaconesses. Deaconess/Home Missioner is a United Methodist lay order administered by United Methodist Women for women and men in fulltime ministries of love, justice, and service.

A Total Program of Mission

Spiritual growth, leadership development, transformative education, and service and advocacy are key to the identity of United Methodist Women and so are embedded in all of our programs.

Mission U Is an Example.

Mission u events are opportunities for United Methodist Women members, friends, and the wider church to grow in their faith as they learn about the world God so loves and calls them to serve. Each year Mission u offers classes on a spiritual growth theme, and a geographic area and a contemporary issue from a Christian perspective. United Methodist Women's National Office **prepares the Mission u study materials, trains conference United Methodist Women leaders** to organize the events in their area and **certifies study leaders** to facilitate the studies. United Methodist and ecumenical partners are often consulted for the studies and enlisted as the Mission u study leaders.

This kind of educational event is transformative, changing participants' lives as they prepare to engage the world.

This quadrennium more than forty thousand people participated Mission u events in conferences, districts, and local United Methodist Women units around the country.

Mission u studies this quadrennium were:

2017

- **Spiritual Growth:** Living as a Covenant Community
- **Geographic:** Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church
- **Issue:** Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action

2018

- **Spiritual Growth:** Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living
- **Issue:** What About Our Money? A Faith Response
- **Geographic:** Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church

2019

- **Spiritual Growth:** Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship
- **Special Study:** Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission.
- **Issue:** What About Our Money: A Faith Response

2020

- **Spiritual Growth:** Finding peace in the midst of anxiety
- **Issue:** Mass incarceration and the School to Prison Pipeline.
- **Special Study:** Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission

Youth and children studies are prepared for selected themes.

Leadership Development Days are another example of United Methodist Women embedding our core commitments in our programming.

Each year United Methodist Women trains members to organize in their areas at Leadership Development Days (LDD), weekends of skill-building, networking, and worship. This quadrennium, nearly two thousand conference and district leaders participated in LDD in Charlotte, North Carolina; St. Louis, Missouri; and Tempe, Arizona.

This quadrennium United Methodist Women expanded LDD's reach with online offerings of key workshops.

Each of these events—Assembly, Mission u, and LDD—includes advocacy “actions.” Advocacy actions this quadrennium have included:

- **Climate Justice:** Writing letters to Ford Motor Company and Chevron urging each to support new industry standards to reduce their carbon emissions.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Writing letters to U.S. legislators in support of federal action to curb U.S. maternal mortality.
- **Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline:** “Holy Disruption” training women to help on the school to prison pipeline.
- **Living Wage:** Writing letters to support Florida farmworkers in campaigns to get fast food chains to sign the Fair Food Program agreement to ensure better wages and working conditions.
- **Advocacy** for immigrant children separated from their families and detained while seeking asylum at the U.S. southern border.

Strengthening Partnerships

United Methodist Women also marked its 150th anniversary with efforts to strengthen relationships with vital, often historic, United Methodist and ecumenical partners in the United States and internationally.

In the United States, our key among our mission partners are the more than ninety NMIs, which are community and health care centers, residential programs, and

colleges. Each year, NMIs that are residences, and community and health care centers serve more than 205,042 persons including:

- 59,275 women over 18 years old
- 22,572 children 0-12 years old
- 20,972 youth age 13 to 18
- 5,132 mothers with children under 5 years old
- 8,226 persons with disabilities
- 52,416 families.

Internationally, United Methodist Women has supported mission partners serving women, children, and youth in nearly one hundred countries. Still, our international presence is driven by the work of nine Regional Missionaries and regional staff who partner with Methodist and United Methodist Women organizations in twenty-one African countries, twenty-four annual conference of the Philippines, twelve countries in the Caribbean, and ten countries of Latin America, through program and mission leadership.

Regional Missionaries, staff, Women's Desk coordinators and U.S. United Methodist Women leaders organized three consultations with sister organizations this quadrennium:

- "Women Transforming the World," which brought women from twenty-one African nations to Maputo, Mozambique, in October 2017 for networking and leadership development.
- "Looking Forward: Women Transcending Boundaries in Solidarity," which brought seventy women

leaders of the Philippines Central Conference, regional missionaries, and staff to Manila to discuss challenges and mission opportunities with women, children, and youth.

- A post-Assembly consultation with leaders of international Methodist and United Methodist women at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City in May 2018.

2020 Legislation

United Methodist Women, moving forward in mission with women, children, and youth, is bringing four pieces of legislation to the 2020 General Conference for adoption:

- **Children's Sabbath**—Adds the third Sunday in October to the church calendar as The United Methodist Church's U.S. observance of Children's Sabbath.
- **The Girl Child**—Calls the church to engage in advocacy to rectify conditions that limit girls from reaching their fullest potential in healthy environments.
- **The Status of Women: Toward Realizing Human Rights for All Women**—Calls on the church to work for women's global equality in education, health, violence against women, and other areas.
- **Voter Rights Protection in the U.S.**—Calls attention to the disproportionate impact of voter suppression and for all communities to have access to full and equitable rights in the voting polls.

Quadrennial Report of the General Commission on United Methodist Men

A twenty-member board of directors guides seven full-time staff members and one part-time staff member based in Nashville. Their ministry is aided by four part-time staff members deployed in other states.

The commission raises 75 percent of its operating budget through local church charters and contributions from individuals. The remaining 25 percent comes from the World Service Fund.

The commission provides tools and resources for ministries to men and youth through the www.gcumm.org website, workshops, conferences, webinars, a bimonthly e-letter, and a quarterly e-magazine available to men around the world.

The 2017 National Gathering of United Methodist Men in Indianapolis included four plenary addresses, nineteen workshops, and three mission projects. During the session, Kevin Watson, author of *The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience*, introduced Christian conferencing in small groups as one of the essential practices initiated by John Wesley. In subsequent years, hundreds of groups of ten to twelve men have been meeting weekly, frequently through electronic methods. The meetings focus on transformation, not information. The content is on the participants' lives with God.

During the 2015-2019 quadrennium, the commission worked with the YWCA of Middle Tennessee to create *Amending through Faith*, an eight-week study designed to help men combat a male culture that treats women as sexual objects, in order to decrease the incidents of domestic violence. Four hundred men across the connection participated in the study in the 2018 introductory year.

During the quadrennium, General Secretary Gil Hanke expanded the commission's relationship with the Association of Directors of Connectional Ministries.

To expand its outreach to men and young people, the commission works with twenty affiliate or endorsed organizations vetted by the board of directors of the commission. Examples of these organizations having positive impacts on local congregations are:

- **The Society of St Andrew**, an agency that provided 7.6 million servings of food in 2018. In the same year, 30,684 volunteers gleaned 16.2 million pounds of produce from farmers' fields and orchards;
- **Programs of Religious Activities with Youth** that provided 4,874 United Methodist youth with four age-based Christian classes and awards;

- **Strength for Service**, a nondenominational ministry created by the commission that provided 40,000 copies of books of daily devotions for police officers, firefighters, and other first responders;
- **Mobility Worldwide**, an international organization that provided 70,000 hand-crank carts for people in developing nations without the ability to walk;
- **The Upper Room Prayer Line**, a ministry supported by United Methodist Men through conference prayer advocates. In 2018, the prayer line received 264,940 prayer requests. In 2019, the phone line was discontinued, and UM Men continue their financial support and now respond to requests posted on the online Prayer Wall;
- **Stop Hunger Now**, an international ministry that has provided 100 million pre-packaged dehydrated meals in United Methodist churches since 2005;
- **Boy Scouts of America**. At the beginning of 2020, the denomination is now the largest charter partner with 320,064 young people in 9,334 churches;
- **Girl Scouts of the USA**, a national ministry that encourages participation in GIRL (go getter, innovator, risk-taker and leader).

The commission operates the Center for Men's Ministry and the Center for Scouting Ministries.

The Center for Men's Ministry

The center provides workshops, programs, seminars, and conferences to help men develop a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Dr. Rick Vance serves as director of the center. He works with jurisdictional, conference, district, and local church presidents of United Methodist Men to expand their outreach beyond the small group that routinely meets for meals to a ministry that includes men within and beyond the walls of the church. During the quadrennium, Vance traveled to Germany to speak about men's ministry. He worked with organizations of United Methodist Men and general agencies to strengthen their ministries to younger men, and he collaborated with members of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders to develop and support ministries in their conferences.

Conference presidents meet annually for training experiences in Nashville. These events provide opportunities for newly elected presidents to increase their understanding of their roles and to discover creative ways to reach younger men.

The center has trained and certified thirty-four men to serve as men's ministry specialists who encourage neighboring churches to enrich their ministries to men.

Local churches are encouraged annually to charter their men's ministry.

The Center for Scouting Ministries

Steven Scheid serves as director of the center, and he works with conference directors of scouting ministry and more than three hundred scouting ministry specialists to encourage churches to minister to young people in their communities through Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire, and Big Brothers–Big Sisters. An estimated 1.7 million participants and family members are impacted by these ministries to young people.

During the quadrennium the center recruited chaplains for the National BSA Jamboree, hosted a space in the Faith and Beliefs tent at the Summit Bechtel site in West Virginia, and conducted a United Methodist Communion service for some eight hundred Scouts.

The center also sponsors annual training experiences at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Some fifty adult leaders participated in each of the 2018 and 2019 events.

During the quadrennium, Scheid encouraged churches in the Western Jurisdiction to adopt Scouts of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, following the decision of that church to drop Boy Scouts at the end of 2019.

For more information, please visit www.gcumm.org or call 866-297-4312. We are here to help you and members of your church.

2020 Quadrennial Report of the JUSTPEACE Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation

Mission, Background, and Origins

The mission of The JUSTPEACE Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation is “to engage conflict constructively in ways that strive for justice, reconciliation, resource preservation and restoration of community in and through The United Methodist Church and with the Church universal to the world in which we live” (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 2401.1). Created by the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) in consultation with The Council of Bishops in 2000, JUSTPEACE came into being in the midst of destructive conflict in The United Methodist Church marked by lawsuits, church trials, wounded people, ruptures of communion, and resource depletion.

JUSTPEACE was overwhelmingly affirmed by the 2004 General Conference, a sign of the deep yearning among United Methodists for a better way to engage conflict. JUSTPEACE is grateful to those persons, entities, and foundations that have invested generously in the ministry during the past years. The board of directors of JUSTPEACE acknowledges the supportive relationships with GCFA, providing financial services, and with the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS), contributing building services. The offices of JUSTPEACE are located in Washington, D.C. in the USA.

An Independent Entity, Vision, and Transitions

JUSTPEACE has an independent board of directors aimed at positioning JUSTPEACE as an impartial entity in the life of the connection. An incorporated resource of The United Methodist Church, JUSTPEACE has historically provided direct services in transforming conflicts, resolving disputes, and assisting with education and training. Seeking a sustainable path for ministry, the JUST-

PEACE board of directors shifted the business model and manner of staffing and delivering resources in 2017.

As United Methodists continue to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, the connection of people called United Methodists is also being transformed. Experiencing conflict along with changes within many communities of faith is inevitable. JUSTPEACE envisions sustained networks of faithful leaders marked by competencies and experiences with conflict transformation, peace building, cultural competency, trauma healing, and restorative justice who are no more than a personal contact or two away—whether in person, by phone, electronic communication, or social media.

Much vital ministry today involves both local and global self-organizing and collaboration to adapt resources to specific contexts. As a **convener** and **connector**, JUSTPEACE seeks to leverage human resources that are engaged and can become a living and sustained web of conflict transformation resources throughout the United Methodist connection. Offering a **clearinghouse** of information and tools for assessing and discovering new resources establishes an online center for continuing to cultivate leaders who are proficient in dealing with conflict and also serve as signs of a faith-focused way of discipleship that leads to reconciliation and life restored.

Future

In a world where conflict, strife, harm, and deep divisions are the landscape in which many of us reside, there seems to be a yearning for a way to engage well and focus on that which can be life-giving—as so much that we experience can be life-depleting. At the heart of our call as JUSTPEACE is reclaiming the ministry of reconciliation as central to our Christian discipleship and critical to thriving ministries.

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶5.

Petition Number: 20332-IC-¶5-C-G; Hawkins, Erin
- Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on
Religion and Race.

Racial Justice

Article V. *Racial Justice* - The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God's goodness and love, God created all persons the value of each person as God's a unique and beloved children. child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places. Racism opposes God's law, goodness, and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy, and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity, and undermine God's work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege, and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.

Rationale:

The sin of racism, fueled by white privilege and colonialism, is a continual a scourge on The United Methodist Church and on society, which must not be allowed to continue. The language proposed in this petition to amend the Constitution is more direct and unequivocal in both denouncing racism and

¶641.

Petition Number: 20334-IC-¶641; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Local Church Records and Disaffiliation or Division

Amend by addition to ¶ 641:

In the case of disaffiliating churches, the conference Commission on Archives and History will establish a plan whereby the records of said churches would be copied and maintained at the annual conference archives, with costs of copying to be borne by the disaffiliating congregation.

In the case of a wider separation, resulting in the dissolution or division of an annual conference, each annual conference will establish a plan whereby its archival holdings will be maintained and supported by subsequent bodies, conferences, or disaffiliated churches.

Rationale:

Whereas there is potential for The United Methodist Church to divide or allow local congregations to disaffiliate (as per ¶ 2553);

And, whereas, such events may result in the loss of critical local church and annual conference records bearing witness to the prior ministry and mission of The United Methodist

¶641.1.

Petition Number: 20333-IC-¶641.1; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Adding "Withdrawn" and "Disaffiliated"

Amend ¶ 641.1:

. . . to provide for the permanent safekeeping of the historical records of all abandoned, or disaffiliated, discontinued, or withdrawn churches in the bounds of the annual conference and its antecedents. . . .

Rationale:

Given the possibility of potential exit ramps from The UMC or dissolution of same, GCAH, in naming conditions of potential exit want to insure that churches departing The UMC will have church records preserved.

¶1701.

Petition Number: 20677-IC-¶1701-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Move GCAH into GCFA

To discontinue GCAH and assign its duties to GCFA, take the following action:

Delete ¶¶ 1701-1712 in their entirety.

Amend ¶ 264 as follows:

¶ 264.1. *Heritage Sunday*—Heritage Sunday shall be observed on Aldersgate Day (May 24), or the Sunday preceding that date (see Historical Statement, page 10). The day provides an opportunity for reflection on heritage, celebration of where the church has been, how it understands itself as it shapes us today, and the meaning of Christian conferencing. Heritage Sunday calls the church to remember the past by committing itself to the continuing call of God. The observance of Heritage Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~. Any general agency of the church that desires to recommend a theme for a given year for this Sunday may do so one year prior to the observance for which the recommendation is made. This recommendation is to be made to the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~, and the decision of the annual theme of this Sunday shall be made by the voting members of the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~.

Amend ¶ 510 as follows:

¶ 510.1. Corrections to the *Daily Christian Advocate*. The editor will then file with the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~ two bound copies of the *Daily Christian Advocate* and corrections as the official record of General Conference. Bound copies shall also be made available at cost by The United Methodist Publishing House.

...

4. All original documents of a General Conference shall be filed with the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~.

Amend ¶ 532 as follows:

¶ 532. *Archives and History*—1. There shall be a jurisdictional commission on archives and history, ~~auxiliary to the general commission~~, . . .

Amend ¶ 545 as follows:

¶ 545. *Records and Archives*—1. The journal of the proceedings of a central conference, duly signed by the president and secretary, shall be sent for examination to the General Conference through its secretary. Two paper copies in every translation shall be sent without charge to the ~~General Commission on Archives and History and the~~ General Council on Finance and Administration, . . .

3. The secretary of each central conference shall submit a hardcopy of every translation and adaptation of the

general *Discipline* or portion thereof in use in that central conference to the ~~General Commission on Archives and History and the~~ General Council on Finance and Administration.

Amend ¶ 606 as follows:

¶ 606.2. Each annual conference shall send without charge to the General Council on Finance and Administration, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, ~~the General Commission on Archives and History~~, the Central Conference or Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History, and the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History two printed copies of its annual journal. In addition, the annual conference shall send one printed copy of its annual journal to the Connectional Table and one printed copy to United Methodist Communications. If available, one copy of a digital version of the journal shall be sent to the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~ and one copy to United Methodist Communications.

3.h) Memoirs as ordered by the annual conference following the guidelines of the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~,

Amend ¶ 641 as follows:

¶ 641. 1. In each annual conference there shall be a conference commission on archives and history. The number of members of the commission and their terms of office shall be as the conference may determine and may include an *ex officio* representative of each United Methodist heritage landmark in its bounds. It shall be the duty of the commission to collect, preserve, and make accessible the historically significant records of the annual conference and its agencies, including data relating to the origin and history of the conference and its antecedents; to encourage and assist the local churches in preserving their records, compiling their histories, and celebrating their heritage; to provide for the permanent safekeeping of the historical records of all abandoned or discontinued churches in the bounds of the annual conference and its antecedents (see ¶ 2549.3); to maintain a fire-safe historical and archival depository and to see that all items that obviously will have value for future history are properly preserved therein; to provide for the ownership of real property and to receive gifts and bequests; to nominate to the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~ buildings, locations, or structures within the annual conference for designation as historic sites or heritage landmarks; to maintain contact with officially designated historic sites and heritage landmarks in their bounds; to assist the bishop or the appropriate conference committee in planning for the historical hour and other appropriate

historical observances at annual conference sessions; to establish retention and disposition schedules for annual conference and local church records under standards or guidelines developed by the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~Commission on Archives and History~~; to cooperate with and report, when requested, to the general and jurisdictional commissions on archives and history; and to engage with other Wesleyan, Methodist, or Evangelical United Brethren-related denominations in lifting up our joint heritage.

Amend ¶ 702 as follows:

¶ 702.3. Between sessions of the General Conference, the following general agencies are accountable to the Connectional Table for those functions that are outlined in the 900 ¶¶s: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, ~~the General Commission on Archives and History~~, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and the General Commission on Communication in matters pertaining to their program responsibilities.

Amend ¶ 703 as follows:

¶ 703.6. *Administrative General Agencies*—The general boards and commissions that have primarily administrative and service functions shall be designated as administrative general agencies. These agencies are the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, The United Methodist Publishing House, ~~and the General Commission on Archives and History~~ and ~~the~~ General Commission on Communication, the last ~~two~~ of which also ~~carry~~ carries program-related responsibilities for which ~~they are~~ it is accountable to the Connectional Table.

Amend ¶ 805 as follows:

¶ 805.4.b) *Committee on Personnel Policies and Practices*—The council shall organize a committee consisting of three representatives from the General Council on Finance and Administration, one of whom shall serve as chairperson, and one representative of each of the following agencies: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, ~~the General Commission on Archives and History~~, the General Commission on Communication, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Each of the aforementioned representatives shall be selected by the council, board, or commission represented from its membership. The committee shall have duties and responsibilities as defined in ¶ 807.13b.

Create a new ¶ 805.4. subparagraph as follows:

¶ 805.4.f) *Committee on Archives and History*—There shall be a Committee on Archives and History that shall serve as the official historical agency of The United Methodist Church. It may be separately incorporated, as determined by the council, and it shall be the successor in effect and in law of the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church. Insofar as practical, changes required by the discontinuation of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) and the creation of the Committee on Archives and History in this section shall be accomplished no later than June 30, 2020, under the guidance of the Connectional Table and the General Council on Finance and Administration. Funds budgeted in the 2021 to 2024 quadrennium to carry out the operations and programs of GCAH shall follow the function.

(1) *Purpose*—(a) The purpose of the committee shall be to promote and care for the historical interests of The United Methodist Church at every level. It shall gather, preserve, and hold title to library and archival materials, and it shall disseminate interpretive materials on the history of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents. It shall cooperate with other bodies, especially the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church, the World Methodist Historical Society, and the World Methodist Council in areas of mutual concern. It shall maintain archives and libraries in which shall be preserved historical records and materials of every kind relating to The United Methodist Church and shall see that such holdings are available for responsible public and scholarly use. It shall provide guidance for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material at all levels of The United Methodist Church (see §(8)(a)ii)). It shall provide support, direction, and encouragement for the work of annual conference and jurisdictional historical agencies and organizations by developing and making available historical, interpretive, and training media. It shall develop policies and resources for the designated United Methodist Historic Sites and United Methodist Heritage Landmarks. It shall provide general supervision for the observance of Heritage Sunday (see ¶ 264.1). It shall engage with other Wesleyan, Methodist, or Evangelical United Brethren-related denominations in lifting up our joint heritage.

(b) The committee shall have responsibility for and supervision of its archives and historical libraries and other depositories of similar character, if any, established by The United Methodist Church.

(c) The committee shall promote collection and dissemination of information and materials concerning the historic witness made individually and collectively by women, racial and ethnic peoples, and other constituent

cies not covered extensively in traditional historical documentation in the worldwide life of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents.

(d) The committee shall develop and make available interpretive materials such as handbooks, services of worship and celebrations of historical events, training films, and other media helpful to annual conferences and local churches.

(e) Once each quadrennium, the committee may hold a historical convocation, to which may be invited members of jurisdictional and annual conference historical agencies and organizations; appropriate faculty and students in institutions of higher education related to The United Methodist Church; members of the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church; members of other Wesleyan, Methodist, and Evangelical United Brethren-related historical organizations; and such other persons, groups, or organizations as may be interested.

(2) *Membership*—(a) The committee shall be constituted quadrennially, and its members and all officers elected by it shall hold office until their successors have been chosen. Interim vacancies during a quadrennium where not otherwise provided by the *Discipline* may be filled by the council as it may determine.

(b) The committee shall be composed of ten members chosen by the council, five of whom shall be members of the council. It is recommended that careful consideration be given to selecting the other five members to be persons with special interests and skills in the history of United Methodism.

(3) *Meetings*—The committee shall meet annually at such time and place as it may determine, subject to the provisions of the act of incorporation, if the committee chooses to be incorporated.

(4) *Officers*—The committee shall elect from its membership a chairperson and such other officers as may be needed.

(5) *Staff*—The council shall choose a general director of the committee, who shall be an associate general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration, and such other staff personnel as may be needed. The general director shall be the executive and administrative officer and shall carry on the work of the committee, keep the records and minutes, serve as editor of official publications of the committee, supervise the depositories, make an annual report to the council, and furnish such reports as are required. The general director shall attend meetings of the committee and shall have the privilege of the floor without vote. Archivists, curators, and librarians employed by the committee shall be responsible to the general director. They shall attend meetings of the committee when it is deemed necessary by the general direc-

tor. When in attendance, they shall have the privilege of the floor without vote.

(6) *Finances*—The committee shall be financed by appropriations of the General Conference; the sale of literature and historical materials; subscriptions to the committee's official publications; dues from associate members; and gifts, grants, and bequests of interested individuals and organizations.

(7) *Historical Society of The United Methodist Church*—(a) The committee shall endorse and encourage the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church and encourage membership therein for the purpose of promoting interest in the study, preservation, and dissemination of the history and heritage of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents. The historical society shall be encouraged to enlist the support and cooperation of committee on archives and history (or equivalent) at the annual conference, jurisdictional conference, and general church levels as well as other interested agencies and organizations in the promotion of the historical interests of the church. The society shall be financially self-supporting through dues and other sources, except for such services as may be provided by the General Conference Committee on Archives and History.

(b) Membership in the historical society shall be established as the society may determine. Membership shall entail the payment of such dues as the society may direct, in return for which members shall receive publications and other benefits as are deemed suitable.

(8) (a) *Archival Definitions*—i) Archives, as distinguished from libraries, house not primarily books, but documentary record material.

ii) Documentary record material shall mean all documents, minutes, journals, diaries, reports, pamphlets, letters, papers, manuscripts, maps, photographs, books, audiovisuals, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data processing records, artifacts, or any other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to any provisions of the *Discipline* in connection with the transaction of church business by any general agency of The United Methodist Church or of any of its constituent predecessors.

iii) General agency of The United Methodist Church or of its constituent predecessors shall, in turn, mean and include every church office, church officer, or official (elected or appointed)—including bishop, institution, board, committee, bureau, council, or conference—at the national level.

(b) *Custodianship of Records*—The church official in charge of an office having documentary record material shall be the custodian thereof, unless otherwise provided.

(c) Procedures—i) The committee shall establish a central archives of The United Methodist Church and such regional archives and record centers as in its judgment may be needed.

ii) The bishops, General Conference officers, the Judicial Council, general boards, committees, and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall deposit official minutes or journals, or copies of the same, in the archives quadrennially and shall transfer correspondence, records, papers, and other archival materials described above from their offices when they no longer have operational usefulness. No records shall be destroyed until a disposal schedule has been agreed upon by the committee and the agency. When the custodian of any official documentary record material of a general agency certifies to the committee that such records have no further use or value for official and administrative purposes and when the committee certifies that such records appear to have no further use or value for research or reference, then such records may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by the agency or official having custody of them. A record of such certification and authorization shall be entered in the minutes or records of both the committee and the agency. The committee is hereby authorized and empowered to make such provisions as may be necessary and proper to carry this paragraph into effect.

iii) The committee shall have the right to examine the condition of documentary record material and shall, subject to the availability of staff and funds, give advice and assistance to church officials and agencies in regard to preserving and disposing of documentary record material in their custody. Officials of general agencies shall assist the committee in the preparation of an inventory of records in their custody. To this inventory shall be attached a schedule, approved by the head of the agency having custody of the records and the committee, establishing a time period for the retention and disposal of each series of records. So long as such approved schedule remains in effect, destruction or disposal of documentary record material in accordance with its provisions shall be deemed to have met the requirements of ¶ 805.4.f)(8)(c)(ii).

iv) The committee is authorized and directed to conduct a program of inventorying, repairing, and microfilming among all general agencies of The United Methodist Church for security purposes that documentary record material that the committee determines has permanent value and to provide safe storage for microfilm copies of such material. Subject to the availability of funds, such program may be extended to material of permanent value of all agencies of The United Methodist Church.

v) The general boards, committees, and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall place two copies, as

they are issued, of all their publications, of whatever kind, in the archives or in lieu thereof shall file a statement with the archivist affirming that they are preserving copies of all such items in their own libraries or depositories.

vi) Official documents, or copies thereof, such as articles of incorporation, constitutions, bylaws, and other official papers of the boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church shall be deposited in the archives.

vii) Whoever has the custody of any general agency records shall, at the expiration of the term of office, deliver to the successor, custodian, or, if there be none, to the committee all records, books, writings, letters, and documents kept or received in the transaction of official general agency business. This will also apply to the papers of temporary and special general church committees.

viii) The bishops, General Conference officers, and the general boards, committees, and agencies of The United Methodist Church are urged to counsel with the central archivist concerning the preservation of all materials.

ix) Jurisdictional, central, and annual conference secretaries shall deposit, without charge, two paper copies of their respective conference journals quadrennially or annually, as the case may be, with the committee and in the archives of the central, jurisdictional, and annual conference as appropriate. One copy of a digital version of the journal will be sent to the committee.

x) Secretaries of jurisdictional and annual conference boards, committees, and agencies shall deposit annually, or as often as they meet, copies of their minutes (as distinguished from reports that are printed separately or in the jurisdictional and annual conference journals) in the central archives or in the appropriate regional archives.

xi) Bishops, General Conference officers, general agency staff personnel, missionaries, and those ordained ministers and laypersons in positions of leadership and influence at any level of the church are urged to deposit or bequeath their personal papers to the archives of the committee.

xii) Organizations and individuals may negotiate appropriate restrictions on the use of materials that they deposit in the archives.

xiii) The committee may authorize the transfer of materials to an organization, agency, or family.

xiv) All materials in the archives shall be available for research and exhibition, subject to such restrictions as may be placed on them.

(9) Historic Sites and Heritage Landmarks—(a) i) Historic Sites—Historic sites are buildings, locations, or structures that are specifically related to a significant event, development, or personality in the history of an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference (or its antecedents). Historic sites are designated by formal action of the

annual, central, or jurisdictional conference within whose regions the site is located. Such designation shall first be considered and reviewed by the respective committee on archives and history (or equivalent). After action by the annual, central, or jurisdictional conference to designate a building, structure, or location as a historic site, the president or chairperson of the committee on archives and history (or equivalent) shall advise the committee of the action taken and provide such documentation as may be required. The committee in turn shall provide an official historic site marker, keep a register of all historic sites, and maintain an ongoing file of pertinent information concerning them.

ii) *Heritage Landmarks*—Heritage landmarks of The United Methodist Church are buildings, locations, or structures that are specifically related to significant events, developments, or personalities in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents. They must have distinctive historic interest and value for the denomination as a whole, as contrasted with local or regional historic significance. Ordinarily, buildings, locations, or structures that have achieved historic significance within the preceding fifty years shall not be considered for designation as a heritage landmark.

iii) *Designation of Heritage Landmarks*—All nominations for the designation of buildings, locations, and structures as United Methodist heritage landmarks shall be made by the annual, central, or jurisdictional conference committee on archives and history (or equivalent) within whose regions they are located. Such nominations shall be referred for consideration to the committee, in accord with guidelines established by the committee. Through its committee on heritage landmarks, the committee shall consider the merits of each nomination and shall make such recommendation as it deems appropriate to the ensuing General Conference for its action and determination.

The committee shall recommend only a building, location, or structure for designation as a heritage landmark that has been registered as a historic site by an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference and has met the requirements established by the committee. The committee shall keep a register of all duly designated heritage landmarks and maintain an ongoing file of pertinent information concerning them.

iv) *Quadrennial Review*—The committee shall be responsible for making a quadrennial review of the existing duly designated heritage landmarks, according to the criteria that it shall prepare and that shall be compatible with the *Book of Discipline*. The committee shall further be responsible for recommending to the General Conference the redesignation or reclassification of the designat-

ed heritage landmarks as such action may be appropriate in keeping with such criteria.

(b) *Present Heritage Landmarks*—The present heritage landmarks of The United Methodist Church (and the year of their designation by General Conference) are: Acuff's Chapel, between Blountville and Kingsport, TN (1968); Albright Memorial Chapel, Kleinfeltersville, PA (1968); Asbury Manual Labor School and Mission, Ft. Mitchell, AL (1984); Barratt's Chapel, near Frederica, DE (1968); Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, FL (1984); Bishop John Seybert/Flat Rock Cluster, Flat Rock and Bellevue, OH (1992); Boehm's Chapel, Willow Street, PA (1984); College of West Africa, Monrovia, Liberia (2012); Cokesbury College, Abingdon, MD (1984); Cox Memorial United Methodist Church, Hallowell, ME (1992); Deadwood Cluster, Deadwood, SD (1984); Edward Cox House, near Bluff City, TN (1968); First Evangelical Association Church Building and Publishing House, New Berlin, PA (1988); First United Methodist Church, Johnstown, PA (1996); Green Hill House, Louisburg, NC (1968); Gulfside Assembly, Waveland, MS (2016); Hanby House, Westerville, OH (1988); John Street Church, New York City (1968); John Wesley's American Parish, Savannah, GA (1976); Keywood Marker, Glade Spring, VA (1988); Isaac Long's Barn, Landis Valley, Lititz, PA (2008); Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, MD (1972); Mary Johnston Hospital, Manila, The Philippines (2012); McMahan's Chapel, Bronson, TX (1972); Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn, NY (1972); Newtown Indian United Methodist Church, Okmulgee, OK (2012); Old McKendree Chapel, Jackson, MO (1968); Old Mutare Mission, Zimbabwe (2012); Old Otterbein Church, Baltimore, MD (1968); Old Stone Church Cemetery and Site, Leesburg, VA (1968); Organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Louisville, KY (1984); Pearl River United Methodist Church, Madison County, MS (2016); Peter Cartwright United Methodist Church, Pleasant Plains, IL (1976); Rehoboth Church, near Union, WV (1968); Robert Strawbridge's Log House, near New Windsor, MD (1968); Rutersville Cluster, Rutersville, TX (1988); St. George's Church, Philadelphia, PA (1968); St. Simon's Island, GA (1968); Simpson House, Philadelphia, PA (2012); Wesley Foundation, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL (1996); Town of Oxford, GA (1972); United Brethren Founding Sites Cluster, Frederick, Keedysville, and Beaver Creek, MD (2000); United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC (2016); Wesleyan College Cluster, Macon, GA (1992); Whitaker's Chapel, near Enfield, Halifax County, NC (1972); Willamette Mission, near Salem, OR (1992); Woman's Foreign Missionary Society founding site, Boston, MA (2004); Wyandot Indian Mission,

Upper Sandusky, OH (1968); and Zoar United Methodist Church, Philadelphia, PA (1984).

This legislation, or any portion of it approved by General Conference, shall take effect at the close of General Conference 2020.

Rationale:

History is important ministry, but doesn't rise to agency level. It is unnecessary to have someone at the level of general secretary in charge, seated at GS Table on par with GCFA, and the boards. That's like having the director of the National Archives on the President's Cabinet.

¶1712.

Petition Number: 20336-IC-¶1712; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Additional Clarification of Para 1712.1 re. Heritage Landmark Definition

¶ 1712. *Historic Sites and Heritage Landmarks*—
1. a) *Historic Sites*—*Historic Sites* are buildings, locations, ~~or~~ structures, or other places that remember and celebrate United Methodist history, that are specifically related to a significant event, development, ~~or program,~~ ministry, or mission in the history of an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference (or its antecedents). Historic sites are designated by formal action of the annual, central, or jurisdictional conference within the region the site is located. Such designation . . .

b) *Heritage Landmarks*—*Heritage landmarks* of The United Methodist Church are buildings, locations, ~~or~~ structures, or other places that remember and celebrate United Methodist history, that are specifically related to a significant event, development, ~~or program,~~ ministry, or mission in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents. They must have . . .

c) *Designation of Heritage Landmarks*—All nominations for the designation of buildings, locations, ~~and~~ structures, or other places that remember and celebrate a significant event, development, personality, program, ministry, or mission in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents shall be made by the annual, central, or jurisdictional commission on archives and history (or equivalent) within the regions they are located. . . .

The commission shall recommend only a building, location, ~~or~~ structure, or other place that remembers and celebrates a significant event, development, personality, program, ministry, or mission in the overall history of The United Methodist Church or its antecedents for designa-

tion as a heritage landmark that has been registered as a historic site by an annual, central, or jurisdictional conference that has met the requirements set by the commission. . . .

¶1712.2.

Petition Number: 20335-IC-¶1712.2; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Amend Listing of Heritage Landmarks

2. *Present Heritage Landmarks*—The present heritage landmarks of The United Methodist Church (and the year of their designation by General Conference) are: Acuff's Chapel, between Blountville and Kingsport, TN (1968); Albright Memorial Chapel, Kleinfeltersville, PA (1968); Asbury Manual Labor School and Mission, Ft. Mitchell, AL (1984); Barratt's Chapel, near Frederica, DE (1968); Bethune-Cookman College University, Daytona Beach, FL (1984); Bishop John Seybert/Flat Rock Cluster, Flat Rock and Bellevue, OH (1992); Boehm's Chapel, Willow Street, PA (1984); College of West Africa, Monrovia, Liberia (2012); Christ United Methodist Church, Honolulu, HI (2020); Cokesbury College, Abingdon, MD (1984); Cox Memorial United Methodist Church, Hallowell, ME (1992); Deadwood Cluster, Deadwood, SD (1984); Edward Cox House, near Bluff City, TN (1968); First Evangelical Association Church Building and Publishing House, New Berlin, PA (1988); First United Methodist Church, Johnstown, PA (1996); Green Hill House, Louisburg, NC (1968); Gulfside Assembly, Waveland, MS (2016); Hanby House, Westerville, OH (1988); Helenor M. Davisson Cluster, Jasper Co., Indiana (2020); John Street Church, New York City (1968); John Wesley's American Parish, Savannah, GA (1976); Keywood Marker, Glade Spring, VA (1988); Lakeside Chautauqua, Lakeside, OH (2020); Isaac Long's Barn, Landis Valley, Lititz, PA (2008); Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, MD (1972); Mary Johnston Hospital, Manila, The Philippines (2012); McMahan's Chapel, Bronson, TX (1972); ~~Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn~~ New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital, NY (1972); Newtown Indian United Methodist Church, Okmulgee, OK (2012); Old McKendree Chapel, Jackson, MO (1968); Old Mutare Mission, Zimbabwe (2012); Old Otterbein Church, Baltimore, MD (1968); Old Stone Church Cemetery and Site, Leesburg, VA (1968); Organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Louisville, KY (1984); Pearl River United Methodist Church, Madison County, MS (2016); Peter Cartwright United Methodist Church,

Pleasant Plains, IL (1976); Rehoboth Church, near Union, WV (1968); Robert Strawbridge's Log House, near New Windsor, MD (1968); Ruttersville Cluster, Ruttersville, TX (1988); St. George's Church, Philadelphia, PA (1968); St. Simon's Island, GA (1968); Simpson House, Philadelphia, PA (2012); Wesley Foundation, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL (1996); Town of Oxford, GA (1972); United Brethren Founding Sites Cluster, Frederick, Keedysville, and Beaver Creek, MD (2000); Wesleyan College Cluster, Macon, GA (1992); Western Union/Westmar College Campus, Le Mars, IA; (2020); Whitaker's Chapel, near Enfield, Halifax County, NC (1972); Willamette Mission, near Salem, OR (1992); Woman's Foreign Missionary Society founding site, Boston, MA (2004); Wyandot Indian Mission, United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC (2016); Upper Sandusky, OH (1968); and Zoar United Methodist Church, Philadelphia, PA (1984).

¶1801.

Petition Number: 20674-IC-¶1801-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Merge UCom into GCFA

For the purpose of merging the General Commission on Communication (UCom) into the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) and making the ministry of communications part of the work of GCFA, the following action is taken:

Amend ¶ 802 as follows:

¶ 802. *Name*—There shall be a General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church, hereinafter called the council. The council shall have authority to choose for itself a name under which it may be incorporated or otherwise conduct business.

Amend ¶ 804 by assigning subparagraph number §804.1 to the existing paragraph and appending a new subparagraph as follows:

§804.2 The General Council on Finance and Administration shall take responsibility for the United Methodist ministry of communications by acquiring the assets, liabilities, and operations of the General Commission on Communication (UCom) by December 31, 2020. The responsibilities of GCFA shall be as prescribed herein, including those of the former General Commission on Communication.

Amend ¶ 805 as follows:

¶ 805. *Organization*—1. *Membership*—The twenty-one voting members of the council shall be elected quadrennially.

a) ~~Sixteen~~ Fourteen (14) voting members of the council shall be elected by the General Conference and be nominated as follows:

(1) two bishops including one from a central conference, nominated by the Council of Bishops;

(2) ~~eleven~~ nine (9) persons from the jurisdictions, nominated by the college of bishops in each jurisdiction based upon an allocation by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure that the membership of the council reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon their combined clergy and lay membership, provided that no jurisdiction shall be guaranteed a seat on the council by this provision, and

(3) three persons from the central conferences—one member from Africa, one from Europe, and one from the Philippines—nominated by the Council of Bishops.

b) It is recommended that in selecting the voting members from the jurisdictions and central conferences attention be given to ensuring adequate representation of racial and ethnic groups and young people, and that approximately one-third be clergy in full connection, one-third be laymen, and one-third be laywomen.

c) ~~Five~~ Seven (7) voting members of the council shall be nominated and elected by the council in such a manner as set forth in the council's bylaws, provided, not more than one of these ~~five~~ seven voting members shall be from the same jurisdictional or central conference. These ~~five~~ seven voting members shall be selected for the purpose of bringing to the council special knowledge, experience, or diversity.

d) The general secretaries who serve as the chief executive officers of the general agencies and the president/chief executive officer of The United Methodist Publishing House may sit with the council and shall have the right to the floor without the privilege of voting.

NEW SUBPARAGRAPH INSERTED HERE

NEW. The members of the executive committee of the Board of Directors of UCom serving at the close of General Conference 2020 shall become members of the Board of Directors of GCFA with voice but not vote upon the discontinuation of UCom and shall serve through the remainder of the quadrennium to ensure the adequate representation of the communications ministry through the period of transition.

e) The voting members, including bishops, shall not be eligible for membership on, or employment by, any other general agency of The United Methodist Church (¶ 701.2), except where the *Book of Discipline* specifically provides for such interagency representation. Members shall also be guided by such conflict-of-interest policies and provisions as may from time to time be adopted by the General Conference or by the council itself.

f) Members shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified.

g) Vacancies occurring between sessions of the General Conference shall be filled by the council on nomination of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction concerned (see ¶ 712) if the vacancy is among members chosen to represent a jurisdiction, or, in the event of a vacancy among the episcopal or central conference representative members, on nomination of the Council of Bishops. Vacancies among the ~~five~~ seven voting members nominated and elected by the council shall be filled in such a manner as set forth in the council's bylaws.

...

4.b) *Committee on Personnel Policies and Practices*—The council shall organize a committee consisting of three representatives from the General Council on Finance and Administration, one of whom shall serve as chairperson, and one representative of each of the following agencies: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Archives and History, ~~the General Commission on Communication~~, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Each of the aforementioned representatives shall be selected by the council, board, or commission represented from its membership. The general secretary of the council, or his or her designee, shall sit with this committee with voice but not vote.

...

Following ¶ 805.4.c) insert new subparagraphs as follows:

d) Following completion of the acquisition of the communications ministry the council will form a Committee on Communications to be membered and staffed as deemed necessary by the council. Any funds budgeted to UCom by the General Conference for the 2021-2024 quadrennium will follow the function and devolve to GCFA following the completion of the period of transition.

e) The Committee on Communications shall have the following responsibilities:

(1) Communication is a strategic function necessary for the success of the mission of The United Methodist Church. It shall be the official newsgathering and distributing body for The United Methodist Church. In discharging its responsibilities, in keeping with the historic freedom of the press, it shall operate with editorial freedom as an independent news bureau serving all segments of church life and society, making available to both religious

and public news media information concerning the church at large.

(2) It shall have primary responsibility on behalf of the church to relate to the public media in presenting the Christian faith and work of the church to the general public through the most effective communication channels. It will provide such structures and strategies as are deemed helpful to the church in its witness through the media. It shall unify and coordinate public media messages and programs of United Methodist general agencies.

(3) It shall give special attention to television, including broadcast television, cable, videotape, videodisc, and satellite. It shall provide counsel and resources to annual conferences—and through conferences, to districts and local churches—to develop and strengthen their television ministries. Responsibilities of the committee shall include program production and placement, and relationships to commercial broadcasters at the national level in the United States.

(4) It shall create and participate in partnerships with national, international, interdenominational, interfaith, and other organizations working in communications as deemed relevant to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

(5) It shall have responsibility to work toward promotion and protection of the historic freedoms of religion and the press, and it shall seek to increase the ethical, moral, and human values of media structures and programs.

(6) It shall have general supervision over the public relations strategy and activity for The United Methodist Church.

(7) It shall plan, create, produce or cause to be produced, and distribute or cause to be distributed resources that are informative and vital to the religious life of all United Methodists. It shall work with all United Methodist entities in coordinating resources produced for strategic church initiatives.

(8) It shall oversee a comprehensive communication system for the church, providing a total view of communication structure and practices, including telecommunications. It shall create networks of communicators at all levels, including local church, district, conference, jurisdiction, and general church. These networks may include periodic consultations for such purposes as idea exchange, information sharing, joint planning, and monitoring and evaluating the total church's communication enterprises. With respect to the use of computers for communication purposes, the committee shall coordinate with other GCFA committees.

(9) It shall provide guidance, resources, and training for the local church coordinator of communications, pro-

vided that training at the local level shall be through and in cooperation with annual conferences.

(10) It shall educate and train in communication principles and skills, including the following: (a) national workshops and training experiences in communication skills related to various media; (b) consultation with and assistance to annual conferences, districts, and racial and ethnic groups in training local church persons, especially the local church coordinator of communications; (c) training experiences for bishops, personnel of general church agencies, and other groups on request; (d) providing and facilitating apprenticeship, internship, and scholarship programs for church communicators; and (e) counseling schools of theology and other institutions of higher education about the training of faculty, candidates for the ordained ministry, and laypersons in the principles and skills of communication, media resource development, and media evaluation.

(11) It shall determine and implement policy for the marketing of all financial causes demanding churchwide promotion or publicity.

(12) It shall undertake the marketing of any cause or undertaking, financial or otherwise, not herein mentioned demanding churchwide promotion or publicity, provided such action is approved by other appropriate bodies. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the source of the funding for any such authorized promotions.

(13) Appeals for giving that are made to United Methodists shall be consistent with the aims of Christian stewardship. The committee and the General Board of Discipleship will cooperate in order that programs and resource materials of the two bodies may be in harmony in their presentation of Christian stewardship.

(14) It shall provide content for clergy and laity in local congregations in a variety of accessible formats to promote understanding and appreciation of the global, connectional church, to develop support for and encourage participation in initiatives, ministries, and missions of the general church and its agencies, and to provide resources and information to assist local congregations and their leaders in carrying out their ministries. This committee shall obtain from the churches or district superintendents the names of church leaders entitled to receive this content so as to compile a subscription list.

(15) It shall lead in communication study and research, applying findings from the professional and academic communities to the work of the church, and in evaluative communication research. It shall cooperate with other church bodies in communication research and development work and share the findings of study and research.

(16) It shall represent United Methodist interests in new technological developments in the field of communication, including research, the evaluation of new devices and methods, and the application of technological developments to the communication services of the church.

(17) It may develop information, resources, databases, and services that provide channels of communication to and from all levels of the church.

(18) It shall provide resources, counsel, and staff training for area, conference, and district communication programs and develop guidelines in consultation with persons working in areas, conferences, and districts.

(19) It shall produce materials for program interpretation in cooperation with the Connectional Table and the general program boards, including the official program calendar of the denomination.

(20) The committee shall be charged with planning and implementation of the official United Methodist presence on and use of the internet, the World Wide Web, or other computer services that can connect United Methodist conferences, agencies, and local churches with one another and with the larger world.

(21) The committee shall be responsible for recommending to GCFA the official brand guidelines of The United Methodist Church. Such branding guidelines shall be consistent with the standards established by GCFA to preserve the denomination's intellectual property. The committee shall work with other GCFA committees and personnel to ensure the use of the cross and flame logo at every level of the church (see ¶ 807.10).

Amend ¶ 807.10 as follows:

¶ 807.10. To supervise the use of the official United Methodist insignia and preserve the integrity of its design; ~~in cooperation with the General Commission on Communication.~~

Amend ¶ 812.4 as follows:

4. The General Commission on Communication Council on Finance and Administration shall promote the World Service Fund.

Amend ¶ 813.5 as follows:

¶ 813.5. The General Commission on Communication Council on Finance and Administration shall promote the General Administration Fund.

Amend ¶ 814.7 as follows:

¶ 814.7. The General Commission on Communication Council on Finance and Administration shall promote the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund.

Amend ¶ 815.3 as follows:

¶ 815.3. Promotion of the Black College Fund shall be by the Division of Higher Education and in consultation with the Council of Presidents of the Black Colleges, in cooperation with and with the assistance of the General

~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration, the cost being a charge against the Black College Fund receipts and within a budget approved by the Division of Higher Education and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

Amend ¶ 816.4 as follows:

¶ 816.4. The General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall promote the Ministerial Education Fund.

Amend ¶ 818.1 as follows:

¶ 818. Purpose—1. . . . The General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall promote the Episcopal Fund.

Amend ¶ 820.7 as follows:

¶ 820.7. General promotion of this program, for purposes of name identification and visibility, shall be the responsibility of the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration.

Amend ¶ 821 as follows:

¶ 821.3. Promotional expenses for World Service Specials shall be borne by the respective participating agencies in proportion to the amount received by each in World Service Specials. The causes of World Service Specials shall be coordinated with other financial appeals and shall be promoted by the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration.

4. The appeals for World Service Specials shall be channeled through bishops, district superintendents, and pastors. Details of the procedure shall be determined by the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with representatives of the recipient agencies or entities.

5. In each annual conference, World Service Specials and UMCOR Sunday shall be promoted by the appropriate conference agency with the appropriate general agency and the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration.

Amend ¶ 823 as follows:

¶ 823.3. Promotional expenses for Advance Specials shall be borne by the respective participating units in proportion to the amount received by each in Advance Specials. The causes of the Advance shall be coordinated with other financial appeals and shall be promoted by the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration.

4. The appeal for Advance Specials shall be channeled through bishops, district superintendents, pastors and other individuals. Details of the procedure shall be determined by the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the designated unit of the General Board of Global Ministries and the Advance Committee.

Amend ¶ 824 as follows:

¶ 824. *General Church Special Sunday Offerings*—

The following are the churchwide special Sundays with offerings to be used in support of general church causes:

1. *Human Relations Day*—Historically, **Human Relations Day** has been celebrated with an offering on the Sunday before the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Congregations are encouraged to observe Human Relations Day on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. The purpose shall be to further the development of better human relations. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Church and Society. In connection with Human Relations Day, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses (see ¶ 263.1). Funds shall be administered by the agencies under which approved programs are lodged.

2. *UMCOR Sunday*—Historically, **UMCOR Sunday** has been celebrated with an offering on the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Congregations are encouraged to observe UMCOR Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. The purpose shall be to share the goodness of life with those who hurt (¶ 263.2). The observance shall be under the general supervision of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, General Board of Global Ministries (¶ 1330.2), in accordance with the following directives:

a) All local churches shall be fully informed and encouraged to receive a freewill offering in behalf of the relief program.

b) Insofar as possible, planning and promotion of One Great Hour of Sharing²² shall be done cooperatively with other denominations through the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Offering receipts shall be administered by The United Methodist Church. In connection with UMCOR Sunday,²³ the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts after payment of promotional expenses. Funds shall be administered by the agency under which approved programs are lodged.

3. *United Methodist Student Day*—Historically, **United Methodist Student Day** has been celebrated with an offering on the last Sunday in November. Congregations are encouraged to observe United Methodist Student Day on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. The offering shall support United Method-

ist scholarships and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund (§ 263.4). The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. In connection with United Methodist Student Day, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses. Funds shall be administered by the agency under which approved programs are lodged.

4. *World Communion Sunday*—Historically, **World Communion Sunday** has been celebrated with an offering on the first Sunday of October. Congregations are encouraged to observe World Communion Sunday on this date or another date appropriate to the local church. The purpose shall be to assist racial and ethnic persons pursuing various avenues of ministry. In connection with World Communion Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal according to the following directives:

a) Each local church shall be requested to remit as provided in § 824.8 all of the Communion offering received on World Communion Sunday and such portion of the Communion offering received at other observances of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the local church may designate.

b) The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, to be divided as follows: 50 percent World Communion Scholarships; 35 percent Ethnic Scholarship Program, and 15 percent Ethnic In-Service Training Program. Funds shall be administered by the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, in consultation with various ethnic groups (§ 263.3).

5. *Peace with Justice Sunday*—Historically, **Peace with Justice Sunday** has been celebrated with an offering on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Congregations are encouraged to observe Peace with Justice Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. The purpose shall be to witness “to God’s demand for a faithful, just, disarmed and secure world” (§ 263.5). The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Church and Society. In connection with Peace with Justice Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal.

a) The annual conference treasurer shall retain 50 percent of the monies for Peace with Justice Ministries in the

annual conference, to be administered by the conference board of church and society or an equivalent structure.

b) The annual conference treasurer shall remit the remaining 50 percent of the monies to the General Council on Finance and Administration.

c) The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts, after payment of the promotional expenses, to the General Board of Church and Society under which approved programs are lodged.

6. *Native American Ministries Sunday*—Historically, **Native American Ministries Sunday** has been celebrated with an offering on the Third Sunday of Easter. Congregations are encouraged to observe Native American Ministries Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. The purpose shall be to develop and strengthen Native American ministries in the annual conferences and in Native American rural, urban, and reservation ministries and communities relating to the General Board of Global Ministries, and to provide scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology (§ 263.6). The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. In connection with Native American Ministries Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall allocate net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses. Funds shall be administered by the agencies under which approved projects are lodged.

7. The General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall promote all authorized churchwide special Sundays with offerings in consultation with participating agencies. Promotional expenses for each offering shall be a prior claim against the receipts of the offering promoted. In each case, such expenses shall be within a budget approved by the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~upon recommendation of the General Commission on Communication~~ after consultation with participating agencies. In the promotion of these offerings, the spiritual implications of Christian stewardship shall be emphasized.

8. Receipts from all authorized churchwide special Sunday offerings shall be remitted promptly by the local church treasurer to the annual conference treasurer, who shall remit monthly to the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration. Local churches shall report the amount of the offerings in the manner indicated on the annual conference report form.

Amend ¶ 906.1.c) as follows:

¶ 906.1.c) The ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops and the presidents of the following agencies: General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Commission on Religion and Race, General Commission on Status and Role of Women, General Commission on United Methodist Men, ~~General Commission on Communication~~, and General Commission on Archives and History, program-related agencies that are accountable to the Connectional Table (as expressed in ¶ 702.3)

Amend ¶ 1120.4 as follows:

¶1120.4. *Membership*—The committee shall be composed of one board member and one staff member from each of the following agencies: the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; one member (board or staff) from each of the following: the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, The United Methodist Publishing House, ~~the General Commission on Communication~~, United Methodist Women; one active or retired bishop representing the Council of Bishops, and one central conference representative; five older adults, one to be selected by each jurisdictional College of Bishops; and no more than three members to be selected by the committee for expertise and/or professional qualifications, and no more than three additional members to be selected by the committee for inclusiveness (racial/ethnic, disability, age, gender, laity, clergy, or geographic distribution).

Delete ¶ 1207.2.(j) in its entirety.

Amend ¶ 1208.3 as follows:

¶ 1208. 3. A minimum of 70 percent of the general portion of the Youth Service Fund shall be used to fund Youth Service Fund projects; the remaining amount shall be used for office resourcing and Youth Service Fund promotion and interpretation. ~~United Methodist Communications~~ The General Council on Finance and Administration shall assist the Division on Ministries With Young People in the promotion and interpretation of the Youth Service Fund.

Amend ¶ 1315.1.c)(5)

¶ 1315.1.c)(5) work cooperatively with the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration in promotion of the UMCOR Sunday offering;

Amend ¶ 1405.21 as follows:

¶ 1405.21. To promote, in cooperation with the Gen-

eral ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration, churchwide special Sundays and funds: Africa University Fund, Black College Fund, Ministerial Education Fund, Native American Ministries Sunday, United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and other funds and special days ordered by the General Conference.

Amend ¶ 1636 as follows:

¶ 1636. *Service of the Entire United Methodist Church*—There shall be one complete, coordinated system of literature published by the board for the entire United Methodist Church. This literature is to be of such type and variety as to meet the needs of all groups of our people. The publisher and such other staff as the board and president/CEO shall determine shall consult with the general program agencies, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration, and the Connectional Table with regard to their publishing needs in order to avoid unnecessary overlapping and duplication.

Delete ¶¶ 1801-1808 in their entirety.

Amend ¶ 263 as follows:

¶ 263. Six churchwide special Sundays with offerings shall be celebrated in each United Methodist Church.

Purpose—General Conference shall determine the purpose of the churchwide offerings upon recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table. The purpose of these offerings shall remain constant for the quadrennium, and the net receipts shall be distributed on ratio to the administering agencies by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration (see ¶ 824.7 and ¶ 805.6). The General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall promote these offerings in cooperation with the agencies responsible for the administration of these funds. (See ¶ 1806.12.) Each offering shall be promptly remitted in full by the local church treasurer to the annual conference treasurer, who shall transmit the funds in full, except where noted differently below, to the General Council on Finance and Administration within thirty days of receipt in the office of the annual conference treasurer.

1. *Human Relations Day*—Historically, Human Relations Day has been celebrated with an offering on the Sunday before the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Congregations are to observe Human Relations Day on this date or another date appropriate to the local church. This Sunday occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God's light to the world. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in

relationship with each other. The purpose of the day is to further the development of better human relations.

In connection with Human Relations Day the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be allocated on ratio by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration, to the administering agencies:

a) *Community Developers Program*: 57 percent (General Board of Global Ministries);

b) *United Methodist Voluntary Services Program*: 33 percent (General Board of Global Ministries) and;

c) *Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program*: 10 percent (General Board of Church and Society).

2. *UMCOR Sunday*—Historically, UMCOR Sunday¹² has been celebrated with an offering on the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Congregations are to observe UMCOR Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination, and awareness of the hurts of the peoples of the world. UMCOR Sunday calls the church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt. In connection with UMCOR Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, General Board of Global Ministries. Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be remitted by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the General Board of Global Ministries.

3. *World Communion Sunday*—Historically, World Communion Sunday has been celebrated with an offering on the first Sunday of October. Congregations are to observe World Communion Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. World Communion Sunday calls the church to be the catholic inclusive church. In connection with World Communion Sunday the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Each local church shall be requested to remit as provided in ¶ 823.8 all of the Communion offering received on World Communion Sunday and such portion of the Communion offering received at other observances of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the local church may designate.

Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be divided on ratio by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the administering agencies:

a) *World Communion Scholarships*: 50 percent (General Board of Global Ministries), with at least one half of the annual amount for ministries beyond the United States;

b) *Ethnic Scholarship Program*: 35 percent (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry); and

c) *Ethnic In-Service Training Program*: 15 percent (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry).

4. *United Methodist Student Day*—Historically, United Methodist Student Day has been celebrated with an offering on the last Sunday in November. Congregations are to observe United Methodist Student Day on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. United Methodist Student Day calls the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The offering supports United Methodist scholarships and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund. In connection with United Methodist Student Day, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be remitted by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the administering agency.

5. *Peace with Justice Sunday*—Historically, Peace with Justice Sunday has been celebrated with an offering on the First Sunday After Pentecost. Congregations are to observe Peace with Justice Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit calling for God's shalom. Peace with Justice witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world. In connection with Peace with Justice Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Church and Society.

a) The annual conference treasurer shall retain 50 percent of the receipts for Peace with Justice ministries in the annual conference, to be administered by the annual conference board of church and society or an equivalent structure.

b) The annual conference treasurer shall remit the remaining 50 percent of the receipts to the General Council on Finance and Administration. Net receipts, after payment of promotional expenses, shall be distributed by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the administering agency for Peace with Justice ministries.

6. *Native American Ministries Sunday*—Historically, Native American Ministries Sunday has been celebrated

with an offering on the Third Sunday of Easter. United States congregations are to observe Native American Ministries Sunday on this date or on another date appropriate to the local church. This Sunday serves to remind the church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society. In connection with Native American Ministries Sunday, the General ~~Commission on Communication~~ Council on Finance and Administration shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Amend ¶ 606.2 as follows:

¶ 606.2. Each annual conference shall send without charge to the General Council on Finance and Administration, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, the General Commission on Archives and History, the Central Conference or Jurisdictional Commission on Archives and History, and the Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History two printed copies or a digital version of its annual journal. In addition, the annual conference shall send one printed copy or a digital version of its annual journal to the Connectional Table ~~and one printed copy or a digital version to United Methodist Communications~~. If available, one copy of a digital version of the journal shall be sent to the General Commission on Archives and History and one copy to the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~United Methodist Communications~~.

Amend ¶ 609.a)(9) as follows:

¶ 609.a)(9) To provide the connectional relationship between the conference and the General Council on Finance and Administration ~~United Methodist Communications~~.

Amend ¶ 702.3 as follows:

¶ 702.3. Between sessions of the General Conference, the following general agencies are accountable to the Connectional Table for those functions that are outlined in the 900 ¶¶s: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Commission on Archives and History, and the General Commission on United Methodist Men, ~~and the General Commission on Communication~~ in matters pertaining to their program responsibilities.

Amend ¶ 703.6 as follows:

¶ 703.6. *Administrative General Agencies*—The general boards and commissions that have primarily administrative and service functions shall be designated as administrative general agencies. These agencies are the General

Board of Pension and Health Benefits, The United Methodist Publishing House, and the General Commission on Archives and History ~~and General Commission on Communication~~, the last two of which also ~~carry~~ carries program-related responsibilities for which ~~they are~~ it is accountable to the Connectional Table.

Amend ¶ 705.1 as follows:

¶ 705.1. *Nominations by Conferences*—a) Each annual and missionary conference in the United States, upon recommendation from a committee composed of the bishop and the general and jurisdictional conference delegation, and having allowed opportunity for nominations from the floor, shall elect persons to be submitted to a jurisdictional pool. The jurisdictional nominating committee shall select persons for election to the following general church bodies: Connectional Table; General Board of Church and Society; General Board of Discipleship; General Board of Global Ministries; General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; The United Methodist Publishing House; Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships; ~~General Commission on Communication~~; General Commission on Religion and Race; and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Jurisdictional conferences may decide that persons elected by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States for inclusion in the jurisdictional pool shall not serve as members of the jurisdictional nominating committee.

Amend ¶ 705.4.c) as follows:

¶ 705.4.c) *Central Conference Membership*—The total central conference membership, including central conference bishops, in general church bodies shall be allocated as follows: four members on the General Commission on Religion and Race; three each (one from each region: Philippines, Europe, Africa) on the General Commission on Archives and History, ~~the General Commission on Communication~~; the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and The United Methodist Publishing House; three each on the General Council on Finance and Administration; seven each (one from each central conference) on the Connectional Table, and the General Board of Church and Society; three on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; four (at least one from each region from the Philippines, Europe, and Africa) on the General Board of Discipleship and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women; and eleven on the General Board of Global Ministries, only two of whom shall be bishops. . . .

Amend ¶ 705.5.a) as follows:

¶ 705.5. *Other General Agencies*—a) Each jurisdictional conference shall elect members from the jurisdictional pool nominated by the annual and missionary

conferences in the United States (§ 705.1) in accordance with the specific membership provisions of those agencies as set forth in the *Book of Discipline*: General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (§ 1502.1a), The United Methodist Publishing House (§ 1602), Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (§ 437), ~~General Commission on Communication (§ 1807)~~, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (§ 2104), and General Commission on Religion and Race (§ 2003).

Rationale:

The ministry of communication is critically important, but the independent structure and staff of UMCCom is not. In a time when the church in the United States is shrinking and resources are tightening, this function must be relocated.

¶1804.

Petition Number: 20337-IC-¶1804; Evans, Cashar - Kitty Hawk, NC, USA.

Communication Supports Church Ministry

Amend ¶ 1804 as follows:

Amenability and Accountability—The General Commission on Communication shall be amenable to the General Conference. ~~As United Methodist Communications is an administrative general agency that supports the mission and ministry of the church at every level of the denomination, carries significant program functions in addition to its many service and support responsibilities, the commission shall be accountable to, report to, and be evaluated by the Connectional Table in program matters and shall be accountable to and report to the General Council on Finance and Administration in financial matters.~~

Rationale:

This revision clarifies the integral role of communication in enabling ministry throughout the church and eliminates redundancy.

¶1805.

Petition Number: 20338-IC-¶1805; Krause, Dan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communication.

Global Communications Network

Amend ¶ 1805 as follows:

Purpose—The General Commission on Communication shall lead the church in communication. It shall meet

the communication, public relations, and marketing needs of the entire church, reflecting the cultural and racial diversity within The United Methodist Church. It shall provide communication resources and services to local churches and annual conferences. It shall have a consultative relationship with all general agencies of the church and with any structures for communication and public relations at the denominational, jurisdictional, central conference, episcopal area, annual conference, district, or local church level. This network of the global communications agency working with all other church entities supports local adaptation across the globe.

Rationale:

This revision clarifies the total scope of UMCCom's work across the church and recognizes the need for communication to be adapted globally.

¶1806.

Petition Number: 20339-IC-¶1806; Krause, Dan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communication.

UMCom Responsibilities

Amend ¶ 1806 as follows:

¶ 1806. *Responsibilities*—Communication is a strategic function necessary for the success of the mission of The United Methodist Church. Specific responsibilities and functions of the General Commission on Communication and its staff are as follows:

24. 1. ~~The General Commission on Communication shall be charged with planning and implementation of the official United Methodist presence on and use of the Internet, the World Wide Web, or other computer services that can connect United Methodist conferences, agencies, and local churches with one another and with the larger world~~ develop a comprehensive communications strategy and provide direction, messaging, and consultation to coordinate communication across the church. The agency will develop and maintain the official presence of The United Methodist Church across communications channels, utilizing storytelling, advertising, the internet, digital and social media, and other emerging channels, tools, and trends.

4. 2. ~~It shall, via United Methodist News, be the official newsgathering and distributing agency for The United Methodist Church and its general agencies, serving as a source of comprehensive and in-depth global news and information about the denomination for both the church and the world. In discharging its responsibilities, in keeping~~

with the historic freedom of the press; it shall operate with editorial freedom as an independent news bureau serving all segments of church life and society, making available to both religious and public news media information concerning the Church at large demonstrating openness and transparency. It may also promote awareness of journalism as a church ministry and its importance in informing the denomination.

2. 3. It shall have primary responsibility on behalf of the denomination to relate to the public media in presenting the Christian faith and work of the Church to the general public through the most effective communication channels. It will provide such structures and strategies as are deemed helpful to the Church in its witness through the media. It shall unify and coordinate public media messages and programs of United Methodist general agencies leadership responsibility over the public relations strategy and activity for The United Methodist Church, working to expand visibility, broaden understanding, maintain a strong public image and enhance the ministry of The United Methodist Church around the world. It shall communicate information through a variety of channels, relate to religious and secular media, and collaborate with and support United Methodist general agencies, annual conferences, and other official entities to increase positive awareness of the denomination.

3. It shall give special attention to television, including broadcast television, cable, videotape, videodisc, and satellite. It shall provide counsel and resources to annual conferences—and through conferences, to districts and local churches—to develop and strengthen their television ministries. Responsibilities of the commission shall include program production and placement, and relationships to commercial broadcasters at the national level in the United States.

4. It shall be responsible for holistic, strategic promotion of the denomination through research-based evangelistic message development and media placement.

4. 5. It shall may create dialogue and participate in strategic communication partnerships with national, international, interdenominational, interfaith, global and ecumenical boards, agencies, caucus groups, and other organizations working in communications as deemed relevant to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. It may also give special attention to strengthening connectedness within other Wesleyan, ethnic, and interfaith organizations.

5. It shall have responsibility to work toward promotion and protection of the historic freedoms of religion and the press, and it shall seek to increase the ethical, moral, and human values of media structures and programs.

6. It shall have general supervision over the public relations strategy and activity for The United Methodist Church.

7. 6. It shall plan, create, produce or cause to be produced, and distribute or cause to be distributed provide services and produce resources that are informative and vital to the religious life and content that are representative of the connection and that inform and engage the spiritual life and ministry of all United Methodists and new disciples. This may include multilingual content for clergy and laity to promote understanding and appreciation of the global, connectional church. It shall work with all United Methodist agencies in coordinating resources produced for strategic Church initiatives. It shall also support and encourage participation in initiatives, ministries, and missions of the general church and its agencies, and provide resources and information to assist local congregations and their leaders in carrying out their ministries. The agency may distribute such content through a variety of channels, and may collect and maintain contact information of lay and clergy leaders and members and others to receive this content. In addition to audiences within the church, United Methodist Communications will maintain channels of communication, resources, and content at the denominational level to support evangelism.

8. 7. It shall oversee a comprehensive communication system for the church, providing a total view of communication structure and practices, including telecommunications. It shall create networks of communicators at all levels, including local church, district, conference, jurisdiction, and general church. These networks may include periodic consultations for such purposes as idea exchange, information sharing, joint planning, and monitoring and evaluating the total Church's communication enterprises. With respect to the use of computers for communication purposes, the agency shall cooperate with the General Council on Finance and Administration around the world, utilizing best practices to serve our audiences and facilitate communication through infrastructure development, emerging technologies, global communications solutions, and strengthening communication channels and networks. It may develop information, resources, databases, and services that provide channels of communication to, from, and within all levels of the church.

9. 8. It shall provide resources, products, services, and guidance, resources, and training for the local church coordinator of communications (§ 255[3]), provided that training at the local level shall be through and in cooperation with annual conferences on communication to equip local church staff and leaders, as well as annual conferences across the world. Services shall include providing

training and learning opportunities through a variety of media.

10. It shall educate and train in communication principles and skills, including the following: (a) national workshops and training experiences in communication skills related to various media; (b) consultation with and assistance to annual conferences, districts, and racial and ethnic groups in training local church persons, especially the local church coordinator of communications; (c) training experiences for bishops, personnel of general Church agencies, and other groups on request; (d) providing and facilitating apprenticeship, internship, and scholarship programs for church communicators; and (e) counseling schools of theology and other institutions of higher education about the training of faculty, candidates for the ordained ministry, and laypersons in the principles and skills of communication, media resource development, and media evaluation.

11. 9. It shall determine and implement, after consultation with the General Council on Finance and Administration, policy for the marketing of all financial causes demanding churchwide promotion or publicity. Its responsibility shall include serving as the church's central agency marketing the special Sundays with giving, the Advance for Christ and His Church, and the general church apportioned funds. This work will be done with collaborative input from administering agencies. Such marketing shall be consistent with the aims of Christian stewardship as determined cooperatively by the General Commission on Communication and the General Board of Discipleship and presented in programs and resource materials. Marketing budgets for the above funds shall be a charge against funds received and developed in cooperation with the General Council on Finance and Administration. In cases where the General Conference assigns a portion of the marketing responsibility to some other agency, such marketing work shall be subject to coordination by the General Commission on Communication. It may undertake the marketing of any authorized financial or other cause demanding churchwide promotion or publicity, in partnership with the responsible agency or organization. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the source(s) of funding for any authorized special appeals (§ 819).

12. It shall be the central agency marketing throughout the Church the following general Church funds: World Service Fund (§ 812.1), Africa University Fund (§ 806.2), Black College Fund (§ 815), Episcopal Fund (§ 818.1), General Administration Fund (§ 813), Interdenominational Cooperation Fund (§ 814), Ministerial Education Fund (§ 816), Human Relations Day (§§ 824.1 and 263.1), UMCOR Sunday (§§ 821, 824.2 and 263.2), Native Ameri-

can Ministries Sunday (§§ 824.6 and 263.6), Peace with Justice Sunday (§§ 824.5 and 263.5), World Communion Sunday (§§ 824.4 and 263.3), United Methodist Student Day (§§ 824.3 and 263.4), the Advance for Christ and His Church (§§ 822 and 823), World Service Special Gifts (§ 820), Christian Education Sunday (§ 265.1), Golden Cross Sunday (§ 265.2), Rural Life Sunday (§ 265.3), Disability Awareness Sunday (§ 265.4), Youth Service Fund (§ 1208), and all other general Church funds approved by the General Conference, as well as any emergency appeals authorized by the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration (§ 819). In the marketing of these causes, this agency shall consult with and is encouraged to use content material provided by the program agency responsible for the area and with the agency responsible for the administration of the funds. Budgets for the above funds shall be developed in cooperation with the General Council on Finance and Administration. In cases where the General Conference assigns a portion of the marketing responsibility to some other agency, such marketing work shall be subject to coordination by the General Commission on Communication. The cost of marketing the funds, as set in the approved marketing budget, shall be a charge against receipts, except that the cost of marketing general Advance Specials shall be billed to the recipient agencies in proportion to the amount of general Advance Special funds received by each (§ 823.3), and the cost of marketing World Service Special Gifts shall be borne by administering agencies (§ 820.8). The administration of the money thus set aside for marketing shall be the responsibility of the General Commission on Communication.

13. It shall undertake the marketing of any cause or undertaking, financial or otherwise, not herein mentioned demanding Church-wide promotion or publicity, provided such action is approved by the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration, or their respective executive committees, if any. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine the source of the funding for any such authorized promotions.

14. Appeals for giving that are made to United Methodists shall be consistent with the aims of Christian stewardship. The General Commission on Communication and the General Board of Discipleship will cooperate in order that programs and resource materials of the two agencies may be in harmony in their presentation of Christian stewardship.

15. It shall provide content for clergy and laity in local congregations in a variety of accessible formats to promote understanding and appreciation of the global, connectional Church, to develop support for and encourage

participation in initiatives, ministries, and missions of the general Church and its agencies, and to provide resources and information to assist local congregations and their leaders in carrying out their ministries. This agency shall obtain from the churches or district superintendents the names of church leaders entitled to receive this content so as to compile a subscription list.

16. ~~10.~~ It shall lead in communication study and research, applying findings from the professional and academic communities and internally managed research projects to the work of the church globally, ~~and in evaluative communication research.~~ It shall may cooperate with and support other agencies, annual conferences and local churches in ~~and other levels of the Church in~~ communication research and development work and share the findings of study and research.

17. ~~It shall represent United Methodist interests in new technological developments in the field of communication, including research, the evaluation of new devices and methods, and the application of technological developments to the communication services of the Church.~~

18. ~~It may develop information, resources, databases, and services that provide channels of communication to and from all levels of the Church.~~

19. ~~It shall provide resources, counsel, and staff training for area, conference, and district communication programs and develop guidelines in consultation with persons working in areas, conferences, and districts.~~

20. ~~It shall produce materials for program interpretation in cooperation with the Connectional Table and the general program boards, including the official program calendar of the denomination.~~

22. ~~11.~~ The General Commission on Communication shall be responsible for setting and maintaining the official brand guidelines of The United Methodist Church. Such branding guidelines shall be consistent with the standards established by the General Council on Finance and Administration to preserve the integrity of the denomination's intellectual property (see ¶¶ 807.10-.11, 2502). It may educate local churches on the importance of branding and the value of the denominational brand elements. It may assist local churches, annual conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions in developing logos consistent with branding guidelines. The commission ~~shall~~ may work with the General Council on Finance and Administration to ensure the use of the cross and flame logo at every level of the church (see ¶ 807.10).

12. It may provide for the development and creation of state-of-the-art audio and/or visual productions. Productions may be created for or by United Methodist entities as well as non-United Methodist entities, provided the subjects are in accord with the Social Principles. To the

greatest extent possible, productions will be accessible to those with limited hearing and/or vision.

Rationale:

These updates reflect United Methodist Communications' current work given a changing communications environment. We must adapt to serve the needs of a diverse, global, multilingual church, use changing technologies and leverage new channels to enhance communication capacity. This sharpens our focus on key priorities in light of financial constraints.

¶1806.

Petition Number: 20340-IC-¶1806-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Open Meetings Responsibility of UMCom

Following existing text of ¶ 1806.1 insert new language as follows:

¶ 1806.1. . . . making available to both religious and public news media information concerning the church at large. In pursuit of this responsibility it shall further be the responsibility of the commission to act as the church's agent in promoting compliance with the provisions of ¶ 722 that provide restrictions on closed meetings, including, but not limited to, pursuit of judicial action as provided in ¶ 2610.2.(c).

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness repeatedly affirmed by the General Conference, the church needs to have formal provision for an advocate for open access to information.

¶1807.

Petition Number: 20342-IC-¶1807; Krause, Dan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Communication.

Commission Membership

Amend ¶ 1807 as follows:

1807. *Organization*—1. *Membership*—The membership of the General Commission on Communication shall be composed of ~~twenty-seven~~ twenty-one members as follows:

a) Two bishops, including one from the United States and one from the central conferences named by the Council of Bishops.

b) ~~Eleven~~ Seven members elected by the jurisdictional conferences based on the following formula: North

Central—2 1, Northeastern—2 1, South Central—3 2, Southeastern—3 2, and Western—1. ~~It is recommended that at least one of the persons elected by the jurisdictional conferences be a racial or ethnic person. In order to ensure inclusiveness, the composition of the commission should reflect the major recognized categories of church members (see ¶ 705.3c, d).~~

c) A total of ~~seven~~ five members of the central conferences, plus one bishop referenced above, named by the Council of Bishops.

d) Seven additional members elected by the commission to ensure membership of persons with expertise in communication or to ensure inclusiveness.

e) The additional members shall be nominated by a committee composed of one commission member designated from each jurisdiction and one of the member bishops.

f) In order to ensure inclusiveness, the composition of the entire commission ~~shall~~ should reflect the major recognized categories of church members (see ¶ 705.3c, d).

2. *Meetings*—The commission shall hold at least one meeting in each calendar year. ~~Fifteen~~ Eleven members shall constitute a quorum.

3. *Officers*—The commission shall elect a president, at least one vice president, a recording secretary, and such other officers as it determines.

~~There may be an executive committee comprised of not more than one-third of the total membership of the commission and elected by the commission. The membership of the executive committee shall be representative of the composition of the commission to the greatest extent possible.~~

4. *Internal Organization*—The General Commission on Communication is empowered to create internal structures as it deems appropriate for effective operation.

5. *Staff*—The commission shall ~~elect annually employ a general secretary upon nomination by the executive committee or a nominating committee and shall elect such deputy general secretaries as needed, and it shall provide for election or appointment of other staff. The appointment and hiring of other staff shall be the responsibility of the general secretary. The general secretary shall cooperate with the Connectional Table for program services and with the general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration for financial services.~~

Rationale:

We propose reducing the size of UCom's board in order to reduce costs, increase efficiency while maintaining diverse representation. This brings our board size to 21, in line with the majority of other agencies.

¶1807.1.

Petition Number: 20341-IC-¶1807.1-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

General Commission on Communication Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 1807.1 as indicated following:

¶ 1807.1 *Organization*—1. *Membership*—The membership of the General Commission on Communication shall be composed of twenty-seven members as follows:

a) Two bishops, including one from the United States and one from the central conferences named by the Council of Bishops.

b) Eleven members elected by the jurisdictional conferences based on the following formula: North Central—2, Northeastern—2, South Central—3, Southeastern—3, Western—1. It is recommended that at least one of the persons elected by the jurisdictional conferences be a racial/ethnic person.

c) A total of ~~seven~~ eight members of the central conferences, plus one bishop referenced above, named by the Council of Bishops.

d) ~~Seven~~ Six additional members elected by the commission to ensure membership of persons with expertise in communication.

Rationale:

The number of central conference members is changed from seven to eight to reflect the addition of a central conference in Africa. The number of additional members is reduced to six to maintain the number of twenty-seven. This petition depends upon the creation of an additional central conference in

¶1808.

Petition Number: 20343-IC-¶1808; Evans, Cashar - Kitty Hawk, NC, USA.

Financial Needs

¶ 1808. *Finance*—The General Conference shall provide for the financial needs of the General Commission on Communication upon recommendation by the General Council on Finance and Administration. ~~The commission shall consult with the Connectional Table in the area of program matters in development of an annual budget, which shall be reported to the General Council on Finance and Administration for approval.~~

Rationale:

The funding process is addressed elsewhere in the *Discipline* and this revision eliminates redundant language.

¶2001.

Petition Number: 20675-IC-¶2001-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Merge GCORR and GCOSROW into GBCS

For the purpose of merging the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and making the combined entity a committee of the General Board of Church and Society, the following action is taken:

Delete ¶¶ 2001-2008 and 2101-2109 in their entirety.

Amend ¶ 643 as follows:

¶ 643. 1. There shall be in each annual conference including those in central conferences a conference commission on religion and race or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships. It shall follow the general guidelines ~~and structure of the General Commission on Religion and Race as outlined in ¶¶ 2002 and 2008, where applicable of the United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness.~~

2. . . . Members of the ~~General Commission on Religion and Race~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness residing in the annual conference shall be *ex officio* members of the annual conference commission on religion and race with vote.

Amend ¶ 644 as follows:

1. The responsibility of this commission shall be in harmony with the responsibility of the ~~general commission (see ¶ 2103)~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness. . . .

e) To advise the ~~general commission~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness about the progress and effectiveness of efforts to achieve full participation of women in the life of the church.

f) To participate in connectional programs and plans initiated or recommended by the ~~general commission~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness and to utilize the resources available from the ~~general commission~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness as needed.

2. . . . A person or persons serving as member(s) of the ~~General Commission on the Status and Role of Women~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness from that annual conference shall, by virtue of their office, be

member(s) of the conference commission on the status and role of women (see ¶¶ 610.6 and 710.6). . . .

Amend ¶ 805.4.b) as follows:

Committee on Personnel Policies and Practices—The council shall organize a committee consisting of three representatives from the General Council on Finance and Administration, one of whom shall serve as chairperson, and one representative of each of the following agencies: the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on Communication, ~~the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women,~~ and the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Each of the aforementioned representatives shall be selected by the council, board, or commission represented from its membership. The general secretary of the council, or his or her designee, shall sit with this committee with voice but not vote.

The committee shall have duties and responsibilities as defined in ¶ 807.12b.

Amend ¶ 807.12.c) as follows:

¶ 807.12.c) The Committee on Audit and Review shall (1) receive from agencies and institutions receiving general church funds (see ¶ 810.2) statements regarding their compliance with the policies stated or referenced in ¶¶ 807.12a and 811.1; and (2) receive from all general agencies information necessary to evaluate pay equity. Based on these statements, and in consultation with and upon the advice of the ~~General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness, the committee shall prepare for the General Council on Finance and Administration reports and recommendations deemed appropriate by the committee, in accordance with the procedures set forth in ¶ 806.12.

Amend ¶ 811.1 as follows:

¶ 811. *General Policies*—1. The General Council on Finance and Administration is authorized to withhold approval of a portion or all of the budget of any agency or any church-related institution receiving general church funds (see ¶ 810.2) until such agency or church-related institution shall submit to the council in writing its established policies of: (a) recruiting, employing, utilizing, recompensing, and promoting professional staff and other personnel without regard to race, ethnicity, age, or gender; (b) fulfilling its duties and responsibilities in a manner that does not involve segregation or discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, or gender; and (c) insofar as possible, purchasing goods and services from vendors who are in compliance with such policies as are described

in sections (a) and (b) of this paragraph. In the fulfillment of this directive, the council shall take the following steps: (1) collaborate with the ~~General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness in the development of a certification form to be submitted to the council by agencies and institutions receiving general church funds; (2) review copies of such certifications with the ~~United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness~~ two commissions; (3) in consultation with the ~~United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness~~ two commissions determine adequate recommendations regarding possible noncompliance with these policies by agencies and institutions receiving general church funds; and (4) in collaboration with the ~~General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women~~ United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine fair and just recommendations for withholding funds from agencies and church-related institutions that are noncompliant.

Amend ¶ 1004 as follows:

¶1004. . . .The board shall maintain close relationships with the ~~General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and the Appalachian Development Committee as they seek it seeks~~ . . .

Add new paragraphs ¶¶ 1007-1009 as follows, renumbering existing paragraphs as required:

¶ 1007. In order to fulfill the monitoring roles previously performed by the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, there shall be a United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness as an integral part of the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS). GBCS shall establish effective structures and processes with sufficient independence to ensure accurate monitoring across the church. In performing such monitoring functions, these structures shall have a direct reporting relationship to the GBCS and to the General Conference. The monitoring structures and processes shall be designed to monitor the entire church, with specific attention given to the General Conference, the Council of Bishops, all general church agencies (including GBCS), annual conferences, and other connectional structures.

¶ 1008.1. It shall be the responsibility of the committee to challenge and equip the general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures of The United Methodist Church to a full and equal participation of its racial and ethnic constituency in the total life and mission of the church through teaching, advocacy and by reviewing and monitoring the practices of the entire church so as to fur-

ther ensure racial inclusiveness as we make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. Further it shall be the responsibility of the committee to challenge The United Methodist Church, including its general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the church's life. Such commitment will confirm anew recognition of the fact that The United Methodist Church is part of the universal church, rooted in the liberating message of Jesus Christ, that recognizes every person, woman or man, as a full and equal part of God's human family.

The committee shall function as an advocate with and on behalf of women individually and collectively within The United Methodist Church; as a catalyst for the initiation of creative methods to redress inequities of the past and to prevent further inequities against women within The United Methodist Church; and as a monitor to ensure inclusiveness in the programmatic and administrative functioning of The United Methodist Church.

3. Insofar as practical changes required by the discontinuation of the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) and of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCOSROW) and the accompanying relocation of the monitoring function of those agencies to the committee on inclusiveness in this section shall be accomplished no later than June 30, 2021, under the guidance of the Connectional Table and the General Council on Finance and Administration. Funds budgeted in the 2021 to 2024 quadrennium to carry out the operations and programs of GCORR and GCOSROW shall follow the functions.

¶ 1009. The United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness shall have staff as determined by GBCS and shall be located in offices as directed by GBCS.

This legislation, or any portion of it, approved by General Conference, shall take effect at the close of General Conference 2020.

Rationale:

The programming and monitoring functions of GCORR and GCOSROW are critically important, but their independent structure and staff are not. In a time when the church in the United States is shrinking and resources are tightening, these functions must be relocated.

¶2003.4.

Petition Number: 20344-IC-¶2003.4-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2003.4:

4. Other paragraphs of the *Discipline* notwithstanding, the members of the board shall elect six additional members based on the expertise needed to accomplish the fiduciary, generative, and strategic work of the board. Consideration should be given to achieving jurisdictional, lay/clergy, gender, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, economic condition, racial/ethnic, and age balance.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶2008.

Petition Number: 20345-IC-¶2008-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Support for Intersectional Justice Work—GCCR

Add new ¶ 2008.5: Providing training, resources, and consultation for and with all levels of the global church to actively resist intersecting structures of white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, patriarchy, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism, and classism.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, we are charged to remember injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere. We affirm our commitment to the dignity of all people and the integrity of creation. At this time of challenge in church and society, we work diligently for justice in intersecting issues.

¶2103.

Petition Number: 20346-IC-¶2103-G; Nelson, Muriel - Monrovia, Liberia.

COSROW Support for Central Conference Women

Amend ¶ 2103 by ADDING additional language as follows:

¶2103. *Responsibility* . . .

12. The commission shall devote at least one-quarter of its work and programming to defending the dignity and equality of women, in our church as well as in society, within the central conferences. The commission shall do so in ways that are culturally sensitive, consistent with our Doctrinal Standards and Social Principles, and pursued in consultation with appropriate local United Methodist leaders.

Rationale:

There are great imbalances of males vs. females in leadership and decision-making roles within our central conferences. Women outside America are also faced with sexism. The church must provide platforms for women all around our global church to hear God and step out in areas of leadership and decision-making.

¶2103.

Petition Number: 20347-IC-¶2103-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Support for Intersectional Justice Work—GCSRW

Amend ¶ 2103 as follows:

new ¶ 2103.12: Providing training, resources, and consultation for and with all levels of the global church to actively resist intersecting structures of white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, patriarchy, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism, and classism.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, we are charged to remember injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere. We affirm our commitment to the dignity of all people and the integrity of creation. At this time of challenge in church and society, we work diligently for justice in intersecting issues.

¶2104.

Petition Number: 20348-IC-¶2104-G; Nelson, Muriel - Monrovia, Liberia.

Increase Central Conference Representation on COSROW

Amend ¶ 2104 as follows:

¶ 2104. *Membership*—1. The policies, plans, and administration of the work of the general commission shall be determined by its membership, which shall be composed of nineteen persons in accord with the following guidelines:

a) Jurisdictional membership . . .

b) There shall be ~~nine~~ six additional members elected by the general commission, in accord with the provisions of ¶ 705.3a. The election of the additional members shall take into account the need to provide adequate representation of racial, ethnic, and national origin groups; persons with disabilities; persons from the various age categories, and to include persons of special competence, and striving for proportional representation among the jurisdictions. It is recommended that the addition of the at-large membership ensure that the total membership maintains a balance, 50 percent clergy (including the range of clergy as defined in ¶ 142) and 50 percent lay, as well as majority membership of women. It is further recommended that such additional members shall maintain a membership total of at least 10 percent youth and 10 percent young adults. Before election, nominated members will be informed of the fiduciary, strategic, and generative responsibilities they will be assuming upon election so that they may clearly understand the time and resource commitment they are making.

c) . . .

d) There shall be two bishops, including at least one from the central conferences, named by the Council of Bishops.

e) There shall be ~~three~~ six central conference members, not including the central conference bishop, named to the board by the Council of Bishops according to the provisions in ¶ 705.4c. At least three of these shall be from Africa.

...

Rationale:

Given the membership growth in the central conferences in Africa and the need for more women to be involved in the life of the church, increasing non-American representation on the commission is very significant. This will ensure that gender issues in the central conferences are given the attention they need.

¶2301.

Petition Number: 20676-IC-¶2301-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Move UMM to GBOD

For the purpose of discontinuing The General Commission on United Methodist Men as an independent agency of the church and transferring the coordination of men's ministry churchwide to the General Board of Discipleship, the following action is taken:

Amend ¶ 256.6 as follows:

¶ 256.6. United Methodist Men—Each church or charge shall have an organized unit of United Methodist Men ~~chartered and annually renewed through the General Commission on United Methodist Men~~. Other organized men's ministry groups in a local United Methodist Church shall annually report to the charge conference ~~and be resourced through the General Commission on United Methodist Men~~. All local church men's organizations shall provide a dedicated ministry for building men spiritually and involving men in the total ministry of the church (¶ 2302).

a) Local church resource material for supporting effective men's ministries shall be provided by the district, conference, and jurisdictional organizations of United Methodist Men and the General Board of Discipleship ~~General Commission on United Methodist Men~~ (¶ 2302).

Amend ¶ 537 as follows:

¶ 537. *Committee on United Methodist Men*—In each jurisdiction there shall be a Jurisdictional Committee on United Methodist Men, ~~auxiliary to the General Commission on United Methodist Men~~ (¶ 2301).

The membership of the Jurisdictional Committee on United Methodist Men shall be composed of the elected officers, committee chairpersons, and ministry coordinators as defined by the organization's bylaws as well as the conference president of United Methodist Men of each annual conference organization within the boundary of the jurisdiction.

Each Jurisdictional Committee on United Methodist Men shall have authority to promote its work ~~in accordance with the policies and programs of the General Commission on United Methodist Men~~.

The Jurisdictional Committee on United Methodist Men shall elect the jurisdictional president during the last year of the quadrennium. ~~The jurisdictional president shall serve on the General Commission on United Methodist Men (¶2303.1.b).~~ . . .

Amend ¶ 648 as follows:

¶ 648. *United Methodist Men—Constitution of United Methodist Men in the Conference—Article 1. Name*—In each annual conference there shall be a conference organization named United Methodist Men, ~~auxiliary to the jurisdictional committee on United Methodist Men and to the General Commission on United Methodist Men~~ (¶2301).

Article 2. *Function*—The function of the conference organization of United Methodist Men shall be to build and support the district organizations of United Methodist Men in developing resources to meet the needs and interests of men and the responsibilities of discipleship; to empower personal witness and evangelism; to enable out-

reach in individual and group mission and ministry; and to encourage and support spiritual growth and faith development; and to promote the objectives and responsibilities of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. In the absence of a district organization, the conference organization, in consultation with the district superintendent, shall fulfill the district responsibilities (§ 671).

Article 3. *Authority*—Each conference organization of United Methodist Men shall have the authority to promote its work ~~in accordance with the plans, responsibilities, and policies of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.~~

Article 4. *Membership*—The conference organization of United Methodist Men shall be composed of all men of local churches or charges (chartered or unchartered) within the bounds of the conference and all clergy.

Article 5. *Officers and Committees*—a) The conference organization shall elect a president, at least one vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

b) The resident bishop shall serve as the honorary president and be a member of the conference organization and its executive committee.

c) The conference lay leader (or designated representative) shall be a member of the conference organization and its executive committee.

d) Additional officers (including civic youth-serving agencies/scouting coordinator) and committees shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the guidelines of ~~the General Commission on United Methodist Men and/or the bylaws of the conference organization of United Methodist Men.~~

Article 6. *Meetings and Elections*—a) There shall be an annual meeting of the conference organization of United Methodist Men, at which time there shall be presented an annual report and a program plan designed to meet the needs of the men of the conference. Officers and committees shall be elected in accordance with the requirements of the organization's bylaws.

b) The voting body of the annual meeting of the conference shall be determined by the organization's bylaws but shall include conference and district officers and committee chairpersons ~~as determined, members of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and members of the jurisdictional committee on United Methodist Men~~ residing within the bounds of the conference.

...

Article 9. *Amendments*—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be proposed as provided in § 507 sent to the recording secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men prior to the last annual meeting of the commission in the third year of the quadrennium.

Article 10. *Connectional Reporting and Accountabil-*

ity—a) Each annual conference United Methodist Men shall have on file a current copy of their constitution and bylaws ~~with the General Commission on United Methodist Men.~~

b) Each annual conference shall prepare submit an annual report ~~to the General Commission on United Methodist Men.~~ This report will may be presented by the conference president at the spring meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents if such an organization is created and supported by the General Board of Discipleship, and it shall include but not be restricted to:

1. Annual goals and progress towards those goals in the last 12 months.

2. A review of the work in evangelism, mission and spiritual growth within the annual conference or beyond.

3. A listing of training events conducted at a conference, district and local church level to expand men's ministry in the all levels of the church.

~~4. An assessment of the General Commission on United Methodist Men to include the annual conference UMM's appraisal of the commission's United Methodist Men's goals and the commission's United Methodist Men's progress toward those goals in the last 12 months.~~

5. A report of the significant challenges to men's ministry and the significant successes of men's ministry to be shared with other conference organizations of UMM.

These reports will ~~become part of the internal review process of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and each conference report shall be shared with the annual conference leadership by the Conference President.~~

Amend § 671 as follows:

§ 671. *United Methodist Men—Constitution of United Methodist Men in the District—Article 1. Name*—In each district there shall be a district organization named United Methodist Men, auxiliary to the conference organization of United Methodist Men ~~and the general commission on United Methodist Men (§ 2301).~~

Article 2. *Responsibilities*—The responsibilities of the district organization of United Methodist Men shall be to work with local units of United Methodist Men in developing resources to meet the needs and interests of men and the responsibilities of discipleship; to empower personal witness and evangelism; to enable outreach in individual and group mission and ministry; to encourage and support spiritual growth and faith development; and to promote the objectives and responsibilities of the conference organization ~~and the general commission on United Methodist Men.~~ The district organization shall also encourage and promote the chartering and annual recertification of local units through the General Board

~~of Discipleship general commission on United Methodist Men (§§ 2302 and 256.6).~~

Article 3. *Authority*—Each district organization of United Methodist Men shall have the authority to promote its work ~~in accordance with the plans, responsibilities, and policies of the conference organization and the general commission on United Methodist Men.~~

Article 4. *Membership*—All men and clergy of local churches or charges (chartered and unchartered) of the district shall be considered members of the district organization.

Article 5. *Officers and Committees*—a) The district organization shall elect a president, at least one vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

b) Additional officers (including civic youth-serving agencies/scouting coordinator) and committees shall be elected or appointed in accordance with ~~the guidelines of the general commission on United Methodist Men and/or the bylaws of the district organization of United Methodist Men.~~

...

Article 9. *Amendments*—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be ~~proposed as provided in § 507 sent to the recording secretary of the general commission on United Methodist Men prior to the last annual meeting of the commission United Methodist Men in the third year of the quadrennium.~~

Delete § 705.3.e) in its entirety.

Delete §§ 2301-2303 in their entirety.

Following existing § 1116.7 insert the following new paragraphs and renumber existing paragraphs as required:

NEW1. As part of its responsibility for the ministry of the laity, GBOD shall provide support services to conference and district leaders of United Methodist Men in The United Methodist Church, forming such committees and

organizational structures as it chooses, which structures shall be known as United Methodist Men (UMM).

NEW2. UMM shall have primary responsibility for the coordination and resourcing of men's ministry within The United Methodist Church.

Any funds budgeted to the General Commission on United Methodist Men for the 2021 to 2024 quadrennium shall follow the function and accrue to the General Board of Discipleship upon the completion of the transfer of responsibility.

This legislation, or any portion of it approved by General Conference, shall take effect at the close of General Conference 2020.

Rationale:

Men's ministry is primarily local. In local settings disciples are made and nurtured. In a time when the church in the United States is shrinking and resources are tightening, the worldwide coordination of men's ministries must be transferred back to GBOD, which already coordinates many other lay ministries.

§2302.4g.

Petition Number: 20349-IC-§2302.4g; Hanke, Gilbert - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Delete Reference to Toll-free Telephone Service

Amend § 2302.4g:

Program partnership with The Upper Room in the Living Prayer Center ministry including support, ~~for toll telephone service participation, and promotion.~~ At all levels of the United Methodist Men's network there shall be prayer advocates;

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20640

Petition Number: 20640-IC-NonDis; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Local Church Records and Disaffiliation or Division

WHEREAS, there is potential for The United Methodist Church to divide, or allow local congregations to disaffiliate (as per ¶ 2553); and

WHEREAS, such events may result in the loss of critical local church and annual conference records bearing witness to the prior ministry and mission of The United Methodist Church and its predecessors; and

WHEREAS, the maintenance of local church records is the responsibility of the annual conference (¶¶ 233 and 2549.4);

Therefore, be it resolved, that in the case of disaffiliating churches, the conference commission on archives and history will establish a plan whereby the records of said churches would be copied and maintained at the annual conference archives, with costs of copying to be borne by the disaffiliating congregation;

Be it further resolved, that, in the case of a wider separation, resulting in the dissolution or division of an annual conference, each annual conference will establish a plan whereby its archival holdings will be maintained and

supported by subsequent bodies, conferences, or disaffiliated churches.

Petition 20741.

Petition Number: 20741-IC-NonDis-!; Brown, Angela - San Leandro, CA, USA.

Reparations

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church establishes a commission of four members of each United States jurisdiction this quadrennium to:

1. to write a letter of support for both House of Representative Bill 40 and Senate Bill 1083.
2. for each annual conference to establish a reparation plan for each state within its jurisdiction; encouraging state legislators to offer the implementation of the plan through state legislation; and
3. the commission is to report back to the General Conference in 2024 the results of their work.

Rationale:

“The United States Government, at the Federal, State, and local level, continued to perpetuate, condone and often profit from practices that continued to brutalize and disadvantage African-Americans. The act of slavery ended but the racism that gave rise to it did not.” [*Race and Repentance in America*,

Proposed Resolutions

R2043.

Petition Number: 20543-IC-R2043; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

Amend Resolution #2043 Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct

Introduction: Misconduct of a sexual nature committed by laity and clergy is an ongoing problem throughout the church. ~~Three percent of women attending church in any given month reported being sexually harassed or abused by a clergy person at some point in their adult lives according to a nationwide study (Diana Garland, "The Prevalence of Clergy Sexual Misconduct with Adults: A Research Study Executive Summary, 2009"; <<http://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/index.php?id=67406>>, accessed 16 July 2010).~~ Continued revelations about mishandlings violations of boundaries of by religious leaders across all faith communities offer a sobering reminder to United Methodists to face our own abuse crisis (M. Garlinda Burton, "United Methodists Need to Face Abuse Crisis: A UMNS Commentary," [umc.org](http://www.umc.org) 2010; <<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=1wL4KnN1LtH&b=5259669&ct=8437677&tr=y&aud=6486686>>, accessed 14 June 2010). The United Methodist Church averages between 140 and 500 known cases of clergy sexual misconduct annually in the US alone (Sally Badgley Dotch, *Healing the Breach: Response Team Intervention in United Methodist Congregations, Doctor of Ministry*, Wesley Theological Seminary, 2010, pp. 131-32). Council of Bishops issued a joint statement with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women naming sexual misconduct as a sin and committing to hold persons accountable and offering healing in response to complaints received (<<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/united-methodist-leaders-respond-to-me-too-and-churchtoo>>). The most recent Sexual Harassment survey in The United Methodist Church revealed significant increases in sexual harassment perpetrated by laypersons (Gail Murphy-Geiss, "Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church," Chicago: General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 20052017). The responsibility for handling these complaints rests with our judicatory leaders who:

~~Bishops and district superintendents are responsible for ensuring~~ that the church responds to allegations of sexual misconduct by either a lay- or clergyperson within a ministerial relationship, attending to both accountability and procedural justice or pastoral concern. ~~In the church's response to misconduct, there can be no true procedural justice in the absence of pastoral concern just as there can be no true pastoral concern without procedural justice.~~ The dual needs of ~~procedural justice and pastoral concern~~ both are far better met addressed by a team effort than by one individual. A full account of justice-making requires the involvement of different persons in distinct roles throughout a process of disclosure, adjudication, and healing. A trained Response/Intervention/Care Team is

comprised of persons approved by the bishop who are equipped to understand trauma and grief with expertise in specific areas of trauma and ready to be deployed by the bishop or bishop's designee to facilitate the process of healing mandated by the *Book of Discipline*.

Definition: Response Teams are called into a situation of trauma in order to promote the possibility of healing for the congregation, staff, and ~~the~~ individuals involved. Response Team ministry provides a way for judicatory leaders to enable effective assessment, intervention, training, and resourcing ~~of for~~ congregations and staff experiencing events affecting congregational health ~~by enlisting a group of persons with training, expertise, and resources in specific areas of ministry.~~ Members may be paid or unpaid. ~~The Response Team is not called to any judicial or disciplinary processes for legal resolution of a situation.~~ The Response Team is called into action by the bishop or bishop's designee, ~~often a district superintendent,~~ and is accountable to the bishop. The Response Team is not called to any judicial or disciplinary processes for legal resolution of a situation and is not a part of any investigation.

Disciplinary Mandate to Provide for Healing: The bishop and cabinet are mandated to "provide a process for healing within the congregation" or other ministry context as part of the supervisory response (§ 363.1f, *Book of Discipline*, 20122016) and judicial process (§ 2701.4.c). The *Discipline* also allows for the use of a Response Team to provide pastoral care when handling and following-up on a complaint: the bishop may select "persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing" to assist during the supervisory response (§ 363.1b, *Book of Discipline*, 20122016). These persons may perform distinct roles, such as individual support for

the accused, and individual support for the congregation, and families affected. These roles are in addition to any interim appointment made in accordance with the *Book of Discipline*, 2012, ¶ 338.3. In all cases, the bishop initiates and guides the church's response to ministerial sexual abuse. Effective use of a Response Team can lessen legal liability and promote justice. When victims feel that the church is attending to their needs and seeking a thorough process for justice-making, they are more likely to continue engaging the church in problem-solving and resolution rather than reactively pursuing civil procedures (e.g., suing the conference). Spreading the work of pastoral care and justice-making among several persons, each with a distinct role, also reduces real and perceived conflicts of interest. A trained and ready Response Team, assembled in a timely manner, can assist the bishop with the holistic task of justice-making. The United Methodist Church commends the use of Response Teams in cases of sexual misconduct by ministerial leaders and urges judicatory leaders to train and employ them. Only 18 annual conferences in the US maintain an active, trained Response Team ("Active" is defined as having responded to more than one congregation within a three-year period. Six additional conferences used a Response Team once between 2007 and 2009. Sally B. Dolch, Healing the Breach). Between 2007 and 2009, these teams responded to 156 incidents, averaging nearly three cases per conference per year. Extrapolating this data to all jurisdictions, we estimate that an additional 112 cases of ministerial sexual misconduct are handled by annual conferences in the US every year without the assistance of a Response Team. We urge bishops, district superintendents, chancellors, and other conference leaders in The UMC to seek out training in the use of a Response Team, to organize and provide for training Response Team personnel, and to employ these teams as partners in the healing ministry required when someone in leadership violates the sacred trust of ministry through sexual misconduct.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women provides training for the development and use of Response Teams and offers a network for trained Response Team coordinators throughout our denomination. For more information on how judicatory leaders and Response Teams may collaborate in promoting congregational healing, see *When a Congregation Is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Misconduct* by Beth Ann Gaede and Candace Reed Benyei (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006, pp.102-16) and the "GuidetoUsingaResponseTeam," <http://umsexualethics.org/ConferenceLeaders/ResponseTeams.aspx> <<http://umsexualethics.org/ConferenceLeaders/Response%20Teams.aspx>>. Response Teams at <<http://umsexualethics.org/response-teams/>>.

Rationale:

A resolution to pursue justice, accountability, reconciliation, and healing through a Response Team Ministry for Sexual Misconduct.

R2044.

Petition Number: 20541-IC-R2044-G; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Sexual Misconduct within Ministerial Relationships

Amend Resolution #2044, Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships:

Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships

The abuse of power occurs when we use power to gratify our own needs rather than to carry out God's sacred trust. It happens when we refuse to own the responsibility of guardianship that comes with the privilege of power. . . until we understand that power is the responsibility to give, instead of the opportunity to take, we will continue to abuse it."

"There is little doubt that sexual misconduct in church and society is significant and troubling for our communities and congregations worldwide. This unwanted behavior damages the moral environment where people worship, minister, work, and learn. In 1996, the General Conference made a commitment to focus on sexual misconduct within the church and took action to address this brokenness and pain within The United Methodist Church" (*The Book of Resolutions*, 1996, p. 128; 2000, p. 135; 2004, p.150)

Sacred Trust, Power, and Responsibility

The Book of Discipline, 2012, ¶ 161F, declares all human beings have equal worth in the eyes of God. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 states, "you are all God's children"; therefore, we as United Methodists support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, or gender. In our congregations and settings for ministry, we seek to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free from misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality, and kinship in Christ.

Those in positions of authority in the church, both clergy and lay, have been given much responsibility, vested with a sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God's love. Misconduct of a sexual nature inhibits the full and joyful participation of all in the community of God. Sexual misconduct in church and ministry settings impedes the mission of

Jesus Christ. Ministerial leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words which hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words which cause harm.

As our children, youth, and adults come to worship, study, camps, retreats, and schools of mission, they bring a heightened awareness of the issues of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, incest, rape, and sexual assault. Ministerial leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words that hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words that cause harm. In the safety and sanctity of the church's settings, we as church leaders, both clergy and lay, paid and volunteer, must be held to the highest standard of conduct as we lead, provide guidance and support, and work with children, youth, and adults in ministry settings. Sexual misconduct in any form is a violation of the membership and ordination vows we take as laity and clergy in The United Methodist Church. Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment are chargeable offenses both for clergy and laity per *The Book of Discipline*, ¶ 2702.

Definitions

Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another. It includes criminal behaviors in some nations, states, and communities:

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual misconduct and is defined in ¶ 161I (*Book of Discipline*, 2012) in the Social Principles. To clarify further, it is unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (including volunteers), mentor, or colleague relationship that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer's performance by creating a hostile environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexualize exploit women, men elders, children, or youth.

Sexual abuse is a form of sexual misconduct and occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (lay or clergy, pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee,

student, staff member, coworker, or volunteer (1996 *Book of Resolutions*, p. 130). It can include coerced or forced sexual contact (including those unable to give informed consent), sexual interaction or contact with children or youth, and sexual exhibitionism or display of sexual visuals or pornography.

Sexualized behavior is behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples include, but are not limited to displaying sexually suggestive visual materials; use of pornography in church programs on or with church property, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body; touching another person's body; touching another person's body/hair/clothing; touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person; kissing; and sexual intercourse. Sexualized behavior can be a form of sexual misconduct when this behavior is unwanted by the recipient or witness, is a violation of society's or the Church's law, breaks the sacred trust in the ministerial role, or violates the vows taken at membership or ordination.

The continuum of behaviors called sexual misconduct within the ministerial relationship represents an exploitation of power and not merely "inappropriate sexual or gender-directed conduct." Sexual misconduct in any form is unacceptable in church and ministry settings whether it is clergy-to-lay, lay-to-clergy, clergy-to-clergy, lay-to-lay, staff-to-staff, staff-to-volunteer, volunteer-to-volunteer, or volunteer-to-staff. Anyone who works or volunteers under the authority or auspices of the Church must be held to the highest standards of behavior, free of sexual misconduct in any form.

Those in Ministerial Roles

Both laity and clergy fill ministerial roles in our Church. In addition to clergy or professional staff, any United Methodist may fill a ministerial role by participating in ministries including, but not limited to:

- leading and participating in lay servant ministries;
- counseling or leading events for children, youth, and adults;
- teaching and leading in church schools for children, youth, and adults;
- counseling victims of violence, domestic violence, or sexual abuse;
- counseling couples about marriage, divorce, or separation;
- leading in worship as speaker from the pulpit, liturgist, communion server, or usher;
- volunteering to chaperone trips, work camps, or special events;
- working in Walks to Emmaus and Chrysalis retreats;
- mentoring;
- supervising church staff members; and

- working with computers, websites, and the Internet in church property/programs;

Progress and Troubling Trends

The General Conference not only has mandated adoption of policies in our churches, conferences, agencies, and schools, it called for training, advocacy practices, and surveys of progress as a denomination conducted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women:

Now twenty years after General Conference first committed to the elimination of sexual misconduct in the Church (1988), good work has been done:

- Thirty-five annual conferences now assign oversight of sexual misconduct issues to a “team”;
- Many conferences require sexual misconduct awareness training for all clergy, lay leadership, and appointees;
- The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has provided support and counsel to victims and church officials in hundreds of cases.

Work remains to be done. Recent findings show the experiences of leadership of the Church on many levels—local church, seminary, annual and general conferences in particular:

- Awareness of the denomination’s policy on sexual misconduct is high, but awareness of the resources for victims and congregations is much lower.
- Harassment is still a significant problem: well over three-fourths of the clergy (men and women) and half of the lay women had experienced sexual harassment in the Church (about one third of laymen).
- Holding offenders accountable, removing errant pastors, lay staff, or volunteers as needed, and requiring counseling, training, and supervision before resumption of ministerial roles are remedial steps our episcopal and superintending leader should use;
- Follow-up on situations of misconduct so that appropriate and effective remediation is achieved so that the behavior stops, does not reoccur, and relationship and ministry are returned to wholeness as much as possible;
- Placing justice for victims above protection of offenders, including pastors, is an equally pressing need;
- With this global Internet age and the growing use of computers by clergy and laity has come more frequent reports of the use of pornography and sexualized materials by laity and clergy within church programs or with church computers or property.

Progress in four areas is not adequate: prevention, education, intervention and healing. Additional work is now needed:

1. Resources for various constituencies addressing prevention, education, intervention, and healing after lay

or clergy sexual misconduct (including the United Methodist website on sexual ethics www.umsexualethics.org <<http://www.umsexualethics.org>>);

2. Updated training (initial, follow-up, and advanced) for the various constituencies within the church, including education on the prevention and the use of pornography, its destructive impact on users, and its potential for abuse in or with church programs or property;

3. Implementation of models for intervention and healing in order to provide a consistent and thorough response when complaints are initiated;

4. Development of a model for ongoing assessment of policies, practices, and responses of conferences;

5. Appropriate handling of the presence and involvement of legally convicted sexual offenders in local congregational activities and ministry;

6. Opportunities for annual conferences to share their resources and experience.

Therefore be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church renews its stand in opposition to the sin of sexual misconduct within the Church worldwide. It further recommit all United Methodists to the eradication of sexual misconduct in all ministerial relationship, and calls for:

1. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, to continue to convene and coordinate a cooperative interagency group to address the areas of prevention, education, intervention, and healing including a representative of the Council of Bishops, the General Boards of Discipleship, Higher Education and Ministry, Global Ministries, Church and Society, the General Council on Finance and Administration, the Division on Ministries with Young People, and representative of annual conference Response/Crisis Teams and Safe Sanctuary Teams (each agency member responsible for his or her own expense and a share of the expense of the annual conference representatives);

2. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women be provided resources sufficient to develop/distribute resources for leaders of lay events and programs with the church in order to help train and equip them to raise this important issue with laity (including lay servants, lay leaders, Christian educators, persons in mission, leaders in School of Christian Mission, Walks to Emmaus, Chrysalis, and leaders of events with young people);

3. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, through the interagency group, to ensure that resources for laity and clergy in ministerial roles are identified and promoted for use in conferences, districts or clusters, and local congregations;

4. The Council of Bishops to reaffirm its commitment to preventing and eradicating sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct in the church through education, training;

and sharing of resources. Each episcopal area will implement policies, procedures, and ongoing plans to coordinate person involved in prevention and intervention, including but not limited to: district superintendents, boards of ordained ministry, boards of laity, advocates, intervention and healing teams, trained mediators, and staff-parish relations committees;

5. United Methodist-related schools of theology to provide training on the prevention and eradication of sexual harassment, abuse and misconduct within the ministerial relationship;

6. Annual conference boards of ordained ministry to provide education (entry level, follow-up, advanced) for all appointed clergy, local pastors, and commissioned members. Annual conferences are also encouraged to provide similar education and training for those employed in ministerial leadership;

7. Episcopal areas to require that all clergy, local pastors assigned laity, and commissioned members appointed in each annual conference have regular, up-to-date sexual ethics training to be in good standing for appointment;

8. The General Board of Church and Society to continue to advocate for just laws that address or counter sexual harassment and abuse in our larger societies.

Sacred Trust, Power, and Responsibility

The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 161F, declares all human beings have equal worth in the eyes of God. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 (CEB) states, “you are all God’s children”; therefore, we as United Methodists support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, or gender. In our congregations and settings for ministry, we seek to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free from misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality, and kinship in Christ.

Those in positions of authority in the church, both clergy and lay, have been given much responsibility, vested with a sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God’s love. Misconduct of a sexual nature inhibits the full and joyful participation of all in the community of God. Sexual misconduct in church and ministry settings impedes the mission of Jesus Christ. Ministerial leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words that hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words that cause harm.

As our children, youth, and adults come to worship, study, camps, retreats, and schools of mission, they bring a heightened awareness of the issues of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, incest, rape, and sexual assault. In the safety and sanctity of the church’s settings, we as church leaders, both clergy and lay, paid and volunteer, must be

held to the highest standard of conduct as we lead, provide guidance and support, and work with children, youth, and adults in ministry settings. Sexual misconduct in any form is a violation of the membership and ordination vows we take as laity and clergy in *The United Methodist Church*. Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment are chargeable offenses both for clergy and laity per the *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 2702.

Definitions

Misconduct of a sexual nature within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay- or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid). The continuum of behaviors within the ministerial relationship represents an *exploitation of power* and not merely “inappropriate sexual or gender-directed conduct.” Misconduct of a sexual nature in any form is unacceptable in church and ministry settings whether it is clergy-to-lay, lay-to-clergy, clergy-to-clergy, lay-to-lay, staff-to-staff, staff-to-volunteer, volunteer-to-volunteer, or volunteer-to-staff. In some states, nations, and communities, sexual relationships between clergy and parishioners is a criminal offense. Anyone who works or volunteers under the authority or auspices of the church must be held to the highest standards of behavior, free of sexual misconduct in any form.

Misconduct of a sexual nature for clergy is listed in ¶ 2702.1: “A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: . . . (h) sexual abuse; (i) sexual misconduct including the use or possession of pornography, (j) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (k) racial or gender discrimination . . .”

Misconduct of a sexual nature for a professing member is listed in ¶ 2702.3: “A professing member of a local church may be charged with the following offenses, and if so, may choose a trial: . . . (e) sexual abuse; (f) sexual misconduct; (g) child abuse; (h) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (i) racial or gender discrimination . . .”

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is a form of misconduct of a sexual nature and is defined in ¶ 161I (*Book of Discipline*, 2016) in the Social Principles. It also includes sexual assault as defined in ¶ 161J (*Book of Discipline*, 2016) in the Social Principles. Sexual abuse includes penetration of the victim’s body, also known as rape, sexual assault, fondling and unwanted touching, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpe-

trator's body, and sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent.

Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct is a form of misconduct of a sexual nature that uses sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another. The misconduct regarding use of pornography is further defined in ¶ 161Q (*Book of Discipline, 2016*) in the Social Principles.

Sexualized behavior is behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples include, but are not limited to displaying sexually suggestive visual materials; use of pornography in church programs on or with church property, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body; touching another person's body; touching another person's body/hair/clothing; touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person; kissing; and sexual intercourse. Sexualized behavior can be a form of sexual misconduct when this behavior is unwanted by the recipient or witness, is a violation of society's or the church's law, breaks the sacred trust in the ministerial role, or violates the vows taken at membership or ordination.

Child Abuse: Child abuse includes but is not limited to child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is sexual activity with a minor and does not need to include physical contact between a perpetrator and a minor. Some forms of child sexual abuse includes exhibitionism or exposing oneself to a minor; fondling; intercourse; masturbation in the presence of a minor, or forcing the minor to masturbate; obscene phone calls, text messages; producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images of children; sex with any kind of a minor including vaginal, oral, or anal; sex trafficking.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct of a sexual nature and is defined in ¶ 161J (*Book of Discipline, 2016*) in the Social Principles. To clarify further, it is unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (including volunteers), mentor, or colleague relationship that alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or volunteer's performance by creating a hostile environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit anyone within the life of the church.

Those in Ministerial Roles

Both laity and clergy fill ministerial roles in our church. In addition to clergy or professional staff, any

United Methodist may fill a ministerial role by participating in ministries including, but not limited to:

- leading and participating in lay servant ministries;
- coordinating and/or leading events for children, youth, and adults;
- teaching and leading in church schools for children, youth, and adults;
- leading in worship as speaker from the pulpit, liturgist, Communion server, or usher;
- volunteering to chaperone trips, work camps, or special events;
- working in Walks to Emmaus and Chrysalis retreats;
- mentoring;
- supervising church staff members; and
- working with computers, websites, and the Internet in church property/programs.

Participation in Stephen Ministries

Progress and Troubling Trends

The General Conference not only has mandated adoption of policies in our churches, conferences, agencies, and schools, it called for training, advocacy practices, and surveys of progress as a denomination conducted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Work remains to be done. Recent findings show the experiences of leadership of the church on many levels—local church, seminary, annual and General Conferences in particular:

- Awareness of the denomination's policy on sexual misconduct is high, but awareness of the resources for victims and congregations is much lower.
- Awareness of policy by members and guests continues to be low.
- Harassment is still a significant problem: well over three-fourths of the clergy (men and women) and half of the laywomen had experienced sexual harassment in the church (about one third of laymen).
- Holding offenders accountable, removing errant pastors, lay staff, or volunteers as needed, and requiring counseling, training, and supervision before resumption of ministerial roles are remedial steps our episcopal and superintending leader should use in every case;
- Accountability for follow-up on situations of misconduct so that appropriate and effective remediation is achieved, so that the behavior stops, does not reoccur, and relationship and ministry are returned to wholeness as much as possible;
- Placing justice for victims above protection of offenders, including pastors, is an equally pressing need;
- With this global internet age and the growing use of computers by clergy and laity has come more frequent reports of the use of pornography and sexualized materials

by laity and clergy within church programs or with church computers or property.

Progress in four areas is not adequate: prevention, education, intervention, and healing. Additional work is now needed:

1. Resources for various constituencies addressing prevention, education, intervention, and healing after lay or clergy sexual misconduct (including the United Methodist website on sexual ethics www.umsexualethics.org <<http://www.umsexualethics.org>>);

2. Updated training (initial, follow-up, and advanced) for the various constituencies within the church, including education on the prevention and the use of pornography, its destructive impact on users, and its potential for abuse in or with church programs or property;

3. Implementation of models for intervention and healing to all affected, in order to provide a consistent and thorough response every time when complaints are initiated;

4. Development of a model for ongoing assessment of policies, practices, and responses of conferences;

5. Appropriate handling of the presence and involvement of legally convicted sexual offenders in local congregational activities and ministry;

6. Opportunities for annual conferences to share their resources and experience (see www.umsexualethics.org).

Therefore be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church renews its stand in opposition to the sin of sexual misconduct within the church worldwide. It further re-commits all United Methodists to the eradication of sexual misconduct in all ministerial relationship, and calls for:

1. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, to continue to convene and coordinate a cooperative interagency group to address the areas of prevention, education, intervention, and healing including a representative of the Council of Bishops, the General Boards of Discipleship, Higher Education and Ministry, Global Ministries, Church and Society, the General Council on Finance and Administration, Wespeth, UMM, UMW, and representatives of annual conference Response/Crisis Teams and Safe Sanctuary Teams (each agency member responsible for his or her own expense and a share of the expense of the annual conference representatives);

2. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women be provided resources sufficient to develop/distribute resources for leaders of lay events and programs with the church in order to help train and equip them to raise this important issue with laity (including lay servants, lay leaders, Christian educators, persons in mission, leaders in Schools of Christian Mission, Walks to Emmaus, Chrysalis, and leaders of events with young people);

3. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, through the interagency group, to ensure that resources for laity and clergy in ministerial roles are identified and promoted for use in conferences, districts or clusters, and local congregations;

4. The Council of Bishops to reaffirm its commitment to preventing and eradicating sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct in the church through education, training, and sharing of resources. Each episcopal area will implement policies, procedures, and ongoing plans to coordinate persons involved in prevention and intervention, including but not limited to: district superintendents, boards of ordained ministry, boards of laity, advocates, intervention and healing teams, trained mediators, and staff-parish relations committees;

5. United Methodist-related schools of theology to provide training on the prevention and eradication of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct within the ministerial relationship;

6. Annual conference boards of ordained ministry to provide education (entry level, follow-up, advanced) for all appointed clergy, local pastors, and commissioned members. Annual conferences are also encouraged to provide similar education and training for those employed in ministerial leadership;

7. Episcopal areas to require that all clergy, local pastors assigned laity, and commissioned members appointed in each annual conference have regular, up-to-date sexual ethics training a minimum of once every four years to be in good standing for appointment;

8. The General Board of Church and Society to continue to advocate for just laws that address or counter sexual harassment and abuse in our larger societies.

Rationale:

Sexual abuse, misconduct, and harassment in ministerial roles cause great harm to all parties involved and to the witness of the church. It is critical that the church has a proper accountability when sexual abuse, misconduct, harassment occurs and has committees and structures to prevent and address such behavior.

R3001.

Petition Number: 20568-IC-R3001-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Accessibility Grants to Churches

WHEREAS, it is essential that The United Methodist Church as a denomination find a way to assist local

churches and ministry programs to find grant money to assist them in becoming more accessible by removing architectural, communication, sensory, and other barriers; and

WHEREAS, our denomination establishes many programs around specific groups of people, whether they be racial and/or ethnic groups or age-targeted groups; and

WHEREAS, ~~each of the all groups that the church claims an interest in and sets priorities for~~ includes persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there are more than one billion people living with disabilities in the world, ~~of which 56 million live in the United States, according to whom the United Nations data. The United Nations recently focused on the issues of disability calls attention~~ by calling for institutions to become more accessible; and

WHEREAS, the *Book of Discipline* calls the church to inclusiveness, and states: “A further mark of inclusiveness is the setting of church activities in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities” (¶ 140), which reflects Jesus’ words for inclusiveness in his parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14, “so my house may be full” (CEV); and

WHEREAS, since 2000, ~~more than 140 hundreds of churches in the United States~~ have received grants to help them increase their accessibility and to remove other barriers;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church set aside funds to provide accessibility and program grants to churches in all annual conferences including in central conferences, and other United Methodist entities, and that the program be administered from within the General Board of Global Ministries. these grants be administered from the DisAbility Ministries Committee, General Commission on Religion and Race.

R3122.

Petition Number: 20587-IC-R3122-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Expansion of Inclusive Language

Adopt Resolution #3122:

WHEREAS, we live in an ever-changing global community with a diversity of multiracial identities where racial/ethnic identification is not limited to one category and much of the world bases identity on ethnic nationality rather than racial/ethnic categories; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations and countries other than the United States have varying racial/ethnic classifications; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion and naming of persons with more than one racial or ethnic identity gives visibility to people who often are excluded; and

WHEREAS, many forms used within The United Methodist Church require the growing population of biracial/multiracial people to choose between one identity or another, by requiring people to identify themselves by selecting only one of the six dominant racial options: Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), Native American, Pacific Islander, and White;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church offer expanded racial identification options on all its forms so that biracial/multiracial persons will have options that are not limiting but embracing of persons with more than one racial or ethnic background.

R3293.

Petition Number: 20577-IC-R3293; Hanke, Gilbert - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

United Methodists Encouraged to Adopt LDS Scout Troops

3293. Receive Guidelines for Ministering to ~~Mormons~~ Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Who Seek to Become United Methodists

WHEREAS, United Methodists seek to act in ways that are faithful, compassionate, and just in relationship to other faith traditions, extending hospitality toward all and charity toward those whose faith and practice differ from ours; and

WHEREAS, as an expression of such hospitality and charity, United Methodists need to offer the pathways into membership for persons of other faith traditions with graciousness, consistency, and clarity; and

WHEREAS, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints presents itself as a faith tradition outside the parameters of historic, apostolic Christianity;

Therefore, we continue to recommend that United Methodist churches should receive persons from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints by offering the sacrament of Christian baptism following a period of *catechesis* (a time of intensive exploration and instruction in the Christian faith); and

Further, we continue to affirm *Sacramental Faithfulness: Guidelines for Receiving People from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)* as a study resource and guideline for pastors and congregations who seek to offer pathways to receive former ~~Mormons~~ mem-

bers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who seek to become United Methodist; and

Further, we authorize the General Board of Discipleship to provide ongoing resources in accordance with *Sacramental Faithfulness: Guidelines for Receiving People from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)* to the church to guide pastors and congregations who receive such persons who seek to become United Methodists in ways that are faithful to our United Methodist heritage; and

Finally, since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has ended its formal relationship with the Boy Scouts of America, we encourage local United Methodist churches to welcome interested youth from the Church of Latter-Day Saints into their scouting ministries programs.

R3371.

Petition Number: 20635-IC-R3371-G; Tichenor, Karen - Soldotna, AK, USA for Alaska Annual Conference.

Amend Charter for Racial Justice

1st paragraph—

Racism is a system of inequality based on race prejudice and the belief that one race is innately superior to all other races. In the United States, systemic race-based prejudice and misuse of power have justified the conquest, enslavement, and evangelizing of non-Europeans. During the early history of this country, Europeans used legal documents such as the Christian Doctrine of Discovery of 1823 to justify the notion that their civilization and religion were innately superior to those of both the original inhabitants of the United States and the Africans who were forcibly brought to these shores as slaves. The concepts of race and racism were created explicitly to ensure the subjugation of peoples the Europeans believed to be inferior. The myth of European superiority persisted—and persists—in every institution in American life. Other people who came, and those who are still coming to do not identify with the European English-speaking power-majority of the United States—who came either by choice or by force—have encountered and continue to encounter racism. Some of these people are historical examples of this include the Chinese immigrants who built the country's railroads as indentured workers; the Mexican indigenous people of what is now Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hawaii, and Alaska whose lands were annexed and whose people were colonized; and the people who have suffered from American colonialism in the Philippines, Jamaica, and Haiti who continue to suffer the consequences of racist American colonial policies of the past. the Puerto Ri-

cans, the Cubans, the Hawaiians, and the Eskimos who were colonized; and the Filipinos, the Jamaicans, and the Haitians who lived on starvation wages as farm workers.

3rd paragraph—The damage from years of systemic race-based exploitation has not been erased and by all measurable indicators, is a legacy that continues through generations. a color-blind society is many years in the future. A system designed to meet the needs of one segment of the population cannot be the means to the development of a just society for all. The racist system Racist systems in the United States today perpetuates the perpetuate the status quo of power and control of by those who are of European ancestry. It is often, often called “white supremacy.” The fruits of racism are prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, and dehumanization, and historical trauma known as multigenerational grief. Consistently, African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders people of minority communities including but not limited to those of African, Hispanic, Latinx, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Island descent have been are systematically humiliated by being given having access to jobs, housing, education, medical services, transportation, and public accommodations that are all inferior. With While their hopes are deferred and rights still denied, the deprived and oppressed fall prey to participate in the a colonial mentality that acquiesced inequity creates. can acquiesce to the inequities.

Rationale:

These changes will bring this important resolution into alignment with some of the latest research findings on racial injustice, its roots and its manifestations.

R3376.

Petition Number: 20570-IC-R3376; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

White Privilege in the United States

Delete Resolution #3376 and replace with new language:

In the United States, whiteness as a concept and racialized identity has always been placed at the top of the societal hierarchy. As a result, white people in this country continue to benefit from a wide range of unearned privileges based solely on their race. These privileges are the direct and indirect result of practices, policies, and procedures stemming from a system of white supremacy, out of which the United States was formed and in which it continues to operate.

The key to understanding white privilege is that whiteness is an unearned advantage of a white person. Studies continue to provide evidence of distinct differences in survival, opportunities, access, resources, and benefit-of-the-doubt available to white people that are not available to people of color. Despite overlapping oppressions that apply to many people in the United States, i.e., sexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, etc., racism is a determinative factor, that operates at a visible and invisible level.

Poverty and prison sentences, economics and education, law enforcement and the legal system, health care and housing, are among the systems found to have discrepancies based on race and color. These systems create a compound effect of unearned racial privilege for white people. For example, racialized housing discrimination creates racial inequity and segregation; housing loans are based on the neighborhoods and preexisting stereotypes of residents; and schools are funded by tax dollars from housing that is calculated on market values affected by segregation and discrimination.

Thus we urge The United Methodist Church at every level and form to disrupt and dismantle all manifestations of white privilege. We challenge the General Conference to recognize white privilege as an underlying cause of injustice in United States society and to commit its resources, energy, and accountability measures to ensuring its elimination in church and in society. It is impossible to recognize the image of God as nonnegotiable for everyone when our church allows unearned benefits for people racialized as white, at the expense of people of color.

We challenge white people to disrupt and dismantle white privilege by committing to and living into a tangible and practical repentance for the sins of racism and the hoarding of unearned benefits due to race. To this end, white people should engage in an overlapping and never-ending threefold practice of awareness (learning to recognize one's white privilege); internalization (making connections between one's whiteness and how it provides privileges and benefits in everyday life); and action (committing to and enacting decisions and practices that will dismantle white privilege in all the places it presents itself—our lives, our churches, and the country).

We challenge each local church and connectional church body in the United States to assess the extent to which white privilege has created racial inequity within their membership, leadership, budget, governing practices, values and mission, outreach, and definitions of “welcome,” “effectiveness,” “faithfulness,” and “full participation.”

Finally, we call on all persons of any racial or ethnic heritage, to engage in disrupting and dismantling white privilege together in order to restore the broken body of Christ. To do so honorably and in a spirit of mutuality, *without replicating white privilege*, we recommend the following:

- white people will increase risk and responsibility for the purposes of repentance and repair;
- people of color will work to recognize and engage in forms of resistance that highlight their dignity, worth, and wholeness, despite the harm that comes from white privilege;
- white people will refuse to expect/demand that people of color teach them about white privilege; share their stories of being harmed by white privilege; or care for them while they reckon with the harm they have caused by helping the system of white privilege exist.

R3427.

Petition Number: 20576-IC-R3427; Hanke, Gilbert - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Add Resources to Resolution on Gender-Based Violence

Resolution 3427: Add resource to a call for action as follows:

....

We call on all United Methodists, local churches, campus ministries, colleges, universities, seminaries, annual conferences, general agencies and commissions, and the Council of Bishops to:

1. Teach, preach, and model healthy masculinity and respectful relationships that reflect the sacred worth of women and girls (Principles of Healthy Masculinity, <http://www.maleallies.org/principles-of-healthy-masculinity>);
2. Engage men and boys as allies in the promotion of gender equality through the use of *Amending through Faith*, a resource developed by the YWCA of Middle Tennessee and the General Commission on United Methodist Men (www.gcumm.org/gender-based-violence);
3. Assess resources used in local ministry settings to ensure the promotion of sacred worth of women and girls and healthy masculinity;

R3443.

Petition Number: 20542-IC-R3443-G; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

Amend Resolution #3443, Eradication of Sexism in the Church:

Eradication of Sexism in the Church

We affirm that “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28 NIV)

WHEREAS, sexism continues to be a pervasive and systematic force within our church and our society; and

WHEREAS, sexism deprives the church and society of the opportunity to use the skills and talents that women have; and

WHEREAS, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2007 survey of local churches in the United States found that only 55% of small churches and 62% of large membership churches have policies against sexual harassment; inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female lay persons (as Board of Trustees members and ushers, for example); 2017 survey found that only 53% of laypersons versus 86% of clergy are familiar with local church policies against sexual harassment. Previous research by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continues to show that inclusive language studies are rare in local congregations with only 4% of laity and 31% of clergy indicating they use inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language when referring to God; and urban congregations more frequently have inclusive language studies, harassment policies, and diverse use of female laypersons (as board of trustees members and ushers, for example); and

WHEREAS, the church remains committed to the eradication of sexual harassment against children, employees, volunteers, clergy and their families, and congregants. Yet sexual misconduct remains a serious problem in our conferences. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2017 survey indicates that more than 50% of clergy, laypersons, and seminary students have reported experiencing some form of sexual misconduct, with 1 in 33 women experiencing sexual harassment in local church meetings and worship, and an alarming number of local congregations do not have policies, procedures, or training in place for laity and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and how to report such conduct; and

WHEREAS, women comprise 58% 57% of the denomination’s membership but hold only one-fifth of the

top leadership positions in the U.S. annual conferences and as leaders are largely relegated to committees without much financial power like women’s ministry and advocacy, racial/ethnic concerns and youth ministry rather than committees that exert considerable influence and control over funding as well as the allocation of money in annual conference ministries, and women employed by general church agencies hold 77% of administrative and clerical support positions (Data from the General Council on Finance and Administration 2009; Women by the Number: issues November 2010, December 2010, January 2011, and March 2011; *THE FLYER*); and

WHEREAS, the church continues to lose clergywomen from local church ministry into more welcoming forms of ministry, indicating a persistent, subtle, and often unchallenged sexism that denies women in The United Methodist Church the opportunity to participate fully and equally in all areas of the church; and despite progress, research continues to show that clergywomen experience a limited positional power when leading a congregation in comparison with their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women 2017 Pay Equity survey found that though membership is comprised of 58% women, they made up 28.4% of clergy positions, with women clergy receiving on average a salary that is almost \$4,000 less per year than their similarly situated male counterparts across regions and jurisdictions;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference continue to commit itself to eradicating sexism in the church and that it affirm the work and tasks of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and of the annual conference-related commissions and counterparts; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference commission or counterpart be given the financial backing to pursue projects that are aimed at educating the members of the local churches about the issues of sexism and at sponsoring the leadership events that enable the annual conference commission members to be better advocates for all who seek equity and inclusiveness; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference, United Methodist seminary, and all United Methodist-related institutions are called to have policies on sexual harassment and equal opportunity; and

Be it further resolved, that each annual conference and local congregation is called have policy, procedures, and training opportunities in place for lay and clergy in stopping and preventing sexual harassment and misconduct; and that progress to full compliance will be reported through the episcopal office to the General Commission

on the Status and Role of Women at the commission's request. The commission will be responsible to report to General Conference 2016; and

Be it further resolved, that bishops and cabinet members be mindful of pay equity disparities and work collectively within their respective conferences to eliminate pay inequities; and

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference support the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as the advocacy and monitoring agency of women's issues for increasing opportunities for females in leadership, promoting equality in filling decision-making posts, and fostering inclusiveness in all facets of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

Sexism, a pervasive and systematic force within our church, deprives the church of the opportunity to use the skills and talents of women. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continues to work toward ending disparities regarding the reporting of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and pay inequality.

R8018.

Petition Number: 20575-IC-R8018; Hanke, Gilbert - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Support for Clergywomen

WHEREAS, United Methodist churches have not always supported-welcomed the appointment of clergywomen and provided them with support following their appointment, and

WHEREAS, clergywomen have gifts and graces that have enriched the witness of this denomination, and

WHEREAS, clergywomen have been supportive of United Methodist Men as expressed in scouting ministry and men's ministry;

Therefore, be it resolved, that United Methodist Men organizations be expected to welcome women to the pulpits of their churches, and

Be it further resolved, that clergywomen be invited to share in the participate in the studies and activities of local chapters United Methodist Men organizations.

R8019.

Petition Number: 20574-IC-R8019; Hanke, Gilbert - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Expanding Our Outreach to Men and Youth

8019 Expanding Our Outreach to Men and Youth

WHEREAS, membership in The United Methodist Church has declined every year since the 1968 merger of The Methodist Church with The Evangelical United Brethren Church, and

WHEREAS, a ~~ABC~~ Pew Research Center poll found that only ~~32~~ 31 percent of American men attend church **at least once a week** compared to ~~44~~ 40 percent of American women, (~~<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/church_poll020301.html>~~ www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/gender-composition), ~~and 13 million more women than men attend church in the U.S.,~~ and WHEREAS, ~~25 percent of married women attend church without their husbands,~~ only 29 percent of men report that they participate in prayer, Scripture study, or religious education groups once or twice a week or more, and

WHEREAS, a Gallup poll shows declining interest among young people with ~~75 percent of those over 75 years indicating that religion is important in their lives and only 47 percent of young adults answering in the same manner,~~ Pew Research Report indicates a declining interest in religion among young people 18-29. Sixty-five percent of those over 65 indicate that religion is important in their lives compared to 40 percent of 18-29, and

WHEREAS, ~~only 10 percent of few~~ U.S. churches maintain vibrant men's ministry programs, and most congregations struggle to find ways to minister to men and reach young people:

Therefore, be it resolved, that churches be encouraged to expand their ministries to all men in the church and the community. The group of men that meets monthly for study, worship, and fellowship serves an important purpose, but it should be only a fraction of a local church's effort to deepen the spiritual lives of men and to minister to men and young people without church homes, and

Be it further resolved, that all churches should charter a United Methodist Men's organization, and they should be encouraged to utilize DVDs, online training, lay-speaking courses, the services of men's ministry specialists, and other resources provided by the General Commission on United Methodist Men to expand the ministry to all men within and beyond the congregation, and.

Be it further resolved, that United Methodist churches be encouraged to charter Scout troops and to add other youth-serving ministries as a way to reach unchurched youth and as a way to minister to young people within their faith communities, and

Be it further resolved, that local churches encourage members to become scouting ministry specialists as a way to expand their ministries through youth-serving agencies.

Be it further resolved, that local churches encourage and provide funding to enable one or more of their members to become men's ministry specialists and to utilize the services and resources of those already accredited as men's ministry specialists, and.

Be it further resolved, that the one of the most effective means of making disciples takes place when men meet in weekly groups, using the "Class Meeting" model of Wesley as described in the book by Dr. Kevin Watson with the same title. These meetings can be either face-to-face or in an e-meeting format. Here men don't talk about a "historical" relationship with Jesus, but answer transformational questions as to where they have intersected with Christ in the last week.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20569-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Cultural Competency Training

Create a new resolution:

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church strives to grow in diversity as a denomination seeking to be the fully inclusive body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, historical realities of oppression and church practices that reflect and favor dominant cultures frequently lead to a lack of effective participation in all levels of conference leadership; and

WHEREAS, cultural competency is a skill that can be learned; and

WHEREAS, annual conferences have a responsibility to ensure the effective participation of all members of The United Methodist Church, especially those members of historically marginalized communities;

Therefore, be it resolved, that in consultation with the General Commission on Religion and Race, each annual conference is strongly encouraged to provide annual cultural competency training for the chairperson of all annual conference boards, agencies, committees, and commissions, and for the full membership of the Committee on Nominations and the Board of Laity or equivalent bodies; and

Be it further resolved, that self-assessment tools are encouraged as part of the training and may include but should not be limited to use of the Intercultural Development Inventory [IDI] and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale [IES];

Be it further resolved, that reports of the completion of trainings, tools used, and number of persons trained shall be provided to the chairperson of the annual conference Commission on Religion and Race or its equivalent body (§ 643.1); and

Be it further resolved, that the responsibility for implementing the actions and values of this resolution shall be that of the resident bishop and/or their designee.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20571-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Support for Multicultural Ministry

Create a new resolution:

WHEREAS, demographic projections highlight that our communities are becoming increasingly non-white, non-English speaking and non-Christian, the importance of relationships with those who differ from the average United Methodist cannot be emphasized enough; and

WHEREAS, the mission of The United Methodist Church to "[m]ake disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" requires us to open our eyes, ears, hearts, and hands to the people around us, especially when it feels uncomfortable and unfamiliar; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has been called by God to minister to people with different histories, race and ethnicities, cultures, and languages; and

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline (2016) states that district superintendents should work to promote collaborative, ecumenical, and multicultural ministries (§ 419.1), but nowhere does the Discipline define what multiculturalism is; the definition either is assumed to be standard across the connection, or is left to individual interpretation; and

WHEREAS, there is no one model of multicultural ministry that is the standard best model, so multiculturalism is best thought of as an approach to ministry that both seeks and serves the wholeness of God and seeks to stretch beyond the limitations that only one experience of God can provide; and

WHEREAS, multiculturalism refers to an approach to ministry in which diversity is celebrated with no pressure to assimilate, and the wisdom of God, as it is uniquely experienced and expressed by persons of different life stories, is listened to and respected; thus, everyone becomes a teacher and a learner because everyone realizes that a single perspective could not possibly contain the fullness of God's grace and truth; and

WHEREAS, multicultural ministry is understood as inherently relational and requiring the humility to learn from others, then Wesleyan ideals are certainly relevant; and

WHEREAS, multicultural ministry requires that we leave our silos of certainty and homogeneity in order to experience God anew; and

WHEREAS, this form of spirituality is social, rather than individualistic; and

WHEREAS, multicultural ministry is shaped by everyone in an equitable manner and not by any one dominant group; is an approach to church and ministry that actively seeks to engage authentically across lines of similarities and differences, for the purpose of mutual learning, teaching, and serving; and

WHEREAS, multicultural ministry goes beyond being in ministry with persons and groups of different lived experiences, by valuing all voices, incorporating all traditions and experiences into the ministry of the church; and

WHEREAS, the General Commission on Religion and Race is mandated by the church to ensure the equitable participation of all believers as members of the same body that is the body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the question of multicultural ministry is not an either/or proposition but rather a distinct path to achieve the inclusive spirit revealed to us at Pentecost, when people understood each other, not through a common language, but through the power of the Spirit who affirmed, embraced, and empowered everyone;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church's commitment to inclusiveness affirms the continued development and strengthening of multicultural ministry approaches as defined above; and the Council of Bishops shall direct annual conferences on matters of ministry so that local churches and ministries are provided with resources and guidance in their efforts to respond to diverse communities.

Be it further resolved, that United Methodist seminaries and schools of theology will incorporate into their curricula cross-racial and cross-cultural competencies needed to prepare students who will minister in diverse settings.

Be it further resolved, that the General Commission on Religion and Race will partner with other appropriate general agencies, such as the General Board of Global Ministries, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, General Board of Church and Society, and General Board of Discipleship to develop resources, within current budgetary framework, that undergird the creation and the strengthening of multicultural ministries.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20582-IC-R9999; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race. Rhodes, Bob - San Diego, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Apology for Illegal Overthrow of Hawaiian Kingdom

Action Desired: Create new resolution

WHEREAS, in the 2012 General Conference Resolution 3324, The United Methodist Church acknowledged that Christianity's spread across the world has often "damaged the culture, life ways, and spirituality of indigenous persons," and called on every conference and local congregation to "develop and nurture relationships with indigenous persons"; and

WHEREAS, the 1992 California-Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church passed Resolution No. 16, which resolved that the conference "recognize the inherent right of native Hawaiian people to self-determined governance, and that it pledge support, advocacy, and solidarity for Hawaiian self-governance"; and

WHEREAS, President Bill Clinton officially apologized in 1993 for the participation of the United States in the January 17, 1893, illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and Queen Lili'uokalani; and

WHEREAS, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA's General Assembly in 1994 passed the resolution titled "Stolen Nation," which recognized that the overthrow of Hawai'i was illegal and urged its sixty-four member denominations to work for justice and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 1993 officially apologized for the church's participation in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and Queen Lili'uokalani and affirmed the inherent right of native Hawaiians to self-governance, and pledged its support and solidarity in the name of Christ; and

WHEREAS, on January 17, 1893, American businessmen and leaders orchestrated the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and Queen Lili'uokalani; and

WHEREAS, in spite of five treaties signed by the U.S. Government with the Hawaiian Kingdom, and the fact that sixteen other nations maintained official diplomatic ties with Honolulu, resident businessmen—some of whom were descended from the original missionaries—calling themselves "the Committee of Safety" seized power by illegally occupying the government building, with the assistance of 162 U.S. Marines and Navy sailors; and

WHEREAS, according to newspaper articles and church archival documents, the Rev. Dr. Harcourt W. Peck supported the illegal overthrow and served as sharpshooter and acting adjutant for Colonel J. H. Fisher, commander of the forces who dethroned Queen Lili'uokalani; and

WHEREAS, when Rev. Dr. Peck returned to Hawai'i a year later to serve as pastor of First Methodist Episcopal Church, he rejoined the sharpshooter company and served as chaplain of the new forcibly established Republic of Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Peck's armed participation against the legal and internationally recognized indigenous government of Hawai'i, as well as his continued solidarity with those who orchestrated the overthrow, solidified First Methodist Episcopal Church's establishment in Honolulu; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has not acknowledged or addressed its historic participation and complicities with injustices related to the Hawaiian people; and

WHEREAS, the offenses were against the entire Hawaiian Kingdom, its subjects, and other residents, not indigenous Hawaiians alone; and

WHEREAS, the illegal overthrow and systematic oppression of Native Hawaiians in 1893 has continued to affect them to this day, as Native Hawaiians:

- Have lower average education, higher unemployment, and lower incomes than the non-Hawaiian population (Maris Mikelsons, the Urban Institute and Karl Eschbach, University of Houston [1993], "Housing Problems and Needs of Native Hawaiians");

- Make up 35 percent of homeless persons in Hawai'i (Yamane, D. P., Oeser, S. G., & Omori, J. [2010]. Health Disparities in the Native Hawaiian Homeless. Hawaii Medical Journal, 69[6 Suppl 3], 35–41. Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery [2015], "Improving Media Representation of Hawaii's Houseless");

- Are less likely to be enrolled in college compared with Hawai'i's other major ethnic groups, (Kamehameha Schools [2014], "Ka Huaka'I: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment");

- Have higher rates of heart attack, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and asthma than the state average (Office of Hawaiian Affairs [2011] "Native Hawaiian Health Fact Sheet.");

- Have twice the proportion of teenage mothers, the lowest rate of prenatal care, and highest rate of infant mortality among major ethnic groups in Hawai'i (Kamehameha Schools [2014], "Ka Huaka'I: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment");

- Make up 24 percent of the general population in Hawai'i, but 27 percent of all arrests, 39 percent of the incarcerated population, and 41 percent of parole revocations (Office of Hawaiian Affairs [2010], "The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System");

- Are more likely to get a prison sentence, receive longer prison sentences, make up the highest percentage of people incarcerated in out-of-state facilities, and has the largest proportion of its population of women in prison, compared to other ethnic groups (Office of Hawaiian Affairs [2010], "The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System");

- Have a higher rate of dissatisfaction with life, are more likely to be depressed, and are more likely to commit suicide compared with non-Hawaiians (Kamehameha Schools [2014], "Ka Huaka'I: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment");

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church acknowledge the history of racism and imposed colonial rule that has impacted Native Hawaiians from the time of the overthrow to the present, and

Be it further resolved, that The United Methodist 2020 General Conference issue a formal public apology to Native Hawaiians for the church's complicity in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy in 1893, and

Be it further resolved, that the California-Pacific Annual Conference bishop appoint a task force to engage Native Hawaiians in a time of listening in order to prepare for a meaningful apology and to nurture authentic community.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20583-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Recognition of the DisAbility Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church

Action Desired: Create New Resolution:

WHEREAS, Christ restored numerous persons with disabilities to their God-given place in the community, and the apostle Paul described the church as the body of Christ and stated that "... the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:22, CEB) and also that "... nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord..." (Romans 8:38a, CEB); and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has stated in the Social Principles that “We recognize and affirm the full humanity and personhood of all individuals with mental, physical, developmental, neurological, and psychological conditions or disabilities as full members of the family of God. We also affirm their rightful place in both the church and society” (§ 162I) and further, that “We urge the Church and society to recognize and receive the gifts of persons with disabilities to enable them to be full participants in the community of faith” (§ 162I); and

WHEREAS, each of the groups that the church claims an interest in and sets priorities for, and, in fact, every group into which people can be classified, includes persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, there are more than one billion people living with disabilities in the world, according to United Nations data, and the United Nations has focused on the issue of disability by calling for institutions to become more accessible; and

WHEREAS, each of the annual conferences have a mandate to have either a committee on disability concerns or other structure to fulfill eight functions, including participation “in jurisdictional accessibility associations in the sharing of knowledge and resources” (§ 653.2.h), and there is no other denomination-wide source of knowledge and resources;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church acknowledges that the DisAbility Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church is a recognized source of knowledge and resources with jurisdictional representation, and charges this committee with the following tasks, to be performed under the auspices of the General Commission on Religion and Race and in collaboration with other General Boards and Agencies:

Through advocacy, to work toward the full participation of people with all types of disabilities, including mental illness, in United Methodist churches in whatever capacity they are called to serve.

Through education, to work to break down barriers, including awareness, architectural, attitude, and communication barriers and more, that keep people with disabilities from finding a place to belong in United Methodist churches.

Through empowerment, following the lead of people with disabilities, to teach others what barriers need to be removed from our churches and other United Methodist entities, to determine goals and develop resources, to educate and train church leaders, and to do every part of the committee’s work.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20584-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Disabilities and the Ordination Process

Action Desired: Create new resolution:

Persons with disabilities often deal with false assumptions by others concerning their vocational abilities. When this happens, qualified candidates for ministry who have much to offer the church are denied the opportunity to contribute, and churches are denied the blessings of their ministry.

Therefore, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church urges all engaged in the process of evaluation of candidates for ministry, including but not limited to the sponsoring church, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations as outlined in the United Nations’ Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, incorporating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, or other relevant laws. After such reasonable accommodations are offered, decisions regarding candidacy should be based solely on whether the candidate is capable of meeting the outlined professional standards required of all candidates for their ministry and is able to render effective service in pastoral ministry.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20585-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin - Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on Religion and Race.

Mental Health Discrimination in Disability Compensation

Action Desired: Create new resolution:

Long-term disability insurance protects employees around the world by providing continuing compensation in lieu of salary when an accident or illness prevents an employee from continuing their service to their employer. Ideally, such insurance provides for compensation based purely on the existence of a disability that prevents continuing employment and continues for the duration of that disability.

In many countries such insurance is often subject to a limitation for disabilities based on “mental and nervous conditions.” The primary reason offered for such a discrimination between disabilities is the comparative difficulty of validating such disabilities, since evidence relies on self-reporting. Other reasons may include the belief that mental and nervous conditions are more likely temporary in nature and therefore a time limitation, typically two years, is appropriate. The limitation therefore places the administrative needs of insurers over the well-being of the persons they are committed to insure.

In the United States, courts have held that discrimination in disability insurance is not addressed by non-discrimination provisions of either the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Affordable Care Act. In the United States, disability insurance is generally regulated at the state level. Because discrimination against mental and nervous conditions is the industry standard, annual conferences and other United Methodist employers in the United States are required to pay an extra premium to obtain nondiscriminatory disability insurance for their lay employees. (The Comprehensive Protection Plan for United Methodist clergy in the United States no longer discriminates.)

The United Methodist Church affirms its long-standing support for persons with mental illness and their families. Jesus Christ made no distinctions in his healing ministry between persons with physical disabilities and those with what we might today call mental illnesses.

Therefore, we call upon the General Board of Church and Society to advocate globally to ensure that when disability insurance is offered by employers or governments to workers in a country, it is offered without discrimination against mental and nervous conditions and to support and encourage the work of annual conference boards of church and society in such advocacy at state and regional legislative bodies.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20586-IC-R9999-G; Hawkins, Erin
- Washington, DC, USA for General Commission on
Religion and Race.

The Church and Disability

Action: Create a new resolution:

We call United Methodists around the world to a new birth of awareness of the need to accept, include, receive the gifts of, and respond to the concerns of persons with intellectual, developmental, physical, mental, and/or neu-

rological disabilities, including their families. All communities, including faith communities, have persons with disabilities; moreover, the World Health Organization estimates there are over one billion persons, approximately 15 percent of the world population, with some form of disability.*

Because the experience of disabilities is universal, common to every family and at some time in every life; and

Because a large part of the ministry of Jesus focused on persons with conditions such as intellectual, developmental, physical, mental, and/or neurological disabilities; and

Because the body of Christ is not complete without people of all areas of life, including persons with all types of disabilities; and

Because there exist inadequacies both in our church and in global society with regard to concerns for the rights of persons with disabilities, utilization of talents, and their full participation within the life of the church and society; and

Believing that the church is most faithful to the teachings and example of Jesus when it expresses love in concrete ways in a mutual ministry with those who are marginalized, neglected, avoided, or persecuted by society; and

Believing in the legacy of John Wesley, Phillip Otterbein, and Jacob Albright, who held that vital piety flows into a ministry of compassion and justice; and

Knowing that prevailing societal norms often unduly glorify the conditions of youthful beauty, mental alertness, and material affluence to the exclusion and avoidance of those whose disabilities put them outside these norms.

Therefore, we The United Methodist Church pledge:
Accessibility:

1. We renew and increase our commitments as a church throughout the world to the development of a barrier-free society, especially in the many physical facilities of the church, including parsonages.

2. To indicate the seriousness of our intent, we encourage the appropriate entities to set time limits to ensure the greatest physical accessibility in the shortest feasible period.

3. We further commit that funding shall be provided or approved by United Methodist agencies only when minimum guidelines are met, such as:

a. providing adequate access to sanctuary pews, altars, chancel areas and pulpit, classrooms, and restrooms;

b. providing facilities with equipment and supplies to meet the needs of persons with visible and invisible

disabilities, including persons with vision and/or hearing loss; and

c. providing curb cuts, ramps with at least a 1:12 inclination or platform lifts.

4. We commit that all meetings of The United Methodist Church shall be welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities. In that regard, all levels of the church, including general church agencies, central conferences, jurisdictions, annual conferences, and districts, shall nominate and elect people with disabilities to boards and committees and enable their full participation.

5. We commit that all United Methodist churches shall conduct an audit of their facilities to discover barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities. (See ¶ 2533.6, the 2012 *Book of Discipline*.) Steps shall then be taken to remove those barriers. The Accessibility Audit for Churches is a recommended resource available from the DisAbility Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church.

6. We commit to continued efforts to adhere to the United Nations' Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the expansion of those Standard Rules in the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ("CRPD") in 2006 (which has been signed by 172 nations as of 2017), both with the primary goal of promoting access to all aspects of social interaction including education, employment, commerce, recreation, government, and transportation; and the United States' Americans with Disabilities Act, including Title I, which states that employers "may not discriminate against qualified persons with disabilities" and will "reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result."

7. The General Conference of The United Methodist Church shall adhere to the United Nations Standard Rules and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act, as applicable, by meeting in an accessible location and budgeting for accommodations needed by delegates and nondelegates, including but not limited to: providing large print and alternative format materials for visually impaired delegates and nondelegates; and providing professional sign language interpretation and real-time captioning for delegates and nondelegates to General Conference, including remote viewers.

Awareness:

1. Our annual conferences shall educate clergy and laity about the needs and opportunities for ministry with and by persons with disabilities and their families.

2. Our annual conferences shall lead the local churches in attitudinal change, to the end that the people called United Methodists are sensitized to the gifts, needs, and

interests of people with disabilities, as well as the needs of including their families.

3. We shall take advantage of the great opportunities for our church to work cooperatively and ecumenically with others who are addressing these issues and extend an active invitation to work jointly where possible.

4. We commit to continued efforts to increase awareness of human-created causes of disability, such as environmental contamination, land mines, war, disasters, as well as transportation and medical accidents.

5. Annual conferences shall identify one Sunday each year as Disability Awareness Sunday (¶ 262) to sensitize people to accessibility concerns and to receive an offering as described in ¶ 265.4, the 2016 *Book of Discipline*.

Adequate Resources:

1. The General Board of Discipleship shall provide resources through the church at all levels, including curricula, for persons with various disabilities, so that each person has a full opportunity for growth and self-realization with the community of faith and the society at large.

2. The General Board of Discipleship, including but not limited to The United Methodist Publishing House and Cokesbury, shall design all curriculum material so that it can be adapted to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and portray persons with disabilities in leadership roles within church and society.

Affirmative Action:

1. Our affirmative action efforts shall include the concerns and interests of persons with disabilities, particularly in the active recruitment and encouragement of persons with disabilities for leadership roles, both clergy and lay, within the church and its agencies, in hiring practices, job security, housing, and transportation.

2. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall monitor annual conference boards of ordained ministry to ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal treatment in the steps to ordained ministry.

3. Our schools of higher education and theological training shall provide specialized courses for faculty and students in the awareness and appreciation of gifts, needs, and interests of people with disabilities. This includes the emphasis of accessibility and equal employment in these institutions, as well as those in the larger society. Accreditation by the University Senate should be withdrawn from institutions where persons who have a disability are excluded, either from attendance, services, or employment.

4. Our local churches shall conduct needs-assessment surveys that can suggest what particular actions must be taken to fully include people with disabilities within the life of the church.

Advocacy within the Church:

Each annual conference throughout the connection shall implement conference methods of recruiting, sensitizing, and training persons as advocates to work with and on behalf of people with disabilities on a one-to-one basis and to enable them to achieve their human and civil rights as well as to assume their rightful place in the life of the church and community. Each annual conference shall also develop the larger concern of advocacy for people with disabilities to enable them to achieve appropriate housing, employment, transportation, education, and leisure-time development.

Our congregations and agencies around the world shall implement disability-related legislation appropriate to their location, such as the United Nations Standard Rules and Americans with Disabilities Act, with the same vigor and interest as they would any other law affecting their able-bodied constituency. This includes but is not limited to the provision of accessible buildings, toilets, and parking; telephone access; hymnals and literature in large print and other alternative formats; closed captioning of all audiovisual media; amplification, assistive listening devices, and/or professional sign language interpretation and real-time captioning when needed.

Advocacy within Society:

Encouraged and informed by the General Board of Church and Society, we shall come alongside people with disabilities and speak out for their rights in society. These rights include access to jobs, public transportation and other reliable forms of transportation, adequate housing, and education. We are people under orders to minister to and with all God's children. We are all people in pilgrimage! We have too often overlooked those of God's children who experience life in different ways from ourselves. We pledge ourselves to an inclusive, compassionate, and creative response to the needs and gifts of people with disabilities.

Barrier-Free Construction for People with Disabilities:

Church monies from agencies and other institutions of The United Methodist Church beyond the local church shall not be granted, loaned, or otherwise provided unless the construction of church sanctuaries, educational buildings, parsonages, camps, colleges, or other church-related agencies or facilities meets minimum guidelines in their plans for barrier-free construction:

Local churches utilizing their own funds or funds secured through lending agencies and institutions beyond The United Methodist Church shall be urged to make adequate provision in their plans to ensure that all new and remodeled church buildings are of barrier-free construction;

Local churches are urged to adapt existing facilities through such programs as widening doorways, installing ramps and elevators, eliminating stairs where possible, providing handrails, as well as ensuring adequate parking facilities and restrooms so that people with disabilities may take their appropriate place in the fellowship of the church; and

Appropriate international agencies of The United Methodist Church shall provide technical information for local churches to assist in providing barrier-free facilities that meet or exceed local building codes.

* Source: World Health Organization at www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health-access.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20588-IC-R9999-G; Pérez, Lyssette - Egg Harbor Township, NJ, USA for MARCHA.

Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean

Action Desired: Create a new resolution

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has a very clear historical and programmatic connection with the establishment and growth of the autonomous Methodist churches in Latin America and a supporting partnership with the MCCA, and

WHEREAS, several annual conferences and many local churches of The UMC have established a special relationship with some Methodist churches in Latin America and the Caribbean and send yearly several Medical Brigades and work teams to support the ministries of Methodist churches in the region, and

WHEREAS, the Encounter with Christ permanent fund (025100) administered by the General Board of Global Ministries is a primary source of financial support for our mission partnership, with interest monies of over one million dollars having already supported around 126 joint mission projects in Methodist and United Churches in 27 countries and 4 regional entities, and

WHEREAS, a unique dimension of Encounter involves a process of shared decision making regarding the utilization of interest monies on behalf of mission among the leadership of CIEMAL (Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean) and MCCA (Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas) and the General Board of Global Ministries, and,

WHEREAS, the process of globalization and immigration has brought us evermore closer together with

sister and brother Methodists of Latin America and the Caribbean, and.

WHEREAS, MARCHA, along with a host of other United Methodists has supported the development of the Encounter permanent fund 025100 and the Encounter Advance Special 14729A from the beginning of the mission effort;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference celebrate the achievement of reaching the amount of 2.3 million dollars in the Encounter Permanent Fund and call upon annual conferences, local churches, and individuals to renew and increase their commitment to Encounter as a primary means of expressing our solidarity together in mission and ministry with Latin America and the Caribbean.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20589-IC-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett - New York, NY, USA for United Methodist Women.

The Girl Child

NEW: The Girl Child

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs,” (Matthew 19:14, NRSV); and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church affirms the rights of children and of women and recognizes that “children are now acknowledged to be full human beings in their own right, but beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations,” that “children have the rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being as do adults,” that “in particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse,” and that women are affirmed as equal to men “in every aspect of their common life” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, ¶162 <[WHEREAS, there are challenges faced by all children, but there are also challenges that are unique to girls; and](https://www.umofficialresources.com/reader/9781426766213/>C, F); and</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

WHEREAS, although girlhood should be a time of growth and learning as the girls of today develop into the women of tomorrow, for millions of girls it is a time of perilous dangers; and

WHEREAS, in many societies, girls are not as valued as boys from the time of birth. Girls everywhere may often have limited opportunities in education, training, and employment. In addition, many face dangerous practices,

such as female genital mutilation/cutting (UN Women, 2017) and child marriage that often lead to psychological trauma, infection by sexually transmitted diseases, and frequent pregnancies, jeopardizing their health and economic well-being. Furthermore, many girls are forced into hazardous and exploitative work situations, while bearing most if not all the burden of housework at home; and

WHEREAS, according to reports from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and the International Labour Organization:

1. Decades after commitments and reaffirmations of those commitments have been made to ensure a quality education for every child, an estimated 34.3 million girls of primary school age and 30 million girls of lower secondary school age are still denied this right (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018);

2. The ILO estimates that 152 million children between 5 and 17 years of age are engaged in child labor. Many of these children are reportedly engaged in work that is likely to harm their health, safety, or moral development (International Labour Organization, 2017);

3. Given its hidden nature, it is impossible to have reliable figures on how many children are globally exploited as domestic workers. According to the ILO, though, more girl-children under 16 are in domestic service than in any other category of child labor. Common risks children face in domestic service are long and tiring working days; use of toxic chemicals; carrying heavy loads; handling dangerous items such as knives, axes, and hot pans; insufficient or inadequate food and accommodations; and humiliating or degrading treatment, including physical and verbal violence and sexual abuse (International Labour Organization, 2012);

4. It is estimated that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, primarily in African countries and, to a lesser extent, in some Middle Eastern countries (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2016);

5. Approximately 650 million girls and young women worldwide were married before reaching age 18, resulting in high-risk pregnancies, death in childbirth, lack of support, fewer educational opportunities, and increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2018b);

6. Young people are at the center of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. In 2017 approximately 1.8 million adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 were living with HIV worldwide. Adolescent girls and young women are especially vulnerable to HIV. In some countries, they are two to three times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts of the same age (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2018a); and

WHEREAS, “When a child is not healthy, is chronically malnourished, does not receive a quality education, does not feel safe in his or her home, school or community, or lacks the opportunity to have his or her voice heard, this child will not be best equipped to fulfil his or her full potential. That not only denies the individual child his or her rights, but also deprives the entire human family of the intellectual, social, moral and economic benefits that derive from the fulfilment of these rights” (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2014); and

WHEREAS, we have a special concern toward underserved populations, including indigenous children and children in isolated communities, The United Methodist Church has a history of supporting work with children, including girl-children, through both the program support and the advocacy work of United Methodist Women, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the General Board of Church and Society;

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church, in accordance with the recommendations of the Report of the Secretary-General on the Girl Child to the General Assembly of the United Nations (United Nations General Assembly, 2017), calls on local churches, conferences, general agencies, church-related organizations, parents, and individuals where appropriate to:

1. Ensure access to inclusive and equitable education for girls including quality curricula as well as safe and enabling learning environments.

2. Improve access to water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and safe living environments for all girls along with education and destigmatization regarding menstruation and sanitary products.

3. Prioritize girls’ health and nutrition through educational initiatives as well as access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services, including those related to puberty, menstruation, and the prevention and treatment of HIV.

4. End harmful traditional practice including child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and other harmful practices resulting in violence toward and the exploitation of girls.

See Social Principles, ¶162 <[#### References](https://www.umofficial-resources.com/reader/9781426766213/>C.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

International Labour Organization (2012). “Child Domestic Work: Global Estimates.” Geneva: ILO. www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_23235.

International Labour Organization (2017). Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016. Geneva: International Labour Organization. www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_575499.

UN Women (2017). Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and Violence Against Women and Girls. New York: UN Women. www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/2/female-genital-mutilation-cutting-and-violence-against-women-and-girls.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018). “Fact Sheet No. 48: One in Five Children, Adolescents, and Youth Is Out of School.” Montreal: UNESCO.

United Nations Children’s Fund (2014). A Post-2015 World Fit for Children. New York: UNICEF. www.unicef.org/agenda2030/files/Post_2015_OWG_review_CR_FI_NAL.pdf.

United Nations Children’s Fund (2016). “Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Global Concern.” New York: UNICEF. data.unicef.org/resources/female-genital-mutilationcutting-global-concern/

United Nations Children’s Fund (2018a, July). “Adolescent HIV Prevention.” data.unicef.org/topic/hiv/adolescents-young-people.

United Nations Children’s Fund (2018b). Child Marriage: Latest Trend and Future Prospects. New York: UNICEF. data.unicef.org/resources/child-marriage-latest-trends-and-future-prospects.

United Nations General Assembly (2017). Report of the Secretary-General on the Girl Child. New York: United Nations.

Rationale:

While progress has been made in the education and well-being of girls around the world, there is still much work to be done. This petition calls upon the church to engage in advocacy to rectify conditions that limit girls from reaching their fullest potential in safe and healthy environments.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20590-IC-R9999; Olson, Harriett - New York, NY, USA for United Methodist Women.

Voting Rights Protections in the United States

NEW: Voting Rights Protections in the United States

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has a historic and present commitment to racial justice, equity, and equality under the law; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which states that the right to vote “shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex” (1920); and

WHEREAS, we honor the work of the women's suffrage movement; and

WHEREAS, we recognize and lament that women of color in many cases did not reap benefits from passage of the 19th amendment; and

WHEREAS, despite the active work of women of color for women's suffrage, many were left without the right to vote for many more years; and

WHEREAS, the history of voting rights in the United States has been fraught with practices of extreme violence, intimidation, and systemic disenfranchisement of people of color; and

WHEREAS, we honor the generation of faithful leaders who worked without ceasing to secure the right to vote for themselves and others, courageously persevering in the face of tremendous violence and threat of violence, often at great personal cost; and

WHEREAS, we especially remember and honor the extraordinary witness and legacy of the civil rights martyrs; and

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted to ensure that the right to vote would not be abridged at any level of government; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court decision in Shelby v. Holder (2013) removed a key provision (Section 5) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

WHEREAS, recent actions by state governments re-establish exclusionary tactics that undermine the voting rights achievements of the 20th century, suppress voter participation, and permit practices known to be racially discriminatory; and

WHEREAS, intensified identification requirements, justified by false claims of widespread voter fraud, harm the exercise of one of the most solemn ways that individuals can influence governmental decision-making and undercut the goal of full access to participation in government; and

WHEREAS, recent cases suggest that inadequate access to polling places and voter registration opportunities, coupled with intensified identification requirements, have had a particularly dampening effect on Native American communities' access to the vote; and

WHEREAS, recent research shows that African American and Latinx voters are far more likely to face obstacles to voting than white voters, including being told they "did not have correct identification," being "harassed or bothered while trying to vote," and being told their names were "not on the list even though they [were] registered" (poll by Public Religion Research Institute and The Atlantic, 2018); and

WHEREAS, partisan gerrymandering continues to hurt the cause of democracy in the United States; and

WHEREAS, felony disenfranchisement laws enacted at the state level have disproportionately harmed African American voters and African American communities, impacting individuals who are currently or formerly incarcerated, on probation, on parole, and/or post-sentence; and

WHEREAS, this disproportionate impact is a direct result of the unjust criminalization of communities of color and the United States' egregious overuse of incarceration (see Resolution 3379); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Congress should aim to guarantee that the voting rights of every eligible voter are protected;

Be it therefore affirmed, that The United Methodist Church calls on the U.S. Department of Justice to exercise its duty to engage in all actions that enhance wider civic participation and that ensure protection of the right to vote as central to securing a robust and inclusive democracy, and

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church calls on local churches, annual conferences, general agencies, and other church-related organizations to:

- Report all efforts to suppress voting rights to their state office of the attorney general as well as to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and make the discovery public to other churches within the state for continued follow up and action.

- Support efforts to end felony disenfranchisement and restore voting rights to people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

- Contact their congressional representatives, urging that they introduce and pass new voting rights legislation that meets the call to repair, restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Rationale:

On the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment (women's right to vote), this petition calls attention to the disproportionate impact of voter suppression and disenfranchisement of communities and women of color in the U.S. All communities must have access to full and equitable rights in the voting polls.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20591-IC-R9999; Olson, Harriett - New York, NY, USA for United Methodist Women.

Children's Sabbath

NEW: Children's Sabbath

WHEREAS, "The program calendar of the denomination shall include only the special Sundays approved by

General Conference, special Sundays approved by ecumenical agencies to which The United Methodist Church officially relates, and the days and seasons of the Christian Year” (*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, ¶ 262); and

WHEREAS, the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Women, and the General Board of Church and Society have officially endorsed the U.S. National Observance of Children’s Sabbath of the ecumenically endorsed Children’s Defense Fund; and

WHEREAS, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, an ecumenical agency of which The United Methodist Church is a member, also endorses the U.S. National Observance of the Children’s Defense Fund Children’s Sabbath;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the third weekend of October be identified as the Children’s Sabbath on the program calendar of The United Methodist Church.

Be it further resolved, that this weekend is not to be classified as a churchwide special Sunday with offerings or a special Sunday without churchwide offerings. The inclusion of said weekend is the inclusion of a special date approved by an ecumenical agency to which The United Methodist Church is officially related, with said observance requiring no financial support on the part of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

Identifies the third Sunday in October as The United Methodist Church’s U.S. observance of Children’s Sabbath and adds it to the program calendar of the church. Liturgical and worship program resources are produced and distributed by Children’s Defense Fund. Not one of the Special Sundays; no offering collection involved.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20592-IC-R9999-G; Olson, Harriett - New York, NY, USA for United Methodist Women.

The Status of Women: Toward Realizing Human Rights for All Women

NEW: The Status of Women: Toward Realizing Human Rights for All Women

The Bible teaches us that both men and women are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Further, the Bible teaches us that women are full members of the church of Christ: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28 NRSV). The life of Jesus ancient cultural patterns

and societal prejudices viewed women as inferior to men. Jesus was extraordinarily supportive of women’s full equality with men, and he charged women and men to use their talents in the cause of God’s kin-dom.

The central theme of Jesus’ teaching is love for God and neighbor. Christian love, as exemplified in the New Testament, requires that we relate to all as persons of worth. To regard another as inferior or to use power over them is to break the covenant of love. Denying equality demeans, perpetuates injustice, and falls short of the example of Jesus. The United Methodist Church has long supported the global movement to improve the status of women. There is increasing awareness that we cannot resolve world problems associated with economic globalization—unequal distribution of resources, governance, security, hunger, poverty, climate change, and war—so long as the talents and potential of half the world’s people are disregarded and even repressed. Women’s experience differs across class, ethnicity, race, national status, religion, sexual orientation, etc., with the poorest and most marginalized women experiencing the greatest inequality. Thus, efforts toward women’s equality must specifically address these different realities.

The United Methodist Church affirms commitments made through four United Nations conferences on women articulated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), a historic document affirmed by 189 nations 25 years ago that is still considered the most comprehensive strategy on women’s rights. We also affirm UN Women in their initiative to reignite and reaffirm the urgency of the Beijing call in 2014 with the “Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture It” campaign (UN Women, 2019). The Beijing Platform recognized that women not only need equality with men but that economic policies need to be changed so that they benefit both women and men. Equality must go beyond access; it needs to include genuine development that delivers fundamental economic and social human rights. Recognizing how militarism, war, violent conflict, climate change, and volatile economic systems affect women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) affirm that equality, development, and peace are inseparable.

The following are some critical areas of concern for women’s equality:

Economics

Globally, women are substantially less likely than men to participate in the labor market, and once in the workforce, they are also less likely to find jobs than men. In addition, women still continue to receive less pay than men. Moreover, women’s unpaid work as caregivers and

volunteers sustains economies and yet is not included in economic statistics. In times of economic crisis, women's unpaid labor fills gaps in education, health care, and other social services as governments cut budgets (Tobin, 2017).

Power and Decision-making

In 1945, 31 countries allowed women to vote. Today, women have the right to vote in most nations, though they still may face societal barriers to participating fully in the political process in some countries. Many areas of discrimination, such as the inequality between men and women in power-sharing and decision-making, remain at all levels. In some nations, a woman is still considered to be her husband's property and holds very few rights with regard to family law, landholding, inheritance, and guardianship of children. Globally, women are still underrepresented in all branches of government.

Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence has risen exponentially in recent decades. Sexual violence by state and non-state actors has become common as women and girls are raped, beaten, sold or trafficked, or forced to become child brides or victims of honor killings. This reality reflects the continuing belief that women and girls are property of men and are subservient to men and the lack of accountability for violence at all levels. States and broader society must work together to dismantle social, economic, and political structures that institutionalize and legitimize violence.

Education

Levels of education are consistently linked with levels of socioeconomic development. The fact that two-thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate people are female is evidence of continuing disparity in society's preference to educate boys over girls (United Nations, 2015). This proportion has remained unchanged for over two decades. Discriminatory, cultural, and social norms, cost of schooling, and school safety concerns inhibit girls' opportunities to gain knowledge and marketable skills needed for jobs that pay decent wages, as well as their ability to negotiate power in multiple relationships. Quality education is one of the principal ways to open doors for women's wider participation in society.

Health and Women's Rights in Reproductive Health

Throughout the centuries, women have rarely been consulted or involved in the decisions regarding fertility-related laws and practices. Coercion, with the aim of either limiting or increasing births, is common today. Evidence now clearly shows that many poor women, particularly ethnic minorities, have been sterilized without their understanding of what was being done to them and without their informed consent. In many places, safe and legal abortion is unavailable, even in cases where the life of the pregnant woman is in danger and may be saved.

In other cases, women are threatened with cuts to welfare payments or other aid programs if they proceed with a pregnancy. Such policies are clearly inconsistent with and violate women's reproductive and economic rights. Women need to be fully informed and fully involved in all decision-making regarding their reproductive health and fertility. Furthermore, issues such as HIV and AIDS faced by women and adolescent girls due to gender inequality and how they cope with these inequalities and injustices will determine their ability to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS or to access antiretroviral therapy.

Women and the Environment

In terms of the environment, women around the world play distinct roles: in managing plants and animals in forests, dry lands, wetlands, and agriculture; in collecting water, fuel, and fodder for domestic use and income generation; and in overseeing land and water resources. They contribute time, energy, and skills to family and community development, and their extensive experience makes them an invaluable source of knowledge and expertise on environmental management. Furthermore, when environmental changes take place, the most affected are women. Yet they have less access to land and productive resources.

Women and the Media

Today's data collection, social media, and surveillance are part of a new digital world. Technology has brought with it the amazing ability for women to organize virtually both regionally and globally, to access archives and document their history, to research, to monitor government commitments and actions, and to make the concerns of women visible to the public. It has opened new opportunities for women in science and technology. Simultaneously, there is a massive concentration of corporate ownership of media at all levels, which shapes images and attitudes regarding women. There are concerns about the potential privatization of the internet and the need for net neutrality. There continues to be a "digital divide" regarding access to the internet where many women in the Global South and poor women are excluded. Limited access to computer and technology education also restricts women and girls' access to quality jobs. Despite important efforts, there is still a huge gap in education and jobs for women and girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

Women and Armed Conflict

In the 21st century, armed conflict within states and between states, with warring parties including non-state actors, are increasingly related to battles over natural resources, aided and abetted by powerful nations and corporations seeking control over oil, land, water, and minerals in poor, underdeveloped nations. Grave violations of women occur in conflict and post-conflict situations.

These human rights violations include murder, torture, starvation, forced prostitution, systematic rape, forced pregnancy, and forced abortion. Yet when it comes to advocating and facilitating peace, women are underrepresented in the decision-making process. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security (2000) affirm that women's protection in armed conflict and participation in peace and decision-making are key to international peace and security.

Call to Action

Since The United Methodist Church recognizes that equality between women and men in a just, sustainable society is a matter of biblical righteousness, the church is called to action in the following ways:

1. Take leadership in urging all remaining nations to ratify UN Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW, which was adopted by UN in December 1979, and advocate for the full implementation of CEDAW and Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

2. Educate and advocate for policies that address the specific needs of women in all their diversity, including race, ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexual orientation, national origin and migration status, marital status, and other factors.

3. Urge governments to ratify the June 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court that specifically addresses gender-based crimes and crimes against humanity such as rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and enforced sterilization.

4. Support the need to enact specific legislation and develop policies to strengthen women's leadership and professional abilities including the right to manage their own businesses. To this end, governments and nongovernmental organizations should develop policies and projects that use local, national, and international networks to facilitate information, technology, credit, and training for women entrepreneurs as well as specific programs that aim to empower women and enhance women's social and economic well-being through quality education that leads to decent work.

5. Examine governmental policies and practices, including official development assistance, as to their impact on women's lives; work to ensure that policies upgrade the status of women and that women in all their diversity are included in decision-making regarding sustainable development goals and programs at all levels.

6. Examine the impact of transnational corporations on women's lives, including through the concentration of corporate power over democratic processes and decision-making; corporate bailouts that leave fewer resources

for social spending; privatization of key government services; corporate influence over the multilateral system including the UN; corporate corruption and support of government corruption; corporate influence in resource wars and militarism; corporate violation of privacy through information technology; exploitative labor practices; and the promotion and selling of dangerous or inappropriate products and technologies.

7. Encourage steps that promote legal and economic literacy in the context of equal rights for men and women.

8. Engage men and boys in gender equality and women's empowerment work to change both societal attitudes and behaviors toward women and girls as well as power relations and structures of inequality.

9. Promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions that support women in peacekeeping and decision-making in times of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Implementation of Resolution 1325 is intimately connected to ending violence against women. When women are excluded from the peace process, they are left vulnerable to more violence, and the violence done to them during war is more likely to be dismissed as mere "collateral damage."

10. Monitor printed and audiovisual media as well as other means of communication on portrayals of the roles and nature of women and men and seek ways to eradicate narrow stereotypes that limit the possibilities of useful contributions by both genders. The church should encourage study of the impact of Western—particularly U.S.—television, radio, and other media on cultural patterns and national development around the world and draw public attention to cases where such influence is harmful to women and girls and destructive to their cultures.

11. Support programs providing information and access to resources in the area of family planning and contraception and involve women in the preparation and distribution of these resources. Particular attention should be given to ensuring access to safe, legal, and noncoercive contraception, providing accurate information regarding abortion and its alternatives, requiring informed consent for sterilization procedures, and creating safe women's health care facilities. Oppose for-profit referral agencies that charge fees for providing information that is freely available elsewhere.

12. Examine the impact of judicial decisions at all levels on the daily lives of women in such areas as child custody, employment, civil rights, racial and sexual discrimination, credit practices, estate settlements, reproduction education, and socioeconomic status.

13. Encourage the church to initiate and support leadership education for women and other educational programs that upgrade the status of women. Ensure girls'

equal access to and the completion of basic education. Reach out to adult women through massive literacy campaigns using all modern means available.

See Social Principles ¶162F.

References

Tobin, S. (2017, August 1). "Gender Equality: What Causes Gender Gaps in the Labour Market?" International Labour Organization. www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_566891/lang--en/index.htm.

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). *The World's Women 2015*. (New York: United Nations). unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/worlds_women2015_report.pdf.

UN Women (2019, March 5). "In Focus: Beijing at 20." <<http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/beijing-at-20>>

Beijing Platform for Action (1995, September). <https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf>

Rationale:

Women globally are still not in equitable status in church and society. This petition calls on the church to address rights of women, when more than half of its population are women; and work toward women's equity in areas such as education, health, violence against women, migration, climate justice, and

R9999.

Petition Number: 20593-IC-R9999-G; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Apology from General Conference to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

Add new resolution

Apology from General Conference to the Victims/Survivors of Sexual Misconduct in The UMC

The United Methodist Church's Social Principles clearly states, "sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship" and "interferes with the moral mission of the Church" (¶ 161J).

The Council of Bishops' press release, "United Methodist leaders respond to #metoo and #churchtoo movement, states, "Council of Bishops affirmed, through its members, renewed commitment to addressing the systemic causes of sexual misconduct and abuse of power. . . . The sin of sexual misconduct must be named by the Church at every level of ministry." The bishops pledge to

do the right thing in every complaint received, including listening well to hear the story and developing a response, which holds persons accountable and offers healing for all affected to the extent of their ability.

Therefore, in the spirit of offering healing for all affected to the extent of our ability, on behalf of the General Conference, we sincerely apologize to the victims and survivors of sexual misconduct perpetrated by the leaders (clergy and lay) of The United Methodist Church for the harm they have done. We acknowledge it is spiritual violence when a ministerial leader commits sexual misconduct and it is a clear violation of sacred trust.

In addition, after this petition is passed by General Conference, the General Commission on General Conference shall read this resolution from the plenary floor and repent of this sin. Additionally, every annual conference shall publicly read this resolution aloud at their 2021 annual meetings.

We encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment. The abuse of inherent power in the leadership position will not be tolerated.

Information to the reporting process can be found at www.umseualethics.org or from your annual conference.

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/united-methodist-leaders-respond-to-metoo-and-churchtoo>

Rationale:

In the spirit of offering healing for all affected to the extended of our ability, The UMC acknowledge publicly the harm victims/survivors have faced due to sexual misconduct by leaders of The UMC.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20594-IC-R9999-G; Hare, Dawn - Chicago, IL, USA for General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Prevention of the Use and Effects of Pornography within the Church

Add new resolution

Prevention of the Use of and Effects of Pornography Within the Church

—
"We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. . . . We reject all sexual expressions that damage the humanity God has given us as birthright" (Social Principles, ¶ 161G, I).

—
For nearly two decades, the global people called United Methodist have strengthened our understanding

and practice of sexual ethics. We have adopted policies and procedures to guide behavior and address brokenness. We have trained, educated, and surveyed lay and clergy leaders of our denomination, conferences, and our congregations. We have spent significant resources in addressing the brokenness from sexual misconduct, from healing individuals and congregations to holding the church accountable through legal proceedings.

As a resource to the church, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women takes very seriously its role to alert our leaders, conferences, and congregations of developments in our societies that call us to intensified concern and action. One such concern today is the expansion of the use of pornography, and its appearance in church programs, through the use of church computers and technology, or on church property.

Definition of Pornography

While definitions may vary, the 2016 *Book of Resolutions* offers the following:

“Pornography is sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal that often portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation. In addition, any sexually explicit material that depicts children is pornographic.” (2016 *Book of Resolutions*, “Pornography and Sexual Violence,” p. 126.)

The global expansion of wireless internet and telecommunications provides limitless availability to pornography. Schools, businesses, and governments are struggling with the use of pornography by employees or students with the organization’s equipment.

The National Center for Sexual Exploitation published these troubling indicators in 2017 in the United States:

- 93% of boys and 62% of girls see pornography during adolescence;
- 64% of 13-24 year olds actively seek out pornography each week or more often;
- 88% of the scenes from 50 of the most popular pornographic videos contained physical violence, and 49% contained verbal aggression;
- 46 separate studies report that exposure to pornography increases risk of committing sexual offenses and enabling rape myths;
- Girls aged 14-19 who view pornography are at a higher risk of becoming victim to sexual harassment and assault;
- Viewing pornography creates negative body images for women and more critical attitudes in men of their sexual partner;

• Women viewing pornography are more likely to be susceptible to believing rape myths;

• Marital rape is more likely when a partner has been viewing pornography;

• Probability of divorce doubles when a partner has viewed pornography.

(National Center on Sexual Exploitation, “Pornography and Public Health: Research Summary,” <http://endsexualexploitation.org/wp-content/uploads/NCOSE_Pornography-PublicHealth_ResearchSummary_8-2_17_FINAL-with-logo.pdf>, August 2, 2017). The use of pornography continues to increase as it becomes more accessible (via the internet, for example) and allows more immediate, realistic, and anonymous sexual contact and gratification (through chat rooms, real-time videos). Research shows it is not an “innocent activity.” It is harmful and is generally addictive. Persons who are addicted to pornography are physiologically altered, as is their perspective, relationships with parishioners and family, and their perceptions of girls and women. Persons who are addicted to pornography must be held accountable for the impact of their behavior, yet they also need prayer, care, and therapy. Those laity and clergy in ministerial roles within our churches, conferences, and agencies are just as susceptible to pornography addiction as anyone else.

In “The Harmfulness of Pornography,” Robert Bran-non shares the following, now confirmed in social science research:

- a majority of people in the US believe that some “pornography” (such as eroticized rape scenes) influences some men toward real-life sexual aggression;
- young male viewers of pornography become more likely to believe “all women want to be raped”; and
- women are portrayed as stereotypical bodies and sex objects.

Pornography in the Church

A disturbing trend in the church is the use of pornography by clergy and lay employees and volunteers, even using computers and other equipment owned by or housed within churches and church-related organizations. We are aware of reports of adults sharing pornographic materials with children and youth during church activities, camps, or programs. But beyond being saddened, shocked, and dismayed by these reports, how do we raise awareness among congregational, conference, agency, school, or cabinet leaders, and what do we do to identify, stop, prevent, and then heal from recurrence in our communities of faith?

The United Methodist Church declares that the use of pornography in church programs, on church premises or with church property by persons in ministerial roles (lay and clergy) is a form of sexual misconduct, a charge-

able offense for laity and clergy in The United Methodist Church.

The General Conference recommends and urges the following actions:

1. that cabinets and boards of ordained ministry include these issues and ministry concerns in sexual ethics training for candidates, appointed pastors, local pastors, and retired pastors;

2. that bishops, cabinets, and chancellors should lead in updating the sexual ethics policies and procedures of conferences and congregations to include use of pornography as a form of sexual misconduct;

3. that laity in positions of leadership in conferences, congregations, agencies, and schools should receive updated training on issues of sexual ethics, including current trends and ways to help persons addicted to pornography;

4. that congregational, annual conference, and agency leaders should receive training on the issues of pornography, especially internet pornography, and should enact strict oversight of church-owned computers and technology, including periodic technology audits.

5. that seminaries and boards of ordained ministries should provide training to help clergy and lay professionals-in-training avoid addictive or harmful behaviors and to minister effectively with persons addicted to pornography by including issues of sexual misconduct, including pornography, in ethics and ministries courses and training for all students; and

Resources: The Social Principles, ¶ 161G, I, and Q; United Methodist website on sexual ethics, www.umsexualethics.org; Resolution on “Pornography and Sexual Violence,” 2016 *Book of Resolutions*, and Resolutions on “Pornography” and “Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships,” 2008 *Book of Resolutions*.

See Social Principles, ¶ 161G and 161Q.

Rationale:

Providing resources to the various levels of the church in eradicating the use of and the effects of pornography within the church.

Judicial Administration

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶56.

Petition Number: 20524-JA-¶56-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Media Access to Judicial Council Oral Processes

Amend ¶ 56.6 as indicated herein following:

¶ 56. Article II.—The Judicial Council shall have authority:

...

6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure provided that as prescribed or limited by the General Conference any session convened by the Judicial Council for the purpose of receiving oral argument on any matter pending before it shall be open to the public, including access to the media for audio and video real time distribution.

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness repeatedly affirmed by the General Conference, oral arguments presented to the Judicial Council should be made readily available to all United Methodists, regardless of their ability to travel to the site of the sessions of that body, taking full advantage of current methods of communication.

¶56.6.

Petition Number: 20525-JA-¶56.6-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Judicial Council to Open Proceedings and Publish Pleadings

Amend ¶ 56.6 as indicated herein following:

¶ 56. Article II.—The Judicial Council shall have authority:

...

6. To provide its own methods of organization and procedure provided that as prescribed or limited by the General Conference the Judicial Council will provide for public access to briefs and arguments entered or made in

any matter pending before it by ensuring that oral arguments shall be open to the public, including access to the media for audio and video real time distribution and will post all briefs submitted in accordance with the rules of the Judicial Council in electronic form on a site on the internet to which access is readily available to the public, except when confidentiality is required because of the nature of the matter at hand. The filing of briefs in electronic form as prescribed by the Judicial Council will be permitted in lieu of the submission of printed copies.

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness, arguments presented to the Judicial Council should be made available to all United Methodists, regardless of their ability to get to the sessions, taking full advantage of current methods of communication. As is common in secular judicial processes, briefs and pleadings should be public documents.

¶57.

Petition Number: 20350-JA-¶57-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Disavow the Principle of Legality

Number the existing paragraph of ¶ 57 as subparagraph 1 and add new subparagraph 2 as follows:

¶ 57. **Article III.—1.** All decisions of the Judicial Council shall be final. When the Judicial Council shall declare unconstitutional any act of the General Conference then in session, that decision shall be reported back to that General Conference immediately.

2. Decisions of the Judicial Council must be based directly upon the text of the *Book of Discipline*, and they must be stated in clear, unambiguous, objective language and not be vague and prone to subjective and varying circumstantial interpretation. Moreover, the Judicial Council does not have legislative authority and may not prescribe legislation where it perceives a lacuna in existing law. Under this principle of judicial power and process, the principle of legality, articulated by the Judicial Council on page 57 of Judicial Council Decision 1366, is declared

to be null, void, and of no effect, since it is not objectively applicable, being subject to the varying circumstantial interpretation of the Judicial Council and being further a clear example of a legislative act of the Judicial Council in the absence of legislation put in place by the General Conference. This provision shall have no retroactive effect on decisions already taken by the Judicial Council.

¶636.

Petition Number: 20351-JA-¶636-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Opening Nominations for Administrative Review Committee to the Plenary of Clergy Session

Amend by addition to ¶ 636 in this way:

¶ 636. *Conference Administrative Review Committee*—There will be . . . of the above. The committee shall be nominated by the bishop and by nomination from the floor of the clergy session and elected quadrennially . . .

Rationale:

Paragraph 33 gives responsibility for all matters of character, performance, and conference relations to the conference and not to the cabinet members. Nominations must be open from the floor for every group that deals with reviewing those or the conference ends up without access to the make-up of those groups.

¶2602.1.

Petition Number: 20352-JA-¶2602.1; Lawrence, William - Chapel Hill, NC, USA.

No Compensation for Judicial Council Members or Alternates

Amend ¶ 2602.1 by adding one sentence at the conclusion of the grammatical paragraph. The proposed new sentence would read: Members shall not receive compensation or remuneration for their services.

And amend ¶ 2603 by adding one sentence at the conclusion of the first grammatical paragraph. The proposed new sentence would read: Alternates shall not receive compensation or remuneration for their services.

And amend ¶ 813.3 by adding one sentence to the sentence in the current paragraph. The proposed new sentence would read: While expenses of the Judicial Council shall be paid, individual Judicial Council members and alternates shall not receive compensation or remuneration for their services.

¶2602.1.

Petition Number: 20353-JA-¶2602.1-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2602.1

Members—1. *Composition and Term*—The Judicial Council shall be composed of nine members and should reflect the diversity of The United Methodist Church, including ~~race~~age, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic condition, jurisdiction and central conferences, and congregational size. In the year 2000 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be elected three laypersons and two ordained clergy other than bishops. In 2004 and each eight years thereafter, there shall be elected two ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. In 2008 and each sixteen years thereafter, there shall be three ordained clergy other than bishops and two laypersons. The laypersons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. Elections shall be held at each session of the General Conference for only the number of members whose terms expire at such session. A member's term of office shall be eight years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive eight-year terms, with a minimum of four years before reelection to the council.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶2608.

Petition Number: 20355-JA-¶2608-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Judicial Council to Open Proceedings and Publish Pleadings—Implementation

Following existing ¶ 2608.2 insert a new ¶ 2608.3 as follows:

¶ 2608.3 *Sessions of the Judicial Council held for the purpose of receiving oral argument on any matter pending before it shall be open to the public, including access to the media for audio and video real time distribution, except when such matter requires confidentiality, as indicated in ¶¶ 2706.7 and 2713.5 as determined by the president of the Judicial Council. A session that might be closed in accordance with this provision may be open with the consent of all parties to the proceeding. In addition, all briefs submit-*

ted in proper order as determined by the rules of practice and procedure of the Judicial Council will be posted on the internet for public access except when such matter requires confidentiality, as indicated in ¶¶ 2706.7 and 2713.5 as determined by the president of the Judicial Council..

New ¶ 2608.3 shall be effective if and when the constitutional amendment proposed herein to ¶ 56.6 is certified by the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness, arguments presented to the Judicial Council should be made available to all United Methodists, regardless of their ability to get to the sessions, taking full advantage of current methods of communication. As is common in secular judicial processes, briefs and pleadings should be public documents.

¶2608.2.

Petition Number: 20354-JA-¶2608.2-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Media Access to Judicial Council Oral Processes—Implementation

Following existing ¶ 2608.2 insert a new ¶ 2608.3 as follows:

¶ 2608.3 Sessions of the Judicial Council held for the purpose of receiving oral argument on any matter pending before it shall be open to the public, including access to the media for audio and video real time distribution, except when such matter requires confidentiality, as indicated in ¶¶ 2706.7 and 2713.5 as determined by the president of the Judicial Council. A session that might be closed in accordance with this provision may be open with the consent of all parties to the proceeding.

New ¶ 2608.3 shall be effective if and when the constitutional amendment proposed in the accompanying petition to ¶ 56.6 is certified by the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness repeatedly affirmed by the General Conference, oral arguments presented to the Judicial Council should be made readily available to all United Methodists, regardless of their ability to travel to the site of the sessions of that body, taking full advantage of current methods of communication.

¶2609.

Petition Number: 20356-JA-¶2609-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

AACLL Authority for Declaratory Decision Request on Proposed Legislation

Amend ¶ 2609 as indicated following:

¶ 2609. Jurisdiction and Powers— . . .

2. The Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of any proposed legislation when such declaratory decision is requested by the General Conference, the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, or by the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

Currently other than the General Conference, itself, which meets for less than two weeks every four years, only the Council of Bishops, a body made up entirely of clergy, may request a constitutionality decision on proposed legislation. This will empower the AACLL with that authority.

¶2609.

Petition Number: 20358-JA-¶2609; Kilpatrick, Joe Wesley - Tucker, GA, USA.

Unity via Improving Judicial Powers of Review

Amend by adding the following as a new paragraph following ¶ 2609.8:

The Judicial Council shall have power to hear and determine the legality of any action by any body created or authorized by the General Conference or any body created or authorized by a jurisdiction or central conference if it should appear that such action is at variance with the *Book of Discipline*, a prior decision of the Judicial Council, or if it should appear that such actions are at variance between the various bodies of The United Methodist Church. This power is a matter of judicial discretion and not a right conferred upon every person concerned. This power shall be governed by the following considerations.

1) The Judicial Council may grant a petition for a review of a case or matter only for compelling reason. The following although neither controlling nor fully measuring the Council's discretion, indicate the character of the reasons the Council may grant a petition for a review.

a- A body of The United Methodist Church, including committees on appeals, has entered a decision or taken an action that conflicts with another body on the same important matter; or has so far departed from the accepted and usual course of judicial proceedings, or sanctioned such a departure, as to call for an exercise of the Judicial Council's supervisory power;

b- A body of The United Methodist Church has taken actions involving important matters conflicting with rele-

vant questions of the laws within the *Book of Discipline* or decisions of the Judicial Council.

c- A body of The United Methodist Church has failed to take actions, such as holding hearings or rendering decisions, involving important matters conflicting with relevant questions of the laws within the *Book of Discipline* or decisions of the Judicial Council.

A petition for a review of a case or matter is rarely granted when the asserted error consists of erroneous factual findings or the misapplication of a properly stated rule of law.

2- A petition to review a case pending in a committee of appeals, before judgment is entered by that committee, will be granted only upon showing that the case is of such imperative importance to the whole church as to justify deviation from normal judicial practice and thus require immediate determination by the Judicial Council.

3- The Judicial Council may prepare rules as to how parties shall seek a review. In general, a petition should be filed timely, that is, within ninety days after entry of a judgment or order or action sought to be reviewed. Timeliness may be extended by a member of the Judicial Council for good cause and upon the request of a responsible party if a matter has been appealed and a rehearing or similar action is pending, provided the extension is for not more than sixty days. An application to extend the time to file a petition for review of a case or matter is not favored.

4- The Judicial Council may set rules for the content of a petition for a review and for briefs in opposition, reply briefs, and supplemental briefs. Briefs in opposition may be filed but are not mandatory.

5- The Judicial Council may set rules for its disposition of a petition for a review. It may enter an appropriate order that may be a summary disposition on the merits. The rules will provide for appropriate notifications to the parties involved.

Rationale:

Modeled on the powers given the USA Supreme Court, this amendment gives our Judicial Council discretionary power to call up a case for its hearing and ensure equality of treatment on important matters impacting our denomination. This should ensure fairness and obedience that contributes to unity.

¶2609.9.

Petition Number: 20357-JA-¶2609.9-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Clarify Role of the Judicial Council as Related to Judicial and Administrative Appeals

Amend ¶ 2609.9:

...

9. The Judicial Council shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine all appeals from decisions of the jurisdictional appeals committee related to the judicial complaint process.

Rationale:

This change complies with the directive in Judicial Council Decision 1361 “to have one or two appellate bodies adjudicate claims of procedural errors. . . .” Clarifies that the Judicial Council is not responsible for hearing administrative appeals. The responsibility to hear administrative appeals rests with the central conference or

¶2701.

Petition Number: 20359-JA-¶2701; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

ALL BELONG: Restoring Trust in Our Judicial Process

Amend ¶ 2701.5:

5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, ~~the complainant(s),~~ and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take~~

effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, this petition removes the harmful consequences of the General Conference decisions that undermine the trust and responsibility placed in the elected and appointed leaders of our church and conferred disproportionate power to those who file complaints.

¶2701.

Petition Number: 20360-JA-¶2701; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #19—Moratorium on Judicial Proceedings

Amend ¶ 2701 by inserting a new subparagraph 6 as follows:

¶ 2701. *Preamble and Purpose*—The judicial proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from the counsel for the church to the committee on investigation. The judicial process terminates at the end of any appeal or right of appeal. The judicial process shall have as its purpose a just resolution of judicial complaints, in the hope that God’s work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Jesus Christ. The following procedures are presented for the protection of the rights of individuals guaranteed under Section III, Article IV, of our Constitution and for the protection of the church. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained until the conclusion of the trial process. Special attention should be given to ensuring racial, ethnic, age, and gender diversity of boards, committees, and courts and the timely disposition of all matters.

* * *

5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of

their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

6. Moratorium on Judicial Proceedings Concerning Human Sexuality—In light of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, no judicial proceedings shall be commenced, and all pending judicial proceedings shall be suspended, insofar as such proceedings are based on a complaint, charge, or allegation that the respondent is a “self-avowed practicing homosexual” (however that term may be defined, including, without limitation, living in a same-gender marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union); that the respondent has conducted, performed, or celebrated a same-gender wedding or other same-gender union; that the respondent has certified, licensed, commissioned, ordained or consecrated a “self-avowed practicing homosexual”; that the respondent has provided “funds to any gay caucus or group” or used funds “to promote the acceptance of homosexuality”; or that the respondent has otherwise engaged in conduct that *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* currently states is “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

This moratorium on all new and pending judicial proceedings concerning human sexuality provisions applies not merely to charges explicitly asserted pursuant to ¶ 2702.1(b), but also to any charge that the same alleged conduct constitutes a chargeable offense under any other provision of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) “immorality” under ¶ 2702.1(a) or ¶ 2702.3(a); “disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(d) and ¶ 2702.3(c); “dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church” under

¶ 2702.1(e) and ¶ 2702.3(d); and “fiscal malfeasance” under ¶ 2702.1(l) and ¶ 2702.3(k).

This moratorium shall go into effect effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, and it shall remain in effect unless and until it is repealed or modified by the General Conference.

Rationale:

The substantial resources required for individual trials related to this deep disagreement in The UMC are best focused on critical missions and ministries. This moratorium offers necessary space for important systematic work to be completed by General Conference delegates without the additional conflict that trials create.

¶2701.

Petition Number: 20362-JA-¶2701-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

When Fair Process begins in Judicial Complaints

Amend by substitution to ¶ 2701 with the following:

¶ 2701. Preamble and Purpose—The judicial proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from the counsel of the church to the committee on investigation of a signed complaint to the proper authorities (JCDs 697, 704, 784) and shall be observed during the supervisory response under ¶ 362. The process set forth . . .

This will require a minor revision to ¶ 362.1b), the section on supervisory response.

Rationale:

Cabinets, simplifying their handling of a troubled pastor, desire postponing fair process rights. What happens before referral to the Committee on Investigation in the judicial track is called “supervision” but is usually where the pastor is isolated, intimidated, and coerced to decide “voluntarily” to take leave or withdraw. Fair process

¶2701.

Petition Number: 20363-JA-¶2701-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2701:

Preamble and Purpose—The judicial proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon

referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from the counsel for the church to the committee on investigation. The judicial process terminates at the end of any appeal or right of appeal. The judicial process shall have as its purpose a just resolution of judicial complaints, in the hope that God’s work of justice, reconciliation and healing may be realized in the body of Jesus Christ. The following procedures are presented for the protection of the rights of individuals guaranteed under Section III, Article IV, of our Constitution and for the protection of the church. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained until the conclusion of the trial process. Special attention should be given to ensuring racial, ethnic, age, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity of boards, committees, and courts and the timely disposition of all matters.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶2701.1c.

Petition Number: 20657-JA-¶2701.1c; Anding, George - Baton Rouge, LA, USA.

Counsel for Complainant

Amend ¶ 2701.1(c) as follows:

c) *Right to Be Accompanied*—The complainant shall have the right to be advised by another person of his or her choosing from the beginning of judicial proceedings and may be accompanied by another ~~that~~ person to any interview or hearing to which they are subject. . . .

and,

Amend ¶ 2704.1(a) as follows:

1. *When respondent is a bishop*

a) *Judicial Complaint*—A complaint based on allegations that a bishop has committed one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall initially be served on the president and secretary of the College of Bishops. Upon receipt of the complaint the president of the College of Bishops shall forthwith deliver a copy of the complaint to the resident bishop, notify active bishops of the existence and nature of the complaint, and refer the complaint to an elder in full connection within the same jurisdictional or central conference, who shall serve as counsel for the church. By agreeing to serve, counsel for the church sig-

nifies his or her willingness to uphold the requirements of church law and the *Discipline*. Counsel for the church shall represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint and shall interact with the person chosen by the complainant to accompany him or her so as to keep the complainant fully informed of the progress of the judicial proceedings. . . .

Rationale:

These changes will insure that persons who file complaints against bishops will be at least as well advised as the bishops receiving the complaints, who have legal counsel available at all times.

¶2701.5.

Petition Number: 20361-JA-¶2701.5; Dodson, Christine - Garner, NC, USA.

A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings

Delete the following words:

~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

Rationale:

A just resolution process requires a covenant of trust between all participants. The stating of harms is already a part of just resolution and does not need to be singled out with specific legislation and enforcement. Doing so violates the covenant of trust between participants in a just resolution process.

¶2701.5.

Petition Number: 20659-JA-¶2701.5; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Just Resolution Compliance

ADD the following sentences to ¶¶ 362.1, 413.3c, 2701.5, 2706.5.c.3 as follows:

In all just resolutions, the respondent shall commit to abide in the future by the provisions of the *Discipline* to which he or she is subject, including but not limited to the provisions the respondent was accused of violating. These standards for just resolution shall apply regardless of whether or not the respondent acknowledges having committed a violation.

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is . . .

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work . . .

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint. In all just resolutions, the respondent shall commit to abide in the future by the provisions of the *Discipline* to which he or she is subject, including but not limited to the provisions the respondent was accused of violating. These standards for just resolution shall apply regardless of whether or not the respondent acknowledges having committed a violation. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When . . .

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*—

3. c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint. In all just resolutions, the respondent shall commit to abide in the future by the provisions of the *Discipline* to which he or she is subject, including but not limited to the provisions the respondent was accused of violating. These standards for just resolution shall apply regardless of whether or not the respondent acknowledges having committed a violation.

¶ 2701. 5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and

bringing healing to all the parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint. In all just resolutions, the respondent shall commit to abide in the future by the provisions of the *Discipline* to which he or she is subject, including but not limited to the provisions the respondent was accused of violating. These standards for just resolution shall apply regardless of whether or not the respondent acknowledges having committed a violation. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties . . .

¶ 2706.5 c) *Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions*

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.2d. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint. In all just resolutions, the respondent shall commit to abide in the future by the provisions of the *Discipline* to which he or she is subject, including but not limited to the provisions the respondent was accused of violating. These standards for just resolution shall apply regardless of whether or not the respondent acknowledges having committed a violation. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures . . .

Rationale:

The purpose of Just Resolutions is to repair harm and achieve accountability, both of which are enhanced by a commitment to abide by our covenant in the future, within the limits of Judicial Council rulings. Refusal to make such a commitment greatly increases the likelihood of future offenses and complaints.

¶2702.

Petition Number: 20367-JA-¶2702-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA. 4 Similar Petitions

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward—Part 8 of 8

Amend the following portions of the *Book of Discipline* as indicated:

¶ 2702. 1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage; (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, ~~including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies; . . .~~

Rationale:

In answer to the call of the gospel for the church, as the body of Christ, to be fully inclusive of all people, the portions of the *Discipline* that have negative impact on the lives of LGBTQ persons ought to be stricken.

¶2702.

Petition Number: 20368-JA-¶2702; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #20—Moratorium on Judicial Proceedings

Amend ¶ 2702 as follows:

¶ 2702. 1. Subject to any and all limitations imposed by other provisions of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) the moratorium imposed in ¶ 2701.6, a ~~A~~ bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage; (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies; (c) crime; (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established

standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (f) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor; (g) child abuse; (h) sexual abuse; (i) sexual misconduct including the use or possession of pornography; (j) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (k) racial or gender discrimination; or (l) fiscal malfeasance.

2. Subject to any and all limitations imposed by other provisions of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) the moratorium imposed in ¶ 2701.6, a A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, or diaconal minister may be brought to trial when the appropriate body recommends involuntary termination.

3. Subject to any and all limitations imposed by other provisions of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) the moratorium imposed in ¶ 2701.6, a A professing member of a local church may be charged with the following offenses, and, if so, may choose a trial: (a) immorality; (b) crime; (c) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (d) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (e) sexual abuse; (f) sexual misconduct; (g) child abuse; (h) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (i) racial or gender discrimination; (j) relationships and/or behaviors that undermine the ministry of persons serving within an appointment; or (k) fiscal malfeasance.

4. *Statute of Limitations*—No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint, except in the case of sexual or child abuse and in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse, there shall be no limitation (¶ 2704.1a).

Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

5. *Time of Offense*—A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of the *Book of Discipline* in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred except in the case of immorality or crime, when the alleged occurrence(s) include allegations of sexual abuse or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of the *Book of Discipline* in effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in the *Discipline*.

Rationale:

The substantial resources required for individual trials related to this deep disagreement in The UMC are best

focused on critical missions and ministries. This moratorium offers necessary space for important systematic work to be completed by General Conference delegates without the additional conflict that trials create.

¶2702.

Petition Number: 20369-JA-¶2702-G; Fuller, Dan - Chenango Falls, NY, USA.

Protecting the Church

Amend ¶ 2702 by adding a new chargeable offense as follows:

¶ 2702. 1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor,¹⁴ clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4)* with one or more of the following offenses: (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage;** (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings,¹⁵ including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;*** (c) crime; (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (e) interfering with the General Conference's or another official United Methodist body's ability to conduct business, in violation of the official rules for that conference or gathering; (f) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (fg) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;¹⁶ (gh) child abuse;*** (hi) sexual abuse;¹⁷ (ij) sexual misconduct*** or (jk) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; or (kl) racial or gender discrimination. . .

3. A professing member of a local church may be charged with the following offenses, and, if so, may choose a trial: (a) immorality; (b) crime; (c) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (d) interfering with the General Conference's or another official United Methodist body's ability to conduct business, in violation of the official rules for that conference or gathering; (e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (ef) sexual abuse; (fg) sexual misconduct;* (gh) child abuse; (hi) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (ij) racial or gender discrimination; or (jk) relationships and/or behaviors that undermine the ministry of persons serving within an appointment. . .

Rationale:

Efforts by demonstrators to take over General Conferences and other UMC gatherings prevent the church's work, waste valuable resources, and disrupt the democratic process of our conferencing. Such tactics seek to bully and intimidate, and are the antithesis of a Christ-like process for addressing disagreements within the church.

¶2702.1.

Petition Number: 20364-JA-¶2702.1-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 3 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #8

Amend ¶ 2702.1 as follows:

1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: ~~(a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage; (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;~~ (ca) crime; (bd) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (ec) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (fd) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor; (ge) child abuse; (fh) sexual abuse; (gi) sexual misconduct including the use or possession of pornography, (hj) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (ik) racial, or gender discrimination; or (jt) fiscal malfeasance.

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of the *Book of Discipline* that prevent people from being full participants in the life of The United Methodist Church alleviates some of the harm The United Methodist Church causes to

¶2702.1.

Petition Number: 20365-JA-¶2702.1-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 7 Similar Petitions

**Next Generation UMC #21—
Chargeable Offenses**

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Equality in Chargeable Offenses]

Amend ¶ 2702.1 as follows:

¶ 2702.1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: (a) immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage; ~~(b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;~~ (eb) crime; (dc) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (ed) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (fe) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor; (gf) child abuse; (hg) sexual abuse; (ih) sexual misconduct including the use or possession of pornography, (ji) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (kj) racial, or gender discrimination; or (hk) fiscal malfeasance.

Rationale:

Deletions to this paragraph mean that a person's sexual identity as a homosexual will no longer be a chargeable offense and clergy and churches are no longer prevented from conducting same-sex wedding ceremonies. The language is adjusted to reflect proposed changes in ¶¶ 161.C., 161.G, 304.3, and 341.6.

¶2702.1.

Petition Number: 20366-JA-¶2702.1; Barrett, Joy - Chelsea, MI, USA for Michigan Annual Conference. Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

**Add Domestic Violence to the List of
Chargeable Offenses**

Amend ¶ 2702.1 adding a new subpoint (m) and a new footnote as follows:

¶ 2702.1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in

¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: . . . or (l) fiscal malfeasance; or (m) domestic violence.

Additionally, a footnote shall be added to this subpoint as follows:

For the purposes of this provision, domestic violence—also called intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic abuse, or relationship abuse—shall be defined as a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. Domestic violence includes behaviors that physically harm, arouse fear, prevent a partner from doing what they wish or force them to behave in ways they do not want. It includes the use of physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse, and economic deprivation. Many of these different forms of domestic violence/abuse can be occurring at any one time within the same intimate relationship.

Rationale:

Domestic violence is a stain on humanity.

¶ 162.F of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* states, “We affirm the right of women to live free from violence and abuse...”

According to the U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline,

Domestic violence (also called intimate partner violence (IPV),

¶2702.1.

Petition Number: 20370-JA-¶2702.1; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Chargeable Offenses

Amend ¶ 2702.1 by substitution of the following:

~~A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one of more of the following offenses: (a) Immorality including but not limited to, not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage, (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies; (c) crime; (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; (e) dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Methodist Church; (f) relationships and/or~~

~~behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor; (g) child abuse; (h) sexual abuse; (i) sexual misconduct including the use or possession of pornography, (j) harassment, including but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment, (k) racial or gender discrimination or (l) fiscal malfeasance.~~

A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 370), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses: (a) conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child abuse, theft, or assault, (b) engaging in sexual activities outside the bonds of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, including sexual abuse or misconduct, the use or possession of pornography, or infidelity, (c) fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement, (d) racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment, (e) relationships and/or behavior that undermine the ministries of other pastors, (f) promoting doctrines or practices which are not in accord with those of The United Methodist Church, (g) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church, (h) other behaviors that significantly diminish the witness of the church to the world.

¶2702.1.

Petition Number: 20373-JA-¶2702.1; Zilhaver, Robert - Uniontown, PA, USA.

Administrative Charges

Add new paragraph ¶ 2702.1.m failure to perform the work of ministry.

Rationale:

This legislation addresses the principle of legality raised in JD 1366 by restoring language and procedures used prior to the 1996 *Discipline*. This language was found to meet the principle of legality in Judicial Council Decision 351 and ¶ 20 of the Constitution.

¶2702.1b.

Petition Number: 20371-JA-¶2702.1b; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Follow Civil Laws and Ecumenical Context of the Country

Amend ¶ 2702. 1 (b):

¶ 2702. 1 (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teaching,

in countries where same-sex marriage is not supported by civil-law and practicing homosexual clergies are not ecumenically accepted, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;

Rationale:

The regulations of marriage given by the church must follow the regulations given by civil-laws and should follow the position of other mainline Protestant denominations that we have ecumenical agreements within the context of the countries and cultures of the church.

¶2702.1d.

Petition Number: 20372-JA-¶2702.1d; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

Simplifying a Chargeable Offense

Amend by addition to ¶ 2702.1(d):

A bishop, clergy, . . . when charged . . . with one or more of the following offenses: (a) . . . (d) disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church; provided the charge is related to alleged conduct that is in violation of specific paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline*; (e) . . .

Other parallel passages that should be changed:

Paragraph 2702.3(c)

Rationale:

As it is written, the “disobedience” charge implies that a bishop or superintendent may give any order, petty, arbitrary, or even illegal, and the pastors who disobey would be subject to this charge. The covenant clergy sign on to is to obey the *Discipline* so any charged offense has

¶2703.

Petition Number: 20375-JA-¶2703; Anding, George - Baton Rouge, LA, USA.

Composition of the Committee on Investigation

Amend ¶ 2703 of the *Book of Discipline*, 2016 as follows:

* * *

2. In each annual conference, there shall be a *committee on investigation* to consider judicial complaints against clergy members of the annual conference, clergy members on honorable location or administrative location from that annual conference, local pastors, and di-

aconal ministers. It shall consist of four clergy members in full connection, three professing members, three alternate clergy members in full connection, and six alternate lay members, three of whom shall be diaconal ministers if available within the bounds of the annual conference. The committee shall be nominated by the presiding bishop in consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry (for clergy members) and the conference board of laity (for professing members) and elected quadrennially by the annual conference. If additional members or alternates are needed before the end of the quadrennium, the annual conference may elect members to serve for the remainder of the quadrennium. Committee members shall be in good standing and shall be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. The committee on investigation shall elect a chair and organize at the annual conference. None of the members or alternates shall be members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the cabinet, or immediate family members of the above. Should a member of the committee on investigation have been a party to any of the prior proceedings in the case that finally comes before the committee, he or she shall be disqualified from sitting on the committee during its consideration of that case, and his or her place shall be taken by an alternate member. Seven members or alternates seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. If the next annual conference is not scheduled to commence within 120 days following the date the judicial complaint is received by the chairperson of the committee, and if the membership of the committee at that time is insufficient to constitute a quorum, then new members, in a number sufficient to constitute a quorum, may be nominated by the presiding bishop and elected *ad interim* by the Board of Ordained Ministry (for any additional clergy member needed) and the conference board of laity (for any additional professing member needed).

Rationale:

Provides a needed method for the election and addition of sufficient new members to the committee on investigation during the quadrennium, if the next annual conference is not scheduled to begin within 120 days following the date the judicial complaint is received by the committee’s chairperson, and if the membership

¶2703.

Petition Number: 20376-JA-¶2703-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2703:

Composition of the Committee on Investigation

1. *When respondent is a bishop*—There shall be a committee on investigation elected by each jurisdictional or central conference. Nominations shall be made by the College of Bishops in consultation with the jurisdictional episcopacy committee. Further nominations may be offered from the floor of the jurisdictional or central conference. The committee shall consist of seven clergy in full connection (with not more than one clergyperson from each annual conference, if possible), two lay observers, and six alternate members, five of whom shall be clergypersons in full connection (with not more than one clergyperson from each annual conference, if possible), and one of whom shall be a layperson. If additional members or alternates are needed, they may be named by the College of Bishops. Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, person with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity. The committee shall elect a chairperson and organize at the jurisdictional or central conference. Seven clergy or alternates seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

2. In each annual conference, there shall be a committee on investigation to consider judicial complaints against clergy members of the annual conference, clergy members on honorable location or administrative location from that annual conference, local pastors, and diaconal ministers. It shall consist of four clergy members in full connection, three professing members, three alternate clergy members in full connection, and six alternate lay members, three of whom shall be diaconal ministers if available within the bounds of the annual conference. The committee shall be nominated by the presiding bishop in consultation with the Board of Ordained Ministry (for clergy members) and the conference board of laity (for professing members) and elected quadrennially by the annual conference. If additional members or alternates are needed, the annual conference may elect members to serve for the remainder of the quadrennium. Committee members shall be in good standing and shall be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, person with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity. The committee on investigation shall elect a chair and organize at the annual conference. None of the members or alternates shall be members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the cabinet, or immediate family members of the above. Should a member of the committee on inves-

tigation have been a party to any of the prior proceedings in the case that finally comes before the committee, he or she shall be disqualified from sitting on the committee during its consideration of that case, and his or her place shall be taken by an alternate member. Seven members or alternates seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

a) In cases of complaints against clergy members of the annual conference, clergy members on honorable location or administrative location from that annual conference, or local pastors, the committee shall consist of four clergy members and three professing members.

b) In cases of complaints against diaconal ministers, the committee shall consist of four clergy members and five professing members, two of whom shall be diaconal ministers if available within the bounds of the annual conference.

3. *When respondent is a layperson*—In all cases, the pastor or district superintendent should take pastoral steps to resolve any complaints. If such pastoral response does not result in resolution and a written complaint is made against a professing member for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.3, the pastor in charge or co-pastors (¶ 205.1) of the local church, in consultation with the district superintendent and the district lay leader, may appoint a committee on investigation consisting of four professing members and three clergy in full connection (both clergy and professing members must come from other congregations, exclusive of the churches of the respondent or the complainant). Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, person with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity. When the pastor in charge is (or co-pastors are) bringing the charge, the district superintendent, in consultation with the district lay leader, shall appoint the committee on investigation. Five members shall constitute a quorum.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶2703.2.

Petition Number: 20374-JA-¶2703.2-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Opening Nominations for the Committee on Investigation to the Plenary

Amend by addition to ¶ 2703.2 in the following way:

¶ 2703.2. The committee shall be nominated by the bishop . . . and by nominations from the floor and elected quadrennially . . .

Rationale:

Paragraph 33 gives responsibility for all matters of character, performance, and conference relations to the conference and not to the cabinet members. Nominations must be open from the floor for every group that deals with reviewing those or the conference ends up without access to the make-up of those groups.

¶2704.

Petition Number: 20377-JA-¶2704-G; Alan, Talbot Davis - Charlotte, NC, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Ensure Communication

AMEND ¶ 2704 by ADDING the following sentence at the end of ¶ 2704.1a, ¶ 2704.2a, ¶ 2704.3a, and ¶ 2704.4a: “From the time of the referral to the counsel for the church until the final conclusion of the complaint process, trial, and/or appeals, the counsel for the church shall keep the complainant informed about the process and hear concerns, through communicating with the complainant at least every 60 days, unless the complainant informs the counsel that he or she is not interested in such communication.”

Rationale:

At times, some counsels for the church have gone too far in shutting out and avoiding communication with the persons filing the original complaint, which worsens the harm of the original offense. This ensures at least a very minimal level of communication.

¶2704.

Petition Number: 20379-JA-¶2704-G; Sim, Gyuchang - River Edge, NJ, USA.

Timely Processing of Complaints

AMEND ¶ 2704 as follows: ¶ 2704. *Referral of Original Complaint to Counsel for the Church, Who Shall Prepare Judicial Complaint and Supporting Material for Consideration by Committee on Investigation*

1. *When respondent is a bishop a) Judicial Complaint— . . .*

b) If a written complaint is made against a bishop for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the counsel for the church, as appointed under ¶ 2704.1a, shall prepare, sign, and forward the judicial complaint and all documentary evidence under consideration to the chairperson of the committee on investigation, the person making the original complaint, and the bishop being charged (respondent). The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 180 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely in situations in which civil authorities are potentially involved, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 90 days.

The respondent shall be given . . .

2. *When respondent is a clergy member of an annual conference, clergy on honorable or administrative location or a local pastor a) Judicial Complaint— . . .*

b) If a written complaint is made against a clergyperson for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the bishop shall appoint a clergyperson in full connection as counsel for the church (see ¶ 361.1e). Counsel for the church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of the conference committee on investigation and represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person making the original complaint in any proceedings before the committee. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 180 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely in situations in which civil authorities are potentially involved, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 90 days. A copy of the complaint . . .

3. *When respondent is a diaconal minister . . . If the supervisory process does not result in resolution, the respondent’s district superintendent may appoint a clergyperson in full connection or diaconal minister as counsel for the church. Counsel for the church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of the conference committee on investigation for diaconal ministers and represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person*

making the original complaint in any proceedings before the committee. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 180 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church, except in extraordinary circumstances in which further delay may be advisable because civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, or an extension of no more than 90 days is absolutely necessary for the sake of gathering relevant evidence, or the bishop, counsel for the church, respondent, and complainant all agree to an extension of no more than 120 days. A copy of the complaint . . .

4. *When respondent is a layperson . . .* If after such steps have been taken and have not resulted in a resolution and a written complaint is made against a layperson for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.3, the pastor in charge or co-pastors (¶ 205.1) of the local church, in consultation with the district superintendent and the district lay leader, may appoint counsel for the church, who shall be a United Methodist. Counsel for the church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of committee on investigation. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 180 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely in situations in which civil authorities are potentially involved, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 90 days . . .

Rationale:

The right to a speedy trial is a widely respected principle in secular law (including the U.S. Bill of Rights). The church should do no less in our own standards of justice. Letting complaint processes drag out indefinitely is grossly unfair to all involved, and can needlessly harm innocent people.

¶2704.

Petition Number: 20380-JA-¶2704-G; Hoffman, Richard - Greensburg, PA, USA.

Timely Processing of Complaints

AMEND ¶ 2704 by ADDING language as follows:

¶ 2704. *Referral of Original Complaint to Counsel for the Church, Who Shall Prepare Judicial Complaint*

and Supporting Material for Consideration by Committee on Investigation

1. *When respondent is a bishop*

a) *Judicial Complaint— . . .*

b) If a written complaint is made against a bishop for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the counsel for the church, as appointed under ¶ 2704.1a, shall prepare, sign, and forward the judicial complaint and all documentary evidence under consideration to the chairperson of the committee on investigation, the person making the original complaint, and the bishop being charged (respondent). The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 120 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely by the bishop while civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 120 days. The respondent shall be given . . .

2. *When respondent is a clergy member of an annual conference, clergy on honorable or administrative location or a local pastor*

a) *Judicial Complaint— . . .*

b) If a written complaint is made against a clergyperson for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the bishop shall appoint a clergyperson in full connection as counsel for the church (see ¶ 361.1d[1]). Counsel for the church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of the conference committee on investigation and represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person making the original complaint in any proceedings before the committee. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 120 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely by the bishop while civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 120 days. A copy of the complaint . . .

3. *When respondent is a diaconal minister*

a) . . . Counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of the conference committee on investi-

gation for diaconal ministers and represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person making the original complaint in any proceedings before the committee. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 120 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely by the bishop while civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 120 days. A copy of the complaint . . .

4. *When respondent is a layperson*

a) . . . Counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and refer the judicial complaint, with all relevant material, to the chairperson of committee on investigation. The counsel shall submit these materials in a timely manner, completing this step within no more than 120 days after the referral of the complaint to the counsel for the church. Exceptions to this deadline may be made in extraordinary circumstances in which the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the church all agree to an extension of up to 120 additional days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely by the bishop while civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, provided that the status of the complaint is subject to review every 120 days. . . .

Rationale:

The current lack of time limits has sometimes been misused to drag out complaint processes for much longer than needed. This is grossly unfair to all involved, and can cause avoidable harm to victims of misconduct, as well as to respondents who may be innocent but remain under burdensome complaints.

¶2704.2a.

Petition Number: 20378-JA-¶2704.2a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Ending the Role of Bishop in Investigating

Amend by addition to ¶ 2704.2a) as follows:

¶ 2704.2a) *When the respondent is a clergy member.* . . . The counsel for the church . . . shall be appointed by the bishop. The counsel for the church shall not be a cabinet member. Any investigation, evaluation of evidence, and interviews with witnesses shall be undertaken by the

counsel for the church and not by the bishop or cabinet members. The counsel for the church shall be a clergy person . . . choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney. Assistant counsel for the church shall not be the conference chancellor. By agreeing to serve . . .

Rationale:

The bishop and cabinet should not be involved in any part of the investigation beyond what they may have witnessed. Because of their power position in the conference, they would be very able to tamper with witnesses and evidence. Because conference chancellors work closely with the bishop on many conference

¶2706.

Petition Number: 20382-JA-¶2706-G; Stover, Gregory - Lake Waynoka, OH, USA.

The Committee on Investigation Time Requirements re: Orders for Remand

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 2706 by adding a new subsection 8 as follows:

8. When a matter is remanded to the committee on investigation by the Judicial Council or by the jurisdictional or central conference committee on appeals, the committee on investigation shall hold a new hearing within 90 days of the issuance of the order of remand and shall reach a decision and report it to the respondent, counsel for the church, and the jurisdictional committee on appeals and/or the Judicial Council within 7 days of the remand hearing

Rationale:

These clear guidelines are needed to ensure the fair and timely oversight of complaints, promote appropriate accountability, and prevent the imposition of indefinite delays, which create uncertainty and are unfair to ALL involved.

¶2706.3.

Petition Number: 20383-JA-¶2706.3; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Suspension by Committee on Investigation

Add new paragraph between ¶ 2706.3 and ¶ 2706.4 and renumber remaining subparagraphs of ¶ 2706:

Suspension Hearing—When a person is under complaint and when deemed appropriate, to protect the

well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, or other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may in consultation with the cabinet request the committee on investigation to suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities.

a) Prior to suspending a clergyperson, the committee on investigation shall conduct a hearing following the provisions of *Hearings before the Committee on Investigation* [current ¶ 2706.4].

b) During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits previously provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension. The cost during this suspension will be borne by the annual conference.

c) The person so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334.

d) If approved, suspension shall be effective during adjudication of any appeal process.

Rationale:

Legislation addresses conflict between administrative/judicial processes for suspension during a complaint. JD1361 creates possibility of barring persons under complaint when deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, or other context for ministry, after 120 days from being removed from clergy duties.

¶2706.5.

Petition Number: 20384-JA-¶2706.5-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Defining Specifications

Amend by addition to ¶ 2706.5 as follows:

¶ 2706.5 *Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberation, Vote, and Referral*—A vote on each charge and specification (date, time, and specific events alleged to have occurred—see JCDs 763 and 784) shall be taken separately. . . .

Rationale:

Certain appellate decisions have ignored these Judicial Council precedents, saying “The Law of the Church does not require exactitude on details or precision.” (JCD 1151) This carelessness about specifications makes it unnecessary for the Church to prove anything. That opens the door to opinions of those in authority becoming the

¶2706.5c3.

Petition Number: 20381-JA-¶2706.5c3; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA. 1 Similar Petition

ALL BELONG: Restoring Wesleyan Accountability to Complaint Processes

Amend ¶ 2706.5.c.3 as follows:

¶ 2706.5.c.3. (3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.2d. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, the complainant, and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The committee on investigation shall retain jurisdiction for the period of time stated for the implementation of the resolution agreement. The committee shall periodically monitor the progress of the completion of the terms and conditions of the resolution agreement, and shall certify when the terms and conditions of the agreement are completed. When the terms and conditions of the agreement are completed, the committee on investigation shall report its certification, and the status of the respondent as a result of completing the terms and conditions of the resolution agreement, to the resident bishop. If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee on investigation for further consideration. Also, decision(s) of a trial court that call for certification as to the completion of terms and conditions of the trial court’s decision(s) after the end of a trial are to be assigned to the committee on investigation for monitoring and certification of completion of the decision. If the respondent fails to complete the terms and conditions

of a trial court decision, the committee shall notify the presiding officer of the trial, who may reconvene the trial court for its further consideration.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ and because Wesleyan tradition is founded in grace. This petition seeks to restore both grace and discretion to the complaint process.

¶2708.

Petition Number: 20385-JA-¶2708-G; Sim, Gyuchang - River Edge, NJ, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Right to a Speedy Trial

AMEND ¶ 2708.2 as follows:

¶ 2708.2 *Time and Place of Trial*—The official charged with convening the trial shall fix the time and place for the trial and will notify the presiding officer, the respondent, counsel for the church, and the person making the original complaint. The trial must be scheduled to be held within no more than 120 days from the date of certification of a bill of charges by the committee on investigation, not counting periods during which any pretrial decisions or findings are under appeal, except in extraordinary circumstances in which the counsel for the church, respondent, complainant, and presiding officer of the trial all agree to an extension of no more than 120 days. This deadline may also be extended indefinitely by the resident bishop for the area in which the trial is to be held, while civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent in matters covered by the complaint, provided that the bishop reviews the progress of the civil authorities at least every 120 days, and shares relevant updates, to the extent that may be appropriate, with the respondent and the counsel for the church. In all cases . . .

Rationale:

The right to a speedy trial is a widely respected principle in secular law (including the U.S. Bill of Rights). The church should do no less in our own standards of justice. Letting complaint processes drag out indefinitely is grossly unfair to all involved and can needlessly harm innocent people.

¶2709.2.

Petition Number: 20386-JA-¶2709.2-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2709.2:

2. *Trial Pool*—At the appointed time, in the presence of the respondent, counsel for the respondent, counsel for the church, and the presiding officer, thirteen persons shall be selected as a trial court out of a pool of thirty-five or more persons selected according to ¶¶ 2712.3, 2713.3, and 2714.3. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, ethnic, person with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that reflects

¶2711.

Petition Number: 20389-JA-¶2711; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

Restoration When a Respondent Is Found to Be Not Guilty

Amend by addition to ¶ 2711 add subparagraph 4:

4. *Restoration When the Trial Results in a Not Guilty Verdict*—

a) When a trial court finds that the respondent is not convicted, the trial court shall have authority to direct the restoration of compensation of the full pastoral support package of the last appointment at the time of the original complaint was filed or removal from the appointment through suspension as part of the judicial process if such suspension occurred prior to the filing of any complaint. Such restoration shall continue until such time as the respondent is provided a new appointment, or he or she is in a new clergy status. Restoring such compensation shall be worked out between the conference council on finance and administration and the local church regarding any support that occurred since the original complaint occurred.

b) If there is no conviction in a trial, the conference council on finance and administration is directed to pay medical, pension, housing, legal, and other reasonable expenses incurred because of the judicial procedures involved.

Rationale:

The emotional, spiritual, and financial toll on a pastor or other respondent subject to the judicial processes of our

church is devastating in any case. But it is even more so when it is determined that the pastor is found not guilty and needs to return to normality.

Anything less

¶2711.

Petition Number: 20392-JA-¶2711-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Amend 2711 to Penalties that Reflect Values of Restorative Justice

Amend ¶ 2711.3:

3. *Penalties—If the Trial Results in Conviction*—Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership, and revoke the credentials of conference membership and licensing, commissioning, ordination, or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. However, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

a) First (1st) offense — One (1) year's suspension without pay.

b) Second (2nd) offense — Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

An annual conference, central conference, or jurisdictional conference may never set mandatory minimum penalty. Each trial court should consider a penalty that focuses on repairing the harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, economic conditions, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall

the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

¶2711.3.

Petition Number: 20387-JA-¶2711.3-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 7 Similar Petitions

Next Generation UMC #22—Penalties

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Restoring Wesleyan Accountability to Court Penalties]

Amend ¶ 2711.3 as follows:

3. *Penalties—If the Trial Results in Conviction*—Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership, and revoke the credentials of conference membership and licensing, commissioning, ordination, or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. However, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

a) First (1st) offense — One (1) year's suspension without pay.

b) Second (2nd) offense — Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

Rationale:

Predefined penalties for complaints intrude on the constitutional prerogative of annual conference clergy to determine all matters relating to the conference relations of their peers. No such "minimum" penalties exist for any other violations. Minimum penalties undermine the trial

court's responsibilities and the constitutional principles of legality and inclusiveness.

¶2711.3.

Petition Number: 20388-JA-¶2711.3-G; Fisher, Christopher - Schuylkill, PA, USA.

Trial Court Penalty Additions for Restoration and Restitution

Amend *Book of Discipline* ¶ 2711.3 as follows:

¶ 2711.3, page 809.

3. Penalties—If the Trial Results in Conviction.—

Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership, and revoke the credentials of conference membership and licensing, commissioning, ordination, or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, and/or to fix a lesser penalty including conditions for restoration or restitution. However, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

a) First (1st) offense—One (1) year's suspension without pay.

b) Second (2nd) offense—Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

If the trial court imposes a penalty with conditions for restoration or restitution, it may include additional consequences if those conditions are not met. When a penalty includes such conditions, the trial court shall indicate the nature and timing of the conditions and which administrative body of the church shall administer those conditions at the conclusion of the trial. That administrative body shall not alter or change the penalty conditions; it may inquire of the trial court for clarification, since the trial court is considered a continuing body until the final disposition of a charge.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall

the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.²³

23. See Judicial Council Decision 1201.

Rationale:

These additions to the penalty options available to a trial court allow for restorative justice and restitution, in keeping with the church's stated goal for such in our Social Principles (¶ 164) and Judicial Proceedings (¶ 2701.5).

¶2711.3.

Petition Number: 20390-JA-¶2711.3-G; Talbert, Matthew - Monticello, IL, USA.

Removal of Mandatory Penalty

Amend ¶ 2711.3. Delete the following from ¶ 2711.3:

~~"However, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:~~

~~a) First (1st) offense — One (1) year's suspension without pay;~~

~~b) Second (2nd) offense — Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration;~~

~~The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney."~~

Rationale:

The *Book of Discipline* does not define punishments for other chargeable offenses.

¶2711.3.

Petition Number: 20391-JA-¶2711.3-G; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Follow Civil Laws of the Country

Action proposed: Amend ¶ 2711. 3:

¶ 2711. 3. *Penalties—If the Trial Results in Conviction*—Further testimony may be heard and arguments by

counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership and/or revoke the credentials of conference membership and/or ordination or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. Except, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702. 1 (b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following in countries, where same-sex marriage is illegal by civil-law:

a) First (1st) offense—One (1) year's suspension without pay.

b) Second (2nd) offense—Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses of fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

Rationale:

The regulations of marriage given by the church must follow the regulations given by civil-laws in the different countries

¶2712.3.

Petition Number: 20393-JA-¶2712.3-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2712.3:

3. The trial shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709 with the pool of thirty-five or more persons to consist of clergy in full connection named by the College of Bishops in approximately equal numbers from each episcopal area within the jurisdictional or central conference. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, and gender diversity.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that reflects God's heart.

¶2713.

Petition Number: 20394-JA-¶2713-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2713:

¶ 2713. *Trial of a Clergy Member of an Annual Conference, Local Pastor, Clergy on Honorable or Administrative Location, or Diaconal Minister*

1. The resident bishop of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of ¶ 2709.

2. The resident bishop shall designate another bishop to be presiding officer.

3. a) The trial for a clergy member or a local pastor shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709 with the pool of thirty-five or more persons to consist of clergy in full connection. If there are not enough persons in appropriate categories in an annual conference to complete the pool, additional persons may be appointed from other annual conferences. All appointments to the pool shall be made by the district superintendents. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, persons with disabilities, sexual orientation, and gender diversity.

b) The trial for a diaconal minister shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709 and shall consist of a pool of thirty-five or more persons who shall be diaconal ministers or, when necessary, members of the church. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, ethnic, persons with disabilities, sexual orientation, and gender diversity.

4. Counsel for the church shall be a clergyperson in full connection.

5. The secretary of the court shall at the conclusion of the proceedings send all trial documents to the secretary of the annual conference, who shall keep them in custody. Such documents are to be held in a confidential file and shall not be released for other than appeal or new trial purposes without a signed release from both the clergyperson charged and the presiding officer of the trial that tried the case. If an appeal is taken, the secretary shall forward the materials forthwith to the president of the court of appeals

of the jurisdictional or central conference. If a president has not been elected, the secretary shall send the materials to such members of the court of appeals as the president of the College of Bishops shall designate. After the appeal has been heard, the records shall be returned to the secretary of the annual conference unless a further appeal on a question of law has been made to the Judicial Council, in which case the relevant documents shall be forwarded to the secretary of that body.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶2713.3a.

Petition Number: 20395-JA-¶2713.3a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Random Selection of the Trial Court Pool

Amend by substitution to ¶ 2713.3a) as follows:

¶ **2713.3a)** The trial for a clergy member . . . All appointments to the pool shall be made by ~~the district superintendents~~. lot, the names drawn randomly in the presence of the counsels for the church and respondent to assure all appointees fit the disciplinary requirements. Special consideration . . .

Rationale:

The superintendents are violating the separation of powers by participating in the selection of the trial court pool. In many cases, they already have decided with the bishop to forward the complaint. In some cases, they initiated the complaint and should not be allowed as complainants to pick the trial

¶2714.3.

Petition Number: 20396-JA-¶2714.3-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2714.3

3. The trial shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709, with the pool of thirty-five or more persons to consist of professing members of local churches other than the local church of the charged layperson within the same district.

Appointments to the pool shall be made by the district superintendent, who may consult with the district lay leader. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation and gender diversity.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the Book of Discipline in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that reflects God's heart.

¶2715.

Petition Number: 20398-JA-¶2715-G; Stover, Gregory - Lake Waynoka, OH, USA.

Authority of Committee on Appeals

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 2715 by adding a new subsection 14 as follows:

14. When remanding a matter to the committee on investigation, the jurisdictional or central conference committee on appeals may not order a pause in judicial proceedings, unless the matter involves a pending criminal charge in the civil (secular) courts.

Rationale:

This addition is needed to clarify the extent and limits of the authority of regional committees on appeals, and to prevent such committees from abusing their authority or delaying accountability by imposing lengthy and unnecessary delays that are unfair to ALL involved.

¶2715.7.

Petition Number: 20399-JA-¶2715.7-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Appellate Bodies Fulfilling their Responsibilities

Amend by addition to ¶ 2715.7 in the following way:

¶ **2715.7.** The appellate body shall determine two questions only: (a) Does the weight of evidence sustain the charge or charges? (b) Were there such errors as to vitiate the verdict and/or the penalty? These questions shall be determined by the records of the trial and the argument for the church and for the respondent. The appellate body shall examine the full record back to the original

complaint, all letters and documents related to the matter, the transcripts of all hearing bodies, the transcripts of the prior appellate bodies involved, the written directions made by presiders of the hearing bodies involved, as well as the briefs and oral argument presented by the parties at interest. The appellate body may not simply defer to the decisions of any other person or entity. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses

Rationale:

The *Discipline* is clear that appellate bodies determine for themselves whether there is weight of evidence or errors of law. They may not refuse the responsibility by delegating it the task to other bodies, even to those allegedly “closer to the incident.” That would violate the Judicial Council precedent

¶2715.8.

Petition Number: 20400-JA-¶2715.8-G; Fisher, Christopher - Schuylkill, PA, USA.

Clarify Appeals Committee Powers

Amend *Book of Discipline* ¶ 2715.8 as follows:

8. In all cases where an appeal is made and admitted by the appellate committee, after the charges, findings, and evidence have been read and the arguments conclude, the parties shall withdraw, and the appellate committee shall consider and decide the case. It may reverse in whole or in part the findings of the committee on investigation or the trial court, or it may remand the case for a new trial to determine verdict and/or penalty. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the hearing or trial, may be imposed, provided that any newly fixed penalty would have been within the range of penalties the trial court had the right to impose. If it neither reverses in whole or in part the judgment of the trial court, nor remands the case for a new trial, nor modifies the penalty, that judgment shall stand. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor change the penalty nor remand the case for a new hearing or trial on account of errors plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

Rationale:

Needed clarification, given recent confusion over the limits to the penalties trials can impose, and over how broad a right the appeals committee has to substitute its own penalty. It is unfair to allow all the trial court’s difficult work to be undone in the absence of relevant errors.

¶2715.10.

Petition Number: 20397-JA-¶2715.10-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

Next Generation UMC #23— Church Appeal Procedures

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Restoring Wesleyan Accountability to Appeals Processes]

Amend ¶ 2715.10 Appeal Procedures as follows:

¶ 2715. *Appeal Procedures—General*

...

10. The church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. ~~The Church shall have a right of appeal to the committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council from findings of the trial court based on egregious errors of Church law or administration that could reasonably have affected the findings of the trial court. When the committee on appeals or the Judicial Council shall find egregious errors of Church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new trial, along with a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy.~~ In regard to cases where there is an investigation under ¶ 2702, but no trial is held, egregious errors of church law or administration may be appealed to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council by counsel for the church. The committee on investigation’s decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of church law or administration. When the committee on appeals ~~or the Judicial Council~~ shall find egregious errors of church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy.

Rationale:

This amendment deletes a repetitious, potentially expensive, and unnecessary process. There is no reason to change the process that has worked successfully for years. The finances of the church are best stewarded toward its mission and ministry rather than redundant trial procedures.

¶2715.10.

Petition Number: 20401-JA-¶2715.10; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Definition of Terms for Appeal

Amend ¶ 2715.10 by adding the following sentence as the third sentence of the paragraph:

In this paragraph, “egregious errors of church law or administration” refers to the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation (whether knowing or not) of church law or judicial process as required by the Book of Discipline, with such errors more likely than not (in the judgment of the appellate body) affecting the findings of the trial court or committee on investigation.

So that the paragraph would read:

¶ 2715.10

10. The church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. The church shall have a right of appeal to the committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council from findings of the trial court based on egregious errors of church law or administration that could reasonably have affected the findings of the trial court. In this paragraph, “egregious errors of church law or administration” refers to the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation (whether knowing or not) of church law or judicial process as required by the Book of Discipline, with such errors more likely than not (in the judgment of the appellate body) affecting the findings of the trial court or committee on investigation. When the committee on appeals or the Judicial Council shall find egregious errors of church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new trial, along with a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy. In regard to cases where there is an investigation under ¶ 2702, but no trial is held, egregious errors of church law or administration may be appealed to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on appeals and then to the Judicial Council by counsel for the church. The committee on investigation’s decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of church law or administration. When the committee on appeals or the Judicial Council shall find egregious errors of church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation a statement of the grounds of its action. This is not to be double jeopardy.

Rationale:

This amendment defines the terms “egregious errors of church law or administration,” as requested by Judicial Council Decision 1366. It enables the fair application of the right of appeal to correct errors made in the judicial process, which are more likely to occur in church proceedings conducted by untrained persons.

¶2718.3.

Petition Number: 20402-JA-¶2718.3-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Organize Administrative Fair Process Paragraphs

Move ¶ 2718.3 and .4 to follow current ¶ 361

¶ 361.3 *Immunity From Prosecution*— . . . The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by the civil laws.

¶ NEW. ¶ 2718.3: *Administrative Fair Process Appeals*—1. The order of appeals on questions of procedures in an administrative process shall be as follows: from the decision of the conference relations committee to the administrative review committee who has original jurisdiction over the administrative matter, and from the administrative review committee to the central conference or jurisdictional appeals committee in which the appellant holds membership, and from the jurisdictional appeals committee to the Judicial Council.

¶ 2718.4 2. When an appeal is made on questions of procedure in an administrative process:

a) In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall within thirty (30) days give written notice of appeal and at the same time furnish to the officer receiving such notice a written statement of the grounds of appeal, and the hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

b) The appellant body shall return to the convening officer of the administrative hearing and to the appellant a written statement of the grounds of its action.

c) An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel during the administrative hearing. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct; by withdrawal from the church; by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal by resorting to suit in the civil courts against any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical administrative process.

d) The right to appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

e) The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs of legal representatives may prosecute such appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

f) The records and documents of the administrative process, including any evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

g) The appellate body shall determine one question only: Were there such errors of church law as to vitiate the recommendation and/or action of the administrative body? This question shall be determined by the records of the administrative process and the arguments of the official representatives of all parties. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses. It may have legal counsel present for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

h) If the appellate body determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing on account of error plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

i) In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the proper administrative hearing body, but questions on church law may be carried on appeal, step by step, to the Judicial Council.

j) Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body. Under no circumstances shall one party in the absence of the other party discuss substantive matters with members of any appellate body while the case is pending.

k) Contacts with members of any appellate body shall be limited to matters of procedure and shall be directed only to the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body. Under no circumstance shall matters of substance be discussed.

Rationale:

Locating all administrative fair process procedures and appeals in one location by moving them from the judicial appeals section (§ 2718) into the administrative fair process section (§ 361-§ 363) better organizes the related paragraphs and provides a clearer understanding of administrative fair process. The contents of the current §

§2718.3.

Petition Number: 20403-JA-§2718.3-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Define Administrative Appeals Process in Response to Judicial Council Decision 1361

Amend § 2718.3:

§ 2718.3. The order of appeals on questions of procedures in an administrative process shall be as follows: from the decision of the conference relations committee to the administrative review committee who has original jurisdiction over the administrative matter, and from the administrative review committee to the central conference or jurisdictional appeals committee in which the appellant holds membership. ~~and from the jurisdictional appeals committee to the Judicial Council.~~ For administrative fair process appeals, the decision of the central conference or jurisdictional appeals committee is final.

Rationale:

This change complies with the directive in Judicial Council Decision 1361 “to have one or two appellate bodies adjudicate claims of procedural errors . . .” while still allowing for a clergy right of appeal in an involuntary status change.

Local Church

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶204.

Petition Number: 20404-LC-¶204-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Local Church Relation to the Annual Conference

Insert a new ¶ 204 that reads as follows:

¶ 204. *Relation to the Annual Conference*—Any local church that is within the boundaries of an annual conference in the United States or that is associated with and under the authority of an annual conference in any of the territories of the United States or islands or provinces within the immediate vicinity of the United States and which annual conference withdraws from The United Methodist Church may withdraw from such a conference with its property, real and personal, tangible and intangible, as long as it meets its current obligations to that conference up to the time of withdrawal. The local church vote to withdraw must be supported by a two-thirds vote of the members of the charge conference. Such local church may apply to become associated with another United Methodist annual conference in the United States, and the annual conference to which application is made may accept the local church into association by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting with the vote taken in open session. The receiving annual conference may receive the local church into association without regard to whether or not the local church is within the current boundaries of the annual conference, and the local church so received will have all the same benefits and obligations of association, such as, but not limited to, clergy and lay membership, membership on annual conference committees, boards, and agencies, and participation in apportionment giving as the first benevolent obligation of the local church.

Rationale:

Since annual conferences have the right to withdraw from The UMC, local churches in a withdrawing conference must be given the opportunity to remain part of The UMC.

¶213.

Petition Number: 20405-LC-¶213; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Assessing Local Churches Potential Reform

¶ 213 of the *Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

¶ 213. *A Process for Assessment of Local Church Potential*—Since every congregation is located in a community in some type of transition, every local church is encouraged to study their congregation's potential. Upon the request of the congregation the district superintendent shall appoint a study task force to assist in an extensive study of the past, present, and potential ministry of that local church. Alternatively, the district superintendent may shall appoint such a task force when the future viability of the congregation is in question; when the leadership structures within the congregation fail to meet the prescribed representation standards as set forth in the *Book of Discipline*, when the congregation seeks to operate under an alternative administrative committee structure to the one set forth in the *Book of Discipline*, when the congregation has had fewer than one profession of faith per year for more than two years, or with formal approval from the pastor appointed to the congregation and the congregation's lay leader, whenever he or she they deems it necessary for other reasons. The task force shall be composed of an equal number of lay and clergy persons and shall include persons from that congregation who have been a member of the congregation for, when possible: fewer than five years, five to twenty years, twenty to fifty years, and more than fifty years. However, the task force shall not be chaired by a person from that congregation. . . .

¶214.

Petition Number: 20406-LC-¶214-G; Land, Amy - Amboy, IN, USA.

Membership Decisions

Add the following language to the end of ¶ 214:

The decision about an individual's readiness to affirm the vows of membership and to become a professing member of The United Methodist Church rests with the pastor in charge of the congregation or charge in which that individual seeks membership. However, in the event that the pastor deems that an individual is not yet ready to affirm the vows of membership, that person may appeal the pastor's decision to the pastor-parish or staff-parish relations committee of the church or charge.

Rationale:

There may be times when, for reasons of safety or integrity, it may be appropriate to delay someone moving from attending church to becoming a formal member. The ability to appeal this decision protects against abuses of pastoral authority. P/SPRC is best equipped to address sensitive situations confidentially.

¶244.

Petition Number: 20656-LC-¶244-G; Rippens, Roger - Waynesboro, VA, USA.

An Appropriate Restraint in Leadership

¶ 244.3. Members of the church council or alternative structure shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, ~~are loyal to the ethical standards~~ strive to follow the principles of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an *ex officio* member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.

Change the *Discipline* in the preamble, ¶ 246:

Members of the charge conference shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, ~~are loyal to the ethical standards~~ strive to follow the principles of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth and young adult members chosen according to the

same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an *ex officio* member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.

Rationale:

Whereas, the book of Social Principles over the years has been changing the emphasis from describing basic principles to describing solutions—for example, ¶ 160.B has changed from being a fairly general statement on the principle of Energy Resources Utilization to one specifying the individual lifestyle that should be adopted

¶246.5.

Petition Number: 20407-LC-¶246.5; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA.

Charge Conference Presiders

Amend ¶ 246.5 as follows:

5. The district superintendent shall preside at the meetings of the charge conference or may designate an elder a clergy member in full connection to preside.

Rationale:

This amendment allows district superintendents to designate any clergy member in full connection to preside at charge conferences. As charge conferences evaluate the overall mission and ministries of churches in context (¶ 2467.3), connecting local congregations to their annual or central conference, both deacons and elders have gifts for presiding.

¶248.

Petition Number: 20408-LC-¶248-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #1—The Affiliation or Reaffiliation Church Conference

ADD NEW ¶ 248A to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. *Basis*—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church, the Plain Grace Plan is adopted. It is the intent of the Plain Grace Plan to multiply new Wesleyan expressions consistent with the common core of The United Methodist Church and to allow the diverse members of The United Methodist Church to be able to live into their preferred expression of Meth-

odism while offering grace to all of God's children. It is the further intent of the Plain Grace Plan to create a Full Communion Relationship with such newly created Wesleyan expressions. The Plain Grace Plan consists of the following paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline*: ¶¶ 248A, 431A-F, 673–680, 725, 1510, and 2553–2555.

2. To encourage broader participation by members of the local church on the question of affiliation or reaffiliation, this paragraph shall apply during the following periods: (1) November 15, 2022, through March 15, 2023; (2) January 1 through March 31, 2026; and (3) January 1 through March 31, 2027. A charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present for considering the question of affiliation or reaffiliation. The church conference shall be authorized by the district superintendent within ten working days of receiving a written request by one of the following: the pastor, the church council, or 15 percent of the professing membership of the local church. In any case, a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Notice may be given up to and including the last day of the above listed periods and church conferences may be conducted after such last day; however, all such conferences shall be conducted no later than thirty days following the last day of the period. Special attention shall be made to give broad notice to the full professing membership of the local church regarding the time and place of a church conference called for this purpose and to use all reasonable means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate the purpose, time, date, and location of the church conference. If reasonably possible, the written notice shall include a copy of the affiliation or reaffiliation agreement to be considered at the meeting. No conference may be held on less than ten days written notice. A church conference conducted under this paragraph shall be presided over by the district superintendent or his or her designee with preference given to the chairman of the church council; if the district superintendent fails to designate a presiding officer, the presiding officer shall be elected by a majority of the professing members present at the meeting as the first order of business. A copy or copies of the proposed affiliation or reaffiliation agreement shall be available for inspection at the church conference. The question of affiliation or reaffiliation shall be decided by a simple majority of the professing members present at the meeting. The vote shall be conducted by secret ballot with the vote being canvassed by three professing members present at the meeting, such members being designated by the presiding officer. The pastor may, but shall not be required to, participate in the canvassing of votes. The result of such vote shall be promptly communicated to The United Method-

ist Church district superintendent and such person as may have been designated by the Full Communion Expression to receive notice. Thereafter, a standardized Gracious Affiliation Agreement or Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement, as authorized by ¶ 674 shall be executed by a duly authorized representative of the local church and the district superintendent. Affiliation or reaffiliation shall be effective upon execution of the agreement by the local church and the authorized representative of the Full Communion Expression or The United Methodist Church. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Discipline* that are not in the Constitution. This paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire at the adjournment of General Conference for 2028.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions, which consists of the twenty total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673–680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553–2555. This paragraph creates a procedure

¶258.

Petition Number: 20410-LC-¶258-G; Mafunda, Simon - HarareZimbabwe.

SPRC Duties

Amend ¶ 258.2g(9), outlining the duties of the committee on pastor-parish relations, by deletion and addition:

(9) To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference ~~lay preachers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry (¶¶247.8 and 310); persons willing to answer their call to Lay Servant Ministry and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry (¶¶ 247.8 and 310),~~ and to enlist and refer . . .

Rationale:

This brings the paragraph in harmony with the rest of the language on ¶ 267. After the initial approval, continuous appraisals become the duty of the district committee on ordained ministry, which is better equipped to handle this.

¶258.

Petition Number: 20412-LC-¶258-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 258.2.g(9)

(9) To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay preachers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry (see ¶¶ 247.8 and 310), and to enlist and refer to the General Board of Global Ministries persons for candidacy for missionary service, recognizing that The United Methodist Church affirms the biblical and theological support of persons regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, economic condition, or disabilities for these ministries. Neither the pastor nor any member of the committee on pastor-parish relations shall be present during the consideration of a candidacy application or renewal for a member of their immediate family. The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these students, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of ¶ 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶258.2a.

Petition Number: 20411-LC-¶258.2a-G; Talbert, Matthew - Monticello, IL, USA.

Immediate Family Definition

Amend ¶ 258.2(a): Add to the current end of 258.2(a) “Immediate family includes spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, adopted children, half-brother, half-sister, step-parents, and step-children.”

¶258.2g.

Petition Number: 20409-LC-¶258.2g-G; Young, Laura - Lubbock, TX, USA. 3 Similar Petitions

Non Discrimination Policy for Lay Staff

Amend ¶ 258.2.g(12) as follows:

(12) To recommend to the church council, after con-

sultation with the pastor, the professional and other staff positions (whether employee or contract) needed to carry out the work of the church or charge. The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy. ~~Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss nonappointed personnel.~~ Employment policies for nonappointed personnel shall prohibit discrimination in hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing lay staff based on age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or marital status. When persons are hired or contracted, consideration shall be given to the training qualifications and certification standards set forth by the general church agency to which such positions are related. The committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance and severance pay for all lay employees. In addition, the committee shall recommend that the church council provide, effective on and after January 1, 2006, 100 percent vested pension benefits of at least 3 percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through either a denominational pension program administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or another pension program administered by another pension provider.

Rationale:

Discrimination against lay employees on the basis of age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or marital status diminishes the witness of the church and harms the applicant and/or employee.

¶2533.

Petition Number: 20413-LC-¶2533-G; Urriola, Ian - Stephens City, VA, USA.

Annual Carbon Footprint and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Audit for Local Churches

Add new subparagraph to ¶ 2533 after ¶ 2533.6.

7. The board of trustees shall conduct or cause to be conducted an annual carbon footprint and/or greenhouse gas emissions audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify what physical, architectural,

and communication barriers exist that impede the church from being at least carbon neutral and/or having at least net zero greenhouse gas emissions and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of such barriers. This audit for churches shall be used in filling out the annual church and/or charge conference reports.

Rationale:

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity. By annually auditing factors that contribute to climate change on their property, the trustees can know what changes can be made on a structural level to help reduce those factors in their own communities.

¶2533.

Petition Number: 20415-LC-¶2533-G; Day, Alfred - Madison, NJ, USA for General Commission on Archives and History.

Providing Secure Space for Local Church Records

7. Annually the board of trustees shall, in consultation with the pastor and the local church historian (if there is one), evaluate the adequacy of the facilities that house the church's permanent records, archival materials, and historical objects (¶ 247.5), with particular attention to conditions that endanger them, and shall recommend to the charge conference a plan to correct any deficiencies.

¶2541.

Petition Number: 20416-LC-¶2541; Starnes, Thomas - Washington, DC, USA.

Time-Limited Transfer of Local Church Property to a Newly Established Unaffiliated Church

Amend, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, Chapter Six, Church Property, Section VI, Local Church Property, by adding a new provision ¶ 2541A, *Local Church Property—Time-Limited Transfer to A Newly Established Unaffiliated Church*, as follows:

¶ 2541A Local Church Property—Transfer to A Newly Established Unaffiliated Church—1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church, whether incorporated or unincorporated, shall have a limited right, for reasons of conscience relating to those issues and otherwise as limited by the paragraph, to transfer all of its assets to a newly established corporation that has

been created for the stated purpose of engaging in Christian ministry but without having a connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church.

2. Effectuating the Transfer—To be effective, and in order to result in a release of the property from the trust in favor of The United Methodist Church, any transfer of local church assets made pursuant to this paragraph must be accomplished in strict accordance with the following procedure, terms, and conditions:

A. Time Limit—The local church's choice to transfer its assets pursuant to this paragraph shall be made in enough time for the transfer to be fully consummated by no later than December 31, 2025. The provisions of this paragraph (¶ 2541A) expire on December 31, 2025, and shall not be used after that date.

B. Church Conference Vote Required—Any transfer of the local church's assets pursuant to this paragraph must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present and voting at a duly called church conference.

i. A church conference called for the purpose identified in this paragraph shall be called and conducted in accordance with the provisions of ¶¶ 246 and 248, except that the following requirements will apply notwithstanding anything to the contrary in ¶¶ 246 or 248.

ii. The church conference shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference.

iii. In providing advance notice of the time, place, and purpose of the church conference, in addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, special effort shall be made to give broad notice to the full professing membership and to use all means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate.

iv. Under the provisions of ¶ 246.7, the purpose of the church conference shall be stated in the call, and the notice to members shall expressly identify the purpose of the church conference as follows: "The purpose of the church conference is to vote on whether, for reasons of conscience regarding issues around human sexuality, the local church should transfer all of its assets, including its real estate, to a newly established corporation created for the purpose of engaging in Christian ministry at the same location but unaffiliated with The United Methodist Church."

v. Any church conference resolution authorizing transfers pursuant to this paragraph shall direct and authorize the local church's board of trustees (or board of directors if the local church is incorporated) to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deeds, or other written instruments.

C. *Transfer Agreement*—In addition to any other documentation needed to effectuate the transfer of the local church's assets to the newly established corporation, there shall be a written agreement between the local church and the newly established corporation ("Transfer Agreement") that must be consistent with the following terms:

i. *Standard Terms of the Transfer Agreement*. To protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Transfer Agreements under this paragraph. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom by consummating a transaction in full compliance with the requirements of this paragraph.

ii. *Costs*. All costs associated with the transfer shall be borne by the newly established corporation.

iii. *Apportionments*. Before any local church assets may be transferred to the newly established corporation, the local church's annual conference shall receive a payment in an amount equal to twelve (12) months of apportionments.

iv. *Pension Liabilities*.

a. Before any local church assets may be transferred to the newly established corporation, the local church must pay to the annual conference an amount equal to the local church's *pro rata* share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations, as calculated in accordance with ¶ 1504.23, unless the local church is excepted from such payment, or the liability is otherwise satisfied, under another paragraph in the *Book of Discipline* addressing pension obligations of local churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

b. The United Methodist Church expects and agrees that a newly established corporation to which local church assets are transferred pursuant to this paragraph will share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the newly established corporation expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a newly established corporation receiving local church assets pursuant to this paragraph, or any association of churches to which it may become aligned, may be eligible to sponsor voluntary employee benefit plans through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under ¶ 1504.2, subject to the applicable terms and conditions of the plans.

v. *Other Liabilities Owed to the Local Church's Annual Conference or other United Methodist Entities*. All outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities owed by the local church to its annual conference or to any other affiliate of The United Methodist Church shall be satisfied in full

before any of the local church's assets may be transferred to the newly established corporation.

vi. *Local Church Liabilities Owed to Third Parties*. Before any local church assets may be transferred to the newly established corporation, all outstanding liabilities of the local church owed to third parties (that is, liabilities other than those covered by ¶ 2541A.2(C)(v), above) shall either be:

a. satisfied in full, with written confirmation of that fact supplied by the third party to whom the liability was owed; or

b. fully assumed by the newly established corporation pursuant to agreements to which the local church's third party creditors have consented, and which oblige the newly established corporation to fully indemnify and defend the local church against any claims relating to those liabilities.

vii. *Payment Terms*. All payments required by the Transfer Agreement shall be made before any local church assets may be transferred to the newly established corporation.

D. *Implementation by Local Church Board of Trustees*.

i. The local church board of trustees (or board of directors if the local church is incorporated) at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by local law to effectuate transfers duly authorized by the church conference in accordance with the requirements of this paragraph.

ii. Any required contract, deed, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in may be executed by and on behalf of the local church by any two officers of the board of trustees (or board of directors if the local church is incorporated), who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the direction of the charge conference, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the local church.

E. *Consent of the Pastor and District Superintendent*.

i. The written consent of the pastor of the local church and the district superintendent to transfers made pursuant to this paragraph shall be necessary and shall be affixed to or included in the Transfer Agreement and in all instruments pursuant to which ownership of the local church's assets are to be transferred to the newly established corporation.

ii. Before providing their consent to any transfer made pursuant to this paragraph, it shall not be necessary for the pastor, the district superintendent, or the district board of church location and building to ensure that there

has been compliance with terms such as those spelled out in subparagraphs (a), (c), and (d) of ¶¶ 2540.3 and 2541.3. Those requirements do not apply to transfers made under this paragraph.

iii. As is the case with property transactions authorized under ¶¶ 2540 and 2541, the written acknowledged consent of the relevant district superintendent to the transfers made in strict conformance with the requirements of this paragraph shall constitute a release and discharge of the assets transferred from any trusts in favor of The United Methodist Church that have previously attached to those assets by virtue of trust provisions included in ¶¶ 2501 and 2503 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* or in any deeds or other instruments of conveyance pursuant to which the local church acquired those assets in the first instance.

F. Impact on the Local Church—A transfer of a local church's assets under this paragraph does not operate to close the local church or to terminate or alter its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church. Rather, following any such transfer, the district superintendent shall guide the remaining members of the local church (i.e., any individuals who have elected to maintain their membership in The United Methodist Church) in an assessment of the local church's continuing potential in accordance with the provisions of ¶ 213. Notwithstanding the transfer of any of the local church's property pursuant to this paragraph, there shall be no closure of that local church, nor any severing of its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church, without the consent of the annual conference and otherwise in full compliance with ¶¶ 2529(1)(c) and 2549.

Rationale:

Borrowing transfer procedures from ¶¶ 2540–2541, and substantive terms from ¶ 2553, church conferences may vote to *transfer* local church *assets* to a newly established corporation, provided the pastor and district superintendent consent, while preserving the annual conference's right to approve any closure or disaffiliation of the local

¶2550.

Petition Number: 20417-LC-¶2550-G; Urriola, Ian - Stephens City, VA, USA.

Reporting Church's Progress on Facilities Becoming Carbon Neutral and/or Having Net Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Add new subparagraph to ¶ 2550 after ¶ 2550.10.

11. An evaluation of all church buildings, grounds, and facilities in relation to their impact on the church's ability to be carbon neutral and/or have net zero greenhouse gas emissions; and, when applicable, a plan and time line for the renovation and development of church buildings, grounds, and facilities to bring the church closer to being at least carbon neutral and/or having at least net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Rationale:

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity. By annually reporting to the charge conference their evaluation of the church's property's impact on reducing factors that contribute to climate change, the trustees can inform the charge what steps can be taken to reduce these factors in their own communities.

Higher Education/Superintendency

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

2017-2020 Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Preparing Leaders for a Vital Worldwide Church

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) engages, equips, and supports faithful and effective lay and clergy leaders to serve congregations, institutions, and communities throughout the world. GBHEM embraces the ministry of learning and leadership formation in the Wesleyan and United Methodist tradition, and serves Christian leaders who are shaped by a process of intellectual engagement, spiritual and character formation, and leadership development.

Context of Call

GBHEM cultivates a dynamic context of call and vocational discernment that encourages lay and clergy leaders to discover, claim, and flourish in God's ministry and mission for the church, the academy, and the world.

Access to Education

Lay and clergy leaders are formed in the Wesleyan and United Methodist (UM) tradition through our network of more than one thousand institutions in **Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America**. In the **United States**, our **13 UM theological schools; 92 UM-related schools, colleges, and universities; and 520 collegiate ministries** are diverse, expand educational access, and prepare the next generation of leaders for our worldwide connection.

Collaborating with Discipleship Ministries, GBHEM's **E-Reader Project** offers affordable, reliable access to textbooks, reference books, the Bible, and Wesleyan resources in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Faculty and students of twenty-two UM-related theological and thirty higher education institutions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia use these resources.

The **Office of Loans & Scholarships** administers more than ninety programs and awards \$6 million in assistance annually to UM undergraduate, graduate, and theological students. Since 2016, we have awarded \$16.5 million to 8,796 students enrolled in U.S. higher educa-

tion institutions and seminaries. **Forty percent of recipients identified as racial/ethnic students.**

The **Ministerial Education Fund (MEF)** supports the thirteen UM theological schools in the U.S. and the Course of Study theological education programs for elders, deacons, and local pastors. MEF also funds Boards of Ordained Ministry in clergy recruitment and education and underwrites GBHEM ministry programming.

Resourcing and Supporting Clergy Leaders

GBHEM's ministry nurtures people as they listen, discern, and respond to God's call.

Exploration and the **Journey Toward Ordained Ministry** scholarships guide hundreds of diverse students considering church leadership. **Called** is a no-cost resource available to local church leaders assisting children, youth, and young adults in discerning their vocation.

Effective Ministry 360™ (EM360™) is based on in-depth research into the attributes clergy need to be successful and effective in ministry. EM360's formation process supports clergy, congregations, and related ministries in meeting the conference's and church's mission and ministry goals. Since 2016, EM360 has expanded from an initial pastoral assessment to include modules for ministry candidates, students enrolled in Course of Study, and district superintendents.

The **Eight-Year Assessment Process (EYA)**, mandated by GC2016, is a partnership between GBHEM, annual conference leaders, and Wespeth. Using EM360's framework and resources, EYA helps clergy determine formational goals and the steps needed to meet them. The system provides support and accountability as clergy meet and report on those goals to their annual conferences. EYA and EM360 work together to undergird clergy formation throughout ministry.

Addressing emerging needs in innovative ways, the new **Center for Integrative Pastoral Practice (CIPP)** includes an accredited hybrid Clinical Pastoral Education program, **Introduction to Chaplaincy** training in the central conferences, and new methods of reflective supervision.

Providing contextual theological education, GBHEM has developed new partnerships for the **Course of Study**: Missouri Part-Time Ministerial Leaders COS, a new Native American satellite COS, a Portuguese-language COS, and the Burundi Conference COS. GBHEM collaborates with central conferences and mission initiatives to broaden support for Boards of Ordained Ministry and pastoral leaders throughout the connection, offering BOM and leadership training in Eurasia, Africa, and Asia.

The **United Methodist Endorsing Agency (UMEA)** validates credentials and advocates for endorsed clergy in ministry beyond church walls. Currently, 1,650 clergy work with UMEA (1,431 endorsed and 392 ecclesiastically approved). UMEA leads the development of an online collaborative application system with members of the Pan-Methodist Commission and chaplaincy training for central conferences.

Strengthening Methodist-Related Higher Education

The **Africa University Fund** sustains the critical mission of Africa University (AU). Currently, around 1,800 students are enrolled full-time at the Zimbabwe campus. More than 9,400 AU graduates are transforming Africa by serving in significant leadership roles. Faithful connective funding has led to a permanent endowment of more than \$77 million and enabled the university to surpass its goal of \$50 million in a campaign for additional investment in academic and infrastructure development.

The **International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU)** fosters cooperation, exchanges, and support among more than one thousand Methodist-related institutions worldwide. IAMSCU develops quality, value-centered education and increases the availability of educational opportunities. Since 2016, GBHEM has awarded 241 international scholarships to students enrolled in IAMSCU institutions through the Grants and Scholarships Program (GRASP).

The **National Association of Schools and Colleges of the UMC (NASCUMC)** develops programming and strengthens educational ties across the UM connection in the U.S. NASCUMC institutions serve nearly three hundred thousand students annually. Recently, NASCUMC partnered with sister institutions in Japan, developed a Leadership Pipeline program to expand the pool of qualified leaders to serve Methodist institutions, and created a joint funding platform for campus initiatives.

The **Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development (MGEFLD)** offers technical, scholarship, and fundraising assistance. MGEFLD has established eleven Leadership, Education, and Development

(LEAD) Hubs in **Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America** to promote a decentralized model of leadership based on “shared vision, responsibilities, and costs.”

The **Black College Fund** supports eleven UM-related historically black colleges and universities and demonstrates the church’s continued commitment to access and empowerment through higher education. These institutions advance research, maintain facilities, and create a nurturing environment for more than fifteen thousand students, many of whom are first-generation college students.

With three imprints and a vast catalog of books, **GBHEM Publishing** helps engage and grow the intellectual life of The UMC. GBHEM Publishing is a member of the Association of University Presses and its titles are regularly recognized with Saddlebag Awards.

The Awakened Life: An 8-Week Guide to Student Well-Being trains, guides, and addresses student health and wholeness through mindfulness practices proven to reduce stress, improve concentration skills, and help build healthy relationships. The simple but profound program, facilitated by campus ministers, chaplains, and student life professionals, helps students struggling with today’s challenges to build resilience, find joy, and connect with the world around them.

The **University Senate**, an elected body of higher education professionals, collectively determines which schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools meet the criteria for listing as institutions affiliated with The United Methodist Church. The Senate’s consultative, collegial role focuses on church-relatedness with regard to UM-related institutions. The Senate also promotes a Senate-type review body serving Methodist institutions across Africa.

General Conference Initiatives

Find full reports on these initiatives at www.gbhem.org/GC20.

If current trends continue, The UMC will face a shortage of ordained elders by 2032. The \$7 million **Young Clergy Initiative Fund**, administered by GBHEM and designed to “increase the number of young clergy among the jurisdictional conferences,” awarded seventy-six grants in 2013-2016 and seventy-two grants in 2017-2020 and doubled the investment in vocational discernment by encouraging grant recipients to secure additional funding.

Administered by GBHEM, the \$10 million **Central Conference Theological Education Fund** is overseen by a commission named by the Council of Bishops. The commission meets annually to review grant proposals to bolster theological education in central conferences.

Since 2016, CCTEF has awarded 232 grants to fund scholarships, faculty development, Courses of Study, and improved libraries, and has doubled its investment from the prior quadrennium.

GBHEM, Wespeth Benefits and Investments, and the National Association of United Methodist Foundations

partnered to apply for a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. to address the financial challenges facing clergy. The **Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship** reduces seminary educational debt and increases financial acumen for ordained ministry candidates.

2017-2020 Quadrennial Report of the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools

The thirteen official UMC seminaries are deeply dedicated to The UMC and to forming its leaders for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. A comprehensive study of our schools was completed this year by the Rev. Dr. Dan Aleshire, fellow United Methodist and recently retired executive director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). An organization with a membership of more than 270 seminaries in the United States and Canada, ATS is one of three accrediting bodies who hold our thirteen UMC schools of theology accountable to the highest standards in theological education, and Dr. Aleshire is one of the most respected leaders in theological education. The full report is available at www.gbhem.org/GC20.

The Association of United Methodist Theological Schools (AUMTS) commissioned this study of the thirteen UMC seminaries to address three questions:

1. What is the place of the thirteen UMC schools in the larger ecosystem of theological education in the United States, including the other thirty-eight schools recognized by the University Senate for the education of United Methodist ministers?
2. What is the sustainability of a system of thirteen institutions with official support from the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) of The United Methodist Church?
3. What is the contribution that UMC seminaries make to the witness and ministry of The UMC?

AUMTS commissioned this report in part to assist the denomination in better understanding who we are and what we do within the higher education and denominational contexts within which our thirteen schools function. We also wanted an external perspective on the schools to clarify our strengths, our vulnerabilities, and our needs in faithfully serving the church now and in the future.

In separate chapters, the report addresses: the history and context of UMC theological schools, the thirteen official schools as a system of UMC theological schools, the thirteen schools as individual institutions, the thirty-eight additional seminaries the UMC University Senate has approved for those seeking ordination in The UMC, and American Protestant theological education. The study also reviewed extensive financial data for each school, including MEF contributions from The UMC. The report concludes with findings emerging from the analyses.

A few key conclusions:

1. A deep Wesleyan theology and ethos pervades the campuses of the thirteen official seminaries. As Aleshire puts it, “these schools are Wesleyan in their bones. . . .” We educate about 60 percent of (primarily U.S.) UMC students enrolled in master of divinity degree programs as they seek ordination in The UMC, and about 60 percent of all (predominately U.S.) ordinands are educated at our schools. Our faculties overall are 46 percent UMC (and 60 percent Wesleyan), and we employ 52 percent of UMC faculty teaching in all U.S. seminaries. All the other thirty-eight University Senate-approved seminaries combined have only 9 percent UMC faculty. Chapel worship across our schools embodies the Methodist tradition and reflects the range of UMC liturgical practices. Aleshire states, “The thirteen schools . . . are pervasively United Methodist . . . Ethos can be taught, no doubt, but perhaps more importantly, it is ‘caught’—carried from persons to persons.”
2. As is the Wesleyan tradition, the thirteen seminaries are also self-consciously ecumenical in thought and practice, teaching students from a wide array of denominations.
3. The thirteen are forming leaders for the future, not the past. Our student bodies overall are far younger and much more racially diverse than The UMC. Half of our UMC students are women. We are deeply committed to racial justice and to the equality of women. Historically we pioneered work to achieve racial equality and women’s full inclusion and continue to do so today. We systematically and enthusiastically engage and support new models of ministry every day.
4. The thirteen schools are very diverse in many ways, including that they reflect the full theological diversity of The UMC. Each school embodies its own range of styles and specialties, yet all thirteen are dedicated to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Through their Ph.D. programs, many of the thirteen educate future faculty who will populate not only UMC and other seminaries, but also UMC-related colleges and universities all over the world.

5. Overall, the thirteen seminaries provide far more resources to The UMC than we receive from it through annual MEF allocations. This is most strikingly evident in scholarships we provide for students; leadership our faculties provide in local churches, annual conferences, and national and international denominational arenas and agencies; and our subsidies for the denomination's Course of Study. In discussing the MEF, Aleshire points out that "the thirteen United Methodist seminaries bring in large amounts of financial resources from beyond the denomination to pay for the preparation of United Methodist clergy and lay leaders in the United States. And [they] provide the second largest source of funds for the preparation of United Methodist clergy from outside the U.S. [that is, second only to the Central Conference Theological Education Fund]. . . . What other United Methodist organization is producing such a large net return on investment?"
6. MEF is a crucial material connection that the thirteen official seminaries and their students have with the denomination. We are proud of the historic commitment to MEF as one of the key indicators of The UMC's dedication to an educated clergy. It is a crucial source of support for the schools, without which some would be in serious financial jeopardy. Moreover, loss of or radical reductions in MEF undercut the basic economic foundation for students who are seeking ordination, adding to their financial hardship and debt. Overall, Aleshire concludes that "Most of the schools could likely find their way to a financial future that includes reduced MEF income, but denominational funding has value beyond its absolute amount. Its presence solidifies connections and its absence strains those connections, and weakened connections could be the more difficult to overcome than reduced revenue."
7. Are there too many seminaries? The study says maybe, but maybe not. Many factors must be considered in answering this question, and they are discussed in Aleshire's report. He notes, however, that per capita, The UMC has fewer seminaries than any other Protestant denomination. All thirteen have experienced substantial financial stress and across the last decade have reduced faculty, staff, and other non-scholarship expenditures (including for some radical reductions in the property they own), all while creatively innovating curriculum and pedagogy. For example, almost all provide online learning in one form or another.
8. We are highly regulated, and the outcomes we produce are continuously studied and evaluated by ourselves and our accreditors. As institutions of higher education that serve the church, we always welcome careful and critical analysis of what we do, which is why we commissioned the study.
9. The Wesleyan tradition is practiced by many people and institutions across The UMC, thanks be to God! The seminaries, however, are keepers of the "intellectual soul" of the Wesleyan faith through faculty who confirm and debate the meaning of Wesleyan theology and history and who teach generations of UMC ministers, as well as through library collections that chronicle the history of Wesleyan thought and life. The thirteen schools "remember what has been given in the past, . . . test past thought in the context of present realities, . . . curate future possibilities, and . . . do all three in the presence of students who will lead the continuing extension of the church's work."

AUMTS will seek to draw further insight from this comprehensive report. We will use it, as well as all that we learn through our extensive connections throughout the church, to improve our individual and collective offerings of theological education so we may serve the church and the world to which we are called to minister. Methodism offers a profound legacy of theological education that responds to diverse contexts and times. The AUMTS is committed to maintain that historic legacy and characteristic openness to change for the sake of more effective ministries around the world.

2017-2020 Quadrennial Report of Africa University

Initiated by action of the General Conference in 1988, Africa University is a flourishing global justice and evangelism ministry of The United Methodist Church with a history of relevance, accountability, and impact.

Grounded in the mission of The United Methodist Church—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—Africa University equips leaders for meaningful discipleship and service within and beyond the denomination. Through its missional contributions, AU enables African communities to experience hope, peace, sustainable livelihoods, food security, and abundant health.

With steadfast investment, a sustained focus on transformational engagement and commitment to global connection, The United Methodist Church plays a pivotal role in the ongoing evolution and efficacy of Africa University's ministry.

Relevance

Since opening in 1992, Africa University has evolved into the cornerstone institution for United Methodist-related higher education efforts on the continent of Africa. Through Africa University, The United Methodist Church offers a high-quality educational experience, provides access through scholarships for financially disadvantaged students such as orphans and refugees, and nurtures ethically grounded and proactive leaders. Groundbreaking programs in peace and governance; migration, citizenship, and refugee protection; health sciences; child rights and childhood studies; public sector management; and intellectual property have made Africa University the institution of choice for both students and a growing number of international partners.

Young people from as many as twenty-nine African nations access leadership training and gain professional skills in three colleges—Health, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences; Business, Peace, Leadership, and Governance; and Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities, and Education. More than eighteen hundred predominantly first-generation college students enroll at Africa University each year and are the institution's primary focus. However, as both United Methodism in Africa and the priorities of African communities grow and change, so must the institutions that serve them.

In 2016, Africa University began implementing fundamental changes to address emerging needs and harness new opportunities:

- Africa University restructured its undergraduate programs to include research and internship placements of up to one year in a bid to enhance workplace readiness among graduates.
- The Faculty of Theology, which operated as a traditional seminary, was transformed into the Institute of Theology and Religious Studies (ITRS). The ITRS is piloting a new doctoral degree program for theological educators in Africa in collaboration with Wesley House Cambridge and working on new training options for laity and military chaplains in Africa.
- A campus-based innovation center, the i5Hub, was established in 2018 to support entrepreneurs as they develop and commercialize new products and services. The i5Hub boasts an enviable list of partners and projects in development. As the focus of Africa's young population shifts from seeking to creating employment, Africa University is well positioned to champion enterprise development.

Accountability

Africa University has relied on the generous support of The United Methodist Church to grow and sustain its ministry. The support of United Methodists—realized through World Service Special Gifts since 1988, and the recently completed \$50 million Campaign for Africa University—affirms the church's passionate belief in the worth of Africa University's mission. Gifts to the campaign surpassed the \$50 million goal and provided crucial funding for teaching and research. Long-term, sacrificial giving by individuals, congregations, districts, and annual conferences has helped Africa University realize a permanent endowment of more than \$78 million, build a well-equipped, modern campus debt-free, and provide scholarships and financial aid to about 70 percent of its students.

The university is profoundly grateful to United Methodist congregations for investing in the Africa University Fund (AUF) apportionment at 100 percent. The AUF funds learning resources in Africa University's libraries and laboratories, supports salaries, and supplies utilities (electricity, water) and other operational needs. It represents 17.2 percent of the institution's annual budget of \$12 million and is crucial to the university's ongoing financial health. The AUF also allows Africa University to assure friends and supporters who invest in capital projects, endowed chairs, and direct or endowed scholarships that 100 percent of every dollar they give is used as designated.

Fiscal accountability and prudent investment are major priorities for the Africa University Board of Directors and for its executive cabinet, led by Professor Munashe Furusa, the vice chancellor/CEO. Over the past four years, the AU Board's and senior administrators' efforts, coupled with the institutional advancement contributions of the Africa University Development Office, have led to a rightsizing of the institution's operations, balanced budgets, and investment in new buildings, recreational facilities, and information and communications technology. The results include strengthened teaching and learning and an enhanced quality of life for students, faculty, and staff.

Impact

The institution's twenty-sixth commencement, in June 2020, is expected to crest the milestone of ten thousand graduates. With a graduation rate of 97 percent and more than 94 percent of its alumni at work on the continent, Africa University's impact is tangible and ever-growing.

Africa University alumni are entrusted with the implementation and oversight of important United Methodist-related initiatives and development projects in the thirteen episcopal areas spread across twenty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa. A growing number of Africa University graduates are missionaries serving under the Global Ministries agency in Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Graduates hold key cabinet-level positions in episcopal offices and serve as seminary/university presidents, faculty, and administrators of the growing number of United Methodist higher education institutions in Africa.

Beyond denominational settings, Africa University graduates are launching new businesses, founding charitable and service organizations, representing and advocating for constituencies as elected officials, and conducting

critical research. AU graduates are sought after, and their impact is being felt in government, business, and civil society in Africa.

Looking Ahead

Growth trends in The United Methodist Church, based on GCFA statistics, show the majority of new United Methodists are in Central and West Africa. Africa's rapid growth brings with it a general church responsibility to ensure that the "United Methodist DNA" grows with integrity and in contextually relevant ways within new worshipping communities.

Increased investment in Africa University over the next quadrennium represents an extraordinary opportunity for The United Methodist Church to remain engaged in nurturing the leaders on whose shoulders the future of Africa and African Methodism will rest over the next five decades. It has the potential to yield a renewed and vibrant connectional reality.

Africa University remains "a uniting, United Methodist dream come true." Together, as a global church, United Methodists envisioned and brought to fruition a university for all of Africa. The reality of Africa University is a testimony to faithfulness in living fully into the Word of God. "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23 ESV).

Through its support of Africa University, the church models its ideals in profound ways. Africa University's value as a source of clergy and lay leaders for Africa *who make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world* is unparalleled. Moreover, through Africa University, new people in new places are invited to embrace the social principles, values, and mission of United Methodism as their foundation for courageous personal witness and service.

2017-2020 Quadrennial Report of the Central Conference Theological Education Fund

The 2016 General Conference doubled the apportioned amount to \$10 million for the 2017-2020 quadrennium because it recognized the tremendous impact of the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (CCTEF) on the formation and education of pastoral leaders in the central conferences of Africa, Asia, and Europe. The CCTEF commission is grateful for this increased funding, which enabled central conferences to expand initiatives and innovations in theological education and leadership development.

While General Conference 2016 approved \$10 million for the fund, the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) expected the World Service Apportionment Fund to pay out at approximately 90 percent. Therefore, the commission awarded \$2 million to applicants in 2017-2019. However, GCFA anticipates the available funds for 2020 will decrease to \$1.5 million due to reduced apportionment receipts.

Under the leadership of Bishop Pedro Torio and the support of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), the commission members met annually to review and award grant applicants in a spirit of mutual accountability with a shared commitment to the advancement of theological education and pastoral formation and develop guidelines with similar high standards of accountability for grant recipients in all central conferences in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The commission continues to utilize regional screening committees from each central conference to review and recommend awards for qualified applicants.

In the first half of the quadrennium, the commission awarded 154 grants that increased the capacity of leaders in mission fields, developed contextual resources and supported innovations in education and ministry, and enabled sustainable programs and practices.

Outcome and Impact of the CCTEF Initiative

The CCTEF directly impacts the lives of clergy and church leadership who are stakeholders in theological education in the central conferences. Such impact enables the church to move forward in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. After two cycles of the CCTEF program, the quality of theological education in the central conferences improved significantly in areas such as teaching, research, resource creation, and networking.

Also, the number of well-educated theological professors, pastors, and leaders of the church, particularly women clergy, who benefit from these initiatives increased substantially. The CCTEF helped advance theological education in all central conferences by strengthening theological institutions, creating networks among these schools, and increasing access to theological education.

The commission lifts these examples of CCTEF impact in four areas:

Capacity building

- The support for Courses of Study and continuing theological education programs resulted in an increase of trained pastors from approximately 50 to 90 percent in many annual conferences in Africa, including a significant increase in the number of women clergy, and a 95 percent increase in better-equipped pastors in the Philippines.
- In the case of the Moscow Theological Seminary, development funds for libraries enabled it to pass government inspection, while other independent institutions in Russia lost educational licenses.
- The growth of in-country training has led to more faculty teaching in theological institutions of their countries rather than staying abroad after being trained in other countries.
- Refocused competencies in Covenant Discipleship Groups integrated widespread ministry engagements with the poor through micro-finance and livelihood development in the Philippines.

Development of contextual education and resources

- Providing funds to produce materials and theological literature in local languages gives more access to theological education and resources and encourages pastoral leaders to expand ministry to others.
- Events such as the African UM Clergywomen's Consultation and Women Coaching Women empower and equip clergywomen to flourish and find ways to balance their personal responsibilities and ministries.
- The preloaded devices provided by the E-Reader program in central conferences offer students wide access to theological books and resources, even if they do not have access to a well-equipped library.

New and innovative initiatives

- CCTEF funds helped add Methodist literature to the Global Digital Library for Theology and Ecumenism (www.methodist-studies.world), which is accessible worldwide.
- E-learning and modular programs in Europe and Eurasia, and the Union Theological Seminary Hybrid Online courses in the Philippines, make theological education and training accessible to more people.
- The Global Chaplaincy Training program provided chaplains in Africa with the knowledge and skills to minister in this specialized chaplaincy field.
- Revitalized radio ministries of southern Philippines exposed pastoral students to a public service of gospel witness and advocacy of the UMC Social Principles.

Sustainability

- The CCTEF support of the Endowment Fund for Theological Education in the central conferences contributes to sustainable long-term support of theological education in the central conferences.

- The requirement of a local contribution of at least 10 percent by any awarded project encourages ownership and responsibility in the projects.
- Utilizing a “train-the-trainer” format ensures long-term availability of leadership for theological education programs.

As The United Methodist Church in most of the central conferences continues to grow, the need for effective, contextual, and sustainable theological education grows as well. In addition to empowering pastoral leaders in their local communities, high-quality theological education enables deeper cross-cultural dialogue within our denomination and beyond. The commission celebrates the impact and the difference that The United Methodist Church has made in the lives and ministries of pastors and communities through the CCTEF. With that confidence, the commission recommends that General Conference 2020 renew its approval of \$10 million for the Central Conference Theological Education Fund through the World Service Apportionment Fund.

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶45

Petition Number: 20277-HS-¶45-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Delete Historical Material

Amend ¶ 45 as indicated following:

¶ 45. Article I.—There shall be a continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church of like plan, powers, privileges, and duties as now exist in The Methodist Church and in The Evangelical United Brethren Church in all those matters in which they agree and may be considered identical; and the differences between these historic episcopacies are deemed to be reconciled and harmonized by and in this Plan of Union and Constitution of The United Methodist Church and actions taken pursuant thereto so that a unified superintendency and episcopacy is hereby created and established of, in, and by those who now are and shall be episcopal leadership and supervision through bishops of The United Methodist Church; and the said episcopacy shall further, who shall have such powers, privileges, and duties as are herein set forth.

Rationale:

This removes important historical information that has no rational place in the currently active and controlling Constitution of the Church.

¶45.

Petition Number: 20278-HS-¶45-C-G; Berggren, Ken - Calhoun, KY, USA.

Bishop's Peer Review 2: A Helpful Constitutional Amendment

Amend ¶ 45; after “herein set forth,” add: The office of bishop is a privilege not a right. It may be lost by nonjudicial processes established by General Conference.

Rationale:

Paragraph 16.5 allows the discontinuation of bishops for unacceptability. No judicial process could determine unacceptability. Some still object to an annual peer review saying bishops have a right to trial. This amendment answers that objection. Bishops who see their office as a right may have lost the humility required to

¶45.

Petition Number: 20680-HS-¶45-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Episcopacy Regionalization—Constitution

Amend ¶ 27 by inserting a new ¶ 27.3 that shall read as follows:

¶ 27.3 To provide for the support, financially and otherwise, of the bishops serving in the jurisdiction or in retirement after having served therein.

Amend ¶ 45 as follows:

¶ 45. Article I.—There shall be a continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church of like plan, powers, privileges, and duties as now exist in The Methodist Church and in The Evangelical United Brethren Church in all those matters in which they agree and may be considered identical; and the differences between these historic episcopacies are deemed to be reconciled and harmonized by and in this Plan of Union and Constitution of The United Methodist Church and actions taken pursuant thereto so that a unified superintendency and episcopacy is hereby created and established of, in, and by those who now are and shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church; and the said episcopacy shall further have such powers, privileges, and duties as are herein set forth.

Amend ¶ 49 as follows:

¶ 49. Article V.—The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional or central conferences in which they are elected, provided that no bishop shall be entitled to residential and presidential supervision when the bishop is relieved of that responsibility by the bishop's central or jurisdictional conference because of a reduction in the number of active and residential bishops. Bishops who are relieved of this responsibility shall be entitled to retire as provided by the General Conference or for appointment to service in the local church by an active bishop in the conference at the sole discretion of the appointing bishop, or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and

not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are involved.⁹⁴ After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected the bishop, provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or central conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or central conference to the work of the said jurisdiction or central conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or central conference.

Rationale:

The episcopacy has functioned at least as regionally as it has globally since the creation of the jurisdictional system. No bishop has ever been transferred between jurisdictions after election. Moreover, regional theological differences make this step imperative if the church is to have any chance at organic unity.

¶47.

Petition Number: 20678-HS-¶47-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Limited Tenure for Bishops and Relationship of Retired Bishops—Constitution

Amend ¶¶ 47, 48, and 50 as indicated following:

¶ 47. Article III.—There shall be a Council of Bishops composed of all the residential bishops of The United Methodist Church. The council shall meet at least once a year and plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire church and for carrying into effect the rules, regulations, and responsibilities prescribed and enjoined by the General Conference and in accord with the provisions set forth in this Plan of Union. The word *residential* shall be under-

stood to indicate those bishops who have not retired and whose terms of office have not expired.

¶ 48. Article IV.—The residential bishops of each jurisdictional and central conference shall constitute a College of Bishops, and such College of Bishops shall arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

¶ 50. Article VI.—~~The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.~~

~~The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and b Bishops elected by the jurisdictions and central conferences of The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure a term of office as determined by the General Conference, provided that the term established shall be the same for all bishops. Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.~~

Any bishop who retires while in residential status as a bishop will continue to be a bishop. However such a bishop will have membership in an annual conference of his or her choosing with the consent of the presiding bishop and will no longer have membership in a College of Bishops or in the Council of Bishops. A retired bishop will have all the powers, duties, and privileges of any other retired elder as long as he or she remains in good standing.

Rationale:

Life tenure is inconsistent with realities of human development and interaction. Accountability to the church and changes for bishops demand election be for limited terms. Moreover, membership of retired bishops should revert to the annual conference. And all bishops of the church should have the same term of office.

¶49.

Petition Number: 20279-HS-¶49-C-G; Berggren, Ken - Calhoun, KY, USA.

Jurisdiction to Central Conference Partners

Amend ¶ 49 by addition:

¶ 49. Article V.—The jurisdictions and central conferences shall form partnerships each quadrennium. These partnerships rotate each quadrennium according to a schedule:

Year 2024West - North Europe and EurasiaNorth Central - CongoNortheast - GermanySoutheast - West AfricaSouth Central - Philippines

Central and South Europe - Africa

Year 2028West - AfricaNorth Central - North Europe and EurasiaNortheast - CongoSoutheast - GermanySouth Central- West Africa

Philippines - Central and South Europe

Year 2032West - Central and South EuropeNorth Central - AfricaNortheast - North Europe and EurasiaSoutheast- CongoSouth Central - Germany

West Africa - Philippines

Year 2036West - PhilippinesNorth Central - Central and South EuropeNortheast - AfricaSoutheast- North Europe and EurasiaSouth Central- Congo

Germany - West Africa

Year 2040West - West AfricaNorth Central - PhilippinesNortheast - Central and South EuropeSoutheast - AfricaSouth Central - North Europe and Eurasia

Congo - Germany

Year 2044West - GermanyNorth Central - West AfricaNortheast - PhilippinesSoutheast - Central and South EuropeSouth Central- Africa

North Europe and Eurasia - Congo

Year 2048West - CongoNorth Central - GermanyNortheast- West AfricaSoutheast- PhilippinesSouth Central- Central and South Europe

Africa - North Europe and Eurasia

Year 2052West - North Europe and EurasiaNorth Central - CongoNortheast - GermanySoutheast- West AfricaSouth Central - Philippines

Central and South Europe - Africa

Bishops elected in a jurisdictional conference shall be sent to their central conference partner and bishops elected in the central conference shall be sent to their jurisdictional partner unless they are not aligned with a jurisdiction that quadrennium. Central conferences without a jurisdictional partner may partner with the other non-aligned conference, or they may elect their own bishops.

The jurisdictional conferences shall meet at the same time as their partnered central conference maintaining connections through emails and other forms of instant communication such as video conferencing through the internet. The jurisdiction will carry the burden of the cost of these electronic connections.

The bishops shall have residential and presidential supervision in the jurisdictional or central conferences in which they are elected or to which they are sent or to which they are transferred. Bishops may be transferred from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction for presidential and residential supervision under the following conditions: (1) The transfer of bishops may be on either of two bases: (a) a jurisdiction that receives a bishop by transfer from another jurisdiction may transfer to that jurisdiction or to a third jurisdiction one of its own bishops eligible for transfer, so that the number transferred in by each jurisdiction shall be balanced by the number transferred out; or (b) a jurisdiction may receive a bishop from another jurisdiction and not transfer out a member of its own College of Bishops. (2) No bishop shall be transferred unless that bishop shall have specifically consented. (3) No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected or received the bishop to the episcopacy. (4) All such transfers shall require the approval by a majority vote of the members present and voting of the jurisdictional committees on episcopacy of the jurisdictions that are involved. After the above procedures have been followed, the transferring bishop shall become a member of the receiving College of Bishops and shall be subject to residential assignment by that jurisdictional conference.

A bishop may be assigned by the Council of Bishops for presidential service or other temporary service in another jurisdiction than that which elected or received the bishop, provided that the request is made by a majority of the bishops in the jurisdiction of the proposed service.

In the case of an emergency in any jurisdiction or central conference through the death or disability of a bishop or other cause, the Council of Bishops may assign a bishop from another jurisdiction or central conference to the

work of the said jurisdiction or central conference, with the consent of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdiction or central conference.

Rationale:

Partnerships strengthen connections within the global church. This radical amendment asks bishops to lead the church in understanding and acceptance. Bishops become missionaries and cross-cultural ministers to teach by example how to love even across cultural and ideological barriers. Sending and receiving bishops would prove we value our unity.

¶50.

Petition Number: 20280-HS-¶50-C-G; Plasterer, George - Clearwater, FL, USA.

Term Limits for Bishops

Amend ¶ 50 as follows:

¶ 50. Article VI.—The bishops, both active and retired, of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church prior to 2024 shall have life tenure. Beginning in 2024, all new elections for bishop in the jurisdictions and central conferences of The United Methodist Church shall be to elect elders for a single term of no longer than twelve (12) years or until they reach an age the General Conference has specified for mandatory retirement, whichever comes sooner. This term may not be extended. No individual elected to the episcopacy in or after the year 2024 may be subsequently reelected to the office. All bishops elected prior to 2024 shall continue to be entitled to the length of their tenure as bishop specified in the Book of Discipline, relevant central conference rules, and other church law at the time of their last election. Those who were elected to the office of bishop in or after the year 2024, complete their term in the office, and remain in good standing shall not remain members of the Council of Bishops, but shall become clergy members of the annual conference of which they were members at the time of their first election as bishop (or of any appropriate successor conference) and shall enjoy the same rights and privileges of any other elder in full connection, except that they may retain the honorary title of bishop as a sign of respect for their service. General Conference may also enact special

retirement benefits plans for former and retired bishops who remain in good standing.

~~Each bishop elected by a central conference of The Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.⁹⁴~~

Rationale:

This petition enhances accountability and equity while reflecting our tradition's foundational belief that elders and bishops are the same order. Twelve (12) years would allow some time for itinerating, while making more room for the best new leadership available. Forcing bishops to run for reelection can unhelpfully politicize and compromise

¶50.

Petition Number: 20281-HS-¶50-C-G; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Term Elections for Bishops Worldwide

Initiate an amendment to our church Constitution, 2016 *Discipline*, so that the portion of ¶ 50 (p. 41) that now reads:

~~The bishops of the Methodist Church, elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of the Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by The United Methodist Church shall have life tenure. Each bishop elected by a central conference of the Methodist Church shall have such tenure as the central conference electing him shall have determined.~~

be amended by substitution to read:

Incumbent bishops in good standing shall be entitled to the term of service for which they were last elected.

Bishops shall be elected quadrennially. Newly elected bishops shall serve for an initial term of not less than 4 or more than 8 years, with the possibility of additional quadrennial elections. The length of the initial term, and any maximum cumulative tenure for episcopal service, shall be the prerogative of the electing regional conference for its elected bishops.

Bishops shall retain the status of ordained elder throughout their time of service within or outside their episcopal role. The honorary title of "bishop" may be retained among those who have completed their terms of service in good standing.

Rationale:

There remains in our denomination's constitution a provision for two standards of episcopal tenure; automatic

life tenure for U.S. bishops and optional term episcopacy for the rest of the world. Nearly all central conferences, including the conferences that exhibit significant discipline-making growth, embrace some standard of term episcopacy.

¶50.

Petition Number: 20282-HS-¶50-C-G; Fordham, Rita - Dalton, GA, USA.

Term Limits for Bishops

Amend ¶ 50 as follows:

¶ 50. Article VI.—The bishops, both active and retired, of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and of The Methodist Church at the time union is consummated shall be bishops of The United Methodist Church.

The bishops of The Methodist Church elected by the jurisdictions, the active bishops of The Evangelical United Brethren Church at the time of union, and bishops elected by the jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church prior to 2024 shall have life tenure. Beginning in 2024, all new elections for bishop in the jurisdictions and central conferences of The United Methodist Church shall be to elect elders for a single term of no longer than twelve (12) years or until they reached an age the General Conference has specified for mandatory retirement, whichever comes sooner. This term may not be extended. No individual elected to the episcopacy in or after the year 2024 may be subsequently reelected to the office. All bishops elected prior to 2024 shall continue to be entitled to the length of their tenure as bishop specified in the *Book of Discipline*, relevant central conference rules, and other church law at the time of their last election. Those who were elected to the office of bishop in or after the year 2024, complete their term in the office, and remain in good standing shall not remain members of the Council of Bishops, but shall become clergy members of the annual conference of which they were members at the time of their first election as bishop (or of any appropriate successor conference) and shall enjoy the same rights and privileges of any elders in full connection, except that they may retain the honorary title of bishop as a sign of respect for their service. General Conference may also enact special retirement benefits plans for former and retired bishops who remain in good standing.

Rationale:

This enhances accountability and equity while reflecting our tradition's foundational belief that elders and bishops are the same order. Twelve (12) years would al-

low some time for itinerating, while making more room for the best new leadership available. Forcing bishops to run for reelection can unhelpfully politicize and compromise their

¶125.

Petition Number: 20651-HS-¶125-G; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops. Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Affiliated Methodist Churches

Amend ¶ 125 as follows:

¶ 125. United Methodists throughout the world are bound together. . . . ~~in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission.~~ Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining “a vital web of interactive relationships” (¶ 132). At the same time, we desire to affirm and celebrate our relationships, covenants, and partnership with autonomous, affiliated ~~autonomous Methodist~~, affiliated united covenanting, and concordat churches (¶¶ 570-574) as well as other partners in the Wesleyan and ecumenical Christian families. . . .

(The remainder of the paragraph follows unamended)

Amend ¶ 227 as follows:

¶ 227. A professing member of The United Methodist Church, of an affiliated ~~autonomous~~-Methodist or united church, or of a Methodist church that has a concordat agreement with The United Methodist Church;. . . .

(The remainder of the paragraph follows unamended)

Amend ¶ 344.1c) as follows:

c) Elders, associate members, and those licensed for pastoral ministry in service under the General Board of Global Ministries may be appointed to the ministries listed in a) and b) above. They may be assigned to service either in annual conferences or central conferences, or with affiliated ~~autonomous Methodist~~ churches, ~~independent self-governing churches~~, churches resulting from the union of Methodist Churches and other communions, mission institutions, or in other denominational or ecumenical ministries. . . .

Amend ¶ 423 as follows:

¶ 423. Conference of Methodist Bishops—There may be a conference of Methodist bishops, composed of all the bishops elected by the jurisdictional and central conferences and one bishop or chief executive officer from each affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist or united church, which shall meet on call of the Council of Bishops after consul-

tation with other members of the conference of Methodist bishops. The travel and other necessary expense of bishops of affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist or united churches related to the meeting of the Conference of Methodist Bishops shall be paid on the same basis as that of bishops of The United Methodist Church.

Amend ¶ 433 as follows:

¶ 433. *Methodist Unity*—1. *World Methodist Council*—a) The United Methodist Church is a member of the World Methodist Council, its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body. The council is a significant channel for United Methodist relationships with other Methodist churches and with autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist churches, affiliated united churches formerly part of The United Methodist Church or its predecessor denominations, and other churches with a Wesleyan heritage.

b) Each affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist church and each affiliated united church that is a member of the World Methodist Council may choose to send delegates either to the General Conference as proposed in ¶ 570.2, .3 or to the World Methodist Council (receiving from the General Administration Fund the expense of travel and per diem allowances thereto). But no such church shall be entitled to send delegations at the expense of the General Administration Fund to both the World Methodist Council and the General Conference.

Amend ¶ 560 as follows:

¶ 560. *Authorization*—Annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions outside the United States that are not included in central conferences or in the territory of affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist or united churches and that, because of geographical, language, political, or other considerations, have common interests that can best be served thereby, may be organized into provisional central conferences as provided in ¶ 540.1.21.

....

Amend Section V title as follows:

Section V. Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated ~~Autonomous~~ Methodist Churches, Affiliated United Churches, Covenanting Churches, Concordat Churches

Amend ¶ 570.2 as follows:

2. *Affiliated ~~Autonomous~~ Methodist Churches*

a) A self-governing Methodist church in whose establishment The United Methodist Church or one of its constituent members (The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church or their predecessors) has assisted and which by mutual agreement has entered into a Covenant of Relationship (in effect from 1968 to

1984) or an Act of Covenanting (see ¶ 573) with The United Methodist Church.

b) Each affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist church shall be entitled to two delegates, one clergy and one layperson, to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church in accordance with ¶ 433.1b. They shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of delegates, including membership on committees, except the right to vote. Such a church having more than 70,000 full members shall be entitled to one additional delegate. At least one of the three delegates shall be a woman. The bishop or president of the affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist churches may be invited by the Council of Bishops to the General Conference.

Amend ¶ 570.4a as follows:

4. *Covenanting Churches*

a) An autonomous Methodist church, an affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist church, an affiliated united church, or another Christian church which has entered into a covenanting relationship with The United Methodist Church through an Act of Covenanting as described in ¶ 573.

Amend ¶ 571 as follows:

¶ 571. *Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated ~~Autonomous~~ Methodist Churches, and Affiliated United Churches*—1. Certificates of church membership given by clergy in one church shall be accepted by clergy in the other church.

....

3. A program of visitation may be mutually arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the autonomous Methodist church, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist church, and/or affiliated united church.

....

Amend ¶ 572, including its heading, as follows:

Becoming An Autonomous Methodist, Affiliated ~~Autonomous~~ Methodist, or Affiliated United Church from Central Conferences

¶ 572. When conferences outside the United States that are parts of The United Methodist Church desire to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist, or affiliated united church, approval shall first be secured from the central conference involved and this decision be ratified by the annual conferences within the central conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the annual conferences.

1. The conference shall prepare a historical record with reasons why affiliation and/or autonomy is requested and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (¶ 2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.

2. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the conferences involved shall mutually agree

on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. These shall be prepared with care and shall be approved by the conferences.

3. Preparation of its *Discipline* is the responsibility of the conference(s) desiring affiliation and/or autonomy.

4. Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for affiliated and/or autonomous relationship have been met, the General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the conference(s) involved to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist, or affiliated united church.

5. Then the central conference involved shall meet, declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the conference(s) involved dissolved, and reorganize as an autonomous Methodist, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist, or affiliated united church in accordance with the enabling act granted by the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops. The proclamation of affiliated and/or autonomous status shall then be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference.

6. A plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with ¶ 571.4.

Amend ¶ 573.1 as follows:

¶ 573. 1. A covenanting relationship, whose elements were adopted by the 1992 General Conference in an action called an “Act of Covenanting Between Christian Churches and The United Methodist Church” may be established between autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist churches, affiliated united churches, or other Christian churches and The United Methodist Church.

Amend ¶ 1314.2.c) as follows:

c) Development of and sustaining cooperative relationships and mission partnerships that include sharing of opportunities and resources, networking and collaboration. This includes the maintaining and fulfilling of connectional relationships with annual conferences, missionary conferences, and central conferences; autonomous, affiliated ~~autonomous~~ Methodist, and united churches; and ecumenical church bodies.

Rationale:

The UMC values its worldwide connectional, missionary relationships with non-UMC churches. To address inconsistent and confusing uses of “autonomous” in naming some of these relationships, this petition deletes “autonomous” from “Affiliated Methodist Churches” and

adds two other clarifying changes; related petition that deletes “Autonomous Methodist Church.”

¶401.

Petition Number: 20283-HS-¶401-G; Berggren, Ken - Calhoun, KY, USA.

Bishop's Peer Review 1

Amend ¶ 401 by addition:

¶ 401. *Task*—The task of superintending in The United Methodist Church resides in the office of bishop and extends to the district superintendent, with each possessing distinct and collegial responsibilities. The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (see Part IV, Section I). From apostolic times, certain ordained persons have been entrusted with the particular tasks of superintending. The purpose of superintending is to equip the church in its disciple making ministry. Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the church. It is their task to enable the gathered church to worship and to evangelize faithfully. It is also their task to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ and to help extend the service in mission. It is their task, as well, to see that all matters, temporal and spiritual, are administered in a manner that acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the church. The formal leadership in The United Methodist Church, located in these superintending offices, is an integral part of the system of an itinerant ministry and requires the approval of the whole church (¶ 16.5). This approval will be expressed in an annual vote of confidence by the bishops themselves. Each bishop will request to hold the office and then active bishops will vote. In years when bishops are elected, the votes shall be conducted after the last jurisdictional and central conference but before new bishops are consecrated. The process may be conducted electronically through email or other modes of instant communication without the physical presence of all bishops. The affirmation of three-fourths of active bishops will be required to retain the office of bishop.

Rationale:

Bishops affect the whole church not just the jurisdiction that elected them. This adds to bishop qualifications the support of the whole church expressed by their col-

leagues in an annual peer review. ¶16.5 allows the discontinuation of bishops for “inefficiency or unacceptability.” Active bishops as a committee can determine unacceptability.

¶402.

Petition Number: 20284-HS-¶402; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA.

Special Ministry, Not Separate Order

Amend ¶ 402 as follows:

Special Ministry, Not Separate Order—The offices of bishop and district superintendent exist in The United Methodist Church as particular ministries. Bishops are elected ~~and district superintendents are appointed~~ from the group of elders who are ordained to be ministers of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order and thereby participate in the ministry of Christ, in sharing a royal priesthood that has apostolic roots (1Peter 2-9; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7). District superintendents are appointed from the group of clergy in full connection.

Rationale:

As district superintendents work “to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world” (¶ 419.1), deacons may, at times, have the needed gifts and skills to serve as district superintendents.

¶402.

Petition Number: 20285-HS-¶402-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Deacons Eligible for Bishop

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 402 as follows:

. . . Bishops are elected and district superintendents are appointed from the group of elders and deacons who are ordained to be ministers of Service, Word, Sacrament, and Order and thereby participate in the ministry of Christ, . . .

Rationale:

Our intentional focus on mission and ministry would benefit from the vision and expertise of both elders and deacons to lead the diverse ministries and congregations of The UMC. We are blessed to have deacons who have the administrative, spiritual, and missional gifts and graces needed to

¶403.

Petition Number: 20286-HS-¶403; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA. 1 Similar Petition

The Role of Bishops and District Superintendents

Amend ¶ 403 as follows:

The Roles of Bishops and District Superintendents—Bishops and superintendents are ~~elders~~ clergy in full connection.

[Retain rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

As district superintendents work “to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world” (¶ 419.1), deacons may, at times, have the needed gifts and skills to serve as district superintendents.

¶403.

Petition Number: 20287-HS-¶403-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Deacons Eligible for Bishop and Superintendent

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 403 as follows:

Bishops and superintendents are elders or deacons in full connection.

1. Bishops are elected from the elders and deacons of the church and are set apart for a ministry of servant leadership, general oversight and supervision of the denomination they serve.

Rationale:

The role of deacon continues to evolve in sophistication and complexity and our denomination is blessed to have deacons who possess the leadership, administrative, spiritual, and missional gifts needed to lead The UMC as bishops and superintendents.

¶403.

Petition Number: 20289-HS-¶403-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

The Primary Task of Cabinets

Amend by Addition to ¶ 403:

¶ 403. *The Role of Bishops and Superintendents*—. . .
3. Together the bishop and district superintendents consti-

tute the appointive cabinet. Above all else, their primary task after matching pastor and church is to help them both succeed together.

Rationale:

This primary task, helping pastors and churches to be effective, to succeed in their match (which is not always as good as they'd like) is easily forgotten in the storm of administrative paper and the siren call of ambition in the larger church. Do this and the church shall live!

¶403.

Petition Number: 20681-HS-¶403-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Episcopacy Regionalization—Implementation

All the following legislative acts shall be effective if, when, and only if the enabling amendments to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church proposed in an accompanying petition shall be certified by the Council of Bishops.

Amend ¶¶ 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 413, 414, 415, 422, 440, 450, 512, 524, 548, 614, 619, 621, 805, 806, 808, 810, 818, 1806, 2501, 2702, and 2712 as indicated following:

¶ 403.1.c) A vision for the church. The role of bishop is to lead the ~~whole~~ church in claiming its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The bishop leads by discerning, inspiring, strategizing, equipping, implementing, and evaluating the fulfillment of the mission of the church. Working in partnership with the Council of Bishops, the cabinet and lay and clergy leadership of the annual conference, and the professing members of the church, the bishop urges the ~~whole~~ church to move toward the vision of sharing Christ with the world in fulfillment of our mission, faithful discipleship and “an even better way” of being Christ’s people in the world.

...

f) ... The bishop shares with other bishops the oversight of the ~~whole~~ church through the Council of Bishops

...

¶ 404. *Provisions for Episcopal Areas—*

1. In central conferences outside the United States, the number of active and residentially assigned bishops shall be determined by each central conference, ~~on the basis of missional potential, as approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Before recommending changes in the number of episcopal areas;~~

the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall:

a) ~~consider these criteria in the following order of priority:~~

(1) ~~the number of charge conferences and the number of active clergy in episcopal[153] areas[154];~~

(2) ~~the geographic size of episcopal areas, measured by the square miles / square km, and the numbers of time zones and nations;~~

(3) ~~the structure of episcopal areas, measured by the number of annual conferences, and the overall church membership in all annual, provisional annual, missionary conferences, and missions in episcopal areas.~~

b) ~~conduct a further analysis of the context and missional potential of changes in episcopal areas.~~

2. In the jurisdictions, the number of active and residentially assigned bishops shall be determined by each jurisdictional conference, ~~on the following basis:~~

a) ~~Each jurisdiction having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to five bishops and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof.~~

b) ~~If the number of church members in a jurisdiction shall have decreased by at least ten percent below the number of church members which had previously entitled the jurisdiction to its number of bishops, then the number of bishops to which it shall be entitled shall be determined on the basis of missional needs, as approved by the General Conference on the recommendation of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, provided however that said jurisdiction shall be entitled to no less than the number of bishops to which it would be entitled under subparagraph a) above. It shall be the responsibility of the affected jurisdiction, through its Committee on Episcopacy, to request consideration of its missional need for an exception, and in the absence of such a request, there shall be no obligation on the part of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy to consider such an exception nor to make any report on such an exception to General Conference. In no case shall there be any constraint on General Conference’s power to act in the absence of such a recommendation or to reject any recommendation that might be received.~~

¶ 406.3. *Special Assignments*—The Council of Bishops may, with consent of the bishop and the concurrence of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, assign one of its members for one year to some specific churchwide responsibility deemed of sufficient importance to the welfare of the total church. In this event, a bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area for that term. Another

bishop or bishops, active or retired, ~~and not necessarily from the same jurisdiction or central conference~~, shall be named by the ~~Council of Bishops on recommendation of the~~ College of Bishops of the jurisdiction involved to assume presidential responsibilities during the interim. In the event that more than one retired bishop is assigned to fulfill presidential responsibilities in one episcopal area, the Episcopal Fund jurisdiction shall be responsible only for the difference between the pensions paid the retired bishops and the remuneration of one active bishop. This assignment may be renewed for a second year by a two-thirds vote of the Council of Bishops and majority vote of the jurisdictional or central committee on episcopacy, and the consent of the bishop and the College of Bishops involved. The bishop so assigned shall continue to receive regular salary and support.

¶ 407. *Vacancy in the Office of Bishop*—A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, retirement (¶ 408.1, .2, .3), resignation (¶ 408.4), judicial procedure (¶ 2712), leave of absence (¶ 410.1), or medical leave (¶ 410.4). In case assignment of a bishop to presidential supervision of an episcopal area is terminated by any of the above causes, the vacancy shall be filled by the ~~Council of Bishops on nomination of the active bishops of the~~ College of Bishops of the jurisdiction or central conference concerned...

¶ 408.1.d) If, however, the retired bishop accepts any one of the following assignments of churchwide responsibility, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall set a level of compensation not to exceed a maximum determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration with the compensation costs borne by the Episcopal Fund jurisdiction where the bishop has membership in the College of Bishops: (1) assignment of a special nature with direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops, or (2) assignment to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education. Assignment of retired bishops to United Methodist Church-related institutions of higher education must be at the initiative of the institutions, with service not to exceed the mandatory retirement ages of the institutions.

If a bishop is assigned to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education, that agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education will pay 50 percent of the compensation established by GCFA for the position. The general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall further assume all responsibility for the bishop's operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (¶ 358.1) or completes the assignment, whichever comes first, except that retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as executive secretary and ecumenical officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms of office. ~~No assignment to a jurisdiction, central conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph.~~ The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

...

¶ 408.2.b) *Vocational Retirement*—A bishop who has served at least eight years in the episcopacy may seek retirement for vocational reasons and may be so retired by the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy on recommendation by the involved College of Bishops. Such bishops shall receive their pensions as provided in ¶ 408.2 (a). If the employing entity provides or makes health insurance available to employees, then the bishop who retires under this provision will be insured under that program, whether or not the bishop is required to pay the premium for that coverage, and the Episcopal Fund jurisdiction will assume no future obligation to provide health insurance for the bishop or the bishop's family. ...

...

¶ 408.3.b) A bishop, for health reasons, may be retired between sessions of the jurisdictional or central conference by a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy upon the recommendation of one third of the membership of the involved College of Bishops. The affected bishop, upon request, shall be entitled to a review of his or her health condition by a professional diagnostic team prior to action by the involved College of Bishops. Notification of action to retire shall be given by the chairperson and secretary of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy to the secretary of the Council College of Bishops and the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund jurisdiction. Appeal from this action may be made to the Judicial Council with the notice provisions being applicable as set forth in ¶ 2716. Upon such retirement, the bishop shall receive a pension to the extent permitted under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply.

¶ 409.1. ... However, when a retired bishop is appointed by ~~the Council~~ a College of Bishops to a vacant

episcopal area or parts of an area under the provisions of ¶¶ 409.3, 410.1, or 410.3, that bishop may function as a bishop in the effective relationship.

¶ 410. *Leaves*—1. *Leave of Absence*—A bishop may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, and the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the Council College of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area. Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund as provided by the jurisdiction.

...

3. *Sabbatical Leave*—A bishop who has served for at least two quadrennia may be granted a sabbatical leave of not more than one year for a program of study or renewal in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, and the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the sabbatical leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from the presidential responsibilities within the episcopal area, and another bishop or bishops shall be designated by the Council College of Bishops to assume the presidential duties. The bishop shall receive one-half salary and, where applicable, housing allowance for the period of the leave.

4. *Medical Leave*—Bishops who by reason of impaired health are temporarily unable to perform full work may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months in consultation with the area committee on episcopacy and with the approval of the College of Bishops, and the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the Council College of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area. Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund as provided by the jurisdiction. If after the six-month time period is over the bishop is still unable to perform full work due to impaired health, disability benefits through the benefit program provided to the bishop should be applied for.

¶ 413.3.d)(iii) All costs associated with actions taken pursuant to paragraph (ii), above, will be paid by the Epis-

copal Fund jurisdiction or central conference wherein the bishop has membership in the College of Bishops.

¶ 414.8. To promote and support the evangelistic witness of the ~~whole~~ church.

¶ 415.6. To consecrate bishops, to ordain elders and deacons, to consecrate diaconal ministers, to commission deaconesses, home missionaries and missionaries, and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. ~~As these services are acts of the whole Church, t~~ Text and rubrics shall be used in the form approved by the General Conference.

¶ 422. *Council of Bishops*—1. Bishops, ~~although elected by jurisdictional or central conferences,~~ are elected general superintendents of the ~~whole~~ church.

...

~~4. The Council of Bishops may assign one of its members to visit another episcopal area or Methodist-related church. When so assigned, the bishop shall be recognized as the accredited representative of the Council of Bishops, and when requested by the resident bishop or president in that area or Church, may exercise therein the functions of episcopacy.~~

¶ 440. *Funding*—Funding for the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of the church shall be provided by the Council of Bishops in one or more clearly identified line items in the Episcopal General Administration Fund budget request to General Conference.

¶ 450. *Funding*—In collaboration with the Council of Bishops, the Committee on Faith and Order shall propose its budget as part of the Episcopal General Administration Fund, to be approved by General Conference.

Delete ¶ 512 in its entirety.

Delete ¶ 524.3.f) in its entirety.

¶ 548. *Bishops in Retired Relation*—1. An ordained minister who has served a term or part of a term as a bishop in a central conference where term episcopacy has prevailed shall, upon retirement from the effective relation in the ministry, be paid an allowance from the General Episcopal Administration Fund in such sum as the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine for the years during which the ordained minister served as a bishop.

~~¶ 614.1.b) The council shall report to the annual conference at each session the Episcopal Fund apportionment to the annual conference under the methodology approved by the General Conference and shall include in its recommended clergy support budget the amount determined by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration as necessary to meet this apportionment.~~

¶ 619.1.a)(5) The conference treasurer shall remit

each month to the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration the amounts received during the month for the General Administration Fund, ~~the Episcopal Fund~~; the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, the Black College Fund, the Ministerial Education Fund, World Service Special Gifts, Advance Special Gifts, general church special Sunday offerings (§ 262), special churchwide appeals (§ 819), and all other general causes not otherwise directed.

¶ 621. *Apportionment Distribution*—Each annual conference shall determine what plan and method shall be used in distributing the apportionments to its several districts and charges for the ~~Episcopal Fund~~ support of the bishops of the jurisdiction (§ 817.1), for the support of district superintendents and conference claimants, and for the Equitable Compensation Fund (§ 625).

¶ 805.6. *Financial Support*—a) Financial support from general church funds for the work of the council shall be from the following sources: (1) an on-ratio allocation from the General Administration Fund, in an amount determined by the General Conference; (2) fixed charges against the World Service Fund, ~~the Episcopal Fund~~, the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, and such other general funds as the General Conference may authorize, on recommendation of the council. Fixed charges shall be in proportion to the funds' receipts.

¶ 806.1.a) The council shall make recommendations to the General Conference as to the amount and distribution of the ~~Episcopal Fund~~ and General Administration Fund, and, in consultation with the Connectional Table, other apportioned general funds.

¶ 808. *Conference Payments of Apportioned Funds*—1. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall, not less than ninety days prior to the session of each annual conference or as soon thereafter as practical, transmit to the presiding bishop thereof, to the president of the conference council on finance and administration, and to the conference treasurer a statement of the apportionments to the conference for the World Service Fund, the General Administration Fund, ~~the Episcopal Fund~~, the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, the Ministerial Education Fund, the Black College Fund, the Africa University Fund, and such other funds as may have been apportioned by the General Conference.

¶ 810. *Definition of General Funds*—1. The terms *general fund(s)* and *general church fund(s)*, wherever they appear in the *Book of Discipline*, refer to: the World Service Fund; the General Administration Fund; ~~the Episcopal Fund~~; the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund; the Ministerial Education Fund; the Black College Fund; the Africa University Fund; World Service Special Gifts; general Advance Special Gifts; the World Communion

Fund; the Human Relations Day Fund; the United Methodist Student Day Fund; the UMCOR Sunday Fund¹⁶; Peace with Justice Sunday Fund; Native American Ministries Sunday Fund; the Youth Service Fund; and such other funds as may have been established by the General Conference and have been specifically authorized by the General Conference to be raised on a churchwide basis.

Delete § 818, including its title, in its entirety.

¶ 1806.12. It shall be the central agency marketing throughout the church the following general church funds: World Service Fund (§ 812.1), Africa University Fund (§ 806.2), Black College Fund (§ 815), ~~Episcopal Fund~~ (~~§ 818.1~~), General Administration Fund (§ 813), Interdenominational Cooperation Fund (§ 819), Ministerial Education Fund (§ 816), Human Relations Day (§§ 824.1 and 263.1), UMCOR Sunday (§§ 821, 824.2, and 263.2), Native American Ministries Sunday (§§ 824.6 and 263.6), Peace with Justice Sunday (§§ 824.5 and 263.5), World Communion Sunday (§§ 824.4 and 263.3), United Methodist Student Day (§§ 824.3 and 263.4), the Advance for Christ and His Church (§§ 822 and 823), World Service Special Gifts (§ 820), Christian Education Sunday (§ 265.1), Golden Cross Sunday (§ 265.2), Rural Life Sunday (§ 265.3), Disability Awareness Sunday (§ 265.4), Youth Service Fund (§ 1208), and all other general church funds approved by the General Conference, as well as any emergency appeals authorized by the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration (§ 819).

¶ 2712.6. A bishop suspended from office shall have claim on the ~~Episcopal Fund~~ episcopal support program established by the jurisdictional or central conference for salary, dwelling, pension, and other related benefits. A bishop removed from office shall have no claim upon the ~~Episcopal Fund~~ jurisdictional or central conference episcopal support program, except as specifically provided by that conference, for salary, dwelling, pension and other related benefits from the date of such removal.

Rationale:

The episcopacy has functioned at least as regionally as it has globally since the creation of the jurisdictional system. No bishop has ever been transferred between jurisdictions after election. Moreover, regional theological differences make this step imperative if the church is to have any chance at organic unity.

¶403.2.

Petition Number: 20288-HS-¶403.2; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA.

District Superintendents' Role

Amend ¶ 403.2 as follows:

2. District superintendents are ~~elders~~ clergy in full connection appointed by the bishop to the cabinet as an extension of the superintending role of the bishop within the annual conference through the same disciplines and in accordance with their responsibilities designated in the *Book of Discipline* under the supervision of the resident bishop.

Rationale:

As district superintendents work “to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world” (¶ 419.1), deacons may, at times, have the needed gifts and skills to serve as district superintendents.

¶404.

Petition Number: 20290-HS-¶404-\$-G; Kilpatrick, Joe Wesley - Tucker, GA, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Financial Stewardship and Justice in the Allocation of Bishops

Amend ¶ 404 by deletion of all the current text and substitution of the following:

¶ 404. Provisions for Episcopal Areas—

1) Withstanding all other paragraphs, there shall be sixty-six (66) episcopal areas. Changes in the number allocated to a jurisdiction or central conference shall be effective September 1 if there is a reduction of areas and effective December 31 where there is an increase in areas.

2) For missional purposes, thirteen (13) episcopal areas will be allocated to selected central conferences as follows: to the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, one (1) area, to the Germany Central Conference, one (1) area, to the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference, two (2) areas, to the Philippines Central Conference, three (3) areas, and to the current Africa Central Conference, six (6) episcopal areas, which will be four (4) for South Africa Central and two (2) for East Africa Central if there is a division of the current Africa Central Conference.

3.a) The USA Jurisdictions, the Congo Central Conference, and the West Africa Central Conference are here-in allocated the fifty-three (53) remaining episcopal areas. The allocation is to be determined on the uniform basis of proportionality computed on the total combined clergy and lay membership therein, applying the membership numbers used to allocate delegates to the General Conference. To achieve the targeted whole number of bish-

ops, the largest of the fractions remaining after an initial rounding may also be rounded.

3.b) There shall be no election of bishops within a jurisdiction or central conference that currently has more than the number calculated herein serving in an active role, defined as those elected for life who are below the retirement age. When the number of active bishops falls below the number calculated herein, then the resulting vacancy shall be filled. However, the number of episcopal areas may temporality exceed the allocated total of fifty-three (53), and the grand total of sixty-six (66), when necessary to respect a commitment to a lifetime election of a bishop in an active role.

September 18, 2019

Joe Wesley Kilpatrick

Laity, Tucker First UMC, Tucker GA 30084

404-964-3589 mobile

jkcpa71@gmail.com

Financial Implications:

Using the cost of active bishops published by GCFA in Report No. 5 from 2016 ADCA, page 618, we can compute the following savings.

Reduction in costs of 15 USA bishops:

15 fewer bishops at a cost of \$329,750 each, equals a reduction of	\$4,946,250
---	-------------

Increase in costs of 15 additional African Bishops:

15 more bishops (five already scheduled by previous General Conference)

At costs of \$232,500 each, equals an increased cost of	\$3,487,500
---	-------------

Net savings per year of	\$1,458,500
-------------------------	-------------

Additional savings are likely to occur at the Episcopal level in the reduction of 15 bishops in the USA, because there may be a corresponding reduction in Conference staff and related costs not covered by the numbers presented in GCFA Report No. 5. If such costs are about \$175,000 per year, as some have suggested, then an additional savings of \$2,625,000 would be achieved.

The 53 areas allocated by proportionality are: North Central 5, Northeastern 5, South Central 8, Southeastern 12, Western 1, Congo Central 14, West Africa 8.

Rationale:

Proportional reallocation, shifts fifteen (15) bishops to Africa, focuses top leadership on the greatest gender inequality, child mortality, poverty, bad government, and bad infrastructure. A missional allocation, from twelve (12) to thirteen (13) bishops, is made to smaller central conferences. Larger ones are treated as equals, share and share alike

¶404.

Petition Number: 20291-HS-¶404; Holley, Del - Knoxville, TN, USA for Jurisdictional Study Committee.

Jurisdictional Study Committee Petition #1— Number of Bishops in Jurisdictions

Amend ¶ 404 by the following additions and deletions:

¶ 404. Provisions for Episcopal Areas

1. In central conferences, the number of bishops shall be determined on the basis of missional potential, as approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. Before recommending changes in the number of episcopal areas, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall:

a) consider these criteria in the following order of priority:

(1) the number of charge conferences and the number of active clergy in the episcopal areas;

(2) the geographic size of episcopal areas, measured by the square miles/square km, and the numbers of time zones and nations;

(3) the structure of episcopal areas, measured by the number of annual conferences, and the overall church membership in all annual, provisional annual, missionary conferences, and missions in episcopal areas.

b) conduct a further analysis of the context and missional potential of changes in episcopal areas.

2. In the jurisdictions, the number of bishops shall be determined on the following basis:

a) Each jurisdiction ~~having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to five bishops, and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof.~~

b) ~~If the number of church members in a jurisdiction shall have decreased by at least 10 percent below the number of church members which had previously entitled the jurisdiction to its number of bishops, then the~~ A jurisdiction, through its jurisdictional committee on episcopacy, may request additional bishops exceeding the number provided in subparagraph a) above; provided, however, that the salary and expenses of such additional bishops, calculated pursuant to the provisions of ¶ 818 (The Episcopal Fund), shall be apportioned to the annual conferences of such jurisdiction. The number of additional bishops to which it shall be entitled shall be determined on the basis of missional needs and financial ability of the annual conferences of the jurisdiction to support such additional bishops, as approved by the Gen-

eral Conference on the recommendation of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, provided however that said jurisdiction shall be entitled to no less than the number of bishops to which it would be entitled under subparagraph a) above. It shall be the responsibility of the affected jurisdiction, through its committee on episcopacy, to request consideration of its missional need for ~~an exception~~ additional bishops, and in the absence of such a request, there shall be no obligation on the part of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy to consider such ~~an exception~~ additional bishops nor to make any report or recommendation on such ~~an exception~~ additional bishops to General Conference. In no case shall there be any constraint on General Conference's power to act in the absence of such a recommendation or to reject any recommendation that might be received. Further, the provisions of this paragraph shall not be construed to limit the authority of the jurisdictional conferences to determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas (¶ 40) or of the Colleges of Bishops to arrange the plan of episcopal supervision (¶ 48).

c) ~~If a jurisdiction, as a result of the provisions of this paragraph, shall have the number of bishops to which it had previously been entitled reduced, then the reduction in the number of bishops to which it is entitled shall be effective as of September 1 of the calendar year in which said reduction has been determined by the General Conference. When a jurisdiction requests a change in the number of bishops for the jurisdiction, the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, in consultation with the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy for the affected jurisdiction, shall develop a time line for implementation of the new number of bishops. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy shall recommend the time line, developed after such consultation, to the General Conference for approval.~~

Rationale:

See Jurisdictional Study Committee report for full rationale—This petition proposes amendments to ¶ 404 that will eliminate the mathematical formula for calculating the number of active bishops for each jurisdiction, establish a minimum number of active bishops for each jurisdiction, and establish a process by which jurisdictions may request additional

¶404.

Petition Number: 20292-HS-¶404-G; Byerman, Mary - Tampa, FL, USA.

More Even and Affordable Distribution of Bishops

Amend ¶ 404.2 as follows:

¶ 404. *Provisions for Episcopal Areas*—

1. In central conferences, the number of bishops . . .
2. In the jurisdictions, the number of bishops shall be determined on the following basis:

a) Each jurisdiction having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to ~~five~~ four bishops and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof. This shall be effective September 1, 2020.

Rationale:

It is becoming widely recognized that our current number of U.S. bishops is not sustainable and that we must take significant steps to put our Episcopal Fund on stronger financial footing. This addresses such concerns while spreading the reduction evenly across all jurisdictions. It also make the formula fairer.

¶404.

Petition Number: 20293-HS-¶404-G; Fuller, Dan - Chenango Falls, NY, USA.

Minimum Basis for US Bishops

Amend ¶ 404.2a by ADDING language as follows:

¶ 404. *Provisions for Episcopal Areas*—

1. In central conferences, the number of bishops . . .
2. In the jurisdictions, the number of bishops shall be determined on the following basis:

a) Each jurisdiction having 300,000 church members or fewer shall be entitled to five bishops and each jurisdiction having more than 300,000 church members shall be entitled to one additional bishop for each additional 300,000 church members or major fraction thereof. Furthermore, each annual conference in the jurisdictions with fewer than 60,000 professing church members shall share a bishop with another annual conference in its jurisdiction, even if this necessitates the total number of bishops in that jurisdiction being fewer than the number produced by the previous formula. The jurisdictional conference shall be responsible for determining the details of adjustments to the number, names, and boundaries of its annual conferences and episcopal areas, within the limits of this paragraph and other relevant provisions of the Discipline. It is recommended that any savings resulting from reductions in the number of jurisdictional bishops as a result of these provisions be used to provide funding for bishops in

the central conferences. (Effective at the close of the 2020 General Conference.)

Rationale:

This would address the wide disparities in the number of church members served by a single jurisdictional bishop (ranging from less than 30,000 to over 350,000). It would also bring some much-needed financial sustainability, by ensuring a minimum support base for each U.S. episcopal area to afford its own bishop.

¶405.

Petition Number: 20294-HS-¶405-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Developing Criteria for Electing a Bishop

Amend by Addition to ¶ 405 as a new .1 and change the numbering accordingly:

¶ 405. *Criteria for Election of, and Consecration of Bishops*—1. *Criteria*—Prior to any nominations for episcopacy, the episcopacy committees of the central and jurisdictional conferences shall list the specific powers of bishops provided in the Book of Discipline so that all nominees will have a chance to see the boundaries of the power of the episcopacy and those electing them will see the gifts and graces of the nominees in light of those limits. Further, the episcopacy committees shall identify other gifts and graces they seek for bishops-elect to conduct ministry in their particular jurisdiction or central conference.

Rationale:

Jurisdictions must define their expectations of what a bishop does and the limits of the bishops' authority. We must be sure the limits on bishops are clear to minimize power abuse. Such a list helps bishops by putting a job description together from the *Discipline* and from the needs

¶406.

Petition Number: 20679-HS-¶406-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Limited Tenure for Bishops and Relationship of Retired Bishops—Implementation

Insert new ¶ 406 and amend existing ¶ 409 as indicated. Renumber all paragraphs as appropriate.

¶ 406. *Term of Office*—Bishops elected by the jurisdictions and central conferences shall have a term of office of eight years, and a bishop may be reelected for one additional eight-year term. If a bishop is elected as

provided in ¶ 407 because of an unanticipated vacancy in the office, then the bishop's term and limits thereto will be as follows, where for this purpose the quadrennium begins on 01 September of the year in which General Conference is held:

1. If at least twenty-four months remain in the quadrennium at the time of election, then the bishop's term of office shall be four years plus the amount of time served in the quadrennium of election.

2. If less time than twenty-four months remains in the quadrennium at the time of election, then the bishop's term of office shall be eight years plus the amount of time served in the quadrennium of election.

3. In the case of a bishop subject either to §1. or 2., the bishop shall be eligible for election to one additional eight-year term. However, no elder who has served at least fourteen years as a bishop shall be eligible for reelection as a bishop.

¶ 409. *Status of Retired Bishops*—A retired bishop is a bishop of the Church in every respect and continues to function as a member of the Council of Bishops in accordance with the Constitution and other provisions of the Discipline. Retired bishops shall become members of an annual conference of their choosing with the consent of the presiding bishop.

1. Retired bishops may participate in the Council of Bishops and its committees, but without vote. They may preside over sessions of an annual conference, provisional annual conference, or mission if requested to do so by the bishop assigned to that conference, or in the event of that bishop's incapacity, by the president of the College of Bishops to which the conference is related. Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops may serve as the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the council. In emergency situations, where the resident bishop is unable to preside, the College of Bishops shall assign an effective or retired bishop to preside over the sessions of the annual conference (¶ 48). They may not make appointments or preside at the jurisdiction or central conference. However, when a retired bishop is appointed by the Council of Bishops to a vacant episcopal area or parts of an area under the provisions of ¶¶ 409.3, 410.1, or 410.3, that bishop may function as a residential bishop in the effective relationship.

These implementing changes will be effective if and when the Council of Bishops certifies the enactment of the enabling changes in the Constitution provided in another petition.

Rationale:

Life tenure is inconsistent with realities of human development and interaction. Accountability to the church

and changes for bishops demand election be for limited terms. Moreover, membership of retired bishops should revert to the annual conference. And all bishops of the church should have the same term of office.

¶408.

Petition Number: 20295-HS-¶408-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Bishops Involuntary Retirement

Amend ¶ 408.3.a) as indicated following:

¶ 408.3. *Involuntary Retirement*—a) A bishop may be placed in the retired relation regardless of age by a two-thirds vote of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy if, after not less than a thirty-day notice in writing is given to the affected bishop and hearing held, such relationship is found determined by, and only by, said committee to be in the best interests of the bishop and/or the church. This action may or may not be taken because of the performance of the bishop, and the reason for the action must be clearly stated in the report of the committee. The provisions of ¶ 361.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process. Written notice also should be given to the chairperson of the jurisdictional conference administrative review committee (¶ 539). The action of the committee on episcopacy is dispositive, and the portion of the report of the committee on episcopacy to the jurisdictional or central conference dealing with this action is for information only as is any notice provided to a conference administrative review committee.

Rationale:

This makes clear that the authority for determining what is in the best interests of the church and/or the bishop in decisions on involuntary episcopal retirement rests with and only with the committee on episcopacy. Such a committee should not be subject to second-guessing on this point.

¶408.

Petition Number: 20296-HS-¶408-G; Choi, Tom - Honolulu, HI, USA.

Mandatory Retirement for Bishops

Amend ¶ 408. *Termination of Office*—An elder who is serving as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.

~~1. *Mandatory Retirement*—a) A bishop shall be retired on September 1 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference if the bishop's sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1. Mandatory retirement for bishops is age seventy-two. An episcopal candidate or a continuing active bishop shall be no older than age sixty-eight on or before September 1 in the year in which the jurisdictional conference is held. The date of retirement for a bishop shall be September 1 in the year a jurisdictional conference is held. This change becomes effective at the close of the 2020 General Conference.~~

Rationale:

This legislation provides better consistency with retirement rules for all elders (§ 357.1), including bishops, basing retirement on the age of the bishop instead of the bishop's birthday.

¶408.3.

Petition Number: 20297-HS-¶408.3; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Council of Bishops Accountability #1

Amend by addition of a new ¶ 408.3.c:

By a majority vote of those present and voting, the members of the Council of Bishops may place any bishop in the retired relation with or without their consent and irrespective of their age if such a relation is recommended by the council relations committee. Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not vote on this matter. The procedures for fair process in administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary retirement procedure (§ 422.5). Written notice also shall be given to the chairperson of the administrative review committee (§ 422.6).

Rationale:

Additions to §§ 408, 410, and 422 go together and create a process by which the Council of Bishops may hold one another accountable, based on the constitutional amendment to § 50 that was ratified in 2017. This proposal includes assurances of fair process and enables greater consistency and uniformity.

¶408.3c.

Petition Number: 20666-HS-¶408.3c; Zilhaver, Robert - Uniontown, PA, USA.

Composite Petition for Council of Bishops to Have Administrative Accountability Authority

Add following new subparagraphs to the *Book of Discipline*:

¶ 408.3 c) By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, the members of the Council of Bishops may place any bishop in the retired relation with or without their consent and irrespective of their age if such a relation is recommended by the council relations committee. The procedures for fair process in administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary retirement procedure (§ 422.5). Written notice also should be given to the chairperson of the administrative review committee (§ 422.6).

¶ 410.5 *Involuntary Leave of Absence*—a) By a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, the members of the Council of Bishops may place any bishop in an involuntary leave status if such a relation is recommended by the council relations committee. The procedures for fair process in administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary retirement procedure (§ 422.5). Written notice also should be given to the chairperson of the administrative review committee (§ 422.6).

b) Involuntary leave of absence shall be approved annually by the Council of Bishops after review and recommendation of the council relations committee.

c) During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the executive committee of the College of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area. Salary and other benefits shall be continued through the Episcopal Fund.

¶ 422.5. The Council of Bishops shall establish from its membership a council relations committee of at least three persons to hear requests for involuntary leave of absence, involuntary retirement, or other such matters as may be referred to it by the Council of Bishops.

a) When there is a recommendation for an involuntary status change or other matter to be referred to the council relations committee, the council relations committee shall conduct an administrative hearing following the provisions of fair process. The Council of Bishops shall designate the person to present the recommendation to the committee. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the recommendation in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergyperson in full connection, and who shall have voice. Once the committee has heard the person designated to represent the recommendation, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the committee, it shall report its decision to the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops may affirm or reverse the decision of the committee.

b) *Fair Process Hearings*—As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of The United Methodist Church, the following procedures are presented for the protection of the rights of individuals and for the protection of the church in administrative headings. The process set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever the council relations committee meets to process an administrative request by the Council of Bishops.

1) In any administrative proceeding the representative of the Council of Bishops and the respondent (the person against whom involuntary action is directed) shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken.

2) Notice of any hearing shall advise the respondent of the reason for the proposed procedures with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty days prior to the hearing.

3) The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied to any hearing by a clergyperson in full connections, in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary provisions. The clergyperson accompanying the respondent shall have the right to voice.

4) In any administrative hearing, under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the pending hearing body. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body.

5) The respondent shall have access, at least seven days prior to the hearing all records relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the administrative process.

6) In the event that a respondent fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the bishop, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official administrative committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual.

7) Prior to the start of the administrative hearing by the council relations committee, the bishop may choose to have a trial. This choice must be made in writing and submitted to the chair of the council relations committee prior to the start of the administrative hearing. The procedures are provided for in ¶¶ 2707-2712.

8) Appeal may be made under the provisions of ¶¶ 2718.3 and 2718.4.

¶ 422.6. The Council of Bishops shall establish from its membership an administrative review committee of at least three persons who are not members of the executive committee or the council relations committee. Its only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures

for any involuntary action recommended by the council relations committee are properly followed. The entire administrative process leading to the action for change of status of the bishop shall be reviewed by the administrative review committee, and it shall report its findings to the Council of Bishops prior to any action by the Council of Bishops. The administrative review committee shall notify the parties of the review process. The administrative fair process hearing procedures (¶ 422.5) should be followed by the administrative review committee. Prior to its report, if the committee determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action.

Rationale:

This composite petition addresses the principle of legality raised in JD 1366 by restoring language and procedures used prior to *1996 Discipline* to provide a constitutional administrative process for Council. This language was found to meet the principle of legality in Judicial Council Decision 351 and ¶ 20

¶409.

Petition Number: 20299-HS-¶409-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Retired Bishops Expenses While Participating in Council of Bishops

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 409 as follows:

A retired bishop is a bishop of the church in every respect and continues to function as a member of the Council of Bishops at their own expense in accordance with the Constitution and other provisions of the *Discipline*. If a retired bishop is asked to engage in work (ex. committee, conference, project, etc.) a contract will be issued for said work to include provision for compensation of expenses incurred.

Rationale:

Retired bishops are invited to lend their thought partnership and wisdom to the work of the COB. In an effort to limit costs incurred by the denomination, retired bishops who choose to engage in COB meetings should pay their own expenses unless contracted for specific work efforts.

¶410.

Petition Number: 20298-HS-¶410; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Council of Bishops Accountability #2

Amend by addition of a new ¶ 410.5:

¶ 410.5. *Involuntary Leave of Absence*—a) By a majority vote of those present and voting, the members of the Council of Bishops may place any bishop in an involuntary leave status if such a relation is recommended by the council relations committee. The procedures for fair process in administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary leave of absence procedure (¶ 422.5). Written notice also should be given to the chairperson of the administrative review committee (¶ 422.6).

b) Involuntary leave of absence shall be approved annually by the Council of Bishops after review and recommendation of the council relations committee.

c) During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and another bishop chosen by the College of Bishops shall preside in the episcopal area. Salary and other benefits may be continued through the Episcopal Fund for a maximum of six months.

Rationale:

Additions to ¶¶ 408, 410, and 422 go together and create a process by which the Council of Bishops may hold one another accountable, based on the constitutional amendment to ¶ 50 that was ratified in 2017. This proposal includes assurances of fair process and enables greater consistency and uniformity.

¶413.

Petition Number: 20300-HS-¶413; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA. 1 Similar Petition

ALL BELONG: Restoring Integrity to Episcopal Just Resolution Processes

Amend ¶ 413.3 as follows:

¶ 413.3.c.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved,~~

a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

¶ 413.3.d.i,

(d) (i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint ~~as having no basis in law or fact,~~ with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the bishop's file and shared with the complainant, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to ¶ 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the church pursuant to ¶ 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, this petition removes the preferential power given to those who file complaints. Striking this language restores the confidentiality of the complaint process and affirms the integrity of the process agreed upon by the parties involved.

¶413.

Petition Number: 20301-HS-¶413-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

Remove Traditional Plan Language

Amend ¶ 413.

3. c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort~~

shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

d) i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (§ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint ~~as having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, ~~copies a copy~~ of which shall be placed in the bishop's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to § 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the church pursuant to § 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

¶414.

Petition Number: 20302-HS-¶414-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Open Meetings of Committees Formed by the Council of Bishops

Following existing § 414.11 insert a new § 414.12 as follows:

¶ 414.12 The Council of Bishops may at its own discretion meet in closed session, however, in the spirit of openness repeatedly affirmed by the General Conference, unless urgently indicated by the nature of the business at hand, sessions shall be open. This provision permitting unlimited discretion for the closing of meetings of the Council of Bishops shall not apply to meetings of committees formed by or for the Council of Bishops that include members or participants who are not bishops. The meetings of such bodies shall be controlled by the open meetings provisions of § 722.

Rationale:

In the spirit of openness repeatedly affirmed by the General Conference, meetings of committees formed by

or for the Council of Bishops, such as the Commission on a Way Forward, that include members other than bishops should be subject to the open meetings provisions already enacted by the General Conference.

¶414.6.

Petition Number: 20303-HS-¶414.6; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Amend 414.6 to Give Further Expression to the Ecumenical and Interreligious Responsibilities of United Methodist Bishops

Amend § 414.6 as follows:

6. To provide liaison and leadership in the quest for Christian unity in ministry, mission, and structure and in the search for strengthened relationships with other living faith communities. Bishops are to model a spirit of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation and lead their areas in establishing relationships of peace, reconciliation, and understanding across lines of denominational and religious differences.

Rationale:

The bishops of The UMC are the primary liaisons between The UMC and other Christian communions (§ 431.2) as well as bodies of other religious traditions. This role should be given further theological elaboration in defining the responsibilities of a bishop.

¶415.6.

Petition Number: 20304-HS-¶415.6-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 8 Similar Petitions

Next Generation UMC #11— Amend Episcopal Responsibilities

[Also submitted as:

All Belong: Restore Conciliar Authority]

Amend § 415.6 as follows:

6. To consecrate bishops; to ordain elders and deacons; to commission deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries; and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. ~~Bishops are prohibited from consecrating bishops who are self-avowed practicing homosexuals, even if they have been duly elected by the jurisdictional or central conference. Bishops are prohibited from commissioning those on the deacon or elder track if the Board of Ordained Ministry has determined the individual is a~~

~~self-avowed practicing homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference. Bishops are prohibited from ordaining deacons or elders if the Board of Ordained Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed practicing homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference.~~

As these services are acts of the whole church, text and rubrics shall be used in the form approved by the General Conference.

Rationale:

¶ 33 empowers annual conference clergy members to determine who is qualified for ordination. The power to elect bishops is reserved to members of the jurisdictional and central conferences. These rights should not be nullified by withholding acts of consecration, ordination, or commissioning from those judged as qualified for those

¶415.6.

Petition Number: 20305-HS-¶415.6-G; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Follow Civil Laws and Ecumenical Context of the Country

Action proposed: Amend ¶ No. 415. 6:

¶ 415. 6. To consecrate bishops; to ordain elders and deacons; to commission deaconesses, home missionaries, and missionaries; and to see that the names of the persons commissioned and consecrated are entered on the journals of the conference and that proper credentials are furnished to these persons. In countries where the ecumenical context does not accept practicing homosexual clergies, Bbishops are prohibited from consecrating bishops who are self-avowed homosexuals, even if they have been duly elected by the jurisdictional or central conference. In countries where the ecumenical context does not accept practicing homosexual clergies, Bbishops are prohibited from commissioning those on the deacon or elder track if the Board of Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference. In countries where the ecumenical

context does not accept practicing homosexual clergies, Bbishops are prohibited from ordaining deacons or elders if the Board of Ministry has determined the individual is a self-avowed homosexual or has failed to certify it carried out the disciplinarily mandated examination, even if the individual has been recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by the clergy session of the annual conference.

Rationale:

The UMC should follow the position of other mainline protestant denominations that we have ecumenical agreements with in the context of the countries and cultures of the church

¶416.5.

Petition Number: 20306-HS-¶416.5-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Remove Course of Study Record from Procedures for Conference Transfers

Amend ¶ 416.5

5. To transfer, upon the request of the receiving bishop (¶ 347.1), clergy member(s) of one annual conference to another, . . . to the ~~conference~~ boards of ordained ministry, . . . written notices of the transfer of members and of their ~~conference~~ standing ~~in the Course of Study if they are undergraduates.~~

Rationale:

The reference to Course of Study is inappropriate in this paragraph because there are no provisions in the *Discipline* for local pastors to transfer. This reference needs to be removed.

¶416.7.

Petition Number: 20716-HS-¶416.7-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraphs after ¶ 416.7:

8. The bishop shall not penalize any clergy for performing, or refraining from performing, a same-sex marriage service.

9. The bishop shall neither require any local church to hold or prohibit a local church from holding a same-sex marriage service on property owned by a local church.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶417.

Petition Number: 20307-HS-¶417-G; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Selection and Assignment of District Superintendents

Amend ¶ 417 as follows:

¶ 417. *Selection and Assignment*—Inasmuch as the district superintendency is an extension of the general superintendency, the bishop shall appoint ~~elders~~ clergy members in full connection to serve as district superintendents.

[Retain rest of the paragraph as written]

Rationale:

The district superintendent is “chief missional strategist of the district . . .,” working “to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world” (¶ 246.5). As those who help bridge the church’s mission into the world, deacons, too, could offer their gifts

¶418.

Petition Number: 20308-HS-¶418-G; Crump, Nita - Macon, GA, USA.

Extension of District Superintendent Years of Service

Amend ¶ 418 as follows:

¶ 418. *Limitations on Years of Service*—The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and district committee on superintendency. During the period 2020–2024, in order to provide stability in leadership, a district superintendent may, at the discretion of the bishop and in consultation with the cabinet and district committee on superintendency, serve longer than eight years consecutively.

No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years in any consecutive eleven years, except during the period of 2020–2024. No elder shall serve as district superintendent more than fourteen years. In addition, con-

sideration shall be given to the nature of superintendency as described in ¶ 401.

Rationale:

Having the option to extend the tenure of district superintendents will provide continuity of leadership during a period of transition.

¶418.

Petition Number: 20309-HS-¶418-G; Delmore, Sean - Labanon, NH, USA.

Limitations of Years of Service

Amend ¶ 418 as follows:

Limitations on Years of Service—The normal term for a district superintendent shall be up to six years, but this may be extended to no more than up to eight years at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with the cabinet and the district committee on superintendency.

No superintendent shall serve for more than eight years in any consecutive eleven years. No ~~elder~~ one shall serve as district superintendent more than fourteen years.

[Retain rest of the paragraph as written]

Rationale:

As district superintendents work “to develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world” (¶ 419.1), deacons may, at times, have the needed gifts and skills to serve as district superintendents.

¶419.1.

Petition Number: 20310-HS-¶419.1; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Amend 419.1 for Clarity and to Give Further Expression to the Ecumenical and Interreligious Responsibilities of District Superintendents

Amend ¶ 419.1 as follows:

1. The church expects, as part of the superintendent ministry, that the district superintendent will be the chief missional strategist of the district. ~~and~~ The district superintendent will be committed to living out the values of the church, including a mandate of inclusiveness, and modeling, teaching, and promoting generous Christian giving. The district superintendent will provide leadership in the quest for ~~cooperating to develop~~ Christian unity and in developing ecumenical, interreligious, multicultural, multi-

racial, and cooperative ministries, ~~and working~~ Working with persons across the church, ~~the district superintendent~~ will develop programs of ministry and mission that extend the witness of Christ into the world.

Rationale:

The paragraph as a whole is incoherent and needs editing. Furthermore, district superintendents of The UMC are an extension of the general superintending office of the bishop (§ 417). As such, the ecumenical and interreligious role and responsibilities of United Methodist bishops should be given explicit extension into the responsibilities

¶419.12.

Petition Number: 20717-HS-¶419.12-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraphs after § 419.12:

13. The superintendent shall not penalize any clergy for performing, or refraining from performing, a same-sex marriage service.

14. The superintendent shall neither require any local church to hold or prohibit a local church from holding a same-sex marriage service on property owned by a local church.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶422.

Petition Number: 20312-HS-¶422; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Council of Bishops Accountability Process #3

Amend by addition to § 422:

¶ 422.2. The Council of Bishops is thus the collegial and corporate expression of episcopal leadership in the church and through the church into the world. The church expects the Council of Bishops to speak to the church and from the church to the world and to give leadership in the quest for Christian unity and interreligious relationships. The Council of Bishops is also a body in which its individual members are held accountable for their work, both

as general superintendents and as presidents and residents in episcopal areas.

¶ 422.5. The Council of Bishops shall establish from its membership a council relations committee of at least three persons to hear requests for involuntary leave of absence or involuntary retirement, as may be referred to it by the Council of Bishops or any seven active bishops. Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not have voted on the referral of requests for involuntary leave of absence or involuntary retirement.

a) When a recommendation for an involuntary status change is referred to the council relations committee, the council relations committee shall conduct an administrative hearing following the provisions of fair process. The Council of Bishops shall designate the person to present the recommendation to the committee. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the recommendation in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergyperson in full connection, who shall have voice. Once the committee has heard the person designated to represent the recommendation, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the committee, it shall report its decision to the Council of Bishops. The Council of Bishops may affirm or reverse the decision of the committee. Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not vote on the matter of affirming or reversing the decision. The Council of Bishops shall refer to the council relations committee any bishop who is unwilling to certify that he or she is willing to uphold, enforce, and maintain the *Book of Discipline* in its entirety (as it applies to bishops), including but not limited to standards on marriage and sexuality and the ordination and appointment of self-avowed practicing homosexuals. The Council of Bishops shall require such certification in writing from all active bishops within thirty (30) days of the adjournment of General Conference each quadrennium. The Council of Bishops shall also require such certification of any new bishop within sixty (60) days of their election. When the council relations committee reaches a positive finding of fact that the bishop has not so certified, the council relations committee shall recommend either involuntary leave or involuntary retirement to the Council of Bishops after conducting a fair process hearing.

b) Fair Process Hearings—As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of The United Methodist Church, the following procedures are presented for the protection of the rights of individuals and for the protection of the church in administrative hearings. The process set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever the council relations committee

meets to process an administrative request by the Council of Bishops.

1) In any administrative proceeding the representative of the Council of Bishops and the respondent (the person against whom involuntary action is directed) shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken.

2) Notice of any hearing shall advise the respondent of the reason for the proposed procedures with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than twenty (20) days prior to the hearing.

3) The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied to any hearing by a clergyperson in full connection, in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary provisions. The clergyperson accompanying the respondent shall have the right to voice.

4) In any administrative hearing, under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the pending hearing body. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body.

5) The respondent shall have access, at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing, to all records relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the administrative process.

6) In the event that a respondent fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the bishop, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official administrative committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual. Members of the council relations committee and administrative review committee shall not vote on the matter of affirming or reversing the decision.

¶ 422.6. The Council of Bishops shall establish from its membership an administrative review committee of at least three persons who are not members of the executive committee or the council relations committee. Members of the administrative review committee shall not vote on any referrals to the council relations committee for involuntary leave or involuntary retirement or any actions of the Council of Bishops related to any matter that will come before the administrative review committee. Its only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures for any involuntary action recommended by the council relations committee are properly followed. The entire administrative process leading to the action for change of status of the bishop shall be reviewed by the administrative review committee, and it shall report its findings to the Council of Bishops prior to any action by the Council

of Bishops. The administrative review committee shall notify the parties of the review process. The administrative fair process hearing procedures (¶ 422.5) should be followed by the administrative review committee. Prior to its report, if the committee determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action.

¶ 422.7. At the end of the process, a bishop may appeal the decision of the conference relations committee, the administrative review committee, and the Council of Bishops on questions of procedure in an administrative process to the Judicial Council according to the stipulations listed in ¶ 2718.4.

Rationale:

Additions to ¶¶ 408, 410, and 422 go together and create a process by which the Council of Bishops may hold one another accountable, based on the constitutional amendment to ¶ 50 that was ratified in 2017. This proposal includes assurances of fair process and enables greater consistency and uniformity.

¶422.5.

Petition Number: 20313-HS-¶422.5; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Addressing the Principle of Legality: Bishops

Add new ¶ 422.5.b.(vii) Prior to the start of the administrative hearing by the council relations committee, the bishop may choose to have a trial. This choice must be made in writing and submitted to the chair of the council relations committee prior to the start of the administrative hearing. The procedures are provided for in ¶¶ 2707–2712.

Rationale:

This legislation addresses the principle of legality raised in JD 1366 by restoring language and procedures used prior to 1996 *Discipline*. This language was found to meet the principle of legality in Judicial Council Decision 351 and ¶ 20 of the Constitution.

¶423.1.

Petition Number: 20311-HS-¶423.1-G; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA.

New Form of Unity #5

Amend ¶ 423.1 by adding subparagraph 423.1 *Conference of Methodist Bishops*

1. If any self-governing Methodist Church is formed by the departure of one or more annual conferences in the United States, the Council of Bishops will seek regular meetings with the bishops of any such new churches.

Rationale:

The New Form of Unity preserves as much unity as possible while allowing for new expressions of Methodism to live faithfully with different views on human sexuality. The bishops from all of the new expressions should show visible unity and plan for common mission.

¶424.3.

Petition Number: 20314-HS-¶424.3-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Changing Accountability of Superintendents

Amend by Deletion of ¶ 424.3 and renumber:

~~¶ 424.3. The cabinet is thus also the body in which individual district superintendents are held accountable for their work, both for the conference and district responsibilities.~~

Rationale:

Cabinets short-circuit complaints against their members by handling them under this paragraph. Superintendents have to face their peers just like any other elder and not by the group that picks its own successors.

¶425.

Petition Number: 20709-HS-¶425-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

Amend ¶ 425:

2. Appointment-making across conference lines shall be encouraged as a way of creating mobility and open itineracy. The jurisdictional committee on ordained ministry will cooperate with bishops and cabinets in providing information on supply and demand within the jurisdiction. Elders who are practicing homosexual persons and in good standing may be appointed across annual conference lines and within the jurisdiction when the residing bishop cannot locate an appointment within their annual conference, for reasons of the safety and well-being of the elder.

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candi-

dates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶425.1.

Petition Number: 20315-HS-¶425.1-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 425.1

Responsibility—1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnicity-origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or age, except for the provisions of mandatory retirement. Annual conferences shall, in their training of staff-parish relations committees, emphasize the open nature of itineracy and prepare congregations to receive the gifts and graces of appointed clergy without regard to race, ethnicity-origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, economic condition, sexual orientation, or age. The concept of itineracy is important, and sensitive attention should be given in appointing clergy with physical challenges to responsibilities and duties that meet their gifts and graces. Through appointment-making, the connectional nature of the United Methodist system is made visible.

¶431.

Petition Number: 20317-HS-¶431-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #2—Full Communion Agreement for Full Communion Expressions

ADD NEW ¶ 431A to the Discipline as follows:

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church, the Plain Grace Plan is adopted. It is the intent of the Plain Grace Plan to multiply new Wesleyan expressions consistent with the common core of The United Methodist Church and to allow the diverse members of The United Methodist Church to be able to live into their preferred expression of Methodism while offering grace to all of God's children. It is

the further intent of the Plain Grace Plan to create a Full Communion Relationship with such newly created Wesleyan expressions. The Plain Grace Plan consists of the following paragraphs in the *Book of Discipline*: ¶¶ 248A, 431A-F, 673-680, 725, 1510, and 2553-2555.

2. Effective upon adjournment of the 2020 General Conference, the Council of Bishops shall enter into a Full Communion Agreement with each Full Communion Expression recognized as such under the provisions of ¶ 431E. The Full Communion Agreement shall recognize that a relationship exists between The United Methodist Church and each Full Communion Expression and shall expressly include the following requirements: (1) recognize The United Methodist Church and the Full Communion Expression as constituent members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, the body of Christ, as described in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the church's historic creeds; (2) recognize the authenticity of each other's sacraments and welcome one another to partake in the Eucharist; (3) affirm the authenticity of each church's Christian ministry, and (4) recognize the validity of each other's offices of ministry. By recognizing the validity of each other's offices of ministry, neither The United Methodist Church nor the Full Communion Expression shall be required to automatically accept transfer of any clergy or bishop; The United Methodist Church and Full Communion Expression shall maintain the absolute right to determine qualifications for transfer of clergy and bishops. In addition, the Full Communion Agreement shall mutually bind The United Methodist Church and the Full Communion Expression to recognize and enforce the Gracious Affiliation Agreements and Gracious Reaffiliation Agreements entered into pursuant to ¶ 678, 679, and 680 of the *Book of Discipline*. No additional provisions may be provided for in the Full Communion Agreement. The Full Communion Agreement shall bind The United Methodist Church and the Full Communion Expression through December 31, 2028, at which time it shall expire unless extended by mutual agreement of The United Methodist Church and the Full Communion Expression. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Discipline* that are not in the Constitution. This paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire at the adjournment of General Conference for 2028.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions, which consists of the twenty (20) total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Disci-*

pline. The twenty paragraphs are ¶¶ 248A, 431A-F, 673-680, 725, 1510, and 2553-2555. This paragraph outlines the requirements of a

¶431.

Petition Number: 20318-HS-¶431-!-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #3—Intent to Become a Full Communion Expression

ADD NEW ¶ 431B to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. On or before Friday, May 29, 2021, an entity may submit a petition of Intent seeking to become a Full Communion Expression by submitting a petition of intent to the Council of Bishops. The petition of intent shall be signed by at least fifty (50) ordained clergy or one bishop of The United Methodist Church. The petition of intent shall not be required to conform to any particular form but it shall establish that the proposed New Expression, if formed, shall meet the following minimum qualifications required of a Full Communion Expression:

a) Adopt a common core of beliefs, set forth in the New Expression's *Book of Discipline*, that shall include the following: the Apostles' Creed, the Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith, the General Rules, the Wesley hymns and a connectional way of life that includes superintendency, itineracy, and conferencing. However, superintendency, itineracy, and conferencing shall not be required to comply with the standards set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*; a New Expression shall have the right to modify each of those Wesleyan systems by adoption of its own standards.

b) Enter into a Full Communion Agreement with The United Methodist Church that includes the requirements for full communion established by ¶ 431A, with such agreement to be in full force and effect until December 31, 2028.

c) Enter into a Gracious Affiliation Agreement that shall govern missional support, pension support, and asset valuation and disposition by requiring The United Methodist Church and the Full Communion Expression to use the processes and procedures set forth in ¶¶ 431F, 1510, 2554, and 2555 with such agreement to be in full force and effect until December 31, 2030.

d) Enter into a Dispute Resolution Agreement that requires mediation and binding arbitration concerning all disputes over the arbitrability, meaning, or application of the Gracious Affiliation Agreement or any Gracious Reaffiliation Agreement with such agreement to be in full force and effect until December 31, 2030.

No additional requirements shall be required in any petition of intent.

2. The petition of intent shall be submitted to the executive secretary of the Council of Bishops either in person, by mail, or by electronic means and shall be received no later than May 29, 2021, at 5:00 P.M. local time at the executive secretary's resident office. Unless within thirty (30) days of receipt of the petition by the executive secretary, the Council of Bishops determines and states, in writing, based solely upon the face of the petition of intent, that the petition is deficient by its failure to meet one or more of the forgoing requirements then the petition shall be deemed approved. No proposed New Expression shall be barred from filing additional timely petitions of intent based upon the fact that an earlier petition was denied as deficient. Any application timely submitted and not acted upon by the Council of Bishops by June 30, 2021, shall be deemed approved. An entity meeting the qualification requirements becomes a "Qualified New Expression."

3. No later than June 30, 2021, the Council of Bishops through its duly authorized representative shall execute, on behalf of The United Methodist Church, the standardized Full Communion Agreement, Gracious Affiliation Agreement, and Dispute Resolution Agreement prepared pursuant to ¶ 431C and tender said agreements to each Qualified New Expression for the purpose of allowing the Qualified New Expression to enter into the agreements after authorization is received from its organizing conference. No such agreement shall be effective unless and until a Qualified New Expression is recognized as a Full Communion Expression pursuant to ¶ 431E.

4. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions which consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶248A, ¶¶431A-F, ¶¶673-680, 725, 1510 and ¶¶2553-2555. This paragraph first establishes the requirements for a petition

¶431.

Petition Number: 20319-HS-¶431-\$-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #4—Agreements between The United Methodist Church and Full Communion Expression

ADD NEW ¶ 431C to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. *Full Communion Agreement*—The General Council on Finance and Administration is hereby authorized to prepare a standardized form Full Communion Agreement consistent with the terms of ¶ 431A for use by The United Methodist Church and New Expressions. The standardized form shall be completed and submitted to the Council of Bishops no later than May 1, 2021. A duly authorized representative of the Council of Bishops is hereby authorized to execute such form agreements on behalf of The United Methodist Church. The Full Communion Agreement shall be in effect until December 31, 2028.

2. *Gracious Affiliation and Gracious Reaffiliation Agreements*

a) The General Council on Finance and Administration is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a standard form Gracious Affiliation Agreement incorporating the processes and procedures set forth in ¶¶ 431F, 1510, 2554, and 2555 for use by The United Methodist Church and a Full Communion Expression. The standardized form shall be completed and submitted to the Council of Bishops no later than May 1, 2021. A duly authorized representative of the Council of Bishops is hereby authorized to execute such form agreements on behalf of The United Methodist Church. The standardized form also shall be publicly available and disseminated to the Conference Board of Trustees for each annual conference. The Gracious Affiliation Agreement shall be in effect until December 31, 2030.

3. *Dispute Resolution Agreement*

The General Council on Finance and Administration is hereby directed and authorized to prepare a standard form Dispute Resolution Agreement that incorporate the processes and procedures set forth in ¶¶ 431F, 1510, 2554, and 2555 for use by The United Methodist Church and Full Communion Expressions no later than May 30, 2021. The terms of the agreement shall require use of the processes established by the Dispute Resolution Agreement in any dispute involving (a) The United Methodist Church and one or more Full Communion Expressions and (b) any dispute between Full Communion Expressions. The terms of the Dispute Resolution Agreement shall require the entities involved in any dispute to share equally the costs and expenses of any mediator or arbitrator. A duly authorized representative of the Council of Bishops is hereby authorized to execute such form agreements on behalf of The United Methodist Church. The Dispute Resolution Agreement shall be in effect until December 31, 2032.

4. Unless noted otherwise, all provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions, which consists of the twenty (20) total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673–680, 725, 1510 and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph authorizes and

¶431.

Petition Number: 20320-HS-¶431-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #5—Qualified New Expression Organizing Conference

ADD NEW ¶ 431D to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. Between the period from May 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022, each Qualified New Expression may hold an organizing conference for the purpose of establishing a new expression of Methodism. Each representative elected by a Qualified New Expression's caucus at an annual conference shall be conclusively deemed qualified to serve as a representative at a New Expression's organizing conference and shall be seated as a voting representative of the organizing conference. A person elected to serve as annual conference representative may serve as a representative solely in the organizing conference for the Qualified New Expression for which that person was elected.

2. Each Qualified New Expression may seat additional at-large representatives with such Qualified New Expression being solely responsible for determining any qualifications for, and the number of, at-large representatives at the organizing conference. A Qualified New Expression may select at-large representatives that are greater in number than the representatives elected by annual conferences of The United Methodist Church. A Qualified New Expression may select as an at-large representative for the organizing conference a delegate to an annual conference who was not elected as a representative of the annual conference.

3. Qualified New Expressions shall make decisions using democratic processes but are free to establish their

own internal rules of order for the organizing conference. In order to facilitate organizing conferences' use of democratic processes, such conferences may employ technological alternatives to in-person conferences, including, but not limited to, multiple geographic sites (including remote sites participating via simulcast). Organizing conferences may employ electronic voting (including remote electronic voting). Such voting methods and procedures are solely the responsibility of the Qualified New Expressions.

4. Each organizing conference shall be free to establish its *Book of Discipline* by majority vote of the annual conference representatives and the at-large representatives voting as a single house. A Qualified New Expression shall have the right to choose whether to have a constitution and, if adopted, the provisions of such constitution. Each Qualified New Expression shall have the right to establish its doctrinal statements, set its own standards for church membership, ordination, superintendency, and all other matters of polity and doctrine. Notwithstanding anything in this subparagraph, a Qualified New Expression that fails to adopt provisions sufficient to fulfill the intentions listed in ¶ 431B before June 30, 2022, shall cease to be a Qualified New Expression and shall not be entitled to the benefits of status as a Full Communion Expression nor to employ the procedures available to Full Communion Expressions. A Gracious Affiliation Agreement may not be employed by a local church seeking to join an expression of Methodism that is not a Full Communion Expression.

5. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2022. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions, which consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673–680, 725, 1510 and ¶¶ 2553-2555. This paragraph sets limited requirements for an organizing

¶431.

Petition Number: 20321-HS-¶431-!-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #6— Full Communion Expression

ADD NEW ¶ 431E to the *Discipline* as follows:

No later than August 1, 2022, each Qualified New Expression desiring to become a Full Communion Expression shall lodge its *Book of Discipline* establishing its adoption of the common core, an executed Full Communion Agreement, an executed Gracious Affiliation Agreement, and an executed Dispute Resolution Agreement with the executive secretary of the Council of Bishops. The *Book of Discipline* so lodged shall be in writing and in a PDF form that may be posted directly on the Internet. No later than August 15, 2022, the Council of Bishops shall verify that the New Expression's *Book of Discipline* adopts the common core and that the Full Communion Agreement, Gracious Affiliation Agreement, and Dispute Resolution Agreement have been executed; the Council of Bishops is free to establish their own internal procedure to verify such compliance. After such verification, the Council of Bishops shall notify such Qualified New Expression that it is a Full Communion Expression not later than August 22, 2022. The Council of Bishops shall arrange to have a copy of each Full Communion Expression's *Book of Discipline* posted online and available to the general public for review and download no later than August 22, 2022. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions which consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673–680, 725, 1510 and ¶¶ 2553–2555. This paragraph establishes a simple procedure to

¶431

Petition Number: 20322-HS-¶431-\$-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #7—Gross and Net Missional Shares and Missional Resource Allocation Formula

ADD NEW ¶ 431F to the *Discipline* as follows:

1. Beginning on July 1, 2023, and continuing on each

July 1 through 2027, each Full Communion Expression shall submit and certify its total professing membership as of May 1 to the General Council of Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church. For each Full Communion Expression, the General Council of Finance and Administration shall calculate a gross missional share by dividing the Full Communion Expression's total professing membership by the sum of The United Methodist Church's total professing membership plus all Full Communion Expression's professing membership as of May 1 of the current calendar year. The gross missional share shall be a percentage calculated to four decimal places. Each Full Communion Expression's gross missional share shall be calculated separately for each year through 2028. The gross missional shares calculated for 2027 shall be used for Fiscal Year 2028 and for calculations made under ¶ 2554. If a Full Communion Expression fails to provide its total professing membership as of May 1 of any calendar year on or before July 1 of that year, the General Council of Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church shall make a good faith estimate of total professing membership for that Full Communion Expression and such estimate shall be used for all calculations for the applicable period.

2. Through the close of The United Methodist Church's fiscal year 2028, each Full Communion Expression shall commit to pay, each fiscal year, their gross missional share of the following budgeted line items of The United Methodist Church: *a)* that portion of the World Service Fund used to support central conferences, said proportion being calculated by General Council on Finance and Administration but expressly excluding all budgeted amounts for those boards, commissions, and institutions identified in subparagraph 3 of this paragraph; *b)* that portion of the Episcopal Fund representing salaries, housing, and office expenses to support bishops in central conferences, said portion being calculated by General Council on Finance and Administration; *c)* the Black College Fund; *d)* the Africa University Fund; *e)* General Commission on Archives and History; and *f)* the General Administrative Fund.

3. Through the close of The United Methodist Church's fiscal year 2024, each Full Communion Expression shall commit to pay, each fiscal year, their gross missional share of the following budgeted line items of The United Methodist Church: *a)* the General Board of Church and Society; *b)* the General Board of Discipleship; *c)* the General Board of Global Ministries; *d)* the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; *e)* the General Commission on Communication; *f)* United Methodist Women; *g)* the General Commission on Religion and Race; *h)* the General Commission on the Status and Role of Wom-

en; and i) the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

4. On July 15 of each calendar year through 2028, the General Council of Finance and Administration shall provide each Full Communion Expression with its gross missional share percentage and an invoice for the total amount of each budgeted line item as required under this paragraph. Said invoice amount is referred to herein as the missional invoice amount and shall be payable in full by the Full Communion Expression by close of The United Methodist Church's fiscal year. Beginning in fiscal year 2024 and for each fiscal year through 2028, each Full Communion Expression shall pay an amount equal to one half of its prior fiscal year's missional invoice amount on or before July 1 of the fiscal year; such amount shall be credited as a payment on its current year missional invoice amount.

5. The phrase "net missional share" shall be an amount equal to an Full Communion's Expression's missional invoice amount multiplied by the actual percentage of budgeted items paid by professing members of The United Methodist Church for a fiscal year. Each Full Communion Expression's net missional share shall be calculated for each fiscal year through 2028.

6. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire December 31, 2028. The provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over, and shall not be limited by, any other provisions of the *Book of Discipline* except the provisions of the Constitution.

Rationale:

This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for multiplication of expressions which consists of the 20 total paragraphs to be added to the *Book of Discipline*. The twenty paragraphs are ¶ 248A, ¶¶ 431A-F, ¶¶ 673–680, 725, 1510, and ¶¶ 2553–2555. This paragraph creates two categories of missional

¶431.

Petition Number: 20658-HS-¶431; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Update Name of the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships

Amend ¶ 431.3 as follows:

3. The ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships shall consult with the Council of Bishops in establishing the guidelines for the adminis-

tration of the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund (see ¶ 814).

Amend ¶ 437 as follows:

¶ 437. In pursuit of its responsibilities and in order to deepen and expand the ecumenical and interreligious ministries of The United Methodist Church, the Council of Bishops shall receive the input and support of the ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships (ACEIR).

Amend ¶ 438 as follows:

¶ 438. *Membership*—Members of the ~~OCUR~~ ACEIR shall be elected by the Council of Bishops as follows:

1. The ~~OCUR~~ ACEIR shall be composed of two episcopal members as determined by the Council of Bishops, including the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops. One of the episcopal members shall be from a central conference.

2. One person from each jurisdiction, one person from the central conferences in Africa, one person from the central conferences in Europe, and one person from the central conference in the Philippines. The bishop who is not the ecumenical officer shall be counted as one of these eight persons. Each jurisdictional or central conference will nominate two candidates, and the Council of Bishops will elect members from this pool of nominees.

3. It is recommended that the Council of Bishops ensure that the United Methodist membership persons be inclusive of ethnic representation, youth, young adults, and women, with a minimum of five laity.

4. Two members with voice and vote from our Full Communion Ecumenical Partners

5. The chairperson and secretary of the Council of Bishops Leadership Team on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, or its successor group, shall be nonvoting members of the ~~OCUR~~ Steering Committee ACEIR.

Amend ¶ 439 as follows:

¶ 439. *Staff*—1. There shall be an ecumenical staff officer of The United Methodist Church to be selected by the Council of Bishops. The work of the ~~OCUR~~ ACEIR shall be facilitated by the ecumenical staff officer who shall be in charge of the day-to-day work of the ~~OCUR~~ ACEIR. The ecumenical staff officer shall be the ~~OCUR's~~ ACEIR's principal administrative and executive officer.

2. Additional staff shall be selected in number and responsibility as determined by the Council of Bishops.

3. The ecumenical staff officer shall report to the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops. All other staff members shall report to and serve at the pleasure of the ecumenical staff officer.

4. The staff of the ~~OCUR~~ ACEIR shall be positioned in locations to be determined by the Council of Bishops.

Amend ¶ 441 as follows:

¶ **441. Responsibilities and Powers**—Responsibilities and powers of the ~~OCUIR~~ ACEIR shall be as assigned by the Council of Bishops.

Amend ¶ 442.1 as follows (ONLY IF THE OTHER PETITION AMENDING ¶ 442 IS NOT ADOPTED. This other petition removes OCUIR from the paragraph, which would make the below amendments unnecessary):

¶ **442. Full Communion with Other Churches**

1. To fulfill the vision of full communion between The United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there shall be a Joint Commission on ELCA/UMC Full Communion. The commission shall serve the following functions:

- a) Coordinate the implementation of action taken by the two churches to achieve full communion.
- b) Assist joint planning for mission.
- c) Facilitate consultation and common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future.
- d) Report regularly and appropriately to each church.

The United Methodist membership of this commission shall be the ~~ecumenical~~ ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops and one lay and one clergy member of ~~OCUIR~~ ACEIR elected by ~~OCUIR~~ ACEIR.

Amend ¶ 447.1 as follows:

1. Nominations to the CFO shall be made by the CFO Executive Committee, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships and sent to the Council of Bishops and to the entire Committee on Faith and Order for their review.

Amend ¶ 571.4 as follows:

4. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and the ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships, shall work out plans of cooperation with these churches. The General Board of Global Ministries shall serve as the agent of The United Methodist Church for a continuing dialogue looking to the establishment of mission priorities with special reference to matters of personnel and finance.

Amend ¶ 642.2 as follows:

2. It is recommended that this annual conference structure be composed of two United Methodists from each district (complying with ¶ 610.5), one of whom shall be district coordinator for Christian unity and interreligious relationships and shall serve as liaison with local church ministry areas on Christian unity and interreligious relationships. Additional members may include per-

sons from The United Methodist Church or other member churches of Churches Uniting in Christ as directed by the conference to ensure ecumenical expertise and interchange with other agencies. Laypersons from The United Methodist Church shall be professing members of local churches. *Ex officio* members of the annual conference structure for Christian unity and interreligious relationships shall include the conference ecumenical officer(s), if elected, and any United Methodists residing within the conference bounds who are members of the following: ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships of the Council of Bishops~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships, the governing board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist delegation to the most recent World Council of Churches Assembly, and the United Methodist delegation to the most recent plenary meeting of Churches Uniting in Christ.

Amend ¶ 705.1 as follows:

1. *Nominations by Conferences*—a) Each annual and missionary conference in the United States, upon recommendation from a committee composed of the bishop and the General and jurisdictional conference delegation, and having allowed opportunity for nominations from the floor, shall elect persons to be submitted to a jurisdictional pool. The jurisdictional nominating committee shall select persons for election to the following general church bodies: Connectional Table; General Board of Church and Society; General Board of Discipleship; General Board of Global Ministries; General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; The United Methodist Publishing House; ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships; General Commission on Communication; General Commission on Religion and Race; and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Jurisdictional conferences may decide that persons elected by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States for inclusion in the jurisdictional pool shall not serve as members of the jurisdictional nominating committee.

Amend ¶ 705.5 as follows:

5. *Other General Agencies*—a) Each jurisdictional conference shall elect members from the jurisdictional pool nominated by the annual and missionary conferences in the United States (¶ 705.1) in accordance with the specific membership provisions of those agencies as set forth in the *Book of Discipline*: General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (¶ 1502.1a), The United Methodist Publishing House (¶ 1602), ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecu-

menical and Interreligious Relationships (§ 437), General Commission on Communication (§ 1807), General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (§ 2104), and General Commission on Religion and Race (§ 2003). With the exception of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (§ 1502.1) and The United Methodist Publishing House (§ 1602.1) the number of additional members to be elected shall be allocated by the secretary of the General Conference so as to insure to the extent possible that membership of each agency reflects the proportionate membership of the jurisdictions based upon the combined clergy and lay membership, excluding episcopal members. In the determination of proportionate allocation, minor fractions shall be rounded down and major fractions rounded up to the nearest integer, and there shall be no minimum number of additional members assigned to any jurisdiction. Insofar as possible, the nominating committee shall select from the jurisdictional nominating pool for the election of persons to fill the additional membership positions from their jurisdictions insuring diversity as otherwise provided in the *Book of Discipline* (§ 705.4b).

Amend § 2201.3 as follows:

3. Other paragraphs of the *Discipline* notwithstanding, members may serve for three (3) four-year terms and may serve on one other general agency. The standing committee shall be composed of one bishop from each jurisdiction and from each central conference named by the Council of Bishops; one ordained minister and one layperson from each jurisdiction and from each central conference who are delegates to the General Conference and named by the Council of Bishops; central conferences with more than three episcopal areas shall elect additional members, lay or clergy, up to the total number of episcopal areas in the central conference; one bishop, one ordained minister, and one layperson who are members of the General Board of Global Ministries and named by the General Board of Global Ministries. The central conference bishop assigned to the ~~Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships~~ Advisory Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relationships shall also be a member of this committee. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of women, lay, clergy, youth, and young adults. The chairperson of the committee shall be a central conference bishop and shall also serve as a member of the Connectional Table. (This legislation will take effect immediately upon action by General Conference for the membership of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters for 2021-2024.)

Rationale:

The ecumenical work of The UMC is no longer carried out by an independent “office” but is housed under the

Council of Bishops. The names “OCUIR” and “OCUIR Steering Committee” do not reflect this change and should be updated to reflect the advisory role of this body to the ecumenical

¶431.4.

Petition Number: 20316-HS-¶431.4-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend § 431.4

4. The United Methodist representatives to ecumenical organizations in the following paragraphs shall be selected by the Council of Bishops. Such representatives shall be inclusive in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, age, persons with disabilities, sexual orientation, economic condition, and region. Representatives shall reflect consideration of balances required both by The United Methodist Church and the respective ecumenical organization. Consideration shall be given to persons named to jurisdictional and central conference pools (see § 705.1.b, c). When proxies are needed to substitute for United Methodist representatives to a specific ecumenical organization, the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops is authorized to name such proxies. Consideration shall be given to United Methodists residing in the area of the ecumenical organization’s meeting, and to the inclusivity of the delegation. The names of proxies shall be reported at the next meeting of the Council of Bishops. Representatives and proxies from The United Methodist Church to various working groups of any of the ecumenical organizations in the following paragraphs shall be named by the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

This petition seeks to create continuity through the *Book of Discipline* in the spirit of § 4 Article IV of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church. Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition includes sexual orientation. May we continue to build a church that

¶434.2.

Petition Number: 20323-HS-¶434.2; Haley, Robert - Montvale, NJ, USA.

Oversight of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Add new subparagraph after § 434.2a

¶ 434.2a

2. *National or Regional Ecumenical Organizations*—a) *The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*—The United Methodist Church is a member of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., its predecessor Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren churches having been charter members of such body.

Statements by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC) reflect upon The United Methodist Church (UMC). However, the Book of Resolutions states that only the General Conference is competent to speak or act in the name of The UMC. It is therefore the position of The UMC that the NCC shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate or appointee for public office. Public office shall be deemed to include but not limited to the following: local, state, and federal office; judges for any court; local state and federal cabinet positions; cabinet-level positions; planning boards; advisory boards; law enforcement offices. Failure of the NCC to voluntarily adhere to the above may be deemed as cause for The UMC to terminate its membership in the NCC. The UMC General Board of Church and Society shall annually, in the month of January, notify the NCC in writing, of the above position.

Rationale:

The *Book of Resolutions* states, "Only the General Conference is competent to speak or act in the name of The United Methodist Church." Yet, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC) issues public statements, claiming to represent The UMC. Oversight of the NCC

¶442.

Petition Number: 20324-HS-¶442; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Amend Paragraph 442 to Reflect a Fuller Range of Our Full Communion Partnerships

Amend ¶ 442 as follows:

¶ 442. *Full Communion With Other Churches*

1. To fulfill the vision goal of full communion visible unity and partnership in mission between The United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America its full communion partner churches, there shall may be a Joint Commission on ELCA/UMC Full Communion Coordinating Committee established for

every full communion relationship, as stipulated in the relevant resolutions establishing such a relationship. The commission—Each coordinating committee shall serve the following functions:

a) Coordinate the implementation of action taken by the two churches to achieve full communion.

b) Assist joint planning for mission.

c) Facilitate consultation and common decision making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future.

d) As requested, to produce resources to facilitate joint study, prayer, and worship among the churches.

d) e) Report regularly and appropriately to each church.

The United Methodist membership of ~~this commission~~ such committees shall be the ~~ecumenical~~ ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops or a designated proxy, and one layperson and one clergy person member of ~~OCUR~~ elected by OCUR as named by the Council of Bishops.

2. In such cases where The United Methodist Church has overlapping full communion agreements between two or more distinct partner churches, the various coordinating committees may combine the work of the several committees into one multilateral coordinating committee, upon approval of the Council of Bishops and the appropriate bodies within the partner churches.

3. Any coordinating committee may recommend to the Council of Bishops and appropriate bodies within the partner churches the suspension of further meetings of the committee at such a time that it deems the animating goals of the committee to have been accomplished. The Council of Bishops and appropriate body within any partner church may reconvene any such coordinating committee as may be fitting to further the unity and joint mission of the churches.

2. 4. The Council of Bishops shall receive reports of the ongoing partnership of The UMC in the central conferences that are in full communion with ~~Lutheran Churches and other denominations~~ churches in order to learn from each other how to "provide leadership toward the goal of understanding, reconciliation, and unity within the church—The United Methodist Church and the church universal" (¶ 403.1e).

Rationale:

This petition brings UMC terminology into harmony with language being used by ecumenical partners. Furthermore, it introduces flexibility in the convening of such coordinating committees and opens up the possibility of reducing the number of general church committees

through temporary suspension of meetings or by combining several committees into one.

¶570.

Petition Number: 20645-HS-¶570-G; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops. Kemper, Thomas - Atlanta, GA, USA for General Board of Global Ministries.

Delete "Autonomous Methodist Church" Category and Replace with More Precise Terms

Amend 'Section V' heading as follows:

Section V. ~~Autonomous Methodist Churches~~, ~~Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches~~, ~~Affiliated United Churches~~, ~~Covenanting Churches~~, ~~Concordat Churches~~

Delete ¶ 570.1, renumber subsequent subparagraphs:

1. ~~Autonomous Methodist Churches~~

~~a) A self-governing church of the Wesleyan tradition and which may or may not have entered into the Act of Covenanting with The United Methodist Church.~~

~~b) Autonomous Methodist churches are not entitled to send delegates to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.~~

Amend ¶ 570.4 as follows:

4. ~~Covenanting Churches~~

~~a) An autonomous Methodist church, an affiliated autonomous Methodist church, an affiliated united church, other Methodist or Wesleyan church, or another Christian church which has entered into a covenanting relationship with The United Methodist Church through an Act of Covenanting as described in ¶ 573.~~

~~b) The Act of Covenanting does not warrant that the covenanting churches shall be entitled to delegates at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, or at the equivalent body of the covenant partner.~~

Amend ¶ 571 as follows:

¶ 571. ~~Autonomous Methodist Churches~~, ~~Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches~~, and ~~Affiliated United Churches~~, and member churches of the World Methodist Council—1. Certificates of church membership given by clergy in one church shall be accepted by clergy in the other church.

2. When the requirements of such a Methodist church for its ordained ministry are comparable to those of The United Methodist Church, clergy may be transferred between its properly constituted ministerial bodies and the annual and provisional annual conferences of The Unit-

ed Methodist Church and their ordination(s) recognized as valid, with the approval and consent of the bishops or other appointive authorities involved in compliance with ¶ 347.

3. A program of visitation may be mutually arranged by the Council of Bishops in cooperation with the equivalent leadership of the ~~autonomous Methodist church~~, affiliated autonomous Methodist church, and/or affiliated united church, and/or World Methodist Council member church.

4. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, shall work out plans of cooperation with these churches. The General Board of Global Ministries shall serve as the agent of The United Methodist Church for a continuing dialogue looking to the establishment of mission priorities with special reference to matters of personnel and finance.

Amend ¶ 572, including its heading, as follows:

Becoming An ~~Autonomous Methodist~~, ~~Affiliated Autonomous Methodist~~, or ~~Affiliated United Church~~, or ~~self-governing church~~ from Central Conferences

¶ 572. When conferences outside the United States that are parts of The United Methodist Church desire to become an ~~autonomous Methodist~~, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church, or self-governing church, approval shall first be secured from the central conference involved and this decision be ratified by the annual conferences within the central conference by two-thirds majority of the aggregate votes cast by the annual conferences.

1. The conference shall prepare a historical record with reasons why affiliation and/or ~~autonomy~~ self-governance is requested and shall consult with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (¶ 2201) on proceedings for affiliation and/or autonomy.

2. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters and the conferences involved shall mutually agree on the confession of faith and the constitution of the new church. These shall be prepared with care and shall be approved by the conferences.

3. Preparation of its *Discipline* is the responsibility of the conference(s) desiring affiliation and/or ~~autonomy~~ self-governance.

4. Upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, when all disciplinary requirements for affiliated and/or ~~autonomous~~ self-governing relationship have been met, the General Conference through an enabling act shall approve of and grant permission for the conference(s) involved to become an

~~autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church, or self-governing church.~~

5. Then the central conference involved shall meet, declare the present relationship between The United Methodist Church and the conference(s) involved dissolved, and reorganize as an ~~autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church,~~ or self-governing church in accordance with the enabling act granted by the General Conference. The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall assist in this process and, when the plans are consummated, report to the Council of Bishops. The proclamation of affiliated and/or ~~autonomous self-governing~~ status shall then be signed by the president of the Council of Bishops and the secretary of the General Conference.

6. A plan of cooperation shall be developed in accordance with ¶ 571.4.

Amend ¶ 573.1 as follows:

¶ 573. 1. A covenanting relationship, whose elements were adopted by the 1992 General Conference in an action called an “Act of Covenanting Between Christian Churches and The United Methodist Church” may be established between ~~autonomous Methodist churches,~~ affiliated autonomous Methodist churches, affiliated united churches, other Methodist or Wesleyan churches, or other Christian churches and The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

The UMC values its worldwide connectional relationships in mission with non-UMC churches. Various and inconsistent uses of “autonomous” in naming some of these relationships, is confusing. To eliminate the confusion, this petition deletes the category “Autonomous Methodist Church;” related petition “Affiliated United Methodist Church” deletes “autonomous.”

¶637.3.

Petition Number: 20325-HS-¶637.3-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Accountability of Bishops

Amend by addition to ¶ 637.3 the following:

¶637.3. *h)* To evaluate the ministry of the bishop annually, the Conference Episcopacy Committee shall provide a format through which every member of the annual conference may offer his or her perceptions of the work of the bishop. The means of evaluating the effectiveness of the bishop shall be based on what is being used by the annual conference for the evaluation of its pastors (¶ 635.2q).

Rationale:

Evaluation tools have improved considerably since the early days when the concept was introduced into the *Discipline*. It is time for cabinet members to face the same kind of evaluation that the pastors face. Bishops are elders and are not above comparable evaluation.

¶1405.

Petition Number: 20326-HS-¶1405-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Update GBHEM Objectives

Delete current ¶ 1405 and replace with the following text

¶ 1405. Objectives—The objectives of the board shall comprise all the objectives assigned to the offices, divisions, and units under its authority:

1. To serve the mission of The United Methodist Church by developing principled, Christian lay and clergy leaders for the life of the church, the academy, and the world.

2. To cultivate a culture of call, vocational discernment, and spiritual formation that helps all persons discover, claim, and flourish in God’s call for their lives.

3. To serve as stewards for the intellectual life of the church.

4. To encourage and celebrate the worldwide emergence and growth of Methodist-related education and ministry, and to promote access to United Methodist-related institutions of education at all levels.

5. To interpret and promote the value of Methodist-related education and ministry; and to foster a Christian presence in institutions related to The United Methodist Church.

6. To prescribe professional ministerial Courses of Study for a systematic entrance into licensed and ordained ministry. Courses include the diversity of contextual, linguistic, and disability needs for clergy leadership formation.

7. To create and sustain a culture of assessment and evaluation that maintains standards of academic excellence.

8. To provide services that promote a climate of acceptance and empowerment within Methodist-related institutions of education and professional church-related ministries for women, racial and ethnic persons, and people with disabilities; and to advocate on behalf of these persons in questions of equity and justice.

9. To collaborate with other general boards, agencies, and commissions of The United Methodist Church to strengthen leadership for a worldwide church.

10. To steward fiduciary and legal relationships with institutions and ministries, and steward the human, institutional, and material resources entrusted to the board.

¶1406.

Petition Number: 20327-HS-¶1406-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Update GBHEM Responsibilities

Delete current ¶ 1406 and replace with the following text

¶ 1406. *Responsibilities*—The responsibilities of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall be:

1. To establish and review the vision, mission, objectives, and strategic direction of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and to advocate for its worldwide mission and vision throughout the United Methodist connection.

2. To give strategic direction to the staff and to delegate authority to board executives through general administrative oversight.

3. To determine policies and programs, establish goals and priorities, project long-range plans, and evaluate programs and services of the board.

4. To establish appropriate organizational structures within the board of directors and the staff to achieve established objectives, including writing bylaws, electing officers, and establishing committees.

5. To elect, supervise, and evaluate the general secretary (¶ 713), and fill vacancies in accordance with ¶ 712.

6. To develop the processes, tools, platforms, and institutions that support the leadership of laity and clergy for the life of the church, the academy, and the world.

7. To interpret, promote, and administer the loans and scholarships programs of the board.

8. To develop, maintain, and assess standards for the credentialing of individuals for vocational ministry.

9. To provide effective processes for the evaluation of United Methodist-related institutions of education with concern for the quality of their performance and the integrity of their mission.

10. To promote and foster intercultural, intracultural, and cultural competencies and dialogue in leadership development.

11. To develop and maintain worldwide cooperative relationships with United Methodist boards, agencies,

commissions, educational institutions, and ministry structures; as well as with other denominations, and ecumenical and interfaith agencies for the full discharge of the objectives of the board and the fulfillment of the initiatives of the General Conference.

12. To provide counsel and guidance to related professional associations and fellowships for the fulfillment of the mission and vision of the board.

13. To provide for the allocation of funds to institutions and to programs related to the board.

14. To develop long-range investments, fund-raising projects, and revenue-generating programs in alignment with the church's mission that shall provide for, insofar as possible, the continuous flow of resources for United Methodist-related education and ministry in perpetuity. The board shall adhere to the investment guidelines adopted by the General Conference.

15. To steward property and endowments as entrusted to the board and related institutions and to maintain and enforce adequate trust and reversionary clauses.

16. To provide support deemed necessary for the agency to carry out the work of the board.

¶1414.2.

Petition Number: 20328-HS-¶1414.2-G; Fuller, Dan - Chenango Falls, NY, USA.

Reform University Senate Membership

AMEND ¶ 1414.2 by DELETING the entire section and ADDING the following new paragraph in its place:

1414.2. The senate shall be composed of fifteen voting members who, at the time of their election, shall be members of The United Methodist Church, shall have actively engaged in the work of education, and who, in the judgment of the General Conference, are by reason of professional background or education qualified for the work of evaluating educational institutions. Election is for the quadrennium, except in cases where conflict of interest arises as a result of change in employment. For the fifteen positions, three shall be nominated by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, six shall be nominated by the National Association of Schools and Colleges of The United Methodist Church, three shall be nominated by the Council of Bishops, and three shall be nominated by the Legislative Committee of the General Conference that deals with Higher Education. Of the persons nominated by each of the groups above, one-third shall be chief-executive officers of United Methodist-related educational institutions and at least one-third shall be persons who are not professionally affiliated with a United Meth-

odist-related educational institution. Care should be taken that women, racial and ethnic persons, and representatives from the United Methodist-related Black colleges and graduate theological seminaries are among those nominated. At the General Conference at which the above nominations are announced, additional nominations may be made from the floor. There shall be no limit on the number of nominations that can be made from the floor. The members shall be elected by the General Conference and the fifteen nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected, with any replacement members made necessary by death or resignation being elected by the University Senate from the remaining nominees. The general secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the associate general secretaries of the Divisions of Higher Education and Ordained Ministry of that board shall serve as ex officio members of the senate, with voice but without vote. There shall be one staff representative on the senate from the General Board of Global Ministries, with voice but without vote, named by the general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries. The senate, at its originating meeting each quadrennium, shall elect as its president a member not professionally affiliated with a United Methodist-related educational institution.

This process shall become effective immediately upon passage and shall be used to elect a new University Senate prior to the close of the 2020 General Conference. If the specified numbers of nominees are not provided to the 2020 General Conference from each respective nominating group, then they shall be filled with nominations from the floor.

Rationale:

Nearly half of University Senate voting members are chief executives of United Methodist-related educational institutions, with others occupying prominent positions in such schools. This presents conflicts of interest, hindering the Senate's capacity for objectively evaluating these institutions. This petition would also make the Senate more representative of the General Conference.

¶1422.

Petition Number: 20329-HS-¶1422-G; Hardt, Philip - Glendale, NY, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Christian Focus of UMC Seminaries

Amend ¶ 1422.3 by adding a new subsection c and relettering the subsequent subsections accordingly:

- ¶ 1422. *Goals*—1. . . .
- 2. . . .

3. *Schools of Theology of The United Methodist Church Located in the U.S.A.*—a) Schools of theology of The United Methodist Church located in the U.S.A. exist to serve The United Methodist Church, primarily in the United States, but with concern for the witness of the church around the world. In addition to their commitment to United Methodism, they also serve students of other denominations in witness to United Methodism's ecumenical relationships. . . .

b) . . .

c) As Christian institutions serving the ecumenical body of Christ in general and The United Methodist Church in particular, these schools of theology shall not shall offer any course work, degree program, or formal certificate explicitly designed for the exclusive purpose of training religious leaders of non-Christian faith communities, if they are to remain eligible to receive financial support for their current operating expenses through the Ministerial Education Fund. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall monitor compliance with this provision.

e-d) . . .

d e) . . .

Rationale:

We seek good relations with our non-Christian neighbors. But it is counterproductive, and poor stewardship of our limited resources, when our own seminaries, which we fund, actively promote the spread of religions that reject the gospel. Church institutions should be undivided in loyalty to Christ and his mission for us.

¶1422.

Petition Number: 20331-HS-¶1422-G; LaSalle, Ann - Ocean Springs, MS, USA.

Regional Flexibility in Theological Education

AMEND ¶ 1422 by ADDING a new subsection #6 as follows:

6. Other disciplinary provisions notwithstanding, any annual conference shall be allowed, on a provisional basis, to approve additional graduate theological seminaries to those listed by the University Senate according to the following rules:

(a) The seminary must be located within 300 miles of at least one congregation of the annual conference, must be accredited by the appropriate educational body (in the United States, the Association of Theological Schools), must have at least one United Methodist faculty member, and must provide opportunities for United Methodist students to take and receive credit for all courses in graduate

theological studies required of United Methodist candidates for commissioning and ordination (§ 324).

(b) The vote by the annual conference shall be debatable and should include consideration of the school's compatibility with our church's Doctrinal Standards and Social Principles.

(c) The vote shall be preceded by opportunity given to a representatives of the school to make a presentation and to answer questions from members of the annual conference.

(d) If a school is thus approved by the annual conference, the school shall be a valid option for clergy candidates in that annual conference for five years, unless this approval is extended by subsequent action of either the annual conference or the University Senate. For purposes of church law, all appropriate provisions in the *Discipline* applying only to schools of theology approved by the University Senate shall, within the approving annual conference, also apply to the school thus approved.

(e) If a school is thus approved by the annual conference, then the bishop, cabinet, and conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall have a responsibility to work in consultation with the school to ensure that United Methodist students are provided with sufficient opportunities for support in preparing for ministry in The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

The University Senate has made unhelpful decisions in unduly restricting which seminaries our clergy may attend. This has hurt our ability to recruit as many highly gifted new ministers as we need. This petition allows much-needed flexibility, within proper safeguards, for UMC leaders who best know their local contexts.

¶1422.3.

Petition Number: 20330-HS-¶1422.3-\$-G; Land, Robert - Amboy, IN, USA.

Christian Faculty

Amend ¶ 1422.3 by adding a new subsection c and relettering the subsequent subsections accordingly:

¶ 1422. *Goals*—1. . . .

2. . . .

3. *Schools of Theology of The United Methodist Church Located in the U.S.A.*—a) . . . b) . . .

c) After January 1, 2022, all persons newly hired for full-time faculty at these schools of theology that are not part of a wider university shall be required, as a condition of being offered the position, to affirm that they are committed Christians who are part of a local trinitarian Christian church, and that after beginning employment

at the school they would remain committed to the historic Christian faith and to being part of a local trinitarian Christian church. If a United Methodist school of theology believes it is important for its institutional mission to be granted an exception for a particular faculty position, then the school may petition the University Senate to be granted an exception. The University Senate shall respond to such requests within a reasonably prompt time period and shall not grant any such requests if it would result in more than 20 percent of the school's full-time faculty being individuals hired under this exception provision.

τ d) . . .

d e) . . .

Rationale:

It is important for our seminaries to have clear identities as unapologetically Christian institutions, providing a spiritually supportive Christian environment for students. The late activation date would prevent this from affecting any current faculty, or any search processes that have already started.

¶2500.

Petition Number: 20702-HS-¶2500-!-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #16—Grants for New Expressions of Methodism

Add a new ¶ 2556 as follows:

¶ 2556. *Grants for New Denominational Expressions of Methodism*

The General Conference shall establish in its 2021-2024 budget an amount to be used for grants that may be provided to new denominational expressions of Methodism that remain in ecumenical or covenantal relationship with The United Methodist Church. These grants reflect and honor a history of shared participation and support in mission and will help with transition costs. The total amount of funds available for such grants shall be determined by the General Conference. Factors considered in determining this amount should include but not be limited to:

- the number of churches in each New Denominational Expression of Methodism
- the number of professing members of those churches
- the amounts remitted to their respective annual conference for payment of general apportioned funds in jurisdictional conferences, or the General Administration and Episcopal Fund in central conferences by those churches in the most recent completed fiscal year.

No monies used for this purpose shall be paid from donor restricted funds or funds subject to a trust. No monies used for this purpose shall be paid from reserves designated or allocated for the funding of pension plans or retiree medical benefits, nor should such payments compromise the ability to fulfill such obligations. Care shall be taken to ensure that the use of all funds shall be consistent with the intent of the donor. The allocation of such grant funds is to be overseen by the Council of Bishops as part of an ecumenical agreement, with advice from a professional mediator, and administrative support and counsel from the

General Council on Finance and Administration and other agencies that can assist this process.

Rationale:

Resources should be offered to New Denominational Expressions of Methodism that continue in ecumenical relationships. This creates a framework for further discernment within a determined pool of funds for all new expressions. The Council of Bishops should offer oversight and receive guidance and input from a wide range of sources.

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20642.

Petition Number: 20642-HS-NonDis-; Holley, Del - Knoxville, TN, USA for Jurisdictional Study Committee.

Jurisdictional Study Commission Petition #5-Number of Active Bishops in Jurisdictions

Based on the report and recommendations of the Jurisdictional Study Committee and the need to allow time for Jurisdictional Committees on Episcopacy and Colleges of Bishops to engage in the assessment of missional needs and financial capacity of each jurisdiction that will be part of the determination of the number of active bishops in the jurisdictions authorized by the 2024 General Conference, the number of active bishops authorized for assignment in each jurisdiction during the 2021-24 quadrennium shall be the same number as authorized by action of the General Conference for the 2017-20 quadrennium; provided, however, that this legislation is not intended to limit the authority of any jurisdiction or its College of Bishops to arrange a plan of episcopal supervision, organize its annual conferences and episcopal areas, or assign its active bishops in a manner that allows the jurisdiction to function with a number of bishops fewer than that authorized by this legislation, if the jurisdiction so chooses. This legislation shall not be construed in any way to limit the constitutional authority of the jurisdictional conferences (§ 40) or the Colleges of Bishops (§ 48). This legislation shall be effective immediately upon the close of the 2020 General Conference.

Rationale:

See Jurisdictional Study Committee report for full rationale—This non-Disciplinary petition proposes setting

the number of active bishops in each jurisdiction for the 2021-24 quadrennium at the same number authorized by action of the 2016 General Conference in order to allow jurisdictional committees on episcopacy and Colleges of Bishops to engage

Petition 20721.

Petition Number: 20721-HS-NonDis; Danker, Ryan - Arlington, VA, USA.

Equally Valuing Lay Seminary Professors

The General Conference directs the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to equally value both clergy and lay seminary faculty at regular rank who are members of The United Methodist Church, or other historic Wesleyan denominations, in the allocation of Ministerial Education Funds (MEF). No differentiation in funding through the MEF to the thirteen (13) official seminaries of the church is to be based on the clergy or lay status of regular rank Methodist seminary faculty.

Rationale:

A portion of MEF funding administered by the GBHEM is currently based on the clergy or lay status of seminary faculty members, allotting more for clergy faculty members than for lay. Valuing clergy faculty above lay faculty devalues the work of lay seminary faculty and their ministry in the church.

Proposed Resolutions

R2046.

Petition Number: 20530-HS-R2046-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Sexual Ethics as Integral Part of Formation for Ministerial Leadership

Update and Readopt Resolution 2046

Replace current Resolution 2046 with the following text:

WHEREAS, since 1996, The United Methodist Church has called for "United Methodist-related schools of theology to provide training on the prevention and eradication of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct within the ministerial relationship" (2008 *Book of Resolutions*, p.139; 1996 *Book of Resolutions*, p.131); and despite ongoing effort, these behaviors persist in epidemic proportion.

WHEREAS, the need continues for focused attention to: professional and sexual ethics, related biblical theological foundations, and the practices of pastoral care and self-care, and that competence in these dimensions of human experience and in the development of self-awareness is critical in ministerial leadership formation.

WHEREAS, Boards of Ordained Ministry, episcopal leaders and cabinets, and annual conferences have responsibility and oversight for ministry processes, supervision, training, and accountability, so they must ensure that ministry leaders participate in training and have access to resources that encourage healthy practices, appropriate boundaries, and ongoing accountability for the sake of the health of clergy, churches, and communities,

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church continues a program of ministerial readiness regarding professional ethics, sexual ethics, healthy boundaries, and self-care as a standard aspect of United Methodist seminary and Course of Study education. And that candidacy programs, licensing school, and other ministerial preparation opportunities offered by annual conferences and Boards of Ordained Ministry will incorporate curriculum that meet these goals.

Goals—Future ministerial leaders are to:

1. understand healthy interpersonal boundaries as integral to enabling the trust necessary for ministry;
2. recognize sexual ethics in ministry as an issue of appropriate use of power and avoidance of abuse rather than exclusively an issue of "sexual morality";

3. understand the appropriate use of power as it relates to consent;

4. understand the importance of professional ethics, including one's own denominational policies and expectations;

5. learn the role of judicatories in prevention and response to clergy sexual misconduct;

6. become knowledgeable about human sexuality, one's own sexual self, and how to deal with sexual feelings that may arise for congregants and vice versa;

7. appreciate how sexual integrity contributes to spiritual wholeness and that this is vital to ministerial formation and personal health;

8. become conversant with scriptural and theological resources for all of the above.

Competencies—Ministerial candidates are to:

1. practice healthy life-choices and work/life balance;

2. be sexually self-aware;

3. become comfortable talking about issues of sexuality;

4. develop skills to provide pastoral care and worship leadership on sexuality issues;

5. be committed to sexual justice in the congregation and in society at large.

Content Areas—Students will study:

1. theology of power, privilege, and abuse (including topics such as: fiduciary duty of ministry; professional ethics paradigm; conflicts of interest; healthy boundaries; predators vs. wanderers);

2. human sexuality (including topics such as: dating, intimacy, and work/life balance; pregnancy, birth control, and abortion; pornography and objectification of persons; shame and abuse; consent and vulnerability; genetic, cultural, and physiological aspects of gender and sexuality);

3. sexual misconduct in ministry (including topics such as: boundary violations; judicatory processes of justice-making; secrecy; inappropriate uses of social networking and communication technologies);

4. pastoral care (including topics such as: working with victims of sexual violence and abuse; transference; dual relationships; confidentiality and stewardship of information; referrals);

5. best practices of ministry (including topics such as: cybersafety, safe sanctuaries [Joy T. Melton, *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church*, Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1998]; healthy communications, clergy self-care; lifelong sexuality education; ministering with sex offenders).

This common core of expectations will provide a baseline of preparation for ministerial leaders in The United Methodist Church. The regular, up-to-date sexual ethics training currently required of all clergy under appointment can build upon this shared foundation instead of having to start with the basics every time (2008 Book of Resolutions, p. 139). District committees on ordained ministry and conference boards of ordained ministry should expect clergy candidates to have a working knowledge and understanding of these facets of professional ethics and sexuality in ministry before they are appointed to serve a church. The continued training for clergy during residency can also build on this common core.

Seminaries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (in the case of Course of Study) shall identify curricular and co-curricular opportunities each year to meet these goals.

R3125.

Petition Number: 20580-HS-R3125; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Revise and Readopt Resolution 3125, "Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom HaShoah)"

Revise and readopt Resolution 3125 as follows:

In recent years, Jewish communities have honored the custom of remembering the Holocaust (*Shoah*) on 27 Nisan of the Jewish calendar. This observance has become a powerful means of educating people about this heinous crime against humanity and sensitizing them to present and potential violence rooted in racial hatred.

WHEREAS, "In the twentieth century there is particular shame in the failure of most of the church to challenge the policies of governments that were responsible for the unspeakable atrocities of the Holocaust" ("Building New Bridges in Hope," *Book of Resolutions* 2008); and

WHEREAS, the same document observes, "[t]he Christian Church has a profound obligation to correct historical and theological teachings that have led to false and pejorative perceptions of Judaism and contributed to persecution and hatred of Jews";

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference calls The United Methodist Church to contrition and repentance of its complicity in "the long history of persecution of the Jewish people" and asks the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships Council of Bishops, the General Board of Church and Society, and conference level ecumenical and interreligious ministries to give special programmatic emphasis to Holocaust awareness and to prepare resources for use in local churches;

annual conferences, and their Conference Commissions on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns or equivalent structures to enable them our churches to become more aware of the Holocaust and its impact, and

Be it further resolved, as a sign of our contrition and our solidarity with the Jewish community, the General Conference urges the observance of *Yom HaShoah*, Holocaust Memorial Day each spring (The date of *Yom HaShoah* may be calculated for each year by using a Hebrew date converter.) in United Methodist local churches and urges the Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships Council of Bishops, in cooperation with other agencies of The United Methodist Church, in a time of increasing anti-Semitism, to work within the structure of our own church to find ways to support the work against anti-Semitism in the world today and to prepare resources for local churches to use in observing *Yom HaShoah*.

We continue to pray for God's grace to speak in Jesus' name against bigotry, hatred, genocide, or other crimes against humanity whenever and wherever they are perpetrated.

Rationale:

With ongoing global tensions and increases in hate crimes against religious minorities, it is important for The UMC to continue to express its solidarity with the Jewish community among other communities. Officially recognizing the importance of Holocaust Memorial Day is one small expression of this solidarity.

R4031.

Petition Number: 20578-HS-R4031-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development

Renew Resolution 4031 as amended:

EDUCATION 4031. The Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development Reaffirmation and Reauthorization of the World Service Special Gift—#05-06-04

WHEREAS, the 2004 General Conference of The United Methodist Church approved the Global Education Fund and authorized the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to raise \$4 million under the World Service Special Gift (#05-06-04) during the 2005-2008 quadrennium for the purpose of developing a new generation of principled Christian leaders who will inspire and transform the people of the world, and lead The United Meth-

odist Church to become a truly global church through the worldwide cooperative network of Methodist schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools; and

WHEREAS, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry has been engaging in infrastructure and capacity building of United Methodist and Methodist-related schools, colleges, universities, and theological schools in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, at a request of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Council of Finance and Administration, and the Connectional Table of The United Methodist Church, approved the name change from the “Global Education Fund” to the “Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development” in September 2006; and

WHEREAS, leadership development is recognized as one of The United Methodist Church's most prominent and galvanizing issues and needs, and the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development is a dynamic mechanism for leveraging the connectional resources of The United Methodist Church to address its leadership crisis and to support the church's global mission; and

WHEREAS, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry serves as the lead program board for leadership development; and

WHEREAS, continuing to reaffirm the resolution for the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development and reauthorizing the raising of up to \$4 million under the World Service Special Gift ~~by the 2012 General Conference~~, are absolutely necessary to undertake this initiative;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the ~~2012~~ 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church reaffirms the Methodist Global Education Fund for Leadership Development and reauthorizes the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to raise up to \$4 million under the World Service Special Gift; ~~during the 2013-2016 quadrennium; and~~

Be it further resolved, that said fund will be raised and administered under the leadership of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. ~~; and~~

~~Be it finally resolved, that this resolution be recorded in the Book of Resolutions of the 2012 General Conference.~~

~~Voted on by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, August, 2011.~~

ADOPTED 2008

AMENDED AND READOPTED 2012

RESOLUTION #4031, 2008 *Book of Resolutions*

R9999.

Petition Number: 20644-HS-R9999-G; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Resolution to Affirm and Implement a Full Communion Relationship with The Episcopal Church in the United States of America and The United Methodist Church

Adopt Resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ calls us to unity so that the world may believe; and

WHEREAS, The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church share a common heritage of faith, ecclesiological parentage, and a commitment to mission; and

WHEREAS, “A Gift to the World: Co-Laborers for the Healing of Brokenness,” the report of The UMC-TEC bilateral dialogue, affirms that there are no church dividing doctrinal issues between our churches and outlines a pattern for the mutual recognition and interchangeability of ordained ministry;

Therefore, be it resolved, that upon parallel action by The Episcopal Church, The United Methodist Church hereby adopts the recommendations of “A Gift to the World” as our churches:

1) recognize one another as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in which the gospel is rightly preached and taught; and that the basic teaching of each respective church, being grounded in the Scriptures, confessed in the church's historic creeds, and attested in the authoritative historic documents and formularies of our churches, is consonant with the gospel and is sufficiently compatible;

2) recognize the authenticity of each other's baptism and Eucharist, and extend sacramental hospitality to one another's members;

3) recognize the authenticity of our respective ministries, including:

- the ministry bestowed upon all lay members of our churches by baptism;

- each other's ordination of persons to priest/elder and deacon;

- each other's polity and ministries of oversight in the ordained (Episcopal) and consecrated (United Methodist) office of bishop;

4) embody our conviction that our ministries of bishops are fully valid and authentic, and broaden and deepen our ecumenical partnerships, by sharing in the apostolic charisms and mutual adaptations of our respective episcopacies in the following manner:

- The United Methodist Church pledges that, effective January 1 in the year following the ratification of such an agreement by both churches, consecrations of United Methodist bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full-communion partners with The Episcopal Church. One of these three shall be a bishop in The Episcopal Church. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands;

- The Episcopal Church pledges that, effective January 1 in the year following the ratification of such an agreement by both churches, ordinations and consecrations of Episcopal bishops will include at least three bishops drawn from common full-communion partners with The United Methodist Church and with at least one United Methodist bishop present. These bishops will be present and participate in the laying on of hands.

5) recognize the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all ordained Methodist elders in full-connection with all ordained priests in The Episcopal Church, and all ordained Methodist deacons in full-connection with all ordained deacons in The Episcopal Church, subject always to canonically or constitutionally approved invitation;

6) authorize the establishment of a joint commission fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches to:

- coordinate the implementation of these resolutions;
- assist joint planning for mission;
- facilitate consultation and common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future; and

- report regularly and appropriately to each church;

7) direct this joint commission to:

- plan an appropriate liturgy to celebrate the full-communion inaugurated by this agreement, consonant with the spirit described in paragraph 10 of “A Gift to the World”;

- work with the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and liturgical matters as may arise, always subject to approval by the appropriate decision-making bodies of the two churches;

- formulate joint educational materials and encourage continuing education opportunities for lay and clergy leaders regarding full-communion; and

- explore the possibility and appropriateness of joining the work of the several joint commissions/coordinating committees that currently exist between our churches and our common full-communion partners;

8) agree to cultivate and maintain active partnership and consultation with one another in the promotion of unity with other churches and closer relations with other faith traditions. Ecumenical and interreligious agreements entered into by one church represented in this agreement with another church or religious group shall not be understood to impose or imply any formal relationship with the other.

FURTHERMORE,

WHEREAS, the purpose of this full-communion agreement is to foster public witness to the unity of our churches through concrete actions of joint mission, ministry, worship and service; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church have distinct geographical presence and jurisdiction worldwide; and

WHEREAS, each of our churches is a member of a global communion with churches or judicatories that have autonomy and jurisdiction in their own geographically defined areas; and

WHEREAS, neither church claims jurisdiction to act outside the geographical boundaries of its several judicatories;

Be it further resolved, that the practical application of this full-communion agreement applies solely in areas where judicatory bodies of our two churches overlap; and

Be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church encourages central conferences whose areas do not overlap with The Episcopal Church to pursue dialogue and ecumenical partnership with those member bodies of the Anglican Communion present in their area.

Rationale:

This resolution is the fruit of decades of dialogue and reflects the unique history of this relationship. “A Gift to the World,” the report from the dialogue committee, is included as ‘ADDENDUM B’ in The Council of Bishops’ Leadership in Ecumenical and Interreligious Ministries Quadrennial Report printed in the

Ordained Ministry

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2

Nashville, Tennessee

Report of the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission Report

The Charge to the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission

The 2016 General Conference authorized the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission to undertake its work based on the charge stated in Petition 60506-MH-NonDis, which proposed the following issues for further exploration by the commission:

1. Articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order;
 2. Explore and clarify the relationship between the ministry structures in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and a possible *General Book of Discipline*. The commission should provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—"The Ministry of the Ordained"—and Chapter Three—"The Superintendency." Members of the commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*;
 3. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor's degree) in fields related to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary;
 4. Examine funding sources and patterns for theological and ministry education and formation;
 5. Explore student debt accumulated by United Methodist seminary graduates and ways to reduce costs.
- a. The commission, in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order, submits the study document entitled *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*. This document is included below in this report.
 - b. Previous commissions and General Conferences have determined that our current approach to licensing, ordination, and conference membership does not align well with our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry—and as a result, our sacred work was hindered.
 - c. In answering this call, through this offering, the commission intends the following:
 - Dialogue—initiate a churchwide conversation about the meaning of ordination;
 - Educate—Explore the deep historical and theological texture embedded in our tradition and our current practice of ministry;
 - Lead—Offer a pathway forward by wrestling with present and past conceptions of ordained and licensed ministry and present legislation to the 2024 General Conference that will bring the church's polity related to licensed and ordained clergy into alignment with the church's understanding of a theology of ordained ministry.
 - d. By carefully examining and courageously expressing the scriptural, ecclesial, practical, and theological groundings of ordained ministry, the church claims and celebrates the best of our Wesleyan tradition.
2. Explore and clarify the relationship between the ministry structures in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and a possible *General Book of Discipline*. The commission should provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—"The Ministry of the Ordained"—and Chapter Three—"The Superintendency." Members of the commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*.
 - a. At its first two meetings, the commission provided input for chapters two and three.

Organized by the 2016 resolution and pursuing this charge, the commission is pleased to offer this report.

Observations and Analysis

1. Articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order.

- b. A team representing the commission attended working sessions preceding each meeting of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (SCCCM) in collaboration with the Committee on Faith and Order to continue the work on drafting the *General Book of Discipline* as mandated by General Conference.
 - c. Through consultation with and concurrence by the commission, the SCCC recommends to General Conference to defer until 2024 to present a draft of the *General Book of Discipline*.
 - d. Legislation submitted by the SCCC for 2020 includes the commission as a part of the *General Book of Discipline* work for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. Future intent is to continue this partnership and consultation with the SCCC. Both the SCCC and the commission are submitting legislation to continue the commission's consultation to the *General Book of Discipline*, should the commission be approved for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.
3. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor's degree) in fields relevant to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary.
 - a. The commission's work on articulating a theology of ordained ministry must precede decisions about what the church requires for the education of clergy. The commission's further examination of the formation and education of clergy is inherent in the *A Sacred Trust* document, which is part of the commission's full report.
4. Examine funding sources and patterns for theological and ministry education and formation.
 - a. The commission recommends adoption of petition #20206 (ADCA p. 514), which states: "All United Methodist annual conferences receiving Ministerial Education Fund allocations shall submit annual reports to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry detailing how the Ministerial Education Fund allocations were spent."
- b. This directive should continue to be considered by the 2021-2024 commission as the theology of ministry document continues to develop.
5. Explore student debt accumulated by United Methodist seminary graduates and ways to reduce cost.
 - a. Through a partnership and grant funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and Wespeth Benefits and Investments are doing extensive work on financial literacy and clergy debt. A grant team has been created to monitor the levels of financial literacy for clergy and the level of clergy debt that impacts clergy on a regular basis. Through this grant, numerous projects and educational opportunities have been developed to assist clergy in strengthening their skills in the area of financial leadership and alleviating clergy debt.
 - b. One project developed through this grant that has had great impact is the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship. Five hundred twenty-one students have been awarded funds over the last three years. Students who received scholarships in the first year reported collectively avoiding \$760,338 in additional debt.
 - c. Because of the extensive work this grant team is doing, the commission chose to focus their efforts on other issues that were more in line with the capacity and expertise of commission members. The grant team is covering the question of clergy financial literacy and debt using far more resources and expertise than are available to the commission for this area of work.
 - d. For a more complete report of this project, please see the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's report.

Conclusion and Request for Further Study

Focused and sustained conversation throughout The United Methodist Church will be needed in the next quadrennium as the church responds to the study document for *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*. This document immediately follows below after the commission's recommendation for further study.

The 2017-2020 commission requests renewal for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. The resolution to renew the commission includes details related to the charge to the commission, the scope of its task, and its funding (see ADCA p. 1061, Petition # 20661, Ordained Ministry – Non-Disciplinary Resolution).

A Sacred Trust

A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church

Study of Ministry Commission, July 2019

Summary

Tasked by the 2016 General Conference “to articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church,” the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission (SMC) seeks to stimulate a conversation that deepens the church’s theological self-understanding in realizing God’s mission for a transformed world. Previous commissions and General Conferences have determined that our current approach to licensing, ordination, and conference membership does not align well with our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry—and as a result, our sacred work is hindered. As resurrection people, we yearn for revival of the Wesleyan movement, and we offer this articulation in prayerful hope for the renewal of the church amidst the current denominational crisis.

The Study of Ministry Commission affirms the sacramental, incarnational, and prophetic nature of ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. Rooted in a Wesleyan understanding of grace and holiness, we view ordained ministry as an embodied posture of service and an enfolded participation in the sublime movement of Spirit—in pursuit of a transformed world. The SMC has defined *ordination* as follows:

Ordination is a visible and outward sign of the sacred trust of clergy leadership. It is a gift of God, given to Christ’s church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ordination is a holy act of the church universal that empowers clergy, who manifest an inward and spiritual grace, to represent the divine initiative at work in the community through the life of apostolic ministry. As a sacramental offering, rooted in our common baptism and one Table, ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world.

In this light, we offer three key claims for dialogue, analysis, and implementation: (1) Ordination initiates elders and deacons into a posture of service and rule of life known as “order”; (2) Because of the sacramental nature of ordination, both deacons and elders bear responsibility for nurturing and leading the sacramental life of the church; (3) By ordaining rather than licensing clergy, the church reclaims its historical and theological position in relation to the ecumenical church.

We recognize that none of these represent the current practice of ministry in The United Methodist Church. The church’s mission will be well-served by the decoupling of ordination and conference membership and recovering the distinctive ministry of “traveling” and “local” ordained ministers (deacons and elders). We are convinced that, through deep theological engagement with one another, we can discover a new future together filled with the hope and promise of the apostolic tradition that we have inherited. At the end of this paper, we will offer questions that can guide the church’s conversation to discover together how our history and theology can push us into an imaginative rethinking of our posture and practice of ministry in relationship to the missional exigencies of the world in which we live today.

Preface

We inherit a beautiful and complicated tradition, gracefully broken and always experiencing renewal. Birthed in a lay-driven movement, The United Methodist Church constantly seeks the Spirit’s refreshing to become more relevant, vibrant, and dynamic. While we do not always exhibit the best of who we yearn to be; through conferencing, councils, and commissions, the church strives to be the people of God, a baptized community, the body of Christ. In pursuit of this vision, Study of Ministry Commissions have been charged by General Conferences to wrestle with our Wesleyan way of ordained, licensed, and lay ministry. For decades, these commissions have prayerfully examined the identity, shape, and scope of United Methodist ministry in order to more faithfully steward God’s mission for the church. Through constant reflection, the church strives for Christian perfection.

For the sake of renewed mission and ministry, the 2016 General Conference has directed this commission “to articulate a theology of ordained ministry for The United Methodist Church.” We have been called to make more deliberate and visible the embedded and hidden principles presently at work. Over the centuries, the practice of ordained ministry in Methodism has changed, morphed, and evolved in an organic manner that does not always systematically integrate our rich theology, history, and polity. However well-reasoned these changes have been—many times emerging from urgent missional necessity—they

have not been altogether cohesive, coordinated, and comprehensive; sometimes they have had unanticipated downstream consequences.

For example, the expansion of *licensing* has fundamentally altered the meaning of the sacraments and the sacramental nature of ordination, conference membership, and the orders. Licensing local pastors, who are not ordained, once was an exception to ensure that sacraments are available to all Christians. Over time, as congregations have increasingly expected clergy leadership to minister to the membership of the local parish rather than the mission field of a circuit, and as the cost of providing adequate compensation to elders has increased, this exception has increasingly become the norm. In effect, licensing has become a functional response to a missional challenge. This response, however, is not the only available option: For instance, elders could travel in circuits with responsibility for sacramental administration for a cluster of congregations. Such a practice, which has historical precedent, addresses a missional need while honoring more fully an apostolic understanding of the sacraments. In recent years, instead of deploying elders, the church has licensed pastors.

As one reads *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church*, one will observe the absence of theological discussion of licensing. This omission is not accidental. We maintain that licensing does not emerge from the theological and historical texture of our Wesleyan heritage. It is our intent here, in pursuit of traditioned innovation, to further the mission of The United Methodist Church that emerges from our historic commitment to advanced theological education and mutual accountability.

With that being said, local pastors are gifts to the church who offer the “means of grace.” We celebrate the faithful ministry that local pastors offer to the church every day. They are called and bear fruit. In fact, in some conferences, local pastors are *not* truly “local”; they are included in the pool of itinerant ministers (without the guarantee of an appointment) that the cabinet considers when making appointments through the conference. Moreover, we particularly honor the ministry of local pastors in racial/ethnic congregations and rural churches, who have driven transformational ministry in the face of extraordinary odds.

Observing the misalignment between our history, polity, and theology of ordained ministry, the General Conference called for an intervention to correct this misalignment. In answering this call, through this offering, this Study of Ministry Commission intends to:

1. **Dialogue**—initiate a theological conversation about the meaning of ordination;
2. **Educate**—explore the deep historical and theological texture embedded in our tradition and our current practice of ministry;
3. **Lead**—offer a pathway forward by wrestling with present and past conceptions of ordained and licensed ministry.

By carefully examining and courageously expressing the scriptural, ecclesial, practical, and theological groundings of ordained ministry, we claim and celebrate the best of our Wesleyan tradition.

True to both our spiritual and intellectual heritage, it is our prayerful hope that this document, *A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church* (2019), will evolve and eventually come alongside *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism* (2008) and *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion* (2004) as teaching resources for deeper formation. To some extent, it completes the threefold model set out in the pivotal ecumenical text, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper 111, 1982).

A Sacred Trust emerges from decades of Study of Ministry commissions and countless conversations, meetings, dialogues, and papers. Although our work here is descriptive, critical, and constructive, we are neither *creating* a theology of ordination nor revamping the ordination process. In articulating a theology of ordained ministry, we seek to give voice to what is already happening in our midst as we participate in the *Missio Dei* (mission of God). Toward this end, in this conversational document, we will engage the following questions:

- What is ordination and how do we define it?
- What is our theology of ordination? And why does it matter?
- What are the major historical insights that contribute to theological affirmations?
- What do we observe as the key challenges to our theology and practice of ordination?
- How might we proceed and offer constructive proposals for change?

Believing that transformational Christian leaders play a key role in the church’s renewal, here we flesh out historical and contemporary implications of Methodism’s theological orientation to ordained Christian leadership.

First, by way of introduction, we provide a *definition* of ordination in the Wesleyan way. In the second section, we unpack this definition and probe “The Meaning of

Ordination.” Next, in the third section, we explore “The Action of Ordination” and what it accomplishes in the life of the ordinand and the life of the church. Then, in the fourth section, we examine “The Nature of Ordained Ministry” as a process of calling, equipping, forming, and sending. The fifth section harkens back to our past in view of what lies ahead, considering “How Our History Informs Our Theology and Future Polity.” Finally, in section six, we offer some concluding remarks and pose some questions that might further advance the conversation.

To be sure, as we articulate a theology of ordination for The United Methodist Church—through the Wesleyan lens of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason—new practical considerations with ecclesiastical and organizational implications will emerge. While noting that theology and practice are “always already” intertwined, it is not our intent to settle the organizational implications with immediate legislative changes. Instead, through an iterative and collaborative process, we hope the ensuing conversation will point toward a clear pathway for the 2024 General Conference.

Theology enlivens the church by providing language to the sublime mystery of God that we experience in Christian community. When we give voice to Spirit work, we issue a summons to participate in this divine gift. Because ordination is an extension of baptism, ordained ministry deepens the Christian call to world-transforming mission. In this vein, the theology of ordained ministry articulated herein expresses our hope for a church that has a clear self-understanding, and that is both well-positioned and actively engaged in relevant, significant mission. The church entrusts ordained ministers, who live in a clergy covenant of trust and mutual accountability, to lead this task—indeed it is a “sacred trust.”

I. Introduction

Ordination is a visible and outward sign of the sacred trust of clergy leadership. It is a gift of God, given to Christ’s church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ordination is a holy act of the church universal that empowers clergy, who manifest an inward and spiritual grace, to represent the divine initiative at work in the community through the life of apostolic ministry. As a sacramental offering, rooted in our common baptism and one Table, ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world.

When United Methodists gather for *revival* at annual conference, the service of ordination inspires the church. A fresh wind of Spirit blows, and God breathes life upon the communion of saints during divine worship. The joyous festival of song, dance, examination, and Word all

point toward that moment when the presiding bishop utters the collective prayer of the people: “Almighty God, pour out your Holy Spirit.” Profound hope resides in this simple petition. Through words that remember the baptismal and Communion invocations, as the gathered assembly of laity and clergy empowers its ordinands for the office and work of deacons and elders, the church creates itself anew.

The church yearns for transformation. Christians in the Wesleyan tradition seek always to experience a change of heart and life that ushers both the church and world more into the likeness of God. Ordained clergy offer unique leadership that stewards this transformation. During the annual conference, the service of ordination ritually marks the importance of this work, and the trust and expectations the church places in its clergy. As such, ordination is a defining moment in this worship service, the life of the church, and the life of the ordinand—mysterious, sacred, sublime—and still, very ordinary. Yes, it is in the everyday, the quotidian, that this mystery is inhabited. The Spirit comes close and unites the called, the community, and the holy One who calls each of us by name.

The church participates boldly and humbly in God’s mission in the world. This mission is not ours to create. Rather, we are called into the gift and the work, and our prayer is sung: “Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be” (Charles Wesley, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” 1747). Our task is to serve as means of grace—even to mirror the grace of Jesus Christ—so that the entire creation might know itself as beloved of God. All Christians are sent, as the other Wesley preached, “to spread scriptural holiness over the land” (John Wesley, “Scriptural Christianity,” 1744). On the job, in our families, and throughout the world, followers of Christ bear witness to the extravagant love of God.

“The people” constitute the church as the community of the baptized. Every Christian is called to ministry by virtue of baptism. (The word *laity* is derived from *laos*, meaning “the people.”) *By Water and the Spirit* explains: “This ministry, in which we participate both individually and corporately, is the activity of discipleship . . . grounded upon the awareness that we have been called into a new relationship not only with God, but also with the world. . . . This is the universal priesthood of all believers” (§56). This community of the baptized is regularly renewed and nourished at the Table as it seeks to fulfill God’s mission in the world.

The church exists for the sake of the world’s transformation, and as such does not stand apart from the world. Laity, in particular, live in this intersection of the world and church, and in so doing they lead and participate in ministry through the church’s “common life of

gratitude and devotion, witness and service, celebration and discipleship” (2016 *Book of Discipline* [BOD], ¶ 126). Their “Christ-like examples of everyday living as well as the sharing of their own faith experiences of the gospel” demonstrate how “all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness” (¶¶ 127, 128). As such, the “people called Methodists” have maintained that the church cannot exist without the ministry of the laity. The rapid growth of the Methodist movement, at its origins and in the present day, occurs in large part because the church is lay-driven and Christ-inspired.

From the laity, some are called to ordained ministry as clergy. While laity and clergy alike participate in the church’s ministry, ordained ministers are called to a new relationship to the church and a new manifestation of lifelong leadership. Ordained clergy are baptized Christians who surrender themselves to a “rule of life,” known as an order, which frames their service to the church. In fact, the word *ordination* itself comes from the root word for “order” (*ordo*). At its best, this service imitates the humility and downward mobility modeled in the ancient Christian hymn recorded in Philippians 2:6-11. Shaped by the church, ordained clergy help to shape the church’s contemporary mission and ministry. Initiated into this rule of life and a mode of accountability known as conference membership, the ordained serve God by engaging in an ongoing process of spiritual formation as they steward the renewal of the church through the ministries of Word, Sacrament, Order, Love, and Justice.¹

Complicated Concepts and Terminology

In The United Methodist Church, although both deacons and elders are ordained into orders, elders uniquely bear responsibility for the ministry of order, which is often reduced to the administration of a congregation’s life. This duplication of terms, in some ways, muddles a concept that carries layers of meaning, and unwittingly conflates identity and function.

Historically, the “order” emerged in the monastic traditions of the first millennium of the church. Those persons who belonged to a particular order followed a unique organization of their lives in an intentional community that defined an essential purpose for its existence in a unique way; defense of the faith, solidarity with the poor, evangelism, and education are examples. The orders provided distinctive lenses through which its members understood their relationship to the church and the world; preached the gospel of Jesus; and ensured, sustained, and extended the apostolic mission and sacraments through-

out the world as “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries” (1 Corinthians 4:1 ESV).

To be ordained into an order today connects elders and deacons with an ancient tradition that extends into contemporary communities that share a common lens and way of life. While elders shepherd the temporal and spiritual life of a local church, both deacons and elders—as initiands in a rule of life grounded in the apostolic tradition—order the ministry of the denomination. Through their unique identities, both elders and deacons order the *whole* life of the church to ensure that the work of the Holy Spirit animates the life of the church and that Jesus Christ is presented over and over again through its work within and beyond its doors. This understanding of order, therefore, cuts across all parts of ministry.

Not only is the term *order* charged with mixed meanings, but also the concept of *clergy* has evolved over time and in different contexts—and now carries sometimes confusing and even contradictory historical traces. For example, during the decades between 1940 and 1968, The Methodist Church eliminated the positions of “local elder” and “local deacon.” These persons had completed their education and were ordained, but because they did not “travel,” their membership was held in the quarterly or district conference. After 1968, the status of “lay pastor” was established, only to be quickly replaced by the “licensed local pastor”: nonordained persons who have the responsibility to celebrate sacraments in their appointments and have conference membership (with only a very few specific limitations), even when their first year of education in the Course of Study has not yet been completed.

To compound our confusion even further, the term *pastor* has morphed from a historic *role* that was carried out by both clergy and laypersons who led churches into an official *clergy status* in the annual conference. Historically, the ordained were called “preachers” and “ministers,” not “pastors.” Exhorters preached in local settings, and stewards cared for congregations, while preachers itinerated, celebrated sacraments, and performed weddings. It is into this rich, and even winding, tradition that this paper intervenes. The conversation continues—hopefully with added clarity and insight.

In deciphering our rich past, we call attention to two historical focal points: the eighteenth-century separation of the Methodist movement in the Americas from the Church of England, and twentieth-century mergers that have given rise to the present-day United Methodist Church. We trace the complex relationship of *licensing*, which originated as a function of the nation-state, to *ordi-*

1. The 2016 *Book of Discipline* includes “Service” as a function of both elders’ and deacons’ ministries. We believe *service* is a posture of ministry rather than a function of it (see below).

nation, which has always been an ecclesial act. As Methodism has evolved from a frontier movement to a conglomerated denomination, our understandings of *clergy*, *traveling*, and *local* have reshaped the practice of ministry.

However malleable and obscured our theological articulation has been, today **we affirm the sacramental, incarnational, and prophetic nature of ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.** Rooted in a Wesleyan understanding of grace and holiness, we confirm that ordained ministry is an embodied and enfleshed participation in the sacred and sublime movement of Spirit in pursuit of a transformed world. Just as God brought order to chaos in Creation, through ordination, God's Spirit orders the church, invites the baptized community into renewed and relevant ministry, initiates ministers into a "rule of life," and propels us all into the new creation. Out of the significance of this gift of Spirit, we make three constructive theological assertions:

1. Ordination initiates elders and deacons into a posture of service and rule of life known as "order";
2. Because of the sacramental nature of ordination, both deacons and elders bear responsibility for nurturing and leading the sacramental life of the church;
3. By ordaining rather than licensing clergy, the church reclaims its historical and theological position in relation to the ecumenical church.

Ordination matters because, through clergy leadership, the church strives for transformation as a sacramental community. Deeply rooted in its ancient and apostolic nature, the church has established ordination as essential to its identity as a community grounded in Word and Sacrament. As Christians, we envision a new day that is already dawning but not yet fully among us. Ordained clergy, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, guide the church in living into this future.

II. The Meaning of Ordination

Ordination Is a Visible and Outward Sign of Sacred Trust

John Wesley, following his Anglican heritage, believed that the sacraments are an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" (*The Book of Common Prayer*). In the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, the outward signs of water, bread, and wine, signify (or point to) another spiritual reality that is manifested through their celebration among the assembly of the faithful. Ordination, though not a sacrament for United Methodists, is sacramental. It is an outward sign that points to a new, spiritual reality. Ordination is an effective

sign of the Holy Spirit's action empowering the ordained for an office and work of ministry in the church. Said another way, ordination is a means of grace. Because God is faithful and responds to the prayer of the church that has surrounded, supported, and formed a candidate over time, ordination confers the grace it signifies.

Ordination establishes a sacred trust between the holy Trinity, the church, and the ordained. The church entrusts the ordained to be stewards of the Word, of the sacraments, and of the apostolic tradition. The act of ordaining confers on the one being ordained this sacred trust, initiated by the Holy Spirit through call and confirmed by the church through a thorough formational process. The call to ordained ministry is a call to a particular kind of life, given over to the ways of God lived out through the ministries of the church. Ordination establishes a new identity and way of being in which the ordained assumes a new posture among the baptized, a posture of service that is shaped by the order into which one is ordained.

The sacred trust of ordination is shaped throughout the process leading up to ordination, formed through the historic examination of candidates before the annual conference, and established by the covenant between the ordained and the church in the general examination of the ordination liturgy. After the candidates for ordination are presented, the assembled people of God declare their assent and pledge on behalf of the whole church to "uphold them in their ministry" (2017-2020 *Ordinal*, 19).

The ordained are identified as "coworkers with all the people of God" and reminded that they are "called to serve rather than to be served." They are asked to affirm faith in the triune God and confidence in the holy Scriptures. They are charged to be faithful in prayer and in the spiritual disciplines as a way of patterning their lives after the teachings of Christ and leading the people of God to "seek peace, justice, and freedom for all people." They are asked to pledge loyalty to The United Methodist Church, "accepting and upholding its order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline," and submitting to mutual accountability with peers and supervisors alike, with the reciprocal expectation that they will be sustained and built up "in prayer, study, worship and service under the rule of life" of the order into which they are ordained (*Ordinal*, 19-20).

The laity and the ordained are thus bound to one another in this covenant of sacred trust; in the prayer of ordination, God blesses and affirms that covenant as the bishop, on behalf of the whole people of God, asks the Almighty to "pour upon the *candidate* the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a deacon [or elder] in Christ's holy church" (*Ordinal*, 25, 28).

Ordination Is a Gift of God to Christ's Holy Church Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

As a church, we believe that God hears our prayers and responds. In every age and time, the people of God need faithful leadership to navigate the tension between the reign of God announced by Christ and the petty fiefdoms of this world in which human will and desire still hold sway. The church in every age prays to ask God for leadership in such a time as this. God provides this leadership by calling forth candidates for ordained ministry, who are then formed, equipped, ordained, and sent to lead the church in bearing witness to the reign of God in the midst of a world so desperately needing to experience Christ's saving grace. In the ordination service, the people of God recognize and receive this gift. The prayer of ordination is the people's prayer, led by the bishop, who lays hands on the head of the ordained and calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit. While the sign-act of ordination is led by the bishop, the action of ordaining is God's work, the fulfillment of a call prayerfully discerned by both candidate and church over time (*Ordinal*, 6).

Ordination makes known some of the many ways the Holy Spirit has already been acting and continues to act in an ongoing way through the life of both the ordained and the church, signifying, not only our utter dependence upon God for the outcome of the church's prayer, but also our trust that the Holy Spirit can and will do things "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20 ESV). Ordination represents an outpouring of the trinitarian life through the church to the ordained who are equipped to lead and guide the church in the shared apostolic ministry of being taken, blessed, broken, and given for the life of the world.

Ordination Is a Holy Act of the Church Universal

As United Methodists, we believe that the grace of God is at work in us long before we become aware. By God's initiative, revealed most fully through Christ, grace frees us from the power of sin and leads us to live a life ever more fully reflective of God's loving intention. Because ordination is an outward and visible sign, it signifies an inward and spiritual grace. This grace is exhibited through a divine call, discerned mutually by both an individual and the church, and manifested through ministries that bear the fruit of the Spirit as the ordained continue to grow into a fuller expression of God's loving intention, being "made perfect in love" (2016 *BOD*, Wesley's Historic Questions, ¶ 336.3). Through grace, the ordained are formed in the ways of God to live a disciplined spiritual life in communion with all the faithful, and in ordi-

nation are sent to bear the fruit of the vine in which they abide (John 15:5).

As part of the church universal, The United Methodist Church shares a sacramental life with other communions and expressions of Christ's body, mutually recognizing God's work in baptism and Christ's presence in Holy Communion through one another's ministries. Similarly, the orders of ministry in The United Methodist Church are ecumenically recognizable, with distinctive roles for deacons, elders, and bishops, which is an important value in our ecumenical relationships and mutual ministry agreements, including those that honor and recognize that we are in full communion. Ecumenically, the ordained serve as ambassadors who represent "the divine initiative and expresses the connection of the local community with other local communities of the universal Church" (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry [BEM]*, "Eucharist," §29). What ties us together ecumenically also unites us in the global mission and witness of the church whose expressions may vary, but whose sacramental life is unified by the Spirit at work through our common apostolic ministry.

Ordination Empowers Clergy to Represent the Divine Initiative at Work in the Community Through the Life of Apostolic Ministry

To be apostolic is to be connected by faith and history with the witness of the apostles. The apostolic witness of the church stands in continuity with the good news of God revealed in the person and presence of Jesus the Christ (Mark 1:15) and made known by the power of the Holy Spirit at work through those whom Christ formed, equipped, and sent to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV). Following the trajectory of the apostles' ministries, the church's apostolic witness is relentlessly missional. The church itself is a sent community on the move, called to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 120). As *Sent in Love (SIL)* states it:

Maintaining the apostolicity of the church requires that a concern for continuity in the essentials of faith and practice be matched by an equal concern for an outward reaching missional perspective. From this perspective we are mindful that encountering the world with the gospel calls the church to ongoing reform and renewal of its life, a "traditioned innovation" that allows the church to express the life-giving truth of the gospel in fresh ways as the faithful encounter new people in new places (¶ 56).

Led by the Holy Spirit, the ordained help the church articulate and embody the apostolic witness of the present availability of the kingdom of God, which Jesus announced through incarnational, life-changing relationships and prophetic, world-shaping missional engagement.

Just as the church is called out of the world (the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, meaning “to be called out”) to be formed in Christlike living, so the ordained are called out of the church to be formed with a unique identity among the people of God. In order to represent the good news of the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed at work in the world, the ordained serve as a sign representing Christ’s persistent presence and promise both in the church, and through the church in the world. To re-present is to present Jesus Christ again in the world in all aspects of one’s work and life.

The work of laity and clergy together is a mutually shared expression of Christ’s ministry for the life of the world. The spiritual gifts identified in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 are clearly named as being given to the church “for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 NRSV). They are given to be formational, to draw the church into a unity of faith and knowledge, to spur it into a greater maturity expressed as “the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 NRSV). From the scriptural witness, it is clear that the spiritual gifts, including proclamation, evangelism, prophecy, teaching, exhortation, generosity, and leadership are given to the laity, the people of God. Any member of the body may, therefore, share in preaching, teaching, leadership, and ordering the life of the church; and every member has a share in the sacramental life of the church. While the tasks of ministry are shared and are not exercised exclusively by the ordained, ordained clergy lead these ministries in a representative way.

From within this general ministry of all believers, God calls, and the Church authorizes some persons for the task of representative ministry. . . . The vocation of those in representative ministry includes focusing, modeling, supervising, shepherding, enabling, and empowering the general ministry of the Church. Their ordination . . . is grounded in the same baptism that commissions the general priesthood of all believers (*By Water and the Spirit*, ¶ 57).

Just as an individual disciple may represent Christ through everyday life and witness, so the ordained also are given a distinctive representative ministry by God’s loving initiative. The ordained humbly offer themselves to serve as a focal point through whom Christ chooses to represent himself in ways that reveal his grace at work

in the life of the baptized and that transform the assembly into his body, empowered to represent his ministry in the world. This sense of representation is deeply consonant with our theology of the Table in *This Holy Mystery* (THM), “It [Holy Communion] is a re-presentation, not a repetition, of the sacrifice of Christ. . . . Nourished by sacramental grace, we strive to be formed into the image of Christ and to be made instruments for transformation in the world” (THM, 8-9).

After the Resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:21-22 NRSV). Apostolic authority comes from our participation in the mission of Christ, to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19 NRSV). The ordained are given authority by the church to represent Christ at Table and Font, to help the church see and know Christ who presides over every baptism and eucharistic feast, and who relentlessly leads the church out through ministries of compassion and justice in the world. The authority conferred by the church to administer the sacraments and to lead the church in its ministries is not to be understood as power over anyone or anything, but rather as the holy privilege of one carrying out the apostolic ministry of leading the people of God in becoming who they are by the grace of God.

As a Sacramental Offering, Rooted in Our Common Baptism and One Table, Ordination Bears Witness to the Mission of God at Work in the World

Together with all the people of God, the ordained are formed by the life of Christ made known at the Table. It is there that we “offer ourselves with praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ’s offering for us,” and there we pray that the Holy Spirit may be poured down upon us, and upon the gifts of bread and wine. “Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood” (UMH, 10). Every time the assembly gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, we offer ourselves to God with Christ and pray for the Holy Spirit to make us Christ’s body, an offering to the world in which we live (THM, 9). When ordained elders and deacons lead the peoples’ prayer together at the Table, they represent this dual movement of offering ourselves to God, who then offers us back to the world, the transformed ones who become agents of transformation. Together, the two orders appropriately and helpfully lead the people in the eucharistic movement of turning toward God in worship and turning toward the world in service.

The church, transformed by the life of Christ made known in the sacraments, itself becomes the bearer of the mission of God at work in the world. We believe that, “the life of the church is a sharing in the love of the triune God. The mission of the church is to communicate that possibility to a world ravaged by sin and in need of salvation” (*SIL* 17, ¶ 40).

It is God’s mission in the world, that both calls the church into being and makes it into a transformed instrument of transformation. The laity and the clergy together are the priesthood of the faithful who embody this mission, each with distinctive roles in carrying out the mission of the church. Reflecting on the marks of the church affirmed by the second ecumenical council in the fourth century CE, *Sent in Love* (¶ 16) identifies four convictions regarding God’s saving love that give life to our United Methodist sense of what it means to be God’s holy church in the world.

1. The saving love of God empowers a missional community (called to be apostolic).
2. The saving love of God is meant for all people (called to be catholic).
3. The saving love of God is transformative (called to be holy).
4. The saving love of God creates community (called to be one).

This fourfold movement helps us see the mission of God through the church’s confession and suggests that the work of the clergy and laity together can be seen in its trajectory. So, we can say that: United Methodist clergy are called to be sent, to lead the church to embody its apostolic witness to the reign of God breaking forth in the world. United Methodist clergy are called to be inclusive, leading the church to welcome all people into a loving, life-changing relationship with the living God. United Methodist clergy are called to a life of personal and social holiness, pilgrims on a grace-filled journey to be made perfect in love in order to lead the church in becoming a grace-filled agent of transformation in the world. United Methodist clergy are called as part of a community of love and forgiveness to lead the church to embody Jesus’ prayer that “they may be one, as we are one” so that the world may come to believe (John 17:21-22 NRSV).

Ordination bears witness to the mission of God at work in the world. The two orders of clergy offer complementary and distinctive gifts that can help the church embody the mission of Christ for the life of the world in ways that enable the church to be transformed even as it is serving as an agent of transformation in the world.

The authority given to deacons and elders should never be exercised as “power over” anyone or anything. It is always held in common with the church. Throughout his ministry, and expressly at his Last Supper, Jesus adopted the posture of one who serves (Luke 22:27), washing his disciples’ feet and setting an example (John 13:15) of service for them and for us. At ordination, deacons and elders are given a yoke of obedience, represented by the stole, that identifies their ministries as ministries of service. Service, while a posture assumed by all disciples of Jesus Christ, is expressed distinctively by the ordained according to the rule of life that orders their ministries as elders or deacons. Service, therefore, cannot be a function of either order of ministry but is rather the posture by which the ordained exercise their leadership in relationship with the *laos*, the people of God, empowering the church to serve the mission of Christ in the world.

III. The Action of Ordination

The goal of discipleship is the formation of a Christ-like character, using all of one’s energy and power to serve God’s will and to be about Christ’s mission on earth. By practicing the spiritual disciplines and being shaped by the means of grace, the baptized learn to trust in God’s ways. This formation in the ways of God is critical for those called to ordination, who willingly give themselves over to the work of God in and through the church.

Through ordination, the Holy Spirit empowers, and the church authorizes. These complementary movements are embodied in the liturgy. There are two sign-acts that accompany ordination. In the first, the bishop lays hands on the ordinand’s head and prays, “Almighty God, pour upon *Name* the Holy Spirit for the office and work of [a deacon/an elder] in Christ’s holy church” (*Ordinal*, 25, 28). By this action and through these words, we trust that the Holy Spirit who has formed, shaped, and equipped the candidate, now acts through the bishop in the company of the faithful. By laying hands on the head of the ordinand, the bishop is participating in the apostolic tradition passed down through the generations of church leadership (2 Timothy 1:6). The practice of laying hands on the head of the ordained is an ancient witness that is understood to bear a gift that empowers the ordained. It is, therefore, an essential part of the act of prayer in ordination (*Ordinal*, 9).

The second sign-act in the ordination service is the laying of the bishop’s hands upon the hands of the ordinand. In this second sign-act, the church authorizes the newly ordained to “take authority” as a deacon or elder. Whereas the first sign-act (the laying of the bishop’s hands upon the head) points to the work of the Holy Spirit in or-

daining, the second sign-act, the laying of hands upon the hands of the ordained, is an act of the church, authorizing the newly ordained to carry out his or her work among the people (*Ordinal*, 8). As such, ordination

confers a new role in the life of the church as well as authority for leadership in specific forms of ministry. The new role . . . is claimed in relation to Christ and his call to leadership and service among the baptized for the life of the world. The authority given is exercised in stewardship of the mysteries of the gospel and of the church's mission to the world. (*Ordinal*, 7)

Ordination Initiates a Person into an Order

As the ordained are given a new role in the life of the church, they are also initiated into a specific way of being, shared by an accountable community known as the "order" into which they are ordained.

The sign of ordination . . . like baptism, should be understood not as a graduation, but as an *initiation* into the way of life of the order into which the candidates are being ordained. That way of life is governed by the vows attending each ordained office. These vows, in turn, specify how these set-apart ministers, together with sisters and brothers in their order, are called and held accountable to live out their baptismal vocation within the life of the church for the sake of the world. (*Ordinal*, 6-7)

The *Ordinal* describes the ministries of deacons and elders as a "rule of life and work." This rule of life serves as a lens that frames the way those ordained to each order see and approach ministry in the church and in the world.

Once initiated into a particular life of ministry, "those who are ordained make a commitment to conscious living of the whole gospel and to the proclamation of that gospel to the end that the world may be saved" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.1). Thus, ordination to the same or equivalent order is not repeatable (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.5), and "those who enter into it dedicate their whole lives to the personal and spiritual disciplines it requires" (2016 *BOD*, ¶ 303.3). To be ordained is to be formed in a new identity, giving one's whole life over to serve Christ and his kingdom through a particular relationship with the church recognized through the orders of ministry. The orders of deacons and elders, therefore, have a significant responsibility for both ongoing formation and mutual accountability.

The Order of Deacons

At ordination, deacons are given authority by the church "to proclaim the Word of God and to lead God's people in ministries of compassion and justice" (*Ordinal*, 25). Deacons' ministries serve as a bridge linking the church to the world and the world to the church. The office and work of a deacon is described this way in the bishop's examination of candidates for ordination:

A deacon is called to share in Christ's ministry of servanthood, to relate the life of the community to its service in the world, to lead others into Christian discipleship, to nurture disciples for witness and service, to lead in worship, to teach and proclaim God's Word, to assist elders and appointed local pastors at Holy Baptism and Holy Communion,² to interpret to the church the world's hurts and hopes, to serve all people, particularly the poor, the sick, and the oppressed, and to lead Christ's people in ministries of compassion and justice, liberation and reconciliation, especially in the face of hardship and personal sacrifice. This is the rule of life and work of a deacon. (*Ordinal*, 23-24)

Biblically, the order of deacons arose in Acts chapter 6 to address an expressed need for ministries of compassion and justice, caring for those in need and helping the marginalized encounter the full embrace of Christian community. Seven people were identified and called out, including Stephen. They were said to be "of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3 NRSV). They came before the apostles, "who prayed and laid their hands on them" (Acts 6:6 NRSV), thus ordaining them to the office and work of a deacon. In Acts 7, Stephen bore witness to the Holy Spirit's work outside of expected channels, modeling the role of the deacon standing on the edge of the community of faith and, through faithful searching of the Scriptures, calling it to find its larger witness in relationship with the world around. His faithful witness represented the love of Christ in word and deed and stands as a reminder of the vulnerability of those who are called to serve.

Deacons are ordained to a ministry of Word, Compassion, and Justice. Shared in common with elders, the ministry of the Word includes the faithful proclamation and teaching of the Word in a way that enables the church to engage the world with a heart of compassion and a prophetic longing for God's justice to prevail. With a Wesleyan passion for social holiness, deacons help the

2. Given the stated theology of this document and the recommendation we make to return to the Wesleyan and ecumenical standard that pairs sacramental authority with ordination, we believe that the *Ordinal* would require revision. Our theology, as noted below, also makes space for deacons to share full sacramental authority with elders.

church love the world with the compassionate heart of Jesus and confront the powers of the world in a way that brings “good news to the poor, . . . release to the captives, . . . recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18 NRSV; see Isaiah 61:1). Deacons represent Christ’s work among the marginalized and lead the church in ministries that cultivate the life of the Kingdom.

In Greek, *diakonos* indicates the role of a table servant, one who both sets the table and makes room around it for all. The role of deacon is, therefore, sacramental, though distinct from the role of the elder. The current practice of deacons assisting elders in the administration of the sacraments includes extending the church’s sacramental life, making space for all, especially the poor and the marginalized, including those who present themselves in contexts other than the church’s regular assembly. Our theological understanding creates space for deacons, by virtue of their ordination, to administer the sacraments.

The Order of Elders

At ordination, elders are given authority “to preach the Word of God, to administer the Holy Sacraments and to order the life of the Church” (*Ordinal*, 28). The ministry of the elder stands in continuity with the apostolic tradition. The office and work of an elder is described this way in the bishop’s examination of candidates for ordination:

An elder is called to share in the ministry of Christ and of the whole church: to preach and teach the Word of God and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead the people of God in worship and prayer; to lead persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to exercise pastoral supervision, to order the life of the congregation and the connection, to counsel the troubled, and declare the forgiveness of sin; to lead the people of God in obedience to Christ’s mission in the world; to seek justice, peace, and freedom for all people; and to take a responsible place in the government of the Church and in service in and to the community. This is the rule of life and work of an elder. (*Ordinal*, 26)

From the very beginning, Jesus called, equipped, and sent disciples to bear witness to the Kingdom life he proclaimed (Matthew 10:1-8). As witnesses of the Lord’s life and resurrection (Acts 1:21-26), the apostles (Greek: those who are sent) led the early believers into a particular kind of shared life devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread together, and prayer (Acts 2:42).

As part of his apostolic ministry, Paul established churches everywhere he went and appointed elders

(Greek: *presbyters*) to continue the apostolic ministries of the churches in his absence (Acts 14:23). As pastors with hearts and lives formed after the heart and life of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd (John 10:11), elders assemble, guide, equip, and send the people of God to embody the Kingdom life “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NRSV). The ministry of the elder is to lead the church in becoming more Christlike for the sake of the world he came and died to save.

Elders are ordained to Word, Sacrament, and Order. Shared in common with deacons, the ministry of the Word has historically been understood as a preaching ministry, proclaiming the reality and the presence of the kingdom of God available through Christ and his teaching. Elders carry the responsibility of helping the people of God understand and interpret the Word of God in ways that bear witness to the eternal truths of God revealed in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in every age and season. With the sacraments serving as central practices of Christian faith and life, forming the identity of both individuals and the assembly as part of the body of Christ, it is the elder who has primary responsibility to help the church embody its sacramental life in a way that forms it as an ongoing witness to Christ’s life-transforming power in the present age. A significant emphasis of the ministry of ordering the life of the church is about creating abundant space so that the work of the Holy Spirit can take place. In ordering the life of the church, the elder is responsible for cultivating a healthy spiritual life among Christian disciples around a Kingdom vision that enables the church to become an agent of transformation in the world.

In the United Methodist tradition, bishops are not ordained to a new order, as they are in many other parts of the ecumenical church. United Methodist bishops are elected from among the elders and consecrated to a new expression of the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order. From apostolic times, leaders have been designated to exercise oversight (*episcopé*) in the wider church (1 Timothy 3). One of the principal gifts offered by episcopal leaders (bishops) is “to express and safeguard the unity of the body” (*BEM*, “Ministry,” §23). In the service of consecration for bishops, the ministry of the newly elected is lifted up this way: “You are called to guard the faith, to seek the unity, and to exercise the discipline of the whole church; and to supervise and support the church’s life, work, and mission throughout the world” (*Ordinal*, 59).

IV. The Nature of Ordained Ministry: Called, Equipped, Formed, Sent

Ordained ministers are persons who respond to the call of God and the church and enter into the vocation

that requires the enhancement and testing of their natural and spiritual gifts, knowledge, and skills for the particular work of ordained ministry, a formation of their Christian identity and character, and their willingness to be sent in mission in and to the world. Ordained ministers are called, equipped, formed, and sent.

Called into Ordained Ministry

The Latin word *vocare* means “to call” or “to summon.” A vocation is a form of work for which a person has perceived a sense of calling by God that one feels compelled or driven to fulfill. A call is an internal disposition that pays attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in one’s life. The call of the baptized to general ministry draws a person into a distinctive understanding and practice of life through witness and service, which is formed by a constant commitment to love God, to imitate Jesus, and to live one’s life formed by the gifts one is given through the gospel.

The call of God to ordained ministry is, first, an inward call that asserts that the person is driven by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel and lead communities of faith in the whole ministry of the church. There is no single way in which God calls a person into ordained ministry. Each person who receives a call to ordained ministry will hear or experience God’s affirmation and beckoning differently. According to Wesley, this call of God is confirmed by “marks” that demonstrate one’s love for God, gifts and grace for the work of ministry, and evidence of success in the lives of other people with whom they have ministered (John Wesley, *Address to the Clergy*, 1756).

Second, the call of the church is an outward call that confirms the inward call to the tradition in which the person seeks to live out the inward call. For Wesley, this took place during a “trial” period of at least one year when the candidate was tested while fulfilling work in an appointed circuit (*Address to the Clergy*). Today, confirmation of the outward call of the church occurs through a specific set of steps that move a candidate toward greater clarity about the call to United Methodist ordained ministry. The call to ordained ministry is a call on behalf of and for the whole church; so, on occasion, a candidate will discern that a different conference or even a different denomination may be the best community in which to fulfill her or his call.

A response to a call is only the beginning of a lifelong process of equipping and formation, shaped by the reality of ordination in one’s life. Call may be the motivator into ordained ministry, but equipping and formation are the processes that sustain an ordained minister in what Wesley described as that “incessant labour of love” (*Address to the Clergy*).

Equipped Through Lifelong Learning

As previously stated, gifted leaders are expected to equip “the saints” in order to fulfill the purpose of bringing people and communities to a point of mature faith, this is to say, mature discipleship. Mature disciples would then, according to Ephesians 4:14 (NRSV), have the capacity to discern the “trickery” and “deceitful scheming” of those who would lead them astray, and, most important, participate in building up the body in love.

Both Wesley and Asbury emphasized the importance of equipping preachers and clergy for their work as a fundamental priority. Begun as a list of assigned books to be completed each year, this practice evolved into the Course of Study and then into a seminary education. The underlying presupposition of Methodism’s founders, which has been maintained throughout our tradition, is that clergy require a fundamental understanding of: the world in which they live, the Scriptures, the history and traditions of the church universal, and the practices of ministry. To this end, today’s Course of Study and seminary education offer the minimum necessary to prepare persons for their clergy vocations. The ecclesial expectation is that all clergy will continue to identify areas of growth fulfilled through their commitment to lifelong learning.

Formed Throughout One’s Ministry

In his *Address to the Clergy*, Wesley emphasized the importance of “right intention,” and the ability to love God and neighbor with all one’s soul and strength to such an extent that it “swallow[s one] up, possess[es one] whole, [and] constitute[s one’s] supreme happiness.” The minister is to be an “example of all holy and heavenly tempers, filling the heart so as to shine through the life.” The minister’s life is supposed to be “one incessant labour of love; one continued tract of praising God, and helping [others].”

For the heart to remain full, for ministry to remain “one incessant labour of love,” a person must be sustained by an emotionally and spiritually healthy life. This kind of sustenance requires an ongoing, intentional, lifelong process of formation. Consequently, a person’s call to the vocation of ordained ministry is explored and enhanced, not just during one’s education, but also in the course of spiritual and ecclesiastical formation. This formation takes place during the stages of candidacy and provisional membership prior to being approved for ordination. This takes a significant number of years because the process is designed to assist clergy with learning the information needed to be effective in their appointments, and also forming their identity as an ordained minister, refining their personal and communal spiritual practices,

and integrating what they learn with who they are becoming.

A deep, mature commitment to ministry cannot be sustained without parallel dedications to a life of maturing knowledge and skills, faith and character. It encompasses both an ongoing commitment to intellectual growth and a deeply personal and communal spiritual journey. Both are required to sustain one's call and ministry throughout life. It requires an increasingly full sense of one's connection and accountability to one's order and to the church. It requires a willingness to submit long-term to a deepening, humbling awareness of the presence and sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God in one's life of missional service.

Sent in Mission to the Church and the World

Because the church universal exists for the purpose of being an agent of God's apostolic mission in and to the world, United Methodist ordained ministers are, by the very essence of their call, sent out into mission. Elders are both sent out in mission through itineracy and lead the church in mission. Deacons identify the type and location of their ministries and are appointed to and lead missional ministries in both the church and world. This is the key to Methodist itineracy.

Matthew 28 and 2 Corinthians form the biblical basis for this understanding. Jesus sent out the apostles with the mandate to make disciples of all nations. They traveled to parts of the world they had never known with the responsibility of making space for, establishing, and building up the body of Christ. Sent out as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, the apostles itinerated throughout Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia.

Wesley's movement of preachers was predicated on the same basis. So Wesley's preachers traveled in two ways. First, they were sent to different parts of England and Ireland and then reappointed, nearly every year, to new locations. Second, they traveled on circuits within the region to which they had been appointed. In U.S. Methodism, the ordained minister who itinerated was known as the "traveling preacher" and the order of elder as "the missional order" in the *Book of Discipline*.

The United Methodist system of itineracy—that of appointing clergy with specific gifts, graces, and skills to churches and ministries with matching missional needs—is designed to enhance the possibilities of sharing the gospel in effective ways. While the system has evolved throughout our history, it is fundamental to a Methodist understanding of the relationship between apostolic mission and ordination.

V. How Our History Can Inform Our Theology and Future Polity

While this document seeks to articulate a theology of ordained ministry, our intent is to spark a much larger conversation about how to restructure and realign our systems of leadership to be more effective in our mission. The models of ministry we have inherited largely arose in a twentieth-century context and are increasingly unsustainable. We are not without hope, however. We believe our history gives us a ready road map for a revival of United Methodism. We can learn much from the historic adaptability of the Methodist movement that can help the church reimagine itself for the future, creating new structures to support ministries with "traditioned" innovation.

Lay-led, Apostolic Ministries

At its origin, Methodism was largely a lay-led movement. The vast majority of Wesley's preachers in Britain, Ireland, and the American colonies were laypersons (including several women). Over time, we have grown to be more clergy-dependent. For example, the key question we always seem to ask with a new church start is about viability, which means, ultimately, the ability to pay a pastor. Why is the ability to pay a pastor the standard for what it means to be church? Historically, the church depended on lay pastors to further its mission, yet the role of lay pastor was replaced by the idea of "local pastor" in the 1976 *Discipline*. Nevertheless, lay pastors still exist in United Methodism as a missional adaptation in central conferences.

- What can we learn from our history to release laypeople to inhabit their own incarnational ministries?
- In what ways can we imagine a renewed emphasis on lay-led apostolic ministries that remain networked with and connected to a sending church?
- What kinds of pathways can we create to support and encourage experimentation and innovation inside and outside local churches (learning from faith partners like Missional Wisdom or Fresh Expressions)?
- What are the best ways for the ordained to support a vital sacramental life shared between a local church and its apostolic expressions?
- What kind of equipping and formational processes would be helpful to create a distinctive Methodist ethos and identity within highly contextualized lay-led apostolic ministries?
- What kind of accountability should be expected for such lay-led initiatives?
- What can we learn from the central conferences about equipping and deploying lay pastors?

Revitalized Circuit-based Ministries

Circuits were Wesley's original organizational structure for itineracy. Circuits were fully adaptable to the American colonies and the new frontier as well. Lay preachers, and then later, ordained clergy were assigned to a logical pattern of locations that facilitated travel and maximized access to the sacraments.

- How might revitalized circuit-based ministries encourage shared missional initiatives in the communities in which they are set?
- How might ordained clergy be deployed to serve collaboratively with circuits to magnify cooperative ministry opportunities among churches?
- What economic models might be used to support collaborative circuit ministries to make the whole system more sustainable?
- How might revitalized circuits bring a sense of being a connectional church closer to the experience of the local church?
- What possibilities might there be for some smaller churches to become centers of Wesleyan discipleship led by lay class leaders with a vital sacramental life cared for through clergy, appointed to serve the local circuit connection?
- How might ordained clergy appointed to circuits ensure a vital sacramental life for lay-led churches?
- How are circuits being used in central conferences?

Revitalized circuits in the twenty-first century could also become centers for formation, cultivating both lay and clergy leadership.

- How might ordained clergy appointed to circuits serve as mentors and teachers in cooperation with seminaries and Courses of Study for the formation and equipping of student pastors in the ordination process?
- How might circuits become formational communities, cultivating a shared ministry consciousness founded on a sense of interdependence among students and resident clergy in formation?
- How might the principles of apprenticeship benefit those in the formational process?
- How might the curricula of seminaries and Courses of Study take advantage of such formational learning communities as part of their teaching, particularly in relation to equipping students in the disciplines of practical ministry?
- In what ways could clergy gifted in teaching be equipped to serve as extension faculty to facilitate circuit-based contextual learning communities?

- How would clergy formation in circuits impact central conferences?

Licensing, Ordination, and the Authority to Administer the Sacraments

The practice of licensing for ministry began in the late 1600s in England when the government decided they needed to have a way to approve or disapprove of particular nonconformist faith groups (meaning simply, *not* Church of England). This innovation started with the state, not the church, and was tied to the ability to perform weddings on behalf of the state. In the U.S., that standard got flipped so that it became the church that issues a license, which the state then uses to determine who is eligible to perform weddings. The idea of licensing clergy in lieu of ordaining them is a twentieth-century innovation, with extraordinary provision made in the 1939 *Discipline*. It was not until 1976 that the status of "local pastor" was normalized, and local pastors were given the responsibility to administer the sacraments in their appointments.

John Wesley did not agree to non-ordained preachers administering sacraments, and the Church of England did not approve of priests celebrating Communion outside the bounds of the church. Lay preachers were never given permission to celebrate the sacraments, with the notable exception of Robert Strawbridge, the Irish lay preacher who immigrated to Maryland. It seems we have built a rather complex and convoluted polity around an *exception*. When Wesley did ordain Whatcoat and Vasey and sent them to the new United States with Thomas Coke, it was for the purpose of making the sacraments available in America, where the ties to the Church of England were severed. It is worth noting that he did not choose to use the exception of Mr. Strawbridge as his blueprint for making the sacraments available. Instead, he chose to break covenant with the Church of England and take upon himself the authority to ordain. For Wesley, sacramental authority belongs with the ordained.

- What would be the implications of returning to the Wesleyan and ecumenical standard of conferring the authority to administer the sacraments at ordination instead of by licensing?
- How might we reframe our understanding of the respective ministries of deacons and elders?
- What is the nature of the covenant and mutual accountability within an order?
- In what ways might deacons and elders adopt distinctive, yet complementary postures in magnifying the sacramental life of the church?

Recovering the Distinction Between Local and Traveling Clergy

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, local deacons and elders who did not itinerate were being ordained. The term *location*, which we still use, meant that a clergyperson left the company of traveling preachers, but could still be appointed to a church. Local elders and deacons completed the same educational requirements as traveling deacons and elders. They were also supervised and managed by presiding elders who were always traveling elders.

The reunification of 1939 saw the continued status of local deacon and local elder. The key distinctions were completion of higher levels of education, itineration, and membership in the annual conference. Local clergy did not travel and were members of the quarterly or district conference. Traveling clergy itinerated and were members of the annual conference. It wasn't until the merger of 1968 that the official distinction between local and traveling clergy disappeared from the church. In 1996, of course, the ordained deacon was added as a category of non-itinerating clergy. For a candidate, the distinction between local and traveling clergy may be discerned as an expression of one's call.

In what ways might recovering the distinction between local and traveling clergy help the church:

- stand in continuity with our Wesleyan roots?
- reconnect with our Methodist heritage?
- create greater continuity with our ecumenical partners?
- resolve the dissonance between our theology and practice?
- create greater flexibility in central and missional conferences?
- provide greater opportunities for part-time and bivocational ministries?

Transitional Issues

Looking forward, if the church were to take seriously the lessons we can learn from our history and our theology, we can anticipate significant transitional questions. Among them, we would ask the church to consider:

- What kinds of systemic change would be needed to transition “licensed local pastors” to “ordained local clergy”?
- When should ordination take place? What should be required educationally and formationally for the status of “local” ordination?
 - MDiv or equivalent
 - COS with bachelor's degree

- Formational experience serving in a circuit under the supervision (apprenticeship?) of extension faculty
- Examination and affirmation of the Board of Ordained Ministry
- How would these requirements be understood in central conferences?
- What implications would there be for the curricula of seminaries and Courses of Study?
- How can we best encourage seminary education while still affirming the value of Course of Study to equip local clergy?
- How would local elders or deacons relate to the annual conference?
 - Could associate membership be a possibility? If so, how might it need to change from its current form?
 - How might local ordination affect clergy with limited itineracy?
- How might local clergy serve?
 - A church within a circuit
 - Entrepreneurial ministries with alternative models of sustainability
 - Ministry partnerships
 - Bivocational or part-time ministries
 - What other ways could we imagine?
- With flexibility in appointment models and an emphasis on alternative models of sustainability, would security of appointment be needed or advantageous for local clergy?
- What kind of process would be needed to help licensed local pastors transition toward ordination?
- What kind of time frame would best allow for such transition for those who choose to pursue ordination?
- What happens to those who choose not to pursue ordination or are denied by the Board of Ordained Ministry?
- How would such a change affect conferences and districts that are currently dependent upon licensed local pastors?
 - Would a shift in emphasis on circuits adequately address the need to provide for the availability of the sacraments?
 - What would be required to make a system of lay-led Wesleyan class-based “churches” sustainable in relation to a circuit?
- How would such a change impact central conferences?

In relation to traveling clergy, we would ask:

- What are the expectations of traveling clergy and how are they different from local clergy?

- What kind of ritual (if any) should accompany election to full membership?
- Should security of appointment be attached to full membership?
- Should full members be expected to be fully itinerant?
- What kind of transitional process should be required for “local” (associate member) clergy to transition to full membership, including the appointive status of “traveling” clergy?
 - Advanced Course of Study (for those without an MDiv or equivalent)
 - Examination and affirmation by the Board of Ordained Ministry
 - Historic examination (Wesleyan questions) by the bishop
 - Election by the clergy session
 - Other requirements?
- How might residency processes assist in this transition?
 - What is the best approach for residency programs? Should they focus more on additional equipping (over and above seminary and Course of Study) or on formation for ministry?
 - To extend the medical metaphor, would there be benefits to identifying “attending” clergy using apprenticeship models?
- Should a security-of-appointment guarantee be given to clergy in residency and actively pursuing full membership?
- Can traveling clergy choose to serve a “local” appointment (i.e., bivocational or less than full time) while remaining a full member?
- Under what conditions might a full member clergy transition to associate membership to serve a “local” appointment with no effect on ordination credentials?
 - Eight-year review
 - Peer review
 - Episcopal and superintendent’s review
 - Status and location
 - Other means?
- How would a shift in the understanding of ordination and full membership impact central conferences?

VI. Conclusion

Methodists have historically prioritized the mission field as a most essential element in arriving at our polity (way of being in practice). This has ultimately resulted in non-ordained local pastors who operate under a license, having been granted sacramental responsibility, while ordained deacons have only provisional sacramental authority. In so doing, The United Methodist Church has diverged from the apostolic tradition with respect to sacramental authority. Moreover, we have diverged from our own founder’s theological vision. John Wesley freely deployed laymen and laywomen to serve preaching ministries, which he understood as being distinct from the priestly ministry of administering the sacraments. Ironically, it was this very theological conviction that led him to the exceptional act of performing extraordinary ordinations himself. Our questions for the church have sought to help us uphold the link between ordination and our sacramental life while, at the same time, reshaping the church to meet the mission of tomorrow.

Toward this end, along with the need to realign our polity with a sound theology of ordination, is the question of how we reorder the work of ministry for the church to provide for agile and innovative possibilities for ministry in a very complex, diverse, and global context. Wesley’s strength lay in his ability to create new approaches to ministry without sacrificing his strong theological roots. It is our hope that this document may inspire a broad-ranging conversation about how we reorder our life of ministry that arises out of our heritage and speaks effectively into a twenty-first-century global context. *DCA Advance Edition*

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶309.2e

Petition Number: 20418-OM-¶309.2e-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Requirements for Transitioning Orders Between Deacon and Elder

Amend ¶ 309.2e:

e) completed at least two years, and no more than eight years, under appointment in a context related to while licensed for the ministry of the order to which they are transitioning.

Rationale:

Deacons or elders transitioning orders must demonstrate effective service before being received into the new order. Ordained clergy are not licensed to practice ministry. Deacons may officiate sacraments with the resident bishop's permission. To require a license during this transition causes confusion about a deacon's clergy status during the transition.

¶310.

Petition Number: 20421-OM-¶310-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Eligibility of Certified Candidates for Course of Study

Amend ¶ 310 after subsection 3 as follows:

3. In special circumstances, the district committee on ordained ministry may authorize other United Methodist ministry settings to serve in the role of the local church for the purpose of recommending candidacy and specify the persons or bodies that will serve in the roles of pastor, pastor parish-relations committee, and charge conference.

4. Certified candidates who have completed studies for the license as a local pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry shall be eligible to enroll in the Course of Study regardless of appointment status.

Rationale:

This change resolves a conflict with ¶ 313.2 requiring the candidate to make progress in studies, allowing the candidate to make such progress regardless of

appointment status. This especially impacts ethnic-minority and non-English speaking candidates.

¶310.

Petition Number: 20747-OM-¶310-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward—Part 4 of 8

Amend the following portions of the *Book of Discipline* as indicated:

¶ 310.2.d) Footnote 3. . . .

The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the church regarding homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.

. . .

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that ~~“we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”~~ Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between two people a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. . . .

Rationale:

In answer to the call of the gospel for the church, as the body of Christ, to be fully inclusive of all people, the portions of the *Discipline* that have negative impact on the lives of LGBTQ persons ought to be stricken.

¶310.2.

Petition Number: 20707-OM-¶310.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

Footnote 3:

The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language [. . .]

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we ~~“do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Chris-~~

tian teaching.” Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity.” ~~between a man and a woman.~~

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candidates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶310.2d.

Petition Number: 20419-OM-¶310.2d-G; Dotson, Junius
- Nashville, TN, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Next Generation UMC #7—Candidacy

Amend ¶ 310.2(d) footnote 3 as follows:

In adopting the statements in ¶¶ 304.2 and 310.2d on the moral and social responsibility of ordained ministers, the General Conference seeks to elevate the standards by calling for a more thoroughgoing moral commitment by the candidate and for a more careful and thorough examination of candidates by district committees and boards of the ministry. The legislation in no way implies that the use of tobacco is a morally indifferent question. In the light of the developing evidence against the use of tobacco, the burden of proof would be upon all users to show that their use of it is consistent with the highest ideals of the Christian life. Similarly, regarding beverage alcohol, the burden of proof would be upon users to show that their action is consistent with the ideals of excellence of mind, purity of body, and responsible social behavior.

Therefore, the changes here do not relax the traditional view concerning the use of tobacco and beverage alcohol by ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church. Rather they call for higher standards of self-discipline and habit formation in all personal and social relationships. They call for dimensions of moral commitment that go far beyond any specific practices that might be listed. (See Judicial Council Decision 318.)

The General Conference, ~~in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination,~~ reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.

For more than 200 years candidates for ordination have been asked Wesley’s Questions, including “. . . Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? . . .”

(¶ 310). All candidates agree to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life and to this end agree “to exercise responsible self-control, by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God” (¶ 304.2).

The character and commitment of candidates for the ordained ministry is described or examined in six places in the *Book of Discipline* (¶¶ 304, 310.2, 324, 330, 333, and 335). These say in part: “Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties” (¶ 333).

The statement on ordination (¶ 304.2) states: “*The Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life . . . [and to] agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits. . . .*”

There are eight crucial steps in the examination of candidates. They are:

(1) The self-examination of the individual seeking ordination as he or she responds to God’s call in personal commitment to Christ and his church.

(2) The decision of the committee on pastor-parish relations, which makes the first recommendation to the charge conference when a member seeks to become a candidate for ordained ministry.

(3) The decision of the charge conference, which must recommend the candidate.

(4) The decision of the district committee on ordained ministry, which must recommend the candidate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and, where applicable, the decision of the district conference.

(5) The decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry, which must recommend deacon’s ordination and provisional membership. See Judicial Council Decisions 513, 536, 542.

(6) The decision of the clergy members of the annual conference, who must elect candidates to provisional membership.

(7) The recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for deacon’s or elder’s ordination and full membership.

(8) The election to deacon’s or elder’s ordination and full membership by the clergy members of the annual conference.

All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and effectiveness to the annual conference throughout their entire ministry.

The General Conference has made it clear in the “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (Part III of the *Discipline*) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our guidelines. “United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine.”

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we ~~“do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”~~ Furthermore, the Principles state that “we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man and a woman~~. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage.” Also, “we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single.”

The General Conference affirms the wisdom of our heritage expressed in the disciplinary provisions relating to the character and commitment of ordained ministers. The United Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we ordain ministers.

In our covenant we are called to trust one another as we recommend, examine, and elect candidates for the ordained ministry and conference membership. See Judicial Council Decision 480.

Rationale:

Affirms the role of boards of ordained ministry to evaluate all candidates based on their fitness and readiness for ordained ministry. This footnote is adjusted to reflect proposed changes in ¶ 161.C and ¶ 161.G that removes language that discriminates against a particular class of people.

¶310.2d.

Petition Number: 20420-OM-¶310.2d-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 6 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #4

[Also submitted as:

ALL BELONG: Honoring the Calling and Gifting of the Holy Spirit]

Amend footnote 3 of ¶ 310.2(d) as follows:

In adopting the statements in ¶¶ 304.2 and 310.2d on the moral and social responsibility of ordained ministers, the General Conference seeks to elevate the standards by calling for a more thoroughgoing moral commitment by the candidate and for a more careful and thorough examination of candidates by district committees and boards of the ministry. The legislation in no way implies that the use of tobacco is a morally indifferent question. In the light of the developing evidence against the use of tobacco, the burden of proof would be upon all users to show that their use of it is consistent with the highest ideals of the Christian life. Similarly, regarding beverage alcohol, the burden of proof would be upon users to show that their action is consistent with the ideals of excellence of mind, purity of body, and responsible social behavior.

Therefore, the changes here do not relax the traditional view concerning the use of tobacco and beverage alcohol by ordained ministers in The United Methodist Church. Rather they call for higher standards of self-discipline and habit formation in all personal and social relationships. They call for dimensions of moral commitment that go far beyond any specific practices which might be listed. (See Judicial Council Decision 318.)

~~The General Conference, in response to expressions throughout the Church regarding homosexuality and ordination, reaffirms the present language of the *Discipline* regarding the character and commitment of persons seeking ordination and affirms its high standards.~~

For more than 200 years candidates for ordination have been asked Wesley’s Questions, including “. . . Have they a clear, sound understanding; a right judgment in the things of God; a just conception of salvation by faith? . . .” (¶ 310). All candidates agree to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life and to this end agree “to exercise responsible self-control, by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and the knowledge and love of God” (¶ 304.2).

The character and commitment of candidates for the ordained ministry is described or examined in six places in the *Book of Discipline* (¶¶ 304, 310.2, 324, 330, 333, and 335). These say in part: “Only those shall be elected to full membership who are of unquestionable moral character and genuine piety, sound in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and faithful in the discharge of their duties” (¶ 333). The statement on ordination (¶ 304.2) states: “*The Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life . . . [and to] agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits. . . .*”

There are eight crucial steps in the examination of candidates. They are:

(1) The self-examination of the individual seeking ordination as he or she responds to God's call in personal commitment to Christ and his church.

(2) The decision of the committee on pastor-parish relations, which makes the first recommendation to the charge conference when a member seeks to become a candidate for ordained ministry.

(3) The decision of the charge conference, which must recommend the candidate.

(4) The decision of the district committee on ordained ministry, which must recommend the candidate to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry and, where applicable, the decision of the district conference.

(5) The decision of the Board of Ordained Ministry, which must recommend deacon's ordination and provisional membership. See Judicial Council Decisions 513, 536, 542.

(6) The decision of the clergy members of the annual conference, who must elect candidates to provisional membership.

(7) The recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry for deacon's or elder's ordination and full membership.

(8) The election to deacon's or elder's ordination and full membership by the clergy members of the annual conference.

All clergy members of the annual conference are accountable as to character and effectiveness to the annual conference throughout their entire ministry.

The General Conference has made it clear in the "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task" (Part III of the *Discipline*) that Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason are our guidelines. "United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine."

In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that we "~~do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~" Furthermore, the Principles state that "we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity ~~between a man and a woman.~~ We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage." Also, "we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single."

The General Conference affirms the wisdom of our heritage expressed in the disciplinary provisions relating to the character and commitment of ordained ministers. The United Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we ordain ministers.

In our covenant we are called to trust one another as we recommend, examine, and elect candidates for the ordained ministry and conference membership. See Judicial Council Decision 480.

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of the *Book of Discipline* that prevent people from being full participants in the life of The United Methodist Church alleviates some of the harm The United Methodist Church

¶314.2.

Petition Number: 20422-OM-¶314.2; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reinstatement of Certified Candidate Status

Amend ¶ 314.2 as follows:

2. *Reinstatement of Certified Candidate's Status*—Certified candidates whose status has been discontinued by a district committee on ordained ministry of an annual conference of The United Methodist Church may ~~shall only~~ be reinstated by the district committee of the district in which they were discontinued, or by another district upon transfer of the certified candidate's file including all possible documentation of the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of certified candidate status.

[Retain rest of the paragraph as written]

¶315.

Petition Number: 20423-OM-¶315-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Categories and Qualifications for the License for Pastoral Ministry

Amend ¶ 315

¶ 315. *License for Pastoral Ministry*—All persons not ordained as elders who are appointed to preach and conduct divine worship and perform the duties of a pastor shall have a license for pastoral ministry. Those listed below (¶ 315.2a-d) shall have been approved by a three-

fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h) and a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.

~~6-1. In every case, t~~ Those who are licensed shall have:

a) Released the required psychological reports, criminal background and credit checks, and reports of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse. They shall submit, on a form provided by the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry:

(1) a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse; or

(2) a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

~~b) Been approved by a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h);~~

~~c~~ b) Provided the board with a satisfactory certificate of good health on a prescribed form from a physician approved by that board.

~~d) Received approval by a three-fourths majority vote of the clergy session.~~

2. The Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 635.2h) may recommend to the clergy session of the annual conference the licensing of those persons who are:

~~1. Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference; or~~

2. a) Local pastors who have completed the following:

a) (1) The conditions for candidacy certification in §§ 310.1-2;

b) (2) The Orientation to Ministry;

c) (3) The studies for the license as a local pastor as prescribed and supervised by the Division of Ordained Ministry or one-third of their work for a Master of Divinity degree at a school of theology listed by the University Senate University Senate-approved theological school;

d) (4) Been examined and recommended by a three-fourths majority vote of the district committee on ordained ministry (§ 666.9); or

3 b) Associate members of the annual conference; or

c) Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference; or

~~4. Deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder; or~~

5-~~d~~) Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations who have training equivalent to the studies for license as a local pastor prescribed by the Division of Ordained Ministry but do not meet the educational requirements for provisional membership in the annual conference.

Rationale:

Lists the categories of licensing in sequential order and clarifies which categories of licensed clergy must receive a 3/4 majority recommendation of the BOM and approval of the clergy session. Clarifies that deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder, do not require licensing.

§315.6c.

Petition Number: 20424-OM-§315.6c; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Licensed Ministry

Amend the *Book of Discipline* § 315.6.c (License for Pastoral Ministry) as follows:

c) Provided the board with a satisfactory letter from a physician stating the individual's good health and listing any medical restrictions or modifications as applicable. Disabilities and diagnoses are not to be construed as unfavorable health factors when a person with a disability or diagnosis is capable of meeting the professional standards and is able to render effective service as one licensed for pastoral ministry. ~~certificate of good health on a prescribed form from a physician approved by that board.~~

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the candidate's privacy. Adds that disabilities/diagnoses are not grounds for lack of fitness for ministry, making the policy consistent with that for provisional members.

§316.1.

Petition Number: 20427-OM-§316.1; Haines, Amy - Worthington, OH, USA for West Ohio Annual Conference.

Clarification of Context of Ministry Regarding Licensed Clergy

Amend § 316.1 so that it reads:

1. Provisional elders approved annually by the Board of Ordained Ministry and local pastors approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry may be licensed by the bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor (§ 340), including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage (where state laws allow), burial, confirmation, and membership

reception, within and while appointed to a particular charge or extension ministry. For the purposes of these paragraphs the A charge or extension ministry will be defined as “the people within or related to the community in which it is located.” ~~or ministry setting being served.”~~ Those licensed for pastoral ministry may be appointed to extension ministry settings when approved by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

Variances across districts and conferences can limit the way a licensed local pastor expands the outreach of their church or ministry setting. This clarification allows licensed local pastors to perform ministry in their church’s community, since the licensed local pastor may be the only pastor in the community.

In

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20425-OM-¶316.6; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Local Pastor Voting Rights

Delete ¶ 316.6 and substitute the following:
The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference. Local pastors who have served at least two years preceding the election as appointed by the bishop, during which time no withdrawal of the appointed status has occurred, who are enrolled in or have completed one of the two constitutionally specified educational processes, Course of Study or M.Div., and are in good standing with the conference board of ordained ministry shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters excluding matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20426-OM-¶316.6-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference. Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Granting Voice to All Clergy (Local Pastors)

~~Delete constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences; and . . . Local Pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment~~

~~before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences:~~

Rationale:

WHEREAS, the Indiana Annual Conference utilizes over 350 Licensed Local Pastors to serve in our congregations; and

WHEREAS, many of our Local Pastors served as Lay Members of Annual Conference prior to being appointed; and

WHEREAS, Local Pastors’ church membership is transferred to the annual conference (clergy) while under appointment

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20428-OM-¶316.6-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference.

Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry

~~Delete constitutional amendments, election of delegates to general, jurisdictional, or central conferences; and~~

~~Delete clergy adding elders or deacons~~

~~Delete have completed the Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and adding and have remained in good standings with their respective dCOM~~

Rationale:

“The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20665-OM-¶316.6-G; Speer, Lloyd - Fairless Hills, PA, USA for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Local Pastor Voting Rights

AMEND ¶ 316.6 under Chapter 2. Section IV. *License for Pastoral Ministry. Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry* to read:

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General;

~~Jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment shall be eligible for election as delegates to the General, central, or jurisdictional conferences. Local pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences and may vote on constitutional amendments.~~

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20668-OM-¶316.6-G; Wilcox, Lynn - Hop Bottom, PA, USA.

Voting Rights of Licensed Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 316.6:

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters ~~except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors who have completed Course of Study or a Master of Divinity degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences. after two years of consecutive appointment, part-time or full-time, and simultaneous or consecutive completion of four classes in the Course of Study track or two semesters towards an M.Div. degree, be permitted to vote on jurisdictional and General Conference delegates, constitutional amendments, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy and, on the ordination of clergy.~~

Rationale:

General Council on Finance and Administration reports there are 20,067 clergy in the United States appointed to local churches. Of those, 33 percent are licensed local pastors without vote. The average congregation served by licensed local pastors has 83 members and attendance averages 42. Small congregations are disproportionately without clergy

¶316.6.

Petition Number: 20685-OM-¶316.6-G; Page, John - Cave Spring, GA, USA.

Increase Voting Rights for Local Pastors

The membership of local pastors under full-time and part-time appointment is in the annual conference where they shall have the right to vote on all matters. ~~except constitutional amendments, election of delegates to general, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment before the election may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~

Rationale:

WHEREAS, the number of ordained elders continues to decline and the number of local pastors continues to increase;

WHEREAS, nearly 80 percent of U.S. congregations average less than one hundred in worship;

WHEREAS, the majority of those small membership churches are pastored by local pastors;

WHEREAS, more than 55 percent

¶317.

Petition Number: 20429-OM-¶317-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Interim License for Pastoral Ministry Approval

Delete ¶ 317 from current location and move it to follow ¶ 315:

~~¶ 317. NEW ¶. Following ¶ 315~~ *Interim License as Local Pastor*—Between sessions of the annual conference, persons who have completed the conditions for licensing listed above (¶ 315.6) may be granted interim license as a local pastor ~~before receiving approval of the clergy session. upon~~ Upon recommendation of the cabinet, the district committee on ordained ministry, and executive committee of the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry, the candidate and may be appointed by the bishop.

Rationale:

Clarifies that interim local pastors may be appointed between annual conference sessions before receiving approval of the clergy session. Also, better organizes licensing paragraphs by ordering the two paragraphs on qualifications for licensing together.

¶318.2.

Petition Number: 20430-OM-¶318.2-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Discontinue Mentoring for PLP after COS Is Completed

Amend ¶ 318.2. as follows:

¶ 318.2. *Part-Time Local Pastors*—Those eligible to be appointed as part-time local pastors are persons (a) . . . (b) . . . (c) . . . (d) . . .

Part-time local pastors may be appointed to small membership churches that are grouped together in a charge under the supervision of a mentor. Mentoring shall continue until such time as educational requirements have been met unless requested by the clergyperson or district superintendent.

Rationale:

All local pastors are assigned a clergy mentor while in the COS or in seminary (¶ 316.4.2). Full-time local pastors no longer have a mentor once they complete the COS; part-time local pastors should be allowed the same grace no matter where they are appointed.

¶319.

Petition Number: 20639-OM-¶319; Olm, Donald - Gallatin, TN, USA for National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors.

Ordination of Local Pastor

Add new subparagraph ¶ 319.6:

Upon completion of Course of Study or an M.Div. degree and having served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment, full-time local pastors will be eligible to seek ordination as a local elder. Local elder status would be achieved by a process of application and examination to the district committee on ordained ministry. Examination by the district committee on ordained ministry would include the applicant (1) prepared and preached at least one written sermon on a biblical passage specified by the district committee on ordained ministry; (2) presented a detailed plan and outline for teaching a Bible study; (3) presented a project that demonstrates fruitfulness in carrying out the church's mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Upon ¾ vote approval of the district committee on ordained ministry recommendation will be made to the Board of Ordained Ministry to then be voted upon by clergy session. Upon approval of clergy session, the local elder may retire under the provisions of ¶ 357 of the *Discipline*. They

shall retain their license for pastoral ministry for service in the local church and maintain their relationship as retired clergy members of the annual conference. The district committee on ordained ministry will not be required to interview the local elder annually and the local elder will be subject to all continuing education and evaluation requirements of ordained clergy.

Rationale:

This addition recognizes the years of service and experience of local pastors and honors the same by recognizing the lifetime call to pastoral ministry of all persons called by God

¶319.2.

Petition Number: 20432-OM-¶319.2; Haines, Amy - Worthington, OH, USA for West Ohio Annual Conference.

Annual Licensing for Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 319.2 so that it reads:

Upon completing each year's education and other qualifications, a local pastor who is not a provisional member may be recommended for continuance by the district committee on ordained ministry. Upon completion of educational requirements, either Course of Study or Master of Divinity degree from a senate-approved seminary, a local pastor may be continued annually by the district committee on ordained ministry without meeting in person with the committee unless requested by the committee, the district superintendent, or the local pastor. The clergy members in full connection of the annual conference may approve continuance of a local pastor after reference to and recommendation by its Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

This would enable our district committees on ministry to honor and affirm the work of local pastors who are in vital, effective ministry. Without a mandatory annual meeting with the DCOM, this affirmation would lighten the load of the DCOM, as they also have responsibilities to oversee CLMs.

¶319.3.

Petition Number: 20431-OM-¶319.3-G; Gadlage, Christopher - Decatur, IN, USA.

Clarifying Course of Study Requirements

Amend ¶ 319.3:

3. A full-time local pastor shall complete the Course of Study curriculum within eight years of beginning the Course of Study and a part-time local pastor within twelve years of beginning the Course of Study, unless a family situation or other circumstance precludes the local pastor's opportunity to meet said requirements. Only time serving under appointment shall be considered when calculating this time limit. The local pastor may be granted an annual extension beyond the prescribed limit upon a three-fourths vote of the district committee on ordained ministry, recommendation by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and the vote of the clergy members in full connection.

Rationale:

Because undergraduate studies are sufficient progress, the beginning point of the Course of Study completion requirement needs to be clarified and time not appointed to a church should not be considered part of the time limit for Course of Study completion.

¶319.5.

Petition Number: 20683-OM-¶319.5-G; Masters, Scott - Chesterfield, NH, USA.

Equilization for Voting Rights Among Clergy

¶ 319.5. *Retirement of Local Pastor*—A local pastor who has made satisfactory progress in the Course of Study as specified in ¶ 318.1 or .2 may be recognized as a retired local pastor. Retirement provisions for local pastors shall be the same as those for clergy members in ¶ 357.1, .2, .4, with pensions payable in accordance with applicable provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Retired local pastors may attend annual conference sessions with voice ~~but not~~ and vote.

Rationale:

While preserving the rights of full clergy membership in annual conferences, this legislation reverses the disenfranchisement of thousands of clergypersons without, or experiencing, limited voice and vote in annual conferences. This petition recognizes that all need appropriate voice and vote to be a part of discerning our denomination's future.

¶320.4.

Petition Number: 20433-OM-¶320.4-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Reinstatement of Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 320.4

¶ 320. *Exiting, Reinstatement, and Retirement of Local Pastors Who Are Not Provisional Members*—

...

4. *Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status*—

a) Local pastors whose approved status has been discontinued . . . and the cabinet.

b) Persons seeking reinstatement shall . . . membership is currently held.

c) When approved by the clergy members in full connection . . . meet requirements as provided in ¶¶ 315, 318.

d) Whenever persons whose approval as local pastors has been discontinued by an annual conference are being considered for ~~appointment or temporary employment~~ licensing in another annual conference, . . . approval as local pastors.

Rationale:

Numbering the steps for the process of reinstatement clarifies what local pastors must do in order to be reinstated either in their home conference or in a new conference.

¶320.4.

Petition Number: 20434-OM-¶320.4; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status

Amend ¶ 320.4 as follows:

4. *Reinstatement of Local Pastor Status*—Local pastors whose approved status has been discontinued from an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors may be reinstated ~~only~~ by the annual conference that previously approved them, its legal successor, or the annual conference of which the major portion of their former conference is a part, ~~only~~ upon recommendation by the district committee on ordained ministry from which their license was discontinued, the Board of Ordained Ministry, and the cabinet. Persons seeking reinstatement shall provide evidence that they have been members of a local United Methodist church since the time of the discontinuance of their local pastor status, or for at least one year prior to their request for reinstatement. The district committee shall require a recommendation from the charge conference where these persons' ~~his or her~~ membership is currently held. When approved by the clergy members in full connection as provided in ¶ 337, their license and credentials shall be restored, and they shall be eligible for appointment ~~as pastors of a charge~~. They shall complete

current studies and meet requirements as provided in ¶¶ 315, 318.

Whenever persons whose local pastor status approval as ~~local pastors~~ has been discontinued by an annual conference are being considered for appointment or temporary employment in another annual conference, the Board of Ordained Ministry where these persons are being considered shall obtain from the Board of Ordained Ministry of the conference where local pastor status approval has been discontinued verification of their qualifications and information about the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of local pastor status ~~termination of their approval as local pastors.~~

Rationale:

This amendment makes the language more consistent with similar paragraphs of the *Discipline* and resolves the apparent contradiction posed by the second paragraph, which allows for local pastor status to be reinstated by a different annual conference.

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20435-OM-¶321.1-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Granting Voice to all Clergy

Delete the following: ~~(a) constitutional amendments; (b)~~

Rationale:

WHEREAS, Associate members have answered the call to ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ and submitted to “itinerant ministry of the Church and are available on a continuing basis for appointment by the bishop” (¶ 321); and

WHEREAS, Associate members serve a vital role in the life of The

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20436-OM-¶321.1; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA.

Associate Clergy Member—Voting Rights

Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 321.1:

1. Associate clergy members, ~~shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations~~

~~of clergy. with the exception of matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1), shall have the right to vote on all matters including constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20437-OM-¶321.1; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA.

Local Pastor Voting Rights

Amend ¶ 321.1: Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except ~~(a) constitutional amendments; matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1).~~

¶321.1.

Petition Number: 20439-OM-¶321.1; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Amend 321.1

Amend ¶ 321.1 as follows:

1. Associate members shall have a right to vote in the annual conference on all matters ~~except~~ including the following: *(a)* constitutional amendments; *(b)* all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶321.2.

Petition Number: 20438-OM-¶321.2; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Associate Members as Delegates

Amend ¶ 321.2 as follows:

2. Associate members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of an annual conference. They shall ~~not be eligible for election to elect and to be elected~~ as delegates to the General or jurisdictional or central conferences.

¶323.2.

Petition Number: 20440-OM-¶323.2; Olm, Donald - Gallatin, TN, USA for National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors.

Election of Fellowship Chair

Amend ¶ 323.2

The bishop shall convene the fellowship and the Board of Ordained Ministry shall coordinate its life and work. Necessary financial support shall be provided by the annual conference through the budget of the board. Quadrennially the board, with guidance from the present Fellowship Chair, shall nominate for chairperson of their Conference Fellowship at least one local pastor who has completed education requirements and/or associate member, not to exceed 3 nominees, to then be elected by the from within the fellowship membership and the Fellowship shall elect quadrennially a chairperson of the Fellowship members present during a gathered meeting of the annual session of the Fellowship, ~~conference who, The elected chairperson,~~ in cooperation with and under the guidance of the bishop, will provide continuing leadership for the Fellowship. The elected Fellowship chairperson, full-time or part-time, shall be a member of the Board of Ordained ministry and its executive committee as specified in ¶ 635.1(a).

Activity of the Fellowship will be reported regularly to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

The Fellowship members and its leadership are the most knowledgeable of those persons who are eligible to be elected chairperson. This gives clarity to the work of electing the Fellowship Chair in order to bring consistency across conferences and confirms the right of the Fellowship to elect their own chairperson

¶324.

Petition Number: 20441-OM-¶324-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Editorial Changes for Clarity in Provisional Membership Paragraph

Amend ¶ 324

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership— . . .*

4. Graduate Requirement:

a) Candidates for ~~deacon or elder provisional membership~~ shall have completed a minimum of one-half of the 27 semester hours of basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith from a University Senate-approved theological school. These courses may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree. These basic graduate theological studies ~~must~~ shall include courses in

Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/ liturgy; and United Methodist studies in doctrine, polity, and history.

b) ~~A) Elder~~—a candidate for ordination as an elder shall also:

1. ~~H~~ave completed a minimum of one half of the studies toward a Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent; ~~or including one half of the basic graduate theological studies from a seminary listed by the University Senate.~~

6: ~~2.~~ Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

. . .

c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (¶ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken online; or by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be on-line courses; and

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a ~~UM~~ United Methodist-related college or university.

d) completed an Advanced Course of Study . . . The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (¶ 324.4a).

e) ~~B) Deacon~~—a candidate for ordination as a deacon shall also have:

(~~1~~) 1. completed a minimum of one half of the studies of a master's degree from a ~~United Methodist seminary or one listed by the University Senate~~ University Senate-approved theological school, or

(~~2~~) 2. received a master's degree in the area of the specialized ministry in which the candidate will serve, or

(~~3~~) completed one half of the basic graduate theological studies, in a context which will provide formation as a United Methodist deacon in full connection within a cohesive program developed by the seminary and approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, documented by a record of completion from that school.

5: ~~3.~~ In some instances a candidate who is pursuing ordination to serve as a deacon in full connection may fulfill the academic requirements through the following professional certification alternate route:

a) shall have reached thirty-five years of age at the time to become a certified candidate;

b) completed a bachelor's degree, received professional certification or license in the area of ministry in which the candidate will serve, have completed a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate credit or equiv-

alent quarter hours in the area of specialization, and have been recommended by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

~~c) have completed a minimum of one-half of the twenty-seven semester hours of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith including the areas of: Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history, in a context which will provide a cohesive program and formation as a United Methodist deacon in full connection within a cohesive program developed by the seminary and approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, documented by a record of completion from that school;~~

6. Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

~~a) completed four years of full-time service or the equivalent;~~

~~b) satisfied all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of this paragraph;~~

~~c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (§ 1421.3d) by:~~

~~1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; and~~

~~2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university.~~

~~d) completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (§ 324.4a):~~

~~7. . . .~~

~~8. . . .~~

9. Each candidate shall respond to a written and oral doctrinal examination administered by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry. The examination shall cover the following:

. . .

10. Each candidate shall have been recommended in writing to the conference Board of Ordained Ministry . . .

11. Each candidate shall have a personal interview with the conference Board of Ordained Ministry . . .

12. . . .

13. . . .

14. Each candidate shall have been recommended

in writing to the clergy session based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:

The paragraph is reorganized to group deacon ordination and elder ordination into separate subparagraphs. Additional changes are editorial to make the paragraph more concise and clearer.

¶324.

Petition Number: 20445-OM-¶324-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Pathway to Elder for Provisional Itinerant Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 324 section 6 as follows:

6. Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

a) completed four years of full-time service or the equivalent;

b) satisfied all requirements of Sections 1-3 and 7-14 of this paragraph;

c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (§ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; and

2. Establishing eligibility to enroll in the Advanced Course of Study by: a) Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university, or b) completion of at least twelve years in itinerant full-time appointment serving two or more pastoral charges.

d) completed an Advanced Course of Study consisting of thirty-two semester hours of graduate theological study offered by a seminary recognized by the University Senate or its equivalent as determined by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The Advanced Course of Study shall include the basic graduate theological studies (§ 324.4a).

Rationale:

Local pastors are by definition non-itinerant. The requirement of the undergraduate degree for proven itinerant pastors with the calling and gifts of elders who are economically unable, in their stage of life, to return to undergraduate studies is a form of socioeconomic bias in conflict with ¶ 4 Article IV

¶324.

Petition Number: 20446-OM-¶324; Ingram, Kimberly Tyree - Huntersville, NC, USA.

Education of Local Pastors Becoming Provisional Members

Amend ¶ 324.6c

Local pastors may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as elders when they have:

... c) completed the Course of Study. Course of Study requirements may be fulfilled as determined by The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (¶ 1421.3d) by:

1. Completion of Course of Study, of which no more than one-half may be taken by correspondence or Internet; up to one-half of Course of Study may be online courses; **and or**

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a UM-related college or university.

Rationale:

These are expected to be two different Course of Study options for the educational route of local pastors to move toward ordination through provisional membership.

¶324.1.

Petition Number: 20443-OM-¶324.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Candidacy or Licensing Requirement for Provisional Membership

Amend ¶ 324.1

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*—

...

1. *Candidacy or Licensing Requirement*: Each candidate shall have been a certified candidate or a local pastor for at least one year.

Rationale:

Certified candidates can be licensed for ministry without being certified for one year. This petition clarifies that a minimum of one year of service as local pastor also qualifies as experience toward eligibility to apply for provisional membership.

¶324.4

Petition Number: 20442-OM-¶324.4-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Basic Graduate Theological Studies Requirements

Amend ¶ 324.4

¶ 324. *Qualifications for Election to Provisional Membership*—...

4. *Graduate Requirement*:

a) Candidates for deacon or elder shall have completed ~~a minimum of one-half of the 27 semester hours of the~~ basic graduate theological studies in the Christian faith. These courses shall each be three (3) semester hours, or the equivalent and may be included within or in addition to a seminary degree. These basic graduate theological studies ~~must~~ shall include courses in Old Testament; New Testament; theology; church history; mission of the church in the world; evangelism; worship/liturgy; and United Methodist doctrine, polity, and history. The combined credit hours for the United Methodist studies shall be a minimum 6 semester hours, or the equivalent. Basic graduate theological studies shall not be taken pass/fail.

Rationale:

Since BGTS are critical to theological education and preparation for ministry, these courses should be taken for a grade and completed prior to commissioning. Clarifies hour requirements for BGTS and UM Studies.

¶324.5.

Petition Number: 20444-OM-¶324.5-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Alternate Provisional Membership Route for Deacons

Amend ¶ 324.5

5. ~~In some instances a candidate who is pursuing ordination to serve as deacon in full connection may fulfill the academic requirements through the following professional certification alternate route: Candidates who have professional certification may fulfill the requirements for provisional membership as deacons when they have:~~

a) ~~shall have reached thirty-five years of age at the time to become a certified candidate; completed four years of full-time (or the equivalent) employment in the area of specialized ministry; and~~

b) ~~completed a bachelor's degree~~, received professional certification or license in the area of ministry in which the candidate will serve, have completed a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate credit or equivalent quarter hours in the area of specialization, and have been recommended by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry;

Rationale:

This change validates years of experience in ministry as an equivalent to some of the required education in the other available paths toward becoming an ordained deacon. The required bachelor's degree is retained in ¶ 324.3.

¶324.8.

Petition Number: 20447-OM-¶324.8; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Provisional Membership

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 324.8 (Provisional Membership) as follows:

8. Each candidate shall present a satisfactory letter from a physician stating the individual's good health and listing any medical restrictions or modifications as applicable. ~~certificate of good health by a physician on the prescribed form.~~ Disabilities and diagnoses are not to be construed as unfavorable health factors when a person with a disability or diagnosis is capable of meeting the professional standards and is able to render effective service as a provisional member.

Rationale:

Replaces the detailed health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information on the health form to be disclosed in violation of the candidate's privacy. This also clarifies that both disabilities and diagnoses are not grounds for lack of fitness for ministry.

¶325.

Petition Number: 20448-OM-¶325-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Rights in Commissioning Candidates

AMEND ¶ 325 by ADDING language as follows:

¶ 325. *Commissioning*— . . . After fulfilling all the candidacy requirements and upon recommendation of the

conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy session shall vote on the provisional membership and commissioning of the candidates. If there is more than one candidate for provisional status presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. . . .

Rationale:

The practice in some areas of voting on all candidates as a group may save time. But if the clergy session is going to have a serious responsibility in reviewing candidates, it must have a right to do more than rubber-stamp all candidates or reject all without distinction.

¶326.

Petition Number: 20450-OM-¶326-G; Cady, Stephen - Rochester, NY, USA.

Residency Requirement when Living Outside of Home Annual Conference

Append to the end of the first paragraph of ¶ 326:

When provisional members are appointed outside of their annual conference boundaries, they shall have the option to complete their residency curriculum under the auspices of the Board of Ordained Ministry in the annual conference where they reside.

Rationale:

Many provisional elders under appointment outside of their home annual conference are forced, often at great expense, to return several times a year to complete their residency curriculum. Some BOOMs allow provisional elders to complete residency in the annual conference of residence. This petition makes it consistent across the connection.

¶326.1.

Petition Number: 20449-OM-¶326.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Authority of Provisional Deacon

Amend ¶ 326.1

¶ 326. *Service of Provisional Members*—

. . .

1. Provisional members . . . local church. A provisional member preparing for ordination as a deacon shall be ~~licensed for~~ commissioned to the practice of ministry

within the appointment setting during provisional membership to perform the duties of the ministry of the deacon as stated in ¶ 328 and be granted support as stated in ¶ 331.10. The appointment setting is defined as “people within or related to the community or ministry setting being served.” Such authorization granted by the license . . .

Rationale:

Clarifies that the practice of provisional member deacons is limited to the appointment setting during provisional membership. This makes the authority of provisional member deacons and provisional member elders the same in being located within the appointment setting.

¶327.

Petition Number: 20455-OM-¶327; Patterson, Cynthia - North Canton, OH, USA for East Ohio Annual Conference.

Establish Process for Reinstatement of Provisional Membership

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 327.7 to read:

8. Reinstatement to Provisional Membership—Provisional members whose conference relationship has been discontinued shall only be reinstated by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the annual conference in which they were discontinued. When approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergy session, their provisional member’s credentials shall be reissued and they shall be eligible to continue with the full eligibility and rights of a provisional member.

Rationale:

Discontinued provisional members who seek to return to the ordination process do not have a clearly defined process to reenter conference relationship without re-applying for provisional membership. This new provision defines, similar to the reinstatement of a local pastor, how conference relationship and matriculation toward full membership may be restored.

¶327.

Petition Number: 20673-OM-¶327-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Elimination of Mandatory Retirement Ages

Amend ¶ 327 as follows:

¶ 327.7. Provisional members may not be retired under the provisions of ¶ 358. ~~Provisional members who~~

~~have reached the mandatory retirement age shall be automatically discontinued.~~ Provisional elders may be classified as retired local pastors under the provisions of ¶ 320.5.

Amend ¶ 357 as follows:

~~¶357.1. Mandatory Retirement—Every clergy member of an annual conference who will have attained age seventy-two on or before July 1 in the year in which the conference is held shall automatically be retired.~~

Amend ¶ 408 as follows:

¶ 408. *Termination of Office*—An elder who is serving as a bishop up to the time of retirement shall have the status of a retired bishop.

1. ~~Mandatory Retirement—~~a) A bishop shall be retired on August 31 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference if the bishop’s sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1 of the year in which the jurisdictional conference is held.⁵

b) ~~A bishop in a central conference shall be retired at a date no later than three months following the adjournment of General Conference, if the bishop’s sixty-eighth birthday is reached on or before the opening day of his or her scheduled conference effective on January 1, 2016. This action becomes effective at the adjournment of General Conference 2016.~~

c) Pension, as provided under the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program), as either may apply, shall be payable as provided in such plan or program following the close of the jurisdictional or central conference.

d) If, however, the retired bishop accepts any one of the following assignments of churchwide responsibility, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall set a level of compensation not to exceed a maximum determined by the General Conference on recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration with the compensation costs borne by the Episcopal Fund: (1) assignment of a special nature with direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops, or (2) assignment to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education. Assignment of retired bishops to United Methodist Church-related institutions of higher education must be at the initiative of the institutions, with service not to exceed the mandatory retirement ages of the institutions.

If a bishop is assigned to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education, that agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education will pay 50 percent of the compensation established by GCFA for the position. The

general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education shall further assume all responsibility for the bishop's operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

Compensation for any special assignment shall cease after the bishop ~~has reached the mandatory age of retirement for all ordained ministers (§ 358.1) or completes the assignment. , whichever comes first, , except that retired~~ Retired bishops elected by the Council of Bishops as executive secretary and ecumenical officer may continue to be compensated for such special assignment(s) throughout the terms of office. No assignment to a jurisdiction, central conference, annual conference, or non-United Methodist agency shall qualify for additional compensation from the Episcopal Fund under the provisions of this paragraph. The status of a retired bishop on special assignment shall, for purposes of housing and other benefits, be that of a retired bishop.

Amend § 417 as follows:

§ 417. *Selection and Assignment*—Inasmuch as the district superintendency is an extension of the general superintendency, the bishop shall appoint elders to serve as district superintendents. Prior to each appointment, the bishop shall consult with the cabinet and the committee on district superintendency of the district to which the new superintendent will be assigned (§ 426) for the purpose of determining leadership needs of the annual conference and the district (§ 401). In the selection of superintendents, bishops shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of The United Methodist Church with respect to sex, race, national origin, physical challenge, and age; ~~except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.~~

Amend § 425 as follows:

§ 425. Responsibility—1. Clergy shall be appointed by the bishop, who is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. Appointments are to be made with consideration of the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and with faithfulness to the commitment to an open itineracy. Open itineracy means appointments are made without regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, color, disability, marital status, or age; ~~except for the provisions of mandatory retirement.~~

Amend § 715 as follows:

§ 715.3. Normal retirement for all general agency staff personnel shall be at age sixty-five or the completion of forty years of service to The United Methodist Church in an elective, appointive, or employed capacity. ~~Mandatory retirement for elective and appointive staff shall be at age seventy-two.~~ There shall be no mandatory retirement age for ~~other employed~~ staff. All general

agency staff personnel may elect to retire from the employing general agency at any time in accordance with the policy in place at the general agency or, if the general agency has a voting representative on the committee on personnel policies and practices of the General Council on Finance and Administration, with the policy established by the General Council on Finance and Administration upon recommendation of the committee on personnel policies and practices.

Rationale:

Mandatory retirement based on age is inimical to the best interest of God's people and of all society. It is illegal in most, if not all, secular institutions in the United States and ought to be abandoned as obsolete in the Church.

§327.2.

Petition Number: 20452-OM-§327.2-G; Gadlage, Christopher - Decatur, IN, USA.

Granting Voice to All Clergy (Provisional Members)

Amend § 327.2:

Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:
a) ~~constitutional amendments;~~
b) ~~all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Provisional clergy members who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.~~

Rationale:

Provisional members do not all have representation at General, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and have no voice in constitutional matters. All United Methodists should have voice and representation in these important matters. (This petition is related to Petition Granting Voice to All Clergy (Provisional Members) § 35.)

§327.2.

Petition Number: 20453-OM-§327.2; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 2 Similar Petitions

Amend 327.2

Amend § 327.2 as follows:

2. Provisional members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:

(a) constitutional amendments;

(b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. Provisional clergy members ~~who have completed all of their educational requirements~~ may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.

¶327.3.

Petition Number: 20454-OM-¶327.3; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Amend 327.3

Amend ¶ 327.3 as follows:

3. Provisional members may serve on any board, commission, or committee of the annual conference except the Board of Ordained Ministry (¶ 635.1). They shall ~~not~~ be eligible ~~for election~~ to elect and to be elected as delegates to the General, central, or jurisdictional or conferences.

¶327.6.

Petition Number: 20451-OM-¶327.6-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Fair Process Appeal Timeline for Provisional Members

Amend ¶ 327.6

¶ 327. *Eligibility and Rights of Provisional Membership*—

...

6. *Discontinuance from Provisional Membership*—

... In the case of discontinuation without consent, prior to any final recommendation, a provisional member will be advised of the right to receive a fair process hearing before the committee on conference relations of the Board of Ordained Ministry. To receive a fair process hearing, the provisional member shall notify the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry in writing no later than forty-five days preceding the beginning of the annual conference session. A report of the action

...

Rationale:

This change provides adequate time for a Board of Ordained Ministry to administer a fair process hearing that adheres to time lines in the *Discipline*, as well as falling within established dates of the annual conference session.

¶328.

Petition Number: 20456-OM-¶328-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Administration of Sacraments by Deacons

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 328 as follows:

... Deacons give leadership in the church's life: in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship; ~~in assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, or in presiding at the celebration of the sacraments; when contextually appropriate and duly authorized;~~ in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; ... ~~the resident bishop of the annual conference in which the deacon is appointed~~ ay authorize the deacon to preside at the celebration of the sacraments. Presiding at the celebration of sacraments involves taking responsibility to lead the gathered community in celebrating baptism and Holy Communion ...

Rationale:

The role of ordained deacon is no less, or more, a valid and valued calling than that of an ordained elder in the ministry and life of The UMC. As such, ordained deacons should have the same authority entrusted to them to administer the sacraments as an ordained

¶330.

Petition Number: 20457-OM-¶330-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Right in Ordaining Deacons

AMEND ¶ 330.6 by ADDING language as follows:

6. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for deacon's orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as deacon by a bishop. If there is more than one candidate for ordination as deacon presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

¶330.

Petition Number: 20458-OM-¶330-G; Merrick, Tracy - Wexford, PA, USA.

Amend Questions Required for Ordination as Deacon and Admission to Full Connection

Change ¶ 330.5.c.4 as follows:

¶ 330. *Requirements for Ordination as Deacon and Admission to Full Connection* . . .

5. The following questions are guidelines for the preparation of the examination:

c) The Practice of Ministry . . .

(4) Provide evidence of your willingness to relate yourself in ministry to all persons without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ~~social~~ status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, economic condition, or disability.

Rationale:

A series of petitions are being submitted to expand and bring consistency in the *Book of Discipline* among the various lists of included constituencies. If this and the other changes are adopted, the following paragraphs would be consistent, except for contextual differences: ¶ 4, ¶ 162, ¶ 330,

¶330.3c.

Petition Number: 20459-OM-¶330.3c-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Alternate Ordination Route for Deacons

Amend ¶ 330.3c

3. They shall have met the following educational requirements: (a) graduation with a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent degree . . . ; (b) graduation with a Master of Divinity degree or a master's degree from a graduate theological school recognized by the University Senate, or a master's degree in an area of specialized ministry; (c) or are candidates over the age of 35 who have completed four years of full-time (or the equivalent) employment in the area of specialized ministry with and who have received professional certification or license in their area of ministry including a minimum of eight semester hours of graduate academic credit. Educational requirements in every case shall include the completion of the basic graduate theological studies of the Christian faith, as outlined listed in ¶ 324.4a.

Rationale:

This validates ministry experience as an alternate way to meet some of the requirements toward becoming an ordained deacon. This is a similar alternate ordination route to what local pastors may use after completing education-

al requirements and a minimum of four years' service in appointive ministry.

¶333.

Petition Number: 20460-OM-¶333-G; Barnes, Robert - Mitchellville, MD, USA for Mount Oak Fellowship.

Ensure Clergy Session Rights in Ordaining Elders

AMEND ¶ 333.2 by ADDING language as follows:

2. A provisional member of the annual conference who has completed the requirements for elder's orders and admission into full membership shall be eligible for election to full membership and ordination as elder by a bishop. If there is more than one candidate for ordination as elder presented to the clergy session for a vote, then each candidate shall be voted on individually, rather than having a single vote taken on the entire group of candidates. Following election, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference, and following ordination, a certificate of ordination.

Rationale:

The practice in some areas of voting on all candidates as a group may save time. But if the clergy session is going to have a serious responsibility in reviewing candidates, it must have a right to do more than rubber-stamp all candidates or reject all without distinction.

¶334.5.

Petition Number: 20712-OM-¶334.5-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 334.5:

6. No elder will be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. Elders have the right to exercise and preserve his or her conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶335.

Petition Number: 20461-OM-¶335-G; Plasterer, George - Clearwater, FL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Ability to Teach the Faith

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 335, *Requirements for Admission to Full Connection and Ordination as Elder*, by adding new language as follows:

¶ 335. . . . (8) responded to a written or oral doctrinal examination administered by the Board of Ordained Ministry. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly in both oral and written form. The candidate's reflections and the board's response should be informed by the insights and guidelines of Part III of the *Discipline*. The review of the candidate by the Board of Ordained Ministry shall include evaluating the candidate's ability to articulately teach our church's Doctrinal Standards (¶ 104), affirm them as his or her own doctrinal beliefs, and refute common objections to our doctrine. The following questions are guidelines for the preparation of the examination:

a) Theology.

. . .

(5) Identify and respond to objections some may have to the following parts of our church's doctrinal standards (¶ 104):

(a) the existence of God;

(b) the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ;

(c) original sin;

(d) the impossibility of us being justified before God on account of our own righteousness;

(e) the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins;

Rationale:

Before we ordain individuals to a lifetime ministry involving teaching the word and administering the sacraments, it is important to go beyond asking about their subjective experiences or personal beliefs, and carefully examine how well they can affirm, teach, and defend our church's faith.

¶335.

Petition Number: 20462-OM-¶335-G; Cady, Stephen - Rochester, NY, USA.

Enabling Provisional Elders to be Appointed to Theological Doctoral Studies

Amend ¶ 335 in the first paragraph to the following:

. . . Such ministry settings may include campus ministry, college and university chaplaincy, overseas/mission work, full-time doctoral studies for the purposes of teaching in a seminary or theological school setting, and other ministries so recognized by the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Rationale:

BOOMs are currently inconsistent in their support of provisional elders who are also doctoral students pursuing a degree in the theological encyclopedia. This petition makes it explicit that being appointed as a full-time doctoral student for the purpose of teaching in a seminary or theological school setting is legitimate.

¶338.

Petition Number: 20464-OM-¶338-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Separation Timeframe for Clergy

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 338 by adding a new subparagraph 5 as follows:

5. In order to assist in a successful transition of leadership through the appointment process of ordained elders, provisional elders, associate members and local pastors, once a clergyperson receives a new appointment, or retires, the general practice shall be that they disengage from the church and congregation they are leaving for a period of one year. This includes attendance at worship, performance of clergy duties (weddings, funerals, baptisms, teaching Sunday school or Bible studies, preaching, etc.), and engagement of social media regarding the church unless requested and agreed to by the incoming clergyperson.

Rationale:

To everything there is a season. In an effort to facilitate a successful transition, and to assist the incoming pastor in connecting fully with his or her new congregation, the outgoing pastor should agree to disengage from his or her previous appointment for a period of one year.

¶338.

Petition Number: 20465-OM-¶338-G; Feagins, John - San Antonio, TX, USA.

Open Itinerary

Amend ¶ 338 as follows:

¶ 338. The Itinerant System—The itinerant system is the accepted method of The United Methodist Church by which ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members are appointed by the bishop to fields of labor. All ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members shall accept and abide by these appointments. When making appointments, bishops and cabinets shall adhere to the ethical principles of inclusive, equitable, and commit to and support open itineracy and the protection of the prophetic pulpit and diversity. Persons appointed to multiple-staff ministries, either in a single parish or in a cluster or larger parish, shall have personal and professional access to the bishop and cabinet, the committee on pastor-parish relations, as well as to the pastor in charge. The nature of the appointment process is specified in ¶¶ 425-429.

1. Full-time service shall be the norm for ordained elders, provisional elders, and associate members in the annual conference. Full-time service shall mean that the person's entire vocational time, as defined by the district superintendent in consultation with the pastor and the committee on pastor-parish relations, is devoted to the work of ministry in the field of labor to which one is appointed by the bishop.

2. *Less Than Full-Time Service*—On occasion, less than full-time service is requested by or required of an elder, provisional elder, or associate member. A clergy member may be appointed in one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarter time increments by the bishop to less than full-time service without loss of essential rights or membership in the annual conference. Division of Ordained Ministry-endorsed appointments beyond the local church may be for less than full-time service.

a) Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but may be made by the bishop under the following circumstances:

(1) *Limited Itineracy*—Less than full-time service may be granted—but is not guaranteed—when the elder, provisional elder, or associate member has declared in writing that itineracy is limited due to temporary constraints. The clergy member shall present that written declaration to the bishop and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made.

(2) *Self-Initiated*—The elder, provisional elder, or associate member seeking less than full-time service shall present a written request to the bishop and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry at least 90 days prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made. Exceptions to the 90-day deadline shall be approved by the cabinet and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

~~(3) Bishop-Initiated—For missional purposes, the bishop may appoint an elder, provisional elder, or an associate member to less than full-time service. The clergy person shall be notified at least 90 days prior to final termination of the current appointment. Special attention shall be given to ensure that the values of open itineracy are preserved.~~

b) *Provisions for Less Than Full-time Appointment*

(1) Following appropriate consultation, as established in ¶¶ 338 and 425-429, and upon joint recommendation of the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry, the less than full-time category shall be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

(2) Reappointment to less than full-time service shall be approved annually by the bishop and cabinet and shall not be granted for more than a total of eight years, except by a three-fourths vote of the clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

(3) Elders, provisional elders, and associate members who receive appointment at less than full-time service remain within the itineracy and, as such, remain available, upon consultation with the bishop and cabinet, for appointment to full-time service. A written request to return to full-time appointment shall be made to the bishop and cabinet at least six months prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is to be made.

(4) The bishop may make *ad interim* appointments at less than full-time service upon request of the elder, provisional elder, or associate member following consultation as specified in ¶¶ 424-428 and upon recommendation of the cabinet and executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the same to be acted upon by the next regular session of the annual conference.

3. Interim appointments may be made to charges that have special transitional needs.

a) Interim clergy may serve outside the annual conference where membership is held under the provision of ¶ 346.1, with approval and consent of the bishops involved.

b) Interim appointments will be for a specified length of time, established in advance following consultation with the district superintendent, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the interim pastor.

4. Associate members, provisional members, or full members may be appointed to attend any school, college, or theological seminary listed by the University Senate, or participate in a program of clinical pastoral education in a setting accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education or another accrediting agency approved by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Rationale:

Involuntary part-time appointment (section 3) is a form of biased, punitive, and economic coercion that conflicts with Judicial Council Decision 1226, restrictive rules III and IV, inclusiveness, fair process, and open itineracy. Clarifies that open itineracy is an ethical principle.

¶338.2.

Petition Number: 20463-OM-¶338.2-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Bi-Vocational/Tent-making Part Time Ministry

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 338.2 a) as follows and renumber the remaining:

¶ 338.2 Less Than Full-Time Service—

a) Appointment to less than full-time service is not a guarantee, but may be made by the bishop under the following circumstances:

(1) Bi-vocational/tentmaking ministry—Less than full-time service may be granted—but is not guaranteed—when the elder, provisional elder, or associate member has declared in writing a plan for service to the local church and employment beyond the local church. The clergy member shall present that written declaration to the bishop and chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry prior to the annual conference session at which the appointment is made.

Rationale:

In the changing culture and landscape, we need to be sensitive to the needs of churches and community as well as the abilities or lack thereof for churches to support full-time clergy with benefits. Bi-vocational/tentmaking options need to be available for ordained elders, deacons, provisional elders, and associate members

¶339.

Petition Number: 20466-OM-¶339; Plowden, Warren - Macon, GA, USA for South Georgia Annual Conference.

Define Pastor

Amend BOD ¶ 339 as follows:

¶ 339. *Definition of Pastor*—A pastor is an ordained elder, deacon, probationer deacon (according to the 1992 *Book of Discipline*), associate member, provisional elder, or local pastor approved by vote of the clergy session and maybe appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination, or on the staff of one such appointment.

menical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination, or on the staff of one such appointment.

¶339.

Petition Number: 20467-OM-¶339; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Pastoral Definition Reform

Be it resolved that ¶ 339 in the *Book of Discipline* be amended as follows:

¶339. *Definition of a Pastor*—A pastor is an ordained elder, probationary deacon (according to 1992 *Book of Discipline*), associate member, provisional elder, or local pastor approved by vote of the clergy session and may be appointed by the bishop to be in charge of a station, circuit, cooperative parish, extension ministry, ecumenical shared ministry, or to a church of another denomination or on the staff of one such appointment. Ordained deacons in full connection and provisional deacons, with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities granted to them in the Discipline shall also be defined as pastors.

¶340.2.

Petition Number: 20708-OM-¶340.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates

Add new subparagraph after ¶ 340.2:

3. Clergy who cannot in good conscience remain a member of an annual conference, based upon the standards for ordination of practicing homosexual persons in that conference, may choose to transfer under ¶ 347 and shall be supported through the process.

Rationale:

Allows annual conferences to decide how sexuality applies to the standards of holy living in clergy candidates. Protects practicing gay clergy who cannot be appointed within their annual conference because of a lack of safe appointments.

¶340.2.

Petition Number: 20713-OM-¶340.2-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new subparagraphs after ¶ 340.2:

3. No clergy at any time may be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. All clergy have the right to exercise and preserve their conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶341.

Petition Number: 20714-OM-¶341-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Amend ¶ 341:

6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions same-sex marriages shall not be conducted performed by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches on property owned by a local church unless that church decides by a majority vote of church conference to allow same-sex marriages on that property.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶341.6.

Petition Number: 20468-OM-¶341.6; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Follow Civil-law of the Country

Action proposed: Amend ¶ 341.6:

¶ 341.6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches in countries where civil-laws do not permit a pastor to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies.

Rationale:

The regulations of marriage given by the church must follow the regulations given by civil-laws in the different countries

¶341.6.

Petition Number: 20469-OM-¶341.6-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 13 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #5

[Also submitted as:

Next Generation UMC #8, ALL BELONG: Extending the Rite of Marriage to All, A Fully Inclusive Way Forward Part 5 of 8]

Amend ¶ 341.6 as follows:

~~Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition we aim to live by the admonition to do no harm. Revising sections of the *Book of Discipline* that prevent people from being full participants in the life of The United Methodist Church alleviates some of the harm The United Methodist Church

¶346.1.

Petition Number: 20470-OM-¶346.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Provisions for Associate Members from Outside the Annual Conference

Amend ¶ 346.1:

¶ 346. Provisions for Clergy from Outside the Annual Conference—Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences and Christian denominations may receive an appointment in the annual conference in the following manner:

1. Ordained Clergy, Associate Members, or Provisional Members from Other Annual Conferences and Other Methodist Denominations—With approval and consent of the bishops or other judicatory authorities involved, ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members of other annual conferences or other Methodist churches may receive appointments in the annual or missionary conference while retaining their home conference membership or denominational affiliation. . . .

Rationale:

Associate members are not required to have their license approved annually by their conference and have an ongoing relationship with the conference and The UMC.

Therefore, they should be able to serve in other conferences after meeting all requirements listed in ¶ 346.1.

¶347.

Petition Number: 20471-OM-¶347; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA.

Retain Annual Conference Authority in Recognizing Ordination

Amend ¶ 347.5 as follows:

Transfers from Other Denominations.

5) Ordained clergy seeking admission into an annual conference on credentials from another denomination who have previously withdrawn from membership in the effective relation in an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or one of its legal predecessors shall not be admitted or readmitted without the consent of receiving a recommendation from the annual conference from which they withdrew or its legal successor, or the annual conference of which the major portion of their former conference is a part, such consent recommendation to be granted upon recommendation of sent from its Board of Ordained Ministry within 90 days of the request.

Rationale:

Annual conferences have sole authority on ordination. The entirety of Section XII prescribes authority to the annual conference and presiding bishop. To require cross-conference approval for ordination negates that authority. Changing “consent” to “recommendation” retains both annual conference authority and prudent investigation.

¶347.1.

Petition Number: 20473-OM-¶347.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Associate Members Transferring to Another Annual Conference

Amend ¶ 347.1

¶ 347. *Transfers*—1. *From Other Annual Conferences*—Ordained clergy, associate members, or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into full, associate, or provisional or full membership with the consent of the bishops involved. . . .

Rationale:

Provides a way for associate members to transfer annual conferences.

¶347.1.

Petition Number: 20474-OM-¶347.1-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Full BOM Recommendation Required for Transfer

Amend ¶ 347.1

¶ 347. *Transfers*—1. *From Other Annual Conferences*—Ordained clergy, or provisional members from other annual conferences of The United Methodist Church may be received by transfer into provisional or full membership with the consent of the bishops involved. Recommendation by the ~~executive committee of the~~ Board of Ordained Ministry and approval of the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer.

Rationale:

Requires that the full Board of Ordained Ministry (rather than only the executive committee) recommend a candidate to the clergy session for transfer.

¶347.2.

Petition Number: 20475-OM-¶347.2-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Clergy Session Approves Transfers from Other Methodist Denominations

Amend ¶ 347.2

¶ 347. *Transfers*—

...

2. *From Other Methodist Denominations*—a) Ordained elders or ordained clergy from other Methodist churches may be received by transfer into provisional or full conference membership or as local pastors, . . . that meet this definition. ~~Prior consultation with the chairperson or executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be held in order to determine that the minister meets the standards for conference membership established by the Discipline and the annual conference.~~ Recommendation by the Board of Ordained Ministry and approval of the clergy session shall take place prior to the transfer. A psychological report, . . .

Rationale:

The Board of Ordained Ministry recommends to the clergy session all clergy membership and conference relations requests before decisions are final. The clergy session is the only body with authority to approve conference

relations and membership decisions and must be included in any decision about transfer into the conference.

¶347.3.

Petition Number: 20476-OM-¶347.3-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Clarity for Transfer Process from Another Denomination

Amend ¶ 347.3

¶ 347. *Transfers*—

3. *From Other Denominations*—

~~c) Following the provisional member's election to full conference membership as a deacon or elder as provided in ¶ 326, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference:~~

4. . . .

5. . . .

6. Election to membership and recognition of orders.

To complete the transfer process:

a) Following the provisional member's election to full conference membership as a deacon or elder as provided in ¶ 330 or ¶ 335 respectively, the bishop and secretary of the conference shall provide a certificate of full membership in the annual conference; and

b) 6: After the orders of an ordained minister of another church shall have been duly recognized, and the minister has been approved for elected to full membership, . . .

Rationale:

Reordering the paragraph in this sequence shows the entire process required to complete a transfer from another denomination. This ordering ensures that those who transfer receive a certificate of membership and that their original ordination is recognized in The UMC after the vote for election into full membership.

¶347.3a.

Petition Number: 20472-OM-¶347.3a; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Disclosure and Discrimination—Transfer

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 347.3.a (*Transfers From Other Denominations*) as follows:

3. *From Other Denominations*—a) On recommendation of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the clergy mem-

bers in full connection may recognize the orders of ordained clergy from other denominations and receive them as provisional members or local pastors. They shall present their credentials for examination by the bishop and Board of Ordained Ministry and give assurance of their Christian faith and experience. They shall give evidence of their agreement with and willingness to support and maintain United Methodist doctrine, discipline, and polity and present a satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry. [Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis nondiscrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶348.

Petition Number: 20477-OM-¶348-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Assigning Clergy Mentors

Amend ¶ 348

~~¶ 348. *Mentors*—1. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:~~

~~2. 1. Mentoring occurs within a relationship . . . preparation for ministry.~~

It is expected that all annual conferences will make available and encourage the use of spiritual directors, coaches, pastoral counselors, or vocational mentors for all clergy, separate from the superintendent, and that clergy will use these kinds of support as a standard practice of ministry throughout the clergy career and in all assignments or appointments.

1. 2. Mentors shall be recommended by the cabinet, selected, trained and held accountable by the Board of Ordained Ministry. There are two categories of mentor, each with distinct functions and responsibilities as follows:

a) Candidacy mentors . . .

b) Clergy mentors are clergy in full connection, associate members, full-time, or part-time local pastors

who have completed the Course of Study or a Master of Divinity from a University Senate-approved theological school and are trained to provide ongoing oversight and counsel with local pastors and with provisional members. Local pastors, while in Course of Study or seminary (§ 316.4), shall ~~will~~ be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry ~~in consultation with the district superintendent~~. Provisional members ~~will~~ shall be assigned a clergy mentor in full connection by the ~~conference~~ Board of Ordained Ministry ~~in consultation with the district superintendent~~. A candidacy mentor may continue with the same person if trained to serve as a clergy mentor. Licensed or ordained clergy from other denominations shall be assigned a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 346.2, § 347.3b).

4. Clergy mentoring begins when a person local pastor, provisional member, or clergy of another denomination receives an appointment as a local pastor or as a provisional member.

~~3. Local pastors and provisional members will be assigned to a clergy mentoring group, wherever possible, or to a clergy mentor by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Persons transferring from other denominations will also be assigned a clergy mentor (§ 347.3b).~~

~~It is expected...~~

Rationale:

The previous wording caused confusion regarding the role of the BOM and superintendent in assigning clergy mentors. This new wording and ordering help to clarify the purpose and implementation of mentoring.

¶349.

Petition Number: 20479-OM-¶349-G; Berneking, Nathanael - Columbia, MO, USA.

Adjusting the Eighth Year Assessment

Amend ¶ 349 as follows:

¶ 349. *Evaluation*—Evaluation is a continuous process for formation in servant ministry and servant leadership that must take place in a spirit of understanding and acceptance. Evaluation serves as a process for clergy to assess their effectiveness in ministry and to discern God's call to continue in ordained ministry.

1. For clergy serving local churches, the district superintendent, in consultation with the pastor-parish relations committee, will evaluate annually the each clergy's effectiveness for ministry (§§ 334.2c, 419, 635.2o, r), using criteria, processes, and training developed by the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry. The clergy in local

churches shall participate annually in an evaluation with the committee on pastor-parish relations for use into enhance an ongoing effective ministry and for to identifying continuing education needs and plans (§ 258.2g[5]), using criteria, processes, and training developed by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the cabinet. The process of evaluation shall include self-assessment and appropriate metrics, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will offer models to guide cabinets and Boards of Ordained Ministry in the evaluation process.

2. Deacons in appointments beyond the local church and elders and local pastors in appointments to extension ministries will undergo annual evaluation by their immediate supervisors, engage in annual self-evaluation, and include copies of these evaluations in the annual report submitted to their bishop, district superintendent, and the Board of Ordained Ministry (§ 344.2a). They shall have an annual conversation with their district superintendent about their ministry.

3. Every clergyperson shall also engage in a ~~six-month~~ process of personal and professional assessment and development every eight years. Subject to the discretion offered to the clergy by this paragraph, ~~t~~The process will be designed and implemented by the cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry for each annual conference in consultation with the Chairs of the Orders of Deacons and Elders and Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members. The process shall include both a formal review and an in-depth renewal opportunity, chosen by the clergyperson in his or her sole discretion, such as a retreat, spiritually centered program of continuing education, or series of coaching and mentoring sessions.

a) Subject to subsection d) below, ~~t~~The formal review ~~may~~shall include a self-evaluation, metrics appropriate to the ministry settings to which clergy are appointed, observations of trends from the previous eight years, and reviews or interviews with people close to the ministry of the clergy being reviewed.

b) The in-depth renewal opportunity shall be submitted by the clergyperson to the ~~designed by the~~ cabinet and Board of Ordained Ministry in a form appropriate to the conference. ~~The renewal opportunities shall include a combination of elements, such as: time apart for prayer and reflection, reflection with a covenant group, meetings with a coach, celebration of ministry milestones, and discernment of future ministry challenges and opportunities.~~ Nothing, in this section, however, shall be interpreted to require the annual conference or local church to provide funding for a clergyperson's in-depth renewal opportunity. Clergy are responsible for selection of such opportunities with costs and time away appropriate to the current

appointment, professional expense budget and personal finances of the clergyperson. When deemed important to help in the evaluation process, psychological assessments may be requested by the cabinet or Board of Ordained Ministry.

c) The district superintendent shall review the formal review and the pastor's selected renewal opportunity portfolio and provide the initial report of the eighth year review of effectiveness. When recommended by the district superintendent, a meeting with the bishop and members of the cabinet may be held.

d) ~~Each annual conference shall develop and initiate a plan for such assessment by January 1, 2020. Each annual conference may, in the discretion of the bishop and cabinet, utilize current evaluation processes and measures of effectiveness in place of the formal review contemplated in subsection a), provided that such evaluations and measures already utilize metrics appropriate to each appointed clergyperson's appointment.~~

Rationale:

This amendment would give annual conferences discretion in utilizing their own mode of evaluation for the eighth year assessment required by ¶ 349, thereby relieving them of added costs. It would also grant clergy agency and discretion, important factors in achieving renewal, in establishing their own plan for spiritual renewal.

¶349.3.

Petition Number: 20478-OM-¶349.3; Davis, Ashley - Montgomery, AL, USA for Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference.

Evaluation for Continuing Formation for Full Members and Local Pastors

Delete ¶ 349.3

Rationale:

Deletion of ¶ 349.3 removes from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* the eight-year review, which consists of a six-month evaluation process for full members and local pastors. This evaluation process was prescribed by the 2016 General Conference. The *Discipline* calls for

¶349.3.

Petition Number: 20715-OM-¶349.3-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Add new paragraph after ¶ 349.3:

4. No deacon will be required or compelled to perform, or prohibited from performing, any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple, including same-sex couples. Deacons have the right to exercise and preserve his or her conscience when requested to perform any marriage, union, or blessing of any couple.

Rationale:

Allows local churches to host same-sex wedding services on church property. Grants all clergy the freedom to exercise their conscience when invited to preside at any wedding service, regardless of sexuality.

¶354.2a.

Petition Number: 20481-OM-¶354.2a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Limit Usage of Involuntary Leave

Amend by addition and deletion in the following way:

¶ 354.2a). A written and signed administrative complaint is not resolved through the supervisory (¶ 362.1b, c), or complaint (¶ 362.1e), ~~or trial~~ process within ninety days, ~~or clearly cannot be resolved within 90 days. Because of the authority of committees on investigation to suspend (¶ 2704.2c), this option shall not be used when the complaint alleges any chargeable offenses (¶ 2702.1).~~

Rationale:

If the Judicial Council does not rule ¶ 354.2a) unconstitutional because it does not provide for hearing and appeal as written, it must be limited as an option to administrative complaints (incompetence, ineffectiveness) and not be used for complaints using offenses listed in ¶ 2702.1). As written, this paragraph can

¶354.5.

Petition Number: 20480-OM-¶354.5-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Separating Interim from Requested Involuntary Leave

Amend by addition of the following:

¶ 354.5 Between sessions of the annual conference, the bishop and cabinet may request that an involuntary leave of absence be granted following fair process (¶ 361-

363) before the conference relations committee if accepted by the Board of Ordained Ministry and administrative review committee meeting as soon as possible thereafter. The pastor shall have fair process rights to appear before both. This interim involuntary leave must be approved by two-thirds majority vote of the clergy session and taken separately from any other involuntary status sought by the cabinet for the following year. The cabinet may also terminated ¶ 363) an involuntary leave during the interim and require support by the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the support of a majority of the clergy session.

Rationale:

Paragraph 354.5 is not consistent with changes made regarding ¶¶ 361-363, 636, and 2718.3-.4. These changes bring it up to date. Further, it should require a change in the “Business of the Annual Conference” report and require separate votes on interim and regular requests for involuntary leave.

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20482-OM-¶357.1-G; Kim, Young Je - Falls City, NE, USA. 10 Similar Petitions

Increase Mandatory Retirement Age

Amend ¶ 357.1 as follows:

Mandatory Retirement—Every clergy member of an annual conference who will have attained age ~~seventy-two~~ seventy-five on or before July 1 in the year in which the conference is held shall automatically be retired.

Rationale:

1. Many professionals are now working late into their 70s and beyond.
2. Other denominations have retirement ages of 75 and beyond (e.g., 2017-2019 *Book of Order* . . . *Presbyterian Church USA*—no age limit; 2018 *Manual of Policies* . . . of the Evangelical Lutheran

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20483-OM-¶357.1-G; Heinzman, William - Herndon, VA, USA.

Elimination of Mandatory Retirement Age for Clergy

Delete subparagraph 1 of paragraph 357 of the *Book of Discipline*. Renumber remaining subparagraphs accordingly.

Rationale:

While we are seeking to be a more inclusive, welcoming church, we force clergy to retire when they reach the age of 72; many of whom are healthy and might continue to serve, if given the opportunity. We should eliminate this unfounded practice of ageism.

¶357.1.

Petition Number: 20484-OM-¶357.1-G; Taylor-Storm, Dawn - West Chester, PA, USA.

Entering Candidacy After Age 72

Add new paragraph to *BOD* ¶ 357.1:

Candidates for ministry at age 72 or older may enter the candidacy process and be appointed in local pastor retired status under the provisions of ¶ 320.5.

Rationale:

Age is not a determination of fitness for ministry. This addition to our *Discipline* would allow conferences an ability to appoint candidates who feel a call to ministry at age 72 or above.

¶357.7.

Petition Number: 20485-OM-¶357.7; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Return from Retirement

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 357.7.2 (Return to Effective Relationship [from Retirement]) as follows:

(2) a satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. ~~certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.~~

[Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20486-OM-¶361; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Remedial Action and Disposition in Administrative Matters

Add new paragraph between ¶ 361.1 and 361.2; re-number remaining subparagraphs:

¶ 361. *Administrative Referral, Disposition, and Remedial Action*—If the bishop determines that a clergyperson’s effectiveness is in question after completing the process of ¶ 334.3, the bishop may recommend an involuntary action listed in ¶ 361.1 or refer the bishop’s findings to the Board of Ordained Ministry for its consideration of remedial or other action.

a) Referral—When a referral is made by the bishop, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall develop a response in a timely manner.

(1) The matter shall be referred to the conference relations committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. And this committee shall conduct an administrative hearing following fair process provisions.

(2) The bishop or a cabinet representative shall present the administrative matter to the committee.

(3) The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the administrative matter in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergyperson in full connection, with voice.

b) Disposition—The conference relations committee makes a recommendation to the Board of Ordained Ministry following the fair process hearing.

(1) Once the committee has heard the bishop or bishop’s designee, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the conference relations committee, it may recommend remedial action, discontinuance, leave of absence, administrative location, dismissal of the matter, or other such action that it deems appropriate to the Board of Ordained Ministry.

(2) The board may accept or amend the recommendations of the committee, or it may dismiss the matter. In rare instances, the board may refer the complaint back to the bishop for possible referral as a judicial complaint.

(3) The board alternatively may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process that seeks a just resolution.

(i) The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral shall not constitute a dismissal.

(ii) The appropriate persons, including a cabinet member and a representative of the Board of Ordained Ministry, shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process including any agreement on confidentiality. The parties shall be told that any resolution remains subject to the final approval by the board.

(iii) If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolutions, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters disclosed to third parties. If the just resolution process results in resolution, the signed written statement of resolution shall be given to the board, and the board may dismiss the matter, retain oversight relating to any terms or conditions of the statement of resolution, or take such other action as deemed appropriate.

(iv) If the process does not result in resolution, the matter is returned to the board for further action. The board’s response will be shared with the clergyperson, the bishop, the cabinet.

c) Remedial Action—In cooperation with the cabinet and in consultation with the clergyperson, the Board of Ordained Ministry may choose or recommend one or more of the following options for a program of remedial action, subject to regular oversight by the board and annual review:

(1) Program of continuing education and spiritual growth (¶ 350);

(2) Leave of absence, voluntary or involuntary (¶¶ 353, 354);

(3) Early retirement or involuntary retirement (¶ 357);

(4) Sabbatical leave (¶ 351);

(5) Honorable location (¶ 358);

(6) Surrender of ordained ministerial office (¶ 360);

(7) Medical Review (¶ 356);

(8) Personal counseling or therapy;

(9) Program of career evaluation;

(10) Peer support and supervision;

(11) Private reprimand: a letter signed by the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry and the clergyperson’s district superintendent, addressed to the clergyperson with a file copy in the permanent file of the Board of Ordained Ministry stating the appropriateness of the administrative matter, the specific remedial action required, and the conditions under which the reprimand shall be withdrawn. A report of the reprimand and the remedial action taken shall remain in the personnel file of the clergyperson once the reprimand has been withdrawn.

Rationale:

Legislation restores language from the 2008 *Book of Discipline* for referral, disposition, and remedial action for an administrative matter that was removed by 2012 General Conference to streamline the judicial/administrative complaint process. The process was ruled unconstitutional in JD 1296, which restored judicial language, this petition restores administrative language.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20490-OM-¶361-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Organize Administrative Fair Process Paragraphs

Move current ¶ 363 to the beginning of ¶ 361:

¶ 361. ~~¶363. Disposition of Recommendations of In Cases of Involuntary Status Change—~~

1. When there is a recommendation for an involuntary status change, the Board of Ordained Ministry shall take action in a timely manner. The recommendation shall be referred to the conference relations committee who shall conduct an administrative hearing following the fair process provisions of ¶ 361.2. The bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry, as appropriate, shall designate the person to present the recommendation to the committee. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to address the recommendation in person, in writing, and with the assistance of a clergy person who is a member in full connection of the respondent's annual conference, and who shall have voice. Once the committee has heard the person designated to represent the recommendation, the respondent, and others as determined by the chairperson of the committee, it shall report its decision to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The board may affirm or reverse the decision of the committee.

† 2. Conference Relations Committee—Each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall establish . . . [Renumber rest of paragraph.]

Rationale:

Moves the explanation of the involuntary status change process to the beginning of the administrative fair process section. The requirements and steps for completing the process now follow. This organization provides a clearer understanding of the administrative fair process. The contents of ¶ 363 are not changed.

¶361.

Petition Number: 20491-OM-¶361-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Conference Relations Committee

Amend ¶ 361:

1. Each annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry shall establish a conference relations committee of at least three persons to hear requests for discontinuance of provisional members, involuntary leave of absence,

administrative location, involuntary retirement, or other such matters as may be referred to them by the Board of Ordained Ministry. Members of the conference relations committee may be selected randomly to hear cases within their jurisdictional or central conference.

Rationale:

This will alleviate the concern that annual conferences may become overly conservative or overly liberal in their interpretation and enforcement of the *Book of Discipline* by having a cross conference committee hear cases.

¶361.2.

Petition Number: 20489-OM-¶361.2-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

When Fair Process Begins in Administrative Complaints

Amend by Addition to ¶ 361.2 as follows:

¶ 361.2. Fair Process Hearings—As part of the holy covenant . . . in administrative hearings. The administrative proceedings and the rights set forth in this paragraph commence upon referral of a signed complaint to the proper authorities (JCDs 697, 704, 784) and shall be observed during the supervisory response. The process set forth . . .

Rationale:

Cabinets, simplifying their handling of a troubled pastor, desire postponing fair process rights. What happens before referral to the conference relations committee in the administrative track is called “supervision” but is usually where the pastor is isolated, intimidated, and coerced to decide “voluntarily” to take leave or withdraw. Fair process

¶361.2c.

Petition Number: 20488-OM-¶361.2c; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

Allows the Accompanying Person to Be Both Elder and a Lawyer

Amend by addition to ¶ 361.2c):

The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied . . . by a clergy person . . . who may also be a lawyer, in accordance . . .

Other paragraph impacted: ¶ 362 1(b).

Other parallel passages that should be changed: ¶¶ 413, 2702.3(c), 2706.2c), 362.1(b).

Rationale:

Elders should not be barred from serving as advocates, just because they are also licensed as attorneys. Advocacy in any hearing on behalf of a respondent is difficult and requires skills most pastors do not ordinarily have. When an accompanying clergyperson happens also to be a lawyer, he or she

¶361.2g.

Petition Number: 20487-OM-¶361.2g; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Addressing the Principle of Legality—Clergy

Add new paragraph ¶ 361.2.g—Prior to the start of the administrative hearing by the conference relations committee the clergyperson may choose to have a trial. This choice must be made in writing and submitted to the chair of the conference relations committee prior to the start of the administrative hearing. The procedures are provided for in ¶¶ 2707-2713.

Rationale:

This legislation addresses the principle of legality raised in JD 1366 by restoring language and procedures used prior to 1996 *Discipline*. This language was found to meet the principle of legality in Judicial Council Decision 351 and the provisions of ¶ 20 of the Constitution.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20492-OM-¶362-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Organize Complaint Procedures Paragraphs

Move ¶ 362 to be inserted before current ¶ 2703:

PROCEDURES FOR REFERRAL AND INVESTIGATION OF A JUDICIAL COMPLAINT

¶ **362. ¶ NEW.** *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust,

the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

a) *Supervision*—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The person filing the complaint and the clergyperson shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

b) *Supervisory Response*—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or her with the right to voice.

The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop's designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. At the determination of the bishop, persons with qualifications and experience in

assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory response. The bishop also may consult with the committee on pastor-parish relations for pastors, the district committee on superintendency for the district superintendents, appropriate personnel committee, or other persons who may be helpful.

When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergyperson named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint.

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality.

A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

d) Suspension—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period not to exceed thirty (30) days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension. The person so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334. The cost of supply of a pastor during the suspension will be borne by the annual conference.

e) Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within ninety (90) days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within ninety (90) days after

the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint with the consent of the cabinet giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy of which shall be placed in the clergyperson's file; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

f) Supervisory Follow-up and Healing—The bishop and cabinet shall provide a process for healing within the congregation, annual conference, or other context of ministry if there has been significant disruption by the complaint. This process may include sharing of information by the bishop or the bishop's designee about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts, which may compromise any possible forthcoming administrative or judicial process. When facts are disclosed, due regard should be given to the interests and needs of all concerned, including the respondent and complainant who may be involved in an administrative or judicial process. This process for healing may include a process of a just resolution, which addresses unresolved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for parties involved. This can take place at any time during the supervisory, complaint, or trial process.

g) A complaint may be held in abeyance with the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry if civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent on matters covered by the complaint. The status of complaints held in abeyance shall be reviewed at a minimum of every ninety (90) days by the bishop and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to ensure that the involvement of civil authorities is still a valid impediment for proceeding with the resolution of a complaint. Abeyance of a complaint may be terminated by either the bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry. The time in which a complaint is held in abeyance shall not count toward the statute of limitations. A clergyperson shall continue to hold his or her current status while a complaint is held in abeyance.

Rationale:

Locating all complaint procedures into the judicial complaint process section by moving them from the administrative fair process section (¶ 361-¶ 363) better organizes the related paragraphs. The contents of the current ¶ 362 have not been changed.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20493-OM-¶362-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #9—Moratorium on Complaint Proceedings

Amend ¶ 362 by adding a new subparagraph (h), as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

* * *

h) Moratorium on Complaints Proceedings Concerning Human Sexuality—In light of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, effective as of the close of the General Conference of 2020, no complaint proceedings (including, without limitation, a bishop’s supervisory response, suspension proceedings, attempts to achieve a just resolution, or referral of a complaint) shall be commenced, and all such complaint proceedings that may be pending shall be suspended, insofar as the alleged misconduct asserted in the complaint is that the respondent is a “self-avowed practicing homosexual” (however that term may be defined, including, without limitation, living in a same-gender marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union); that the respondent has conducted, performed or celebrated a same-gender wedding or other same-gender union; that the respondent has certified, licensed, commissioned, ordained, or consecrated a “self-avowed practicing homosexual”; that the respondent has provided “funds to any gay caucus or group” or used funds “to promote the acceptance of homosexuality”; or that the respondent has otherwise engaged in conduct that *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* currently states is “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

This moratorium on all new and pending complaint proceedings concerning human sexuality provisions applies not merely to charges that are explicitly based on ¶ 2702.1(b), but also to any charge that the same alleged conduct constitutes a chargeable offense under any other provision of the *Discipline*, including (without limitation) “immorality” under ¶ 2702.1(a); “disobedience to the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(d); “dissemination of doctrines contrary to the established standards of doctrine of The United Meth-

odist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(e); and “fiscal malfeasance” under ¶ 2702.1(f).

This moratorium shall remain in effect unless and until it is repealed or modified by the General Conference.

Rationale:

The substantial resources required for individual complaint processes related to this deep disagreement in The UMC are best focused on critical missions and ministries. This moratorium offers necessary space for important systematic work to be completed by General Conference delegates without the additional conflict that complaints processes and trials create.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20498-OM-¶362; Lambert, Jennifer - Phoenix, AZ, USA for Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

Complaint Procedures

Amend ¶ 362 as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2016 and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused, by a professing lay member or another clergy member of the conference in which they serve and/or live (with exceptions being made for complaints where criminal charges or abuse may be involved), of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20500-OM-¶362; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA. 1 Similar Petition

ALL BELONG: Restoring Wesleyan Accountability to Just Resolutions

Amend ¶ 362 as follows:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members,

and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

Amend ¶ 362.c as follows:

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions,

shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

Amend ¶ 362.3e as follows:

e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint ~~as having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the clergy person's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

Rationale:

Because all belong in the body of Christ, this petition acts to delete and remove harmful consequences of General Conference decisions that undermine the trust and responsibility placed in the elected and appointed leaders of our church, and conferred disproportionate power to those who file complaints.

¶362.

Petition Number: 20503-OM-¶362-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Remove Traditional Plan Language and Clarify Just Resolution

Amend ¶ 362:

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the

hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ.

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. A just resolution is most possible within the bounds of an annual conference, the basic body in the church. When a complainant lives beyond the bounds of the annual conference of the respondent, the bishop or counsel for the church shall hear the concerns and harms of the complainant and may continue the just resolution without the complainant's final approval in order to address local community and contextual needs.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

a) Supervision—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or district superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergyperson. A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The person filing the complaint and the clergyperson shall be informed by the district superintendent or bishop of the process for filing the complaint and its purpose.

b) Supervisory Response—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. The person against whom the complaint was made may choose another person to accompany him or her with the right to voice; the person making the complaint shall have the right to choose a person to accompany him or

her with the right to voice. The supervisory response shall be carried out by the bishop or the bishop's designee in a timely manner, with attention to communication to all parties regarding the complaint and the process. At the termination of the bishop, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory response. The bishop also may consult with the committee on pastor-parish relations for pastors, the district committee on superintendency for the district superintendents, appropriate personnel committee, or other persons who may be helpful. When the supervisory response is initiated, the bishop shall notify the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry that a complaint has been filed, of the clergyperson named, of the general nature of the complaint, and, when concluded, of the disposition of the complaint.

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) ~~shall~~ may be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory or complaint process. This is a not an administrative or judicial proceeding.

d) Suspension—When deemed appropriate, to protect the well-being of the person making the complaint, the congregation, annual conference, other context for ministry, and/or clergy, the bishop, with the recommendation of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, may suspend the person from all clergy responsibilities, but not from an appointment, for a period not to exceed ninety days. With the agreement of the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the bishop may extend the suspension for only one additional period not to exceed thirty days. During the suspension, salary, housing, and benefits provided by a pastoral charge will continue at a level no less than on the date of suspension. The person

so suspended shall retain all rights and privileges as stated in ¶ 334. The cost of supply of a pastor during the suspension will be borne by the annual conference.

e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the Bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies of which shall be placed in the clergyperson's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

f) *Supervisory Follow-up and Healing*—The bishop and cabinet shall provide a process for healing within the congregation, annual conference, or other context of ministry if there has been significant disruption by the complaint. This process may include sharing of information by the bishop or the bishop's designee about the nature of the complaint without disclosing alleged facts, which may compromise any possible forthcoming administrative or judicial process. When facts are disclosed, due regard should be given to the interests and needs of all concerned, including the respondent and complainant who may be involved in an administrative or judicial process. This process for healing may include a process of a just resolution, which addresses unresolved conflicts, support for victims, and reconciliation for parties involved. This can take place at any time during the supervisory, complaint, or trial process.

g) A complaint may be held in abeyance with the approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry if civil authorities are involved or their involvement is imminent on matters covered by the complaint. The status of complaints held in abeyance shall be reviewed at a minimum of every 90 days by the bishop and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to ensure that the involvement of civil authorities is still a valid impediment for proceeding with the resolution of a complaint. Abeyance of a complaint may be terminated by either the bishop or the Board of Ordained Ministry. The time in which a complaint is held in abeyance shall not count toward the statute of limitations. A clergyperson shall continue to hold his or her current status while a complaint is held in abeyance.

¶362.1.

Petition Number: 20494-OM-¶362.1-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #18— Amend Just Resolution Process

Amend ¶¶ 362.1, 413.3c, 2701.5, 2706.5.c.3 by deleting the same sentence to all four as follows: ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is . . .

This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of this sacred trust, in the hope that God's work . . .

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 362.1c may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. When . . .

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*—

3. c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 362.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~

¶ 2701.5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties . . .

¶ 2706.5 c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.2d. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, the complainant, and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. ~~Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint.~~ If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures . . .

Rationale:

The goal of a just resolution is to fairly and fully resolve conflict, not keep a list of all harms. This deletion from 2019 enables The UMC to honor the admonition of Scripture to “keep no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Identifying “all harms” is subjective in nature.

¶362.1.

Petition Number: 20497-OM-¶362.1-G; Beard, Janet - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference.

Amend Complaint Procedures

Amend ¶ 362.1, paragraph 4 of *The Book of Discipline* as follows:

A complaint is a written and signed statement claiming misconduct as defined in ¶ 2702.1. The complainant, if clergy, shall be a member of the same annual conference as defined in ¶ 369.1, or a clergy member of another annual conference appointed in the same annual conference, or a layperson with membership in a United Methodist church within the same annual conference as the clergy about whom the complaint is filed. When a complaint is received by the bishop, both the person making the complaint and the person against whom the complaint is made will be informed in writing of the process to be followed at that stage. When and if the stage changes, those persons will continue to be informed in writing of the new process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended for one 30-day period upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

Rationale:

A logical reading of Matthew 18:15-20 (Rule of Christ) would suggest that a complainant and respondent are members of the same annual conference. Complaints filed against clergy in another annual conference do not promote healing and love and in fact further break an already fractured denomination.

¶362.1a.

Petition Number: 20499-OM-¶362.1a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Limiting Cabinet Complaint Initiation

Amend by addition in ¶ 362.1a) as follows:

¶ 362.1a) *Supervision*—In the course of the ordinary fulfillment of the superintending role, the bishop or superintendent may receive or initiate complaints about the performance or character of a clergy person. To initiate a judicial complaint, they must be the victim or a witness to the alleged event. To initiate an administrative complaint, they must have attempted appropriate remedial actions (¶ 334.3) or sought medical evaluations as needed (¶ 356). A complaint is a written . . . purpose.

Rationale:

As supervisors, bishops and superintendents have a role. Reasonable limits are possible under the *Discipline* and they must be put in place.

As the paragraph now stands, the phrase “or initiate” allows bishops and superintendents prone to autocracy to

destroy pastor's ministries and ravage the morale of whole conferences.

¶362.1b.

Petition Number: 20501-OM-¶362.1b; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

The Role of Elders in Supervisory Meetings

Amend by addition to ¶ 362.1b):

b) *Supervisory Response*—The supervisory response of the bishop shall begin upon receipt of a formal complaint. The response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution among all parties. It is not part of any judicial process. The complaint shall be treated as an allegation or allegations during the supervisory process. At all supervisory meetings no verbatim record shall be made and no legal counsel shall be present. An elder who is also an attorney is permitted to accompany the respondent, with voice, at supervisory meetings.

Rationale:

Advocacy in any hearing on behalf of a respondent is difficult and requires skills most pastors do not ordinarily have. When an accompanying clergyperson happens also to be a lawyer, he or she may have just the extra skills a respondent needs in either administrative or judicial hearings that could

¶362.1c.

Petition Number: 20496-OM-¶362.1c-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #17— Just Resolution-Amend Complainant Role

Amend ¶¶ 362.1(c), 413.3(c), 2701.5, and 2706.5(c)3 by deleting the same sentence to all four as follows: ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~

Also delete the complainant(s), in ¶¶ 2701.5 and 2706.5(c)3.

¶ 362. *Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. . .

...

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the

parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*

...

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2,

...

...

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 363.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the church and other parties to the complaint.

¶ 2701.5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right insofar as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed

by the church and other parties to the complaint. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the church, ~~the complainant(s)~~, and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

¶ 2706.5. Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral

c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(1) If the committee on investigation determines . . .

(2) If the committee on investigation determines . . .

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.5. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, ~~the complainant(s)~~, and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. ~~No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and every effort shall be made to have the complainant(s) agree to the resolution before it may take effect.~~ If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same per-

sons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Just resolutions shall state all identified harms and how they shall be addressed by the Church and other parties to the complaint. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The written statement affirming such resolution shall be given to the bishop for further action(s) to implement the agreement, if any. If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee.

Rationale:

This amendment removes language from the 2019 Traditional Plan that makes the complaint process more expensive and creates the potential for unresolvable conflict, which increases the likelihood of costly clergy trials that distract from making disciples for Jesus Christ.

¶362.1c.

Petition Number: 20502-OM-¶362.1c; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

The Role of Cabinet Members in Just Resolution

Amend by addition to ¶ 362.1c):

c) *Just Resolution*—The supervisory response . . . If the bishop chooses . . . on confidentiality. From that point forward, no bishop, bishop's representative, or other cabinet representative shall participate in the just resolution process. The presiding bishop will appoint a person to supervise the just resolution process. A process seeking a just resolution . . . to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

Rationale:

Bishops and cabinet members often involved in the judicial process in many ways and they are sorely tempted to control the outcome of just resolution procedures. That crosses the line of constitutional responsibilities. Cabinet members are “executive” and just resolution belongs to the annual conference, the entity that hires and

¶362.1e.

Petition Number: 20495-OM-¶362.1e-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #10— Amend Complaint Process

Amend the complaint process ¶ 362.1e and ¶ 413.3d as follows:

¶ 362.1 e) *Referral or Dismissal of a Complaint*—Upon receiving a written and signed complaint, the bishop shall, within 90 days, carry out the supervisory response process outlined above. If within 90 days after the receipt of the complaint resolution is not achieved, the bishop shall either:

(1) Dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the cabinet, giving the reasons therefore in writing, copies a copy of which shall be placed in the clergyperson's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~; or

(2) Refer the matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint.

¶ 413.3.d) (i) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College of Bishops may either dismiss the complaint as ~~having no basis in law or fact~~, with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy, giving the reasons therefore in writing, a copy copies of which shall be placed in the bishop's file ~~and shared with the complainant~~, refer the matter to the committee on episcopacy as an administrative complaint pursuant to ¶ 413.3e, or refer the matter to counsel for the church pursuant to ¶ 2704.1 to prepare a complaint to forward to the committee on investigation.

Rationale:

In the Wesleyan tradition, we live by the admonition to do no harm. These deletions from the 2019 Traditional Plan restore discernment and discretion to the office of the episcopacy. There are other reasons that a complaint might be subject to dismissal, beyond having no basis in law or fact.

¶364.

Petition Number: 20504-OM-¶364; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Readmission to Provisional Membership

Amend ¶ 364 by adding a new paragraph following the first paragraph (which currently ends “to perform those ministerial functions for which they are qualified.”)

Persons whose provisional membership has been discontinued from one annual conference may be appointed or considered for appointment in a different annual conference. In such circumstances, these persons may follow the above provisions to be readmitted to provisional membership in the annual conference in which they are seeking, or are under, appointment. In addition, the Board of Ordained Ministry of that annual conference shall obtain verification of their qualifications, and information about the circumstances relating to the discontinuance of provisional membership, from the Board of Ordained Ministry of the conference in which provisional membership was discontinued.

Rationale:

In our interconnected world, it becomes increasingly likely that former provisional members might geographically relocate and/or be called again in a new context. This amendment would give such people the choice of reentry into provisional membership, rather than restarting the process, while preserving and addressing the conditions of discontinuance.

¶365.3.

Petition Number: 20505-OM-¶365.3; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Honorable Location

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 365.3 (*Readmission After Honorable or Administrative Location*) as follows:

3. A satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. ~~certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.~~ The Board of Ordained Ministry shall require psychological evaluation.

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent.

¶367.

Petition Number: 20506-OM-¶367-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Delete Outdated Readmission After Termination Process

Delete ¶ 367 in its entirety.

Rationale:

The procedures in this paragraph apply to those terminated prior to General Conference 1976. They are no longer timely and need to be deleted.

¶368.5.

Petition Number: 20507-OM-¶368.5; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Reduce Inappropriate Medical Disclosure and Discrimination—Involuntary Retirement

Amend the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 368.5 (*Readmission After Involuntary Retirement*) as follows:

5. Presentation of satisfactory letter from a physician, as described in ¶ 324.8. ~~certificate of good health on the prescribed form from a physician approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry.~~

[Retain the rest of the paragraph as written.]

Rationale:

Replaces the health form with a letter from a physician, eliminating the high potential for confidential information to be disclosed in violation of the individual's privacy. Refers back to disability/diagnosis non-discrimination for those seeking provisional membership, making the policy more consistent

¶369.1.

Petition Number: 20508-OM-¶369.1-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Accountability of Superintendents

Amend by addition:

¶ 369.1 1. The annual conference is the basic body of The United Methodist Church. All clergy, including district superintendents, are amenable to the annual conference in the performance of their duties

Rationale:

Because ¶ 424.3 violates the separation of powers, this paragraph takes precedence over it with or without amendment. Superintendents who violate the *Discipline* must be held accountable just as any other pastor is within the annual conference and its means to do that under fair process.

¶635.1a.

Petition Number: 20509-OM-¶635.1a-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Opening Nominations for the Board of Ordained Ministries to the Plenary

Amend by addition to ¶ 635.1a) in the following way:

¶ 635.1a) Members for the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be nominated by the presiding bishop . . . and with the cabinet, and by nomination from the floor of the annual conference. To ensure adequate . . .

In addition, this amendment needs to be made in ¶¶ 636 (*Conference Administrative Review Committee*) and 2703 (*Composition of the Committee on Investigation*).

Rationale:

Paragraph 33 gives responsibility for all matters of character, performance, and conference relations to the conference and not to the cabinet members. Nominations must be open from the floor for every group that deals with reviewing those or the conference ends up without access to the make-up of those groups.

¶635.1a.

Petition Number: 20511-OM-¶635.1a-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Assuring Boards of Ministry Compliance

Amend by addition ¶ 635.1.a:

Members shall be nominated by the presiding bishop after consultation with the chairperson of the board, the executive committee, or a committee elected by the board of the previous quadrennium, and with the cabinet. Prior to being nominated for membership on the Board of Ordained Ministry by the bishop, any individual must certify to the bishop that he or she will uphold, enforce, and maintain the *Book of Discipline* related to the duties of the Board of Ordained Ministry, including but not limited to all the qualifications for ordination (¶¶ 304, 330, 335, 336). Additionally, the bishop must certify to the annual conference secretary that he or she has only nominated individuals who have so certified. To ensure adequate board membership . . .

Rationale:

Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this provision ensures that members of the board commit to upholding the requirements of the *Discipline* and makes the bishop responsible for nominating only

such persons. Permitting boards to not conform to the *Discipline* tears the unity of the church.

¶635.2a.

Petition Number: 20510-OM-¶635.2a; Banks, Martha - Akron, OH, USA.

Effectively Recruiting and Retaining Young Clergy of Color

Amend *Discipline* ¶ 635.2.a:

To assume the primary responsibility for the enlistment and recruitment of ministerial leadership for our churches and other ministry settings by working in consultation with the cabinet and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to study and interpret the ordained, licensed, certified, and assigned ministerial leadership needs and resources of the annual conference, with due regard to the inclusive nature of the church. It shall, with the assistance of the local church committee on pastor-parish relations, conference agencies, and every ordained, licensed, certified, and assigned leader of the conference, enlist women and men of all races and ethnic origins for ministry as a vocation and guide those persons in the process of education, training, and discernment of the most appropriate path for their ministry, recommending colleges and schools of theology listed by the University Senate, licensing school, and other approved educational opportunities. In United States annual conferences, it shall actively recruit and retain clergy of color, with particular efforts to recruit and retain young clergy of color, using empirically supported, culturally relevant employment practices for African American, Native American, Latina/o, and Asian American/Pacific Islander clergy, respectively, and shall include a report of its racial diversity clergy recruitment and retention practices and progress in the annual conference journal. All persons Persons recruited should have an understanding of and appreciation for persons of different racial and ethnic heritages.

Rationale:

Men of color make up less than 8% and women of color make up less than 4% of United Methodist clergy in the United States (Kane, 2014), where the average age of first appointments of clergy of color is 45 years old (Johnson, 2012). ¶162A of the Social Principles of

¶635.2h.

Petition Number: 20512-OM-¶635.2h-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Assuring Full Examination

AMEND by addition to ¶ 635.2.h:

To examine all applicants as to their fitness for the ordained ministry and make full inquiry as to the fitness of the candidate for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to associate membership; (3) election to provisional membership; and (4) election to full conference membership. The Board of Ordained Ministry shall conduct a full examination to ascertain whether an individual meets the requirements of all applicable disciplinary standards and shall not ignore such standards, including but not limited to ¶ 304.1-3 and the standards appropriate to the candidate's stage in the process (¶¶ 310, 313, 315, 322, 324, 330, 335, 336). The board shall certify to the clergy session that such an examination has occurred and its results. If the board determines as a matter of fact that an individual fails to meet any of the requirements, including but not limited to unrepentantly engaging in any sexual relationship outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage, the board shall not recommend the individual to the clergy session of the annual conference for commissioning or ordination.

Rationale:

Incorporates Judicial Council Decisions 1343, 1344, and 1352 in the *Discipline*, requiring boards of ordained ministry to fully examine candidates' qualifications under ¶ 304.3. Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this forbids boards from recommending persons found to be unqualified under that paragraph to the clergy session.

¶666.7.

Petition Number: 20513-OM-¶666.7; Smith, Taylor - Griffin, GA, USA.

Amendment of Voting Process for Certification of Candidates for Ordained Ministry

Amend ¶ 666.7 as follows:

¶ 666.7. The vote of the committee on matters of candidacy shall be by individual written ballot of the committee present. A three-fourths majority vote is required for certification. All other matters of candidacy shall be by a simple majority vote. The committee shall notify the candidates in writing twenty-four hours following the initial interview unless extraordinary circumstances concerning the candidates' fitness for ministry merit further study. Further consideration of an inquiring candidate's certification shall take place over a period of no more than 14 days, after which the district superintendent shall inform the candidate of their decision and next steps.

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20661.

Petition Number: 20661-OM-NonDis-\$-G; Haller, Laurie - USA for 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission.

Create 2021-2024 Study of Ministry Commission

General Conference has endorsed a Study of Ministry Commission most quadrennia since the creation of The United Methodist Church in 1968. As ministry needs continue to evolve, the church needs focused study and recommendations on the nature and structure of ministry in the new realities of the church and the world. We propose that the church continue the Study of Ministry Commission for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.

We recommend a team of 15-18 members who are broadly representative in ethnicity, age, geographic area, ministry orders, laity, and theological perspectives. Commission members should have specific experience and skill sets related to licensed and ordained ministry (e.g. Boards of Ordained Ministry, cabinets, theological education, agencies, and local churches). At least one-third of the 2021-2024 Commission should be members from the 2017-2020 Study of Ministry Commission. There shall also be at least one central conference member from Africa, one from Europe, and one from the Philippines. We advocate especially for the representation and inclusion of younger clergy. The Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, will select the commission's members and leadership. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will assign staff to resource and carry out the commission's work and provide funding for its staff's participation.

The 2020 General Conference will appropriate funds sufficient for the commission's work, with funding and implementation of the commission administered through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The commission will respond to the church's needs and will partner with key entities, such as the Council of Bishops, the Committee on Faith and Order, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, United Methodist seminaries, and Boards of Ordained Ministry. The commission should continue to lead in the development of the church's understanding of a theology of ordained ministry and consider innovations that further The United

Methodist Church's mission in the world. The commission's work will include the following tasks:

1. Continue to study and develop a theology of ordained ministry and its implications for The United Methodist Church through initiating a churchwide conversation and a process of feedback about the theology of ordination grounded in the church's study of "A Sacred Trust: A Theological Framework for Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church." This study document is included as a part of the commission's report found in the ADCA.

2. Present a revised document to the 2024 General Conference that is based on feedback from annual conferences and other bodies of the church.

3. Present legislation to the 2024 General Conference to align the church's polity related to licensed and ordained clergy with the church's understanding of a theology of ordained ministry as expressed in the developing study document, "A Sacred Trust."

4. Continue consultation with the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to provide guidance and language in the development of text for the *General Book of Discipline*, Chapter Two—"The Ministry of the Ordained," and Chapter Three—"The Superintendency." Members of the Study of Ministry Commission shall be on the writing committee for the *General Book of Discipline*.

5. Further examine the formation and education of clergy, working toward a systemic model that embraces both Master of Divinity and Course of Study work, and continues into provisional membership and the early years of ministry. The commission should also reflect on the possibility of allowing annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry to consider persons for ordination who have completed advanced degrees (beyond the bachelor's degree) in fields relevant to ministry when those degrees are integrated with basic graduate theological studies at an approved seminary.

6. Examine new educational models and patterns for ministry education and formation as related to the church's developing understanding of a theology of ordained ministry and responding to ministry needs for our current context.

7. Assist the church in its understanding of the Ordering of Ministry as related to needs resulting from the 2020 General Conference.

