The Daily Christian Advocate is now available as a website. Go to www.dailychristianadvocate.org, where you can access all Delegate Handbook materials, general agency reports, petitions, and everything else in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate electronically using your computer, smartphone, or tablet.

During General Conference, the website will be updated daily with the reports, legislation, and proceedings of the Conference.

Go to www.dailychristianadvocate.org to create your account and login.
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Greetings, and welcome to the 2020 General Conference!

The Commission on the General Conference has been praying, worshiping, talking, planning, and working for the past four years to plan not one, but two sessions of the General Conference. Many thanks to those who have invested extra effort in all the steps that have been needed. These efforts have included creating a daily schedule; providing the Daily Christian Advocate; securing the infrastructure required for conferencing; accommodating the travel, housing, and dining needs of delegates, staff, and guests; and many other tasks. We appreciate the work of the teams from the Minnesota and Dakotas Annual Conferences who are providing local hospitality. We have all been supported in these ministries by the very able staff of the Minneapolis Convention Center and Meet Minneapolis.

The Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA) will be published digitally in English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili on the DCA website: www.dailychristianadvocate.org. All reports, petitions, delegate lists, schedules, and other information will be available in an easily accessible format online. It will also be published as before in three volumes. Volumes 1 and 2 will be mailed to delegates at least ninety (90) days prior to General Conference. In Volume 1, there are delegate lists (clergy names in the delegate lists are in italics), seating assignments, legislative committee assignments, agenda and program, the proposed Plan of Organization and Rules of Order (which will be presented for adoption at the first plenary session), and the report of the Commission on the General Conference.

Volume 2 contains printed reports of the general agencies and study commissions, proposed changes in the Book of Discipline, proposed new resolutions, amendments to existing resolutions, and non-disciplinary proposals. When the same petition is submitted multiple times, it is printed only once and the number of similar petitions is noted in the petition header. Only fifty (50) words of rationale are printed. The material is organized according to the legislative committee to which it is assigned.

The final section of the Advance Edition, Volume 3, is the quadrennial report of the General Council on Finance and Administration. This volume will be available electronically on the opening day of General Conference. This volume must contain financial reports that cannot be prepared until the 2019 books are closed and thus requires a later production date than the rest of the ADCA.

The full daily editions of the Daily Christian Advocate will also be published digitally on the DCA website during General Conference. Selected material from the DCA—particularly those items that will be voted on—will also be printed and distributed to delegates as a courtesy. These selected materials will additionally be translated into French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili.

Delegates and first reserves will be issued free access to the DCA website and given copies of the printed material. If other reserve delegates are seated, they will have access to the DCA website and may use the printed material provided for the people they replace. All issues of the Daily Christian Advocate are published under the authority of the Commission on the General Conference.

Blessed to serve,
Kim Simpson, Chairperson, Commission on the General Conference
Rev. Gary W. Graves, Secretary of the General Conference
Sara Hotchkiss, Business Manager of the General Conference
Dr. Brian Sigmon, Daily Christian Advocate Editor
2020 General Conference Schedule

Registration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, May 3</td>
<td>1:00–6:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Registration (all categories)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, May 4</td>
<td>7:00 A.M.–6:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Registration (all categories)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, May 5</td>
<td>7:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M.; 4:00–6:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Registration (all categories)</td>
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Registration will continue from 7:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. each day except for Sunday, May 10.

Agenda and Program

Following is the overall program of the 2020 General Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Following the presentation and adoption of the report of the Commission on the General Conference at the opening session of the General Conference, the Committee on Agenda and Calendar shall immediately become responsible for guiding the order of business of the Conference. All times listed are considered “Orders of the Day.” Announcements will be held prior to the end of each Plenary as necessary.

Friday, May 1

6:00 P.M. – Orientation for Interpreters
– Orientation for Pages and Marshals

Saturday, May 2

8:00 A.M. – Orientation for Central Conference Delegates
10:00 A.M. – Committee on Credentials

Sunday, May 3

8:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. – Orientation for Central Conference Delegates
1:00 – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
3:00 P.M. – Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters
– Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
– Orientation for Legislative Committee Recorders
6:00 P.M. – Orientation for Interpreters

Monday, May 4

7:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
9:00 A.M. – Committee on Reference
– Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters
10:00 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
1:00 P.M. – Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
– Committee on Presiding Officers
– Committee on the Journal

Tuesday, May 5

6:00 P.M. – Orientation for Heads of Delegations
– Orientation for Pages and Marshals

7:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Orientation for All Delegates
2:00 – 3:30 P.M. – Opening Worship
3:30 – 3:50 P.M. – Break
3:50 – 6:30 P.M. – Plenary Session
Call to Order
Roll Call and Setting the Bar of the Conference
Emergency Procedures
Greeting from Minneapolis
The Role of Monitoring (5 minutes)
The Power of Communication (15 minutes)
Journey from 2016 to 2020 (15 minutes)
Speaker Recognition System Introduction
Testing the Voting System
Commission on the General Conference Report and Plan of Organization and Rules of Order
Elections
• Coordinator of the Calendar
• Inter-jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy
• General Conference Administrative Committees
Report of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar
4:00 – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing
6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Wednesday, May 6

7:00 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
– Committee on Reference
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 8:30 A.M. – Worship
8:30 – 10:35 A.M. – Plenary Session
    Episcopal Address (45 minutes)
    Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
    Report on the Social Principles Revision (12 minutes)
    Nominations
10:35 – 10:55 A.M. – Break
10:55 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
    Young People’s Address (30 minutes)
    General Book of Discipline Report and Dialogue
    (90 minutes)
1:00 – 2:30 P.M. – Lunch
2:30 – 4:30 P.M. – Organization of the Legislative Committees
4:30 P.M. – Dinner and Mandatory Leadership Training
    for Legislative Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Parliamentarians, Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Recorders, and Sub-Committee Chairs.
4:30 P.M. – Recess for All Others
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

Thursday, May 7

7:00 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
    – Committee on Reference
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 8:45 A.M. – Worship
8:45 – 9:30 A.M. – Plenary Session
    Opening Prayer
    Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
    Laity Address (30 minutes)
    Administrative Committee Reports
9:30 – 9:50 A.M. – Break
9:50 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. – Legislative Committees
12:30 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch
1:30 – 4:00 P.M. – Legislative Committees
4:00 – 4:20 P.M. – Break
4:20 – 6:20 P.M. – Legislative Committees
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing
6:20 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion (Legislative Committees)
6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Friday, May 8

7:00 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
    – Committee on Reference
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 8:45 A.M. – Worship
8:45 – 9:50 A.M. – Plenary Session
    Opening Prayer
    Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 8:45 A.M. – Worship
8:45 – 9:50 A.M. – Plenary Session
    Opening Prayer
    Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
Financial State of the Church (15 minutes)
Connectional Table Report (20 minutes)
Jurisdictional Study Committee Report (15 minutes)
Administrative Committee Reports
9:50 – 10:10 A.M. – Break
10:10 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. – Legislative Committees
12:30 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch
1:30 – 4:00 P.M. – Legislative Committees
4:00 – 4:20 P.M. – Break
4:20 – 6:20 P.M. – Legislative Committees
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing
6:20 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion (Legislative Committees)
6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Saturday, May 9

7:00 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
    – Committee on Reference
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 8:45 A.M. – Worship
8:45 – 9:50 A.M. – Plenary Session
    Opening Prayer
    Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
    Wespath – New Retirement Plan Overview
    (45 minutes)
    Administrative Committee Reports
    Consent Calendars
9:50 – 10:10 A.M. – Break
10:10 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. – Legislative Committees
12:30 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch
1:30 – 4:00 P.M. – Legislative Committees
4:00 – 4:20 P.M. – Break
4:20 – 6:00 P.M. – Legislative Committees
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing
6:00 – 7:30 P.M. – Dinner
7:30 – 9:20 P.M. – Legislative Committees
9:20 – 9:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion (Legislative Committees)
9:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Sunday, May 10

Sabbath

Monday, May 11

6:30 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 9:20 A.M. – Worship
    Consecration of Deaconesses and Home Missioners
    for Lifetime Service
Delegate Handbook

9:20 – 10:00 A.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
   Administrative Committee Reports
   Consent Calendars

10:00 – 10:20 A.M. – Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Voting Demonstration
   Elections
   • Trustees of John Street Church
   • Secretary-designate of the General Conference
   • Commission on the General Conference
   • General Agencies
   • Judicial Council
   • University Senate
   • Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

12:00 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch

1:30 – 3:40 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Africa University Report (20 minutes)
   Higher Education and Ministry Report (20 minutes)
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

3:40 – 4:00 P.M. – Break

4:00 – 6:10 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Abundant Health Initiative Report (10 minutes)
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion

6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Tuesday, May 12

6:30 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar

7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)

8:00 – 9:30 A.M. – Worship
   Ecumenical Introductions (30 minutes)

9:30 – 10:00 A.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
   Administrative Committee Reports
   Consent Calendars

10:00 – 10:20 A.M. – Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

12:00 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch

1:30 – 3:40 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Recognition of Retiring Bishops and Presentation of New Episcopal Leadership (10 minutes)
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

3:40 – 4:00 P.M. – Break

4:00 – 6:10 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   80th Anniversary of UMCOR and Migrant Ministries (10 minutes)
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion

6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Wednesday, May 13

6:30 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar

7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – Worship

9:00 – 10:00 A.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
   Methodist Family Day (30 minutes)
   Administrative Committee Reports
   Consent Calendars

10:00 – 10:20 A.M. – Break

10:20 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

12:00 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch

1:30 – 3:40 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   100th Anniversary of the United Methodist Building (5 minutes)
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

3:40 – 4:00 P.M. – Break

4:00 – 6:10 P.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Calendar Items & Conference Business

5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing

6:10 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion

6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Thursday, May 14

6:30 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar

7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)

8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – Worship
   Commissioning of Missionaries

9:00 – 10:00 A.M. – Plenary Session
   Opening Prayer
   Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
   Mission Bicentennial (15 minutes)
   Administrative Committee Reports
Consent Calendars
Calendar Items & Conference Business
10:00 – 10:20 A.M. – Break
10:20 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
12:00 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch
1:30 – 3:40 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Recognition of New Judicial Council Members and those members completing their service
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
3:40 – 4:00 P.M. – Break
4:00 – 6:10 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
5:00 P.M. – Daily Deadline for DCA Printing
6:10 – 6:30 P.M. – Evening Devotion
6:30 P.M. – Adjournment

Friday, May 15
6:30 A.M. – Committee on Agenda and Calendar
7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. – Registration (all categories)
8:00 – 9:00 A.M. – Worship
9:00 – 10:00 A.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Monitoring Report (3 minutes)
  Administrative Committee Reports
  GCFA Report
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
  Announcements
10:00 – 10:20 A.M. – Break
10:20 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
12:00 – 1:30 P.M. – Lunch
1:30 – 3:40 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Recognition of General Conference Staff and Local Host Committee (25 minutes)
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
3:40 – 4:00 P.M. – Break
4:00 – 6:00 P.M. – Plenary Session
  Opening Prayer
  Calendar Items & Conference Business
6:00 – 6:30 P.M. – Closing Worship
6:30 P.M. – Final Adjournment
Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church

Officers of the Council

President: Kenneth H. Carter  
President-Designate: Cynthia F. Harvey  
Secretary: Mande Muyombo  
Executive Secretary: Marcus Matthews  
Ecumenical Officer: B. Michael Watson  
Past President: Bruce R. Ough

Residential Bishops

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<tr>
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<td>HOLSTON, L. Jonathan</td>
<td>OUGH, Bruce R.</td>
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<td>BALL, Sandra L. Steiner</td>
<td>HOSHIBATA, Robert T.</td>
<td>PALMER, Gregory V.</td>
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<td>JOHNSON, Peggy A.</td>
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Retired Bishops

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<td>STOCKTON, Thomas B.</td>
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</table>
## Connectional Table Members 2017-2020

### Officers

Bishop Christian Alsted, Chairperson  
Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, Vice Chairperson  
Dave Nuckols, North Central Jurisdiction, Treasurer

### Staff

Rev. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, Chief Connectional Ministries Officer  
Rev. Rachel Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, Assistant Connectional Ministries Officer  
Emily Clemons, Director of Communication  
Rev. Adrienne Stricker, Administrative Assistant

### Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jurisdiction/Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pete Aguila</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Belles</td>
<td>Division on Ministries with Young People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Greg Bergquist</td>
<td>General Secretary, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Ole Birch</td>
<td>Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference</td>
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<td>President, General Commission on Religion and Race</td>
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<td>Barbara Boigegrain</td>
<td>General Secretary, Wespath Benefits &amp; Investments</td>
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<td>Rev. Dr. Brad Brady</td>
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<td>Shareka R. Brown</td>
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<td>Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver III</td>
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<td>Rev. Amy Coles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rev. Alfred T. Day, III</td>
<td>General Secretary, General Commission on Archives and History</td>
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<td>Josephine Deere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bishop Hee-Soo Jung</td>
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<td>Moses Kumar</td>
<td>General Secretary, General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
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<td>Moses Kumar</td>
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</table>
Bishop Tracy Malone, President, General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
Bishop William McAlilly, President, General Board Higher Education and Ministry
Bishop Michael McKee, President, General Council on Finance and Administration
Rev. William Meekins, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Brian Milford, President and Publisher, The United Methodist Publishing House
Tonya Murphy, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Ken Nelson, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Benedita Penicela Nhambiu, Africa Central Conference
Rev. Marianne Niesen, Western Jurisdiction
Rev. Dennis M. Oglesby, Jr., Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc.
Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary, United Methodist Women
Bishop Jeremiah Park, President, General Commission on Archives and History
Rev. Lysette Perez, Metodistas Representando la Causa de los Hispanos Americanos
Lathem Postell, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Karen Prudente, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Dr. Robin Scott, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Jovito Sermonia, Philippines Central Conference
Kim Simpson, Chair of the Commission on the General Conference
Rev. Mike Slaughter, North Central Jurisdiction
Bishop James Swanson, President, General Commission on United Methodist Men
Monalisa Tuitahi, Pacific Islanders National Caucus of United Methodists
Bishop Mark Webb, President, Discipleship Ministries
Bishop Mike Watson, Ecumenical Officer, Council of Bishops
Miller Wilbourn, South Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Stefan Zürcher, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
Judicial Council

Officers

M. Oswald Tweh, President, West Africa Central Conference
Ruben Reyes, Vice President, Philippines Central Conference
J. Kabamba Kiboko, Secretary, North Central Jurisdiction

Members

Dennis Blackwell, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Beth Capen, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Lidia Romao Gulele, Africa Central Conference
Øyvind Helliesen, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
Deanell Reece Tacha, South Central Jurisdiction
Luan-Vu Tran, Western Jurisdiction

Clerk: R. Preston Price

Commission on the General Conference

Officers

Kim Simpson, Chairperson
Mujinga Kashala, Vice Chairperson
Gary George, Secretary

Members

Mary Ellen Beasley [appointed August 2019 to finish Duncan McMillan’s term]
Helene Bindl
Francis Charley
Beth Ann Cook
Phebe Cosmiano
Joseph DiPaolo
Christine Flick
Steven Furr, M.D.
James Haun
Stephanie Henry
A. Lynn Hill

John Hiller
Stanislas Kassongo
Betty Katiyo [deceased August 2019]
Marie Kuch-Stanovsky
Jorge Lockward
Mills Maliwa
Duncan McMillan [resigned July 2019]
Laura Merrill
Joseph Mulongo
Ellen Natt
Juliet Spencer
Audun Westad

Ex Officio Members

Bishop Thomas Bickerton, Council of Bishops Representative
Gary Graves, Secretary of the General Conference
Sara Hotchkiss, Business Manager of the General Conference
Moses Kumar, Treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration
Minneapolis Hospitality Team
General Conference 2020

Bruce R. Ough, Resident Bishop
James Haun, Project Director
Becky Boland, Project Co-Director

Host Operations and Management Team
James Haun Christa Meland
Becky Boland Jan Russell
Gail Johnson Kent Johnson

Annual Conference Liaison
Dakotas: Bea Stucke, Diane Weller
Minnesota: Cindy Gregorson

City Services
Manager: Kent Johnson
Co-Manager: Linda Hammer
Hotel Key Leader: Linda Hammer
Volunteer Transportation Key Leader: Jill Easton
Transportation Key Leader: David Serdar
Airport Key Leader: Gary Gottfried

Convention Center Services
Manager: Carol Haun
Co-Manager: Mary Anne Korsch
Information Key Leader: Linda Voss
Credentialed Registration Key Leaders: Tom Knudtson and Judy Knudtson
Observer Registration Key Leader: Becky Real
Lydia Project Key Leader: MaryAnne Korsch

Special Services
Manager: Becky Boland
Co-Manager: Nicole Anderson
Bishops and Spouses Key Leaders: Char Ough, Sheilah Kyburz, Pam Pettit, Karen Evenson, Yvette Richards
Ecumenical and Special Guests Key Leaders: John Mitchem, Matthew Bader
Hennepin Avenue UMC Key Leaders: Judy Zabel, Larry Dunbar, Jerry Gale, Ginger Sisco
Area Displays Key Leader: Terry Sullivan
Judicial Council Support Key Leader: Kathi Austin Mahle
Prayer Room Key Leader: Pam Serdar
Spiritual Director: Jane Stone
Prayer support: Jane Hincks
Arts and Activities: Dean Wolf, Sally Johnson, Elizabeth Macaulay, Randy Koppen, Brian Frink, Mary Huper, Guy Sederski
Worship and Music Support: Van Nixon, Lindy Zabel, Bill Mathis

Administrative Support
Manager: Gail Johnson
Co-Manager: Michelle Beshman

Communications Support
Manager: Christa Meland
Graphic Design: Karla Hovde
Video Production: Doreen Gosmire
Videography: David Stucke
Volunteer Support: Jan Russell
Volunteer Childcare: Kelsey Johnson
Cultural Competency Trainers: Katie Matson, Dana Neuhauser
Registration and Arrival

Registration

Registration will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Delegates, official participants, members of the press, and invited guests will register in Room 102A, while observers will register in the B Lobby area. Everyone in attendance will be required to register and wear a nametag issued by the General Conference. Registration dates and times are as follows:

Sunday, May 3 1:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.
Monday, May 4 7:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.
Tuesday, May 5 7:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
(closed during Opening Worship)
4:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.
Wednesday, May 6 7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Registration will continue from 7:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M. all remaining days except Sunday, May 10, when there will be no registration.

Delegates and reserve delegates are required to present the credential card signed by the annual conference secretary and a government-issued photo identification (driver’s license, passport, or I.D. card) to register. A General Conference nametag and the same photo identification will be required to gain entrance to the Plenary Sessions (Hall C) and to enter the delegate seating area of the legislative committee rooms. Credential cards and General Conference nametags are issued by the secretary of the General Conference.

Reserve Delegate Seating

A General Conference nametag and photo identification will be required when a reserve delegate begins the seating process. Reserve delegates will be issued a voting card and allowed to enter the delegate seating area through the reserve delegate check-in area at the entrance to the back of Hall C once the primary delegate or head of delegation turns in the completed and signed Temporary Seating form and the voting card of the primary delegate. A similar process will be followed to seat a reserve delegate in a legislative committee. This process is to be used only for a specific session. At the end of the session, the reserve delegate is to turn in the voting card and Temporary Seating form before the voting card will be re-issued to the primary delegate.

What to Bring

- Your credential card and government-issued photo identification.
- *Advance Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA)*—delegates and first reserve delegates receive by mail.
- *The Book of Discipline, 2016.*
- *The Book of Resolutions, 2016.*

Weather during General Conference

Average high temperature: 69 F° / 20.8° C
Average low temperature: 49° F / 9.4° C
Average precipitation for the month: 3.3 in. / 8.5 cm
Cloudiness (days per month): 11 days

The hotels and the Minneapolis Convention Center are air conditioned. Dress accordingly.

Smoking Restrictions

There is no smoking allowed anywhere within the Minneapolis Convention Center.
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2020 GENERAL CONFERENCE
MAY 5 - 15, 2020

HOTELS
1  DoubleTree Guest Suites - 1101 LaSalle Ave
2  Hilton Minneapolis - 1001 Marquette Ave
3  Holiday Inn Express & Suites - 225 11th St South
4  Hyatt Regency - 1300 Nicollet
5  Millennium - 1313 Nicollet
Floor Plans of Minneapolis Convention Center
Floor Plans of Minneapolis Convention Center
Floor Plans of Minneapolis Convention Center
This diagram shows the seating arrangement in the plenary area at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The plenary area is located in Exhibit Halls B and C (see page 18). Plenary seating assignments are listed alphabetically by annual conference on pages 22-24.
## Plenary Seating Assignments
### Alphabetically by Conference (Subject to change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordat Churches</th>
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Introduction

The United Methodist Church looks much different than it did when it came into being in 1968. Changes have taken place throughout every level—from local churches and communities, through annual conferences, and up to our global gathering of clergy and laity. The reality of being a worldwide church in this day and time has transformed our context and practice in conferencing.

The Commission on the General Conference reflects the worldwide nature of the church. It is a diverse group of individuals with representatives from each central conference and jurisdiction. Our meetings are simultaneously interpreted into French and English, and our diversity in thought and theological perspective is broader than our language differences. Together, as a picture of the worldwide church, we have strived to be faithful to our charge as we have prepared for our meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In addition to the dedicated individuals who are elected to the commission, we have been blessed with the assistance of staff, many of them serving as volunteers. Ms. Sara Hotchkiss, Rev. Gary Graves, Ms. Raquel Pérez-Molloy, Dr. Susan Brumbaugh, Rev. Abby Parker Herrera, Mr. Raymond Trapp, Dr. Brian Sigmon, Ms. Diane Degnan, and Mr. Don Reasoner have provided the commission with invaluable leadership and experience and deserve special thanks. As you arrive in Minneapolis, you will see evidence of the efforts of the Host Committee, ably headed by Rev. James Haun. Bishop Bruce and Mrs. Char Ough along with the Dakotas and Minnesota Annual Conferences are working to prepare for our welcome.

The role of the Council of Bishops at General Conference is coordinated by the commission in several areas, including their leadership in worship, the Episcopal Address, and the assistance given by our Rules to the Committee on Presiding Officers, which selects those persons who preside at each plenary session. The commission has an ex officio member of the Council of Bishops as part of its composition, and we have been grateful for the contributions of Bishop Thomas Bickerton and the bridge that he has continued to strengthen between the commission and the Council of Bishops. To encourage our coordination with the council, this commission has welcomed a second bishop from the Davao Episcopal Area in the Philippines Central Conference as a permanent guest at our meetings. Bishop Rodolfo Juan has been a helpful contributor to our work.

We are also grateful for the leadership of Duncan McMillan, who served as chair of the Commission from 2016 to 2019. We have recently mourned the death of our fellow member, Betty Katiyo of the West Zimbabwe Annual Conference, who served on the commission since 2012. We appreciate Duncan’s and Betty’s dedication and service.

Function of the Commission

The Commission on the General Conference is tasked with the design and plan for the 2020 General Conference. The 2016 Book of Discipline (¶ 511) establishes the parameters and responsibilities of the commission. This includes selecting the site, setting the dates of General Conference, creating the daily schedule, providing the Daily Christian Advocate, accommodating needs of delegates, setting the per diem allowance recommendation, assigning the number and content of legislative committees, and setting the number of delegates when the designated formula produces a number outside the constitutional range.

Results of 2019 General Conference

This commission, like none in recent history, has had to plan two General Conferences. Planning for the 2020 General Conference began, then had to pause as planning for the 2019 Special Session became the main focus. During the process of evaluating the 2019 called General Conference, several items of importance were noted.

A task force was created to investigate possible improper voting at the 2019 General Conference. This task force engaged LBMC, an accounting and business advisory company, to conduct an investigation and Bass, Berry & Sims to provide legal advice regarding process and results of the investigation. The investigation revealed credible evidence that four votes were cast by persons not authorized or properly credentialed as delegates. This resulted in a minority report substitution vote to be declared null and void. The following recommendations were a result of those findings:

- Recommendation 1: Considering what effects the voided vote would have on the disaffiliation legisla-
tion passed, the commission shall ask the Council of Bishops, pursuant to Paragraph 56, Section 4 of the *Discipline*, to consider referral to the Judicial Council to examine the impact of this determination on the disaffiliation vote [2019 DCA p. 523].

- **Recommendation 2:** The commission shall refer to the Council of Bishops allegations concerning delegate selection issues that the task force received from members of the church, but which were beyond the scope of the task force investigation or the authority of the Commission on the General Conference under the *Discipline*.
- **Recommendation 3:** The commission shall propose a collaborative conversation with the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration on membership statistics and the qualifications of and manner in which people are recorded as professing members.
- **Recommendation 4:** The commission affirms new General Conference procedures relating to registration and voting as proposed by commission staff with input from LBMC.

**Actions that have been preliminarily identified for further review and possible implementation include:**

- New procedures relating to registration and voting.
- Electronic voting technology will be utilized to ensure proper voting.
- Nametags will include pictures.
- Government issued photo ID will be required to enter the registration room. No group registrations are allowed.
- More controlled distribution of delegate reimbursements.
- Classroom table arrangements in plenary.
- Dedicated entry points to plenary room.
- Assigned seat within delegations.

**Other plans to be implemented will include:**

- The ADCA and DCA will be available digitally, with the ADCA and selected material from the DCA available in print as well.
- A professional parliamentarian will be assisting as needed at the 2020 General Conference.
- Bishops presiding will have more intentional training.
- Survey following the 2020 General Conference will be developed and distributed.
- Increased plenary time to accommodate a new disciplinary requirement stating that each petition approved by a legislative committee shall receive a vote by the plenary session.

**Proposed Rules changes will include:**

- Adding the following language: “Delegates are free to vote according to their conscience without interference by others observing, monitoring, or recording their votes. Persons shall not give or accept bribes or threaten delegates in order to influence voting.”
- Requiring delegates to use placards or flags to raise points of order.
- Requiring that before delegates vote to end debate on a given matter, the presiding bishop will inform them of how many people have requested to speak for, speak against, or propose amendments.
- No longer allowing challenges of misrepresentation to interrupt a delegate who has the floor.

These proposed recommendations and changes are within the responsibilities of the commission and hope to improve the workings of the General Conference.

**General Conference 2020 and Beyond**

The theme for the 2020 General Conference is “. . . and know that I am God” from Psalm 46. It is the plan of the worship team to emphasize a multitude of different ways we can know God. It is hoped that this can be a positive guide to our work together—looking to God for new ways to develop the church, not do the usual past things, but to build bridges to find common ground for a hope-filled future.

It is in that spirit that the commission has planned for this General Conference. The commission is charged with planning the structure for the delegates to accomplish their work. Many hours have been spent trying to anticipate the needs of persons, from lodging to food to transportation and time to replenish. Facilities to guide our process have been planned in detail. There are many moving parts that must work together to bring this undertaking to fulfillment. The commission has done their work by modeling respectful treatment of others, really listening to each other and honoring the task we were assigned to accomplish.

The Host Committee has been working diligently to make sure the delegates’ needs are met and to be of help onsite. Please thank the many volunteers who have given of their time and talents to serve the church.

It was the commission’s hope to hold the 2024 General Conference in Manila, Philippines, but circumstances
beyond our control have made this location not possible. The location for the 2024 General Conference will be announced at a later date.

The United Methodist Church is at a defining moment in its life. As we gather as a global body, the world will be watching to see how we handle our issues. The mechanism is in place to do the work. It’s up to the delegates to discern the best way forward. May this gathering be grace

filled, where all voices are heard, persons are respected, the mission of the church is lifted as primary, and God’s love is evident!

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Simpson
Chair, Commission on the General Conference

General Conference of The United Methodist Church
Proposed Budget for the 2021-2024 Quadrennium

General Conference (¶¶ 501-511). The apportionments for General Conference go to fund delegate expenses, operation costs (convention center and equipment rental, publishing, petition tracking software, worship, labor), language services (printed translation of advance materials and spoken interpretation on site), expenses of the offices of the secretary, business manager, and treasurer of the General Conference, and expenses of the several commissions and committees in support of the event.

The changing global nature of the church is due in part to the rapidly growing membership in central conferences. The percentage of delegates from central conferences has increased significantly since the start of this millennium, which was 16 percent in 2000. The percent of delegates from central conferences for the most current four quadrennia is 29 percent in 2008; 38 percent in 2012; 42 percent in 2016; and 44 percent in 2020. This change in representation has resulted in two of the four major cost drivers increasing significantly:

1. The budgeted cost of language and translation services in 2024 is:
   a. Oral interpretation - $1,450,000
   b. Written interpretation - $490,000
2. In 2016, the average travel costs for delegates from within the United States was approximately $765 for each delegate, while the average travel cost for delegates from central conferences was approximately $3,365 each. As representation from central conferences grows, because of growth in membership, so likewise does the cost of travel for delegates.

The Commission on the General Conference launched a ministry partner program for the 2012 General Conference with the intent of creating an income stream that may permit the payment of some of the accumulated costs. This program will continue through the 2024 General Conference. Ministry partnership net income (after expenses) provided in 2016 was approximately $400,000 and is expected to be approximately $725,000 in 2020.

(Taken from the General Council on Finance and Administration Report No. 6, General Administration Fund, ADCA Volume 2, Section 1.)
## General Conference Quadrennial Budget Comparison

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apportionment</td>
<td>$8,560,657</td>
<td>$10,586,478</td>
<td>$11,822,081</td>
<td>$10,451,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>$210,418</td>
<td>$595,925</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>$185,831</td>
<td>$337,340</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less: Allowance for Shortfall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1,985,231)</td>
<td>(2,135,300)¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>$8,965,906</td>
<td>$11,519,743</td>
<td>$13,986,850</td>
<td>$8,465,700</td>
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### Expense

**General Conference Commission & Committees**
- Commission on the General Conference, Committee on Editorial Revision, Inter-jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy

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<td>$257,739</td>
<td>$796,791</td>
<td>$692,549</td>
<td>$585,166</td>
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**General Conference Staff Offices** - Business Manager, Secretary, and Treasurer

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$844,853</td>
<td>$1,503,953</td>
<td>$1,594,606</td>
<td>$1,798,531</td>
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**Operations** - convention center and equipment rental, publishing and distribution of ADCA and DCA, petition tracking software, worship and music, labor; pre-briefing

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$2,847,849</td>
<td>$4,536,360</td>
<td>$2,294,301</td>
<td>$2,241,735</td>
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**Language Services** - Translation and Interpretation

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<td></td>
<td>$1,312,676</td>
<td>$1,541,717</td>
<td>$1,469,666</td>
<td>$1,393,666</td>
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**Delegate Expenses** - Travel and Per Diem Allowance

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$3,442,689</td>
<td>$3,895,558</td>
<td>$3,049,676</td>
<td>$3,015,917</td>
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**Sponsorship Expenses**

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<td>$229,740</td>
<td>$226,907</td>
<td>$200,704</td>
<td>$109,704</td>
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**Total Expenses**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8,935,545</td>
<td>$12,500,926</td>
<td>$9,301,502</td>
<td>$9,144,719</td>
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### Net Income

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Balance (Deficit) / Surplus</td>
<td>(835,293)</td>
<td>(945,432)</td>
<td>(1,986,225)²</td>
<td>(1,870,019)²</td>
</tr>
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**Ending Reserves (Deficit)/Surplus**

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(804,842)</td>
<td>(1,926,615)</td>
<td>(390,877)³</td>
<td>(679,019)</td>
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</table>

(1) 70% apportionment shortfall projection
(2) Includes deficit from 2019 General Conference
(3) A request will be made to GCFA from the CGOC for a grant to cover the deficit should apportionment dollars come in at this rate or lower as to not carryover deficit to the 2021-2024 General Conference budget.
Plan of Organization and Rules of Order
for the 2020 General Conference

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Plan of Organization and Rules of Order for the General Conference

PREAMBLE

From the days of John Wesley, the “People called Methodist” have gathered and continue to gather for Christian conferencing as a means of grace. The early Methodists, even as they attended to practical needs of the movement, focused primarily on spiritual matters. The spiritual affairs of the Church and its mission are always before the body whether or not they are apparent in the passions of debate on temporal concerns. Through Christian conferencing the Church comes together, seeking unity in the midst of diversity, always desiring to know the mind of Christ. The General Conference is the representative, deliberative body for The United Methodist Church. It has developed an orderly, rational, and fair process for making majority decisions in the practical affairs of the Church; yet, it also protects the rights of minority positions. The delegates come together in firm conviction that the unity of United Methodism is God’s will and the best way to “spread scriptural holiness” in this global movement of the Church.

The purpose of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order is to help the General Conference be a means of grace, discerning God’s will and striving for Christ-like wisdom in all of our decisions. In the midst of deliberation, we may pause, listen in silence, pray together, and refocus our vision on where the Spirit is leading the Church. These times of silence, prayer, and discernment may be varied and surprising. While they are not substitutes for respectful and orderly debate, they do serve to hold our temporal affairs up to the light of the larger, common mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Trusting that God is at work throughout all of life, the General Conference invites the Church and others to observe our deliberations by conducting our business in open meetings (consistent with ¶ 722 of the Book of Discipline).
PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

I. Opening Session and Organization

The General Conference will assemble at the set time and place beginning with worship. The opening business session of the Conference shall be called to order by the bishop designated, as provided in the Book of Discipline ¶ 16.11.

The following order of business shall be observed:

A. Roll Call. The record of attendance shall be made in writing to the Secretary of the General Conference by:
   1) The Secretary of the Council of Bishops for the bishops,
   2) The Secretary of the Judicial Council for that body,
   3) The Executive Secretary of the Connectional Table for all general secretaries,
   4) The chairperson of each annual conference delegation for its membership (See Rule 5), and
   5) The chairperson of each delegation for Concordat, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist and United Churches.

B. Establish the bar of the conference.

   1) Adoption of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order

D. Elections
   1) Coordinator of Calendar (See IV.C)

E. Report of Committee on Agenda.

F. Miscellaneous Business.

G. Adjournment.

II. Episcopal, Laity, and Young People Addresses

The Quadrennial Addresses shall be delivered early in the Conference, at such hour as determined by the Commission on the General Conference. The Council of Bishops shall coordinate the preparation and presentation of the Quadrennial Episcopal Address. The Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders shall coordinate the preparation and presentation of the Quadrennial Lay Address. This opportunity to present shall be open to all annual conference lay leaders.
The United Methodist Division of Ministries with Young People shall coordinate the preparation and presentation of the Quadrennial Young People Address. This opportunity to present shall be open to all young people.

III. Presiding Officers

The presiding officers for the plenaries of the Conference, the opening plenary excepted (See Section I), shall be chosen from among the effective active bishops by the Committee on Presiding Officers (See Section VII.A.6).

IV. Secretary of the General Conference

A. The Secretary of the General Conference shall be responsible for all functions of the office assigned by ¶ 504.3 in preparation for the session of the General Conference, and shall be accountable to the Commission on the General Conference.

B. The Secretary of the General Conference shall select persons from the clergy and lay membership of The United Methodist Church to serve on the secretarial support staff.

C. The Conference shall elect, upon nomination by the Secretary of the General Conference, a Coordinator of Calendar, who shall assist the Committee on Agenda and Calendar in presenting reports in such order as to expedite the business of the Conference, and in other responsibilities of the committee (See I.D.1 and VII.A.1).

D. The Secretary of the General Conference shall appoint a Petitions Secretary who shall prepare the petitions, resolutions, and reports that meet the requirements of Book of Discipline ¶ 507 for reference to the appropriate legislative committee, subject to review by the Committee on Reference (See Section VII.A.7).

E. A budget for the work of the Secretary of the General Conference shall be presented by the Commission on the General Conference to the General Council on Finance and Administration. Such budget shall be paid out of the General Administration Fund.
F. If in the interim of the quadrennial sessions of the General Conference the office of the Secretary of the General Conference shall be vacated for any reason, the Council of Bishops shall elect a successor to serve until the next session.

V. Nominations and Elections

The Secretary of the General Conference shall develop a timeline for the submission of nominations, elections, and appointments by the Council of Bishops. In making these nominations, elections and appointments, attention shall be given to ensuring continuity of membership from the previous quadrennium. It shall be the responsibility of the Council of Bishops to present nominations for the Commission on the General Conference, Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, General Conference administrative committees, and secretary-designate of the General Conference. These nominations shall be presented to the General Conference for election.

Disciplinary provisions shall govern the nomination and election procedures for:

- General Council on Finance and Administration (¶ 805.1)
- General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (¶ 1502.1)
- General Commission on Archives and History (¶ 1704.2)
- The University Senate (¶ 1414.2)
- The Judicial Council (¶¶ 2602, 2603, 2604.1)

and Episcopal membership on:

- General Board of Church and Society (¶ 705.4d)
- General Board of Discipleship (¶ 705.4d)
- General Board of Global Ministries (¶¶ 705.4d, 1311.6)
- General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (¶ 705.4d)

The *Daily Christian Advocate* shall publish the list of nominees for election to the Judicial Council and the University Senate. Biographical sketches not to exceed 100 words in length shall be submitted by each nominee and shall be published as submitted.
VI. Commission on the General Conference

A. There shall be a Commission on the General Conference comprised of lay and clergy membership as defined by ¶ 511 of the Book of Discipline. They shall have oversight responsibility for all arrangements necessary for the meeting of the General Conference.

1. Languages of the General Conference: The *Daily Christian Advocate* will be published in English.\(^1\) Simultaneous and/or one-on-one interpretation of plenary and legislative committee sessions will be offered in French, Portuguese, Spanish, KiSwahili, German, Russian, Korean, and American Sign Language and/or others as determined by the Commission on the General Conference in consultation with the Multilingual Resources of the General Board of Global Ministries.

2. Duly credentialed interpreters or other personal assistants for persons with special needs may be seated when necessary with voting delegates in all committee and plenary sessions.

VII. Committees

The General Conference shall have standing committees and special committees as it may order, with such functions, responsibilities, and limitations as assigned.

A. Administrative Committees

The members of the following committees shall be appointed by the Council of Bishops at its fall meeting preceding the General Conference. All except the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision shall be from the elected delegates to the General Conference (See Section V). Members of administrative committees that meet prior to the day on which the General Conference convenes shall receive the delegate per diem for each additional day on which their attendance is required. Delegates who are appointed to such

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\(^1\) Editor’s note: *The Book of Discipline 2016* ¶ 511.4.c requires that daily schedules, petition lists, nominations information, and other high-importance information in the DCA must also be made available in French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili. These will be provided electronically.
committees less than 60 days prior to the opening session of General Conference shall be entitled to reimbursement for any additional transportation costs.

1) Agenda and Calendar

(a) There shall be a Committee on Agenda and Calendar composed of fifteen members, one from each central conference and jurisdiction, at least six of whom shall be laypersons; the Coordinator of the Calendar; the Chairperson of the Program Committee of the Commission on the General Conference or designee; and the Chairperson of the Commission on the General Conference or designee.

No member of the committee shall be chairperson of a legislative committee or a staff person of any general agency. The committee shall be convened, for the purpose of organization, by the Secretary of the General Conference, or designee, at least the day before the opening of the General Conference.

Following the presentation and adoption of the report of the Commission on the General Conference at the opening session of the General Conference, the Committee on Agenda and Calendar shall immediately become responsible for guiding the order of business of the Conference.

(b) The Committee on Agenda and Calendar shall:

(1) Present calendar reports in such an order as to expedite the business of the Conference,

(2) Inform the bishop presiding as soon as possible of the agenda items, including order of priority, to be considered,

(3) Keep an overview of calendar progress;

(4) Report recommendations to each session of the General Conference concerning business agenda, including time allocation and order in which legislative committee reports shall be presented;

(5) Give priority in plenary for legislative consideration as calendar items become available: first to items affecting the global
church, second to items with financial implications, items
supported by the legislative committee, and third to items with
minority reports;

(6) Announce, at the last plenary session of each day, a tentative agenda
for the next day;

(7) Consult daily with the legislative committee chairpersons to
expedite the business of the General Conference; and

(8) Receive all requests for special orders of the day, except those in the
report of the Commission on the General Conference on the first day of
the Conference.

c) Proposals, questions, communications, resolutions, and other matters not
included in the regular business of the General Conference shall be referred to
the Committee on Agenda and Calendar without motion or debate. This
committee shall determine whether the matter presented shall be considered by
the General Conference. A decision of this committee may be appealed by
submitting to the Conference the signatures of ten delegates. The item shall be
presented to the Conference if the appeal is supported by a one-third vote.

2) Correlation and Editorial Revision
There shall be a Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision of eight
persons and two alternates not delegates to the General Conference, and the
Book Editor or designee, who shall be an ex-officio member. They shall be
entitled to reimbursement of expenses for attendance at meetings of the
committee. The Book Editor or designee shall convene the committee for the
purpose of organization. During the session of General Conference and
following its adjournment, the function of this committee shall be:

(a) To review all proposed legislation reported in the Daily Christian Advocate
or presented in special reports to the General Conference. The committee shall
report to the committees concerned, or to the General Conference as the
situation may warrant, all contradictions, duplications, and inconsistencies
discovered.
(b) To assure that, when a calendar item approved on the Consent Calendar or under an omnibus vote is found to be in conflict with parts of another calendar item discussed and voted upon at a plenary session, the item discussed and voted shall prevail.

(c) To edit the Book of Discipline in accordance with Section X.B.

3) Courtesies and Privileges

There shall be a Committee on Courtesies and Privileges composed of twelve members, one from each central conference and jurisdiction, at least six of whom shall be laypersons. The committee shall be convened by a bishop for the purpose of organization. The committee has the following duties and responsibilities:

(a) To consider all matters of privilege and, if they are such as appropriate, to recommend to the Conference that they be heard.

(b) To consider resolutions of commendation, courtesy, appreciation, etc., submitted in writing by delegates. The committee may initiate similar resolutions and may edit and amend those submitted to it. Resolutions approved by the committee shall be published in the Daily Christian Advocate and brought to the floor if the committee considers them of unusual importance or urgency.

(c) To arrange for extending appropriate courtesies of the Conference.

(d) To limit its report, including the statement of the chairperson and the hearing of such persons as may be presented, to a maximum of ten minutes in any one business day. No person or persons shall be presented whose request has been denied by the Commission on the General Conference, nor after the sixth day unless approved by a two-thirds vote of the Conference (See Rule 31.6).

4) Credentials

There shall be a Committee on Credentials composed of twelve members, one from each central conference and jurisdiction, at least six of whom shall be laypersons. The committee shall be convened by a bishop for the purpose
of organization. The committee shall provide guidance to the Secretary of the General Conference regarding the approval of credentials of delegates, and may review decisions regarding the seating of delegates, including reserve delegates. The committee shall report to the General Conference its decisions and recommendations regarding challenges to the seating of any delegates.

5) **Journal**

There shall be a Committee on the Journal of three delegates to approve daily the record of Proceedings of the General Conference prepared by the Secretary of the General Conference and assistant(s). The committee shall be convened by a bishop for the purpose of organization.

6) **Presiding Officers**

There shall be a Committee on Presiding Officers composed of twelve members, one from each central conference and jurisdiction, six of whom shall be clergy and six of whom shall be laypersons. The committee shall be convened by a bishop for the purpose of organization. The committee shall select and notify the presiding officer(s) of each plenary session at least 24 hours in advance, insofar as possible. The committee shall be free to select a bishop for more than one session and to change the presiding officer during the session, whenever it seems advisable (See Section III).

7) **Reference**

There shall be a Committee on Reference composed of twenty-four members, one clergy and one lay person from each central conference and jurisdiction. The membership of this committee shall include at least one member from each legislative committee who will be designated as petition coordinator for their legislative committee. If possible, petition coordinators should have served previously on a General Conference legislative committee. These petition coordinators shall serve as advisors to the officers of the legislative committee of which they are members. Additional members from the Committee on Reference shall assist the petition coordinator in the legislative committee of which they are members. This committee shall be convened, for the purpose of
organization, by the Secretary of the General Conference, or designee, the day prior to the opening of the General Conference.

(a) After reviewing the proposed assignments by the Secretary of the General Conference of the petitions, resolutions, and similar communications dealing with the regular business of the Conference to legislative committees, this committee shall refer the same to the appropriate legislative committees (See Section IV.D). This committee shall also be responsible for reviewing the assignment, by the Secretary of the General Conference, of all reports, recommendations, and resolutions from general agencies, standing or special commissions and committees, and all other communications which are submitted to the Secretary of the General Conference after the convening of the General Conference, all of which shall be referred directly to appropriate legislative committees without presentation to a plenary session of the General Conference.

(b) The Committee on Reference may withdraw an item that has been assigned to a committee, either upon a request or upon its own motion. It may also withhold from reference or publication any document it shall deem improper.

(c) The Secretary of the General Conference, or the Petitions Secretary, may withhold from publication any petitions deemed defamatory to a private individual or obscene. The Committee on Reference shall review all such decisions.

(d) Where the committee finds two or more substantially identical petitions, it may group them under one title and number, indicating the total number of petitions.

(e) No petitions shall be assigned by the Committee on Reference to any General Conference committee unless they meet the requirements of the Book of Discipline.
B. Advance Legislative Research Panel

(a) There shall be an Advance Legislative Research Panel chosen by the Executive Committee of the Commission on the General Conference, composed of a number of members equal to the number of legislative committees.

(b) Panel members shall be chosen based on their comprehensive knowledge of the Book of Discipline as evidenced by their previous participation in the life of the general church through service on the Judicial Council, the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision, or as a conference chancellor. Panel members must be willing to volunteer significant hours prior to General Conference.

(c) All petitions received, after being compiled by Disciplinary paragraphs, shall be assigned by legislative committee among the panel members. The panel members, in turn, will review all the petitions they have been assigned and locate any other paragraphs of the Book of Discipline, including the Constitution, which are closely related to the subject matter of the petition, as well as closely related Judicial Council decisions and memoranda. The panel member shall then record the related paragraph, decision, or memoranda with each petition.

(d) No judgment or editorial comment about any petition shall be included.

(e) The notation of related paragraphs shall become a permanent attachment to the petition as it goes through the General Conference legislative committee process.

(f) The legislative committees will consider how related paragraphs would impact or be impacted by adopting such a petition.

(g) The Advance Legislative Research Panel’s work shall be coordinated by the Petitions Secretary.

(h) A panel member is not precluded from being a delegate to General Conference.
C. Committee on Ethics

There shall be a Committee on Ethics, comprised of the members of the Committee of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference. Individual delegates may report their concerns about alleged violations of the rules to the Office of the Secretary of the General Conference. The Office of the Secretary of the General Conference who shall investigate, attempt to resolve all such claims, and report the resolution to the Committee on Ethics and to the delegate(s) who raised the concern. Based on the severity of the concerns, the Office of the Secretary of the General Conference may refer the matter to the Committee on Ethics. Alleged violations of the rules may also be referred directly to the Committee on Ethics by a one-fifth vote of the Plenary. The Committee on Ethics shall review all matters referred to it and report its findings to the Plenary with recommended action.

D. Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

(For membership, see Book of Discipline ¶ 2201.)

To this Standing Committee shall be referred all petitions, resolutions, etc., relating to the Central Conferences, and Autonomous Methodist Churches, Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches, and Affiliated United Churches within the Central Conferences.²

Book of Discipline paragraphs

28-31………..Constitution: Central Conferences
540-548………..Central Conferences
560-567………..Provisional Central Conferences
572 ………….Becoming an Autonomous Methodist, Affiliated
Autonomous Methodist, or Affiliated United Church from Central
Conferences
575………………Joining The United Methodist Church

² Editor’s note: The description of legislative material, including paragraph assignments, has been updated to reflect the assignment of such material by the Commission on the General Conference in accordance with ¶ 511.4.f.
2201………………. Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall submit its report and any legislative proposals related to the paragraphs assigned to it directly to the General Conference. If the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters has a concern for any paragraphs assigned to one of the legislative committees, the Committee shall offer its recommendation to the appropriate legislative committee for consideration and recommendation to the General Conference.

E. Legislative Committees

There shall be legislative committees to whom all properly submitted petitions and reports shall be assigned. The Commission on the General Conference shall set the number of legislative committees and the assignment of Disciplinary paragraphs and topics to those committees in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference and the Business Manager of the General Conference (¶ 511.4.f). Any legislative committee considering legislation affecting the responsibilities assigned to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall consult with the Committee before submitting its proposed legislation to the Conference.

F. Membership of Legislative Committees

1) Within the annual conference delegation, each delegate shall choose one legislative committee on which to serve, the choice being made in order of election.

In 2016, the laity clergy delegate first elected shall be entitled to the first choice, the clergy lay delegate first elected, the second choice, and thus the right of choice shall continue to alternate between lay and clergy delegates in the order of their election. For subsequent General Conferences, first choice shall alternate between the clergy and lay delegates according to the following schedule:
Two members of a delegation may not serve on the same legislative committee unless the said delegation is represented on all of them. Whenever a delegation has more than one delegate on a legislative committee, its delegates shall be divided as equally as possible between lay and clergy. Thus, if there are three delegates on a committee, they shall be two clergy and one lay or vice versa.
The Secretary of the General Conference shall provide these instructions and examples with the election of delegate instructions sent to each annual conference secretary.

2) If a matter is under consideration in any legislative committee which in the judgment of any annual conference delegation vitally affects the interests of its constituency, and if the said annual conference is not represented in the membership of said committee, then the delegation may choose one of its delegates to represent its annual conference in the committee when the aforementioned matter is under consideration. This delegate shall be entitled to sit with the committee while this particular matter is being considered and shall have voice, but not vote (See Section VII.G.3.(e)).

3) Each person seated in the General Conference with voice but not vote may submit to the Secretary of the General Conference a choice of a legislative committee and shall have the same right in that committee to voice but not vote.

G. Meetings of Committees

1) Organization and Quorum of Committees. All legislative and administrative committees shall meet for organization at a time determined by the Commission
on the General Conference. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in all committees.

Consistent with the spirit of ¶ 722 in the Book of Discipline, meetings of General Conference committees and subcommittees shall be open.

2) Administrative Committees

(a) A bishop appointed by the Council of Bishops and an organizing secretary appointed by the Secretary of the General Conference shall serve, respectively as chairperson and secretary, to organize the committees, except where other provision is specified.

(b) The election of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary of each administrative committee shall be by separate sequential written ballot for each position. Due consideration shall be given for inclusiveness that reflects the global nature of the church, including gender, age, ethnicity, geography, young people, clergy, and lay.

3) Legislative Committees

All legislative committees shall meet for organization at such time as the Commission on the General Conference shall determine. A bishop appointed by the Council of Bishops and an organizing secretary appointed by the Secretary of the General Conference shall serve, respectively, as chairperson and secretary, to organize each of the several committees. The first meeting of the legislative committees shall be held as soon as possible following the first plenary session of the General Conference. The orientation of the committee, followed by the election of officers, shall be the order of business of the first meeting of the committee.

(a) Election of Officers. The chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and subcommittee chairpersons of each committee shall be elected by separate sequential written ballot for each position. Due consideration shall be given for inclusiveness that reflects the global nature of the church, including gender, age, ethnicity, geography, young people, clergy, and lay. If no election by simple
majority vote of those voting has occurred after three (3) consecutive ballots, the floor will be reopened for nominations.

(b) Training. The Secretary of the General Conference shall be responsible for training all chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, secretaries, and sub-committee chairpersons of legislative committees. The training shall include instruction in their duties, all procedures in the handling of petitions, the times of the daily deadline for publishing reports, and other information to expedite the work of the committees. The Commission on the General Conference shall arrange for a time and place for such a training session. No officer shall serve without completing this training.

c) Parliamentarians. Each legislative committee shall be assigned a parliamentarian by the Secretary of the General Conference. Retired bishops nominated by the Council of Bishops shall be included in the pool of parliamentarians. It shall be the responsibility of the Business Manager of the General Conference to develop a pool of other people not currently delegates to serve as parliamentarians. It is preferred that these persons be members of The United Methodist Church, have knowledge of the Rules of the General Conference, and have training in parliamentary procedure. The retired bishops shall be given priority in being assigned to legislative committees. At the invitation of the presiding officer, the parliamentarian advises on matters of parliamentary procedure.

d) Regular Meetings. The legislative committees shall meet for business as scheduled by the Agenda and Calendar Committee unless otherwise ordered by the Conference, and at such other times as the committees may determine provided that no legislative committee shall meet at times that conflict with plenary sessions. Any legislation not completed by the legislative committee at the time of the Saturday evening adjournment of the first week of General Conference shall remain unfinished and legislative committees shall be adjourned (See Rule 37).

e) Voting Area. Each legislative committee and sub-committee shall establish an area in which only voting committee members and their
properly credentialed assistant or translator will be seated. The Business Manager of the General Conference shall provide four designated seats in each legislative committee for the monitors from the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. An area shall also be established for those present with voice but not vote (See Section VII.F.2). Staff members of the Secretary of General Conference and Business Manager of General Conference may speak in the performance of their duties. General agency staff, other resource persons, and visitors may speak only when authorized, in each instance by vote of one-third \(\frac{1}{3}\) of the committee or sub-committee or by invitation of the chair (See Rule 31.3).

(f) Minority Reports. Minority reports allow for the expression of differing views held by a significant portion of a legislative committee and may be offered in accordance with Rules 29, 38, and 39.

(g) Reports. Legislative Committee Reports should be submitted as soon as possible following the action of the committee. All Legislative Committee Reports shall be submitted prior to 5 P.M. on Monday of the second week.

H. Function and Authority of Committees

1) The administrative committees, without specific instruction or direction from the Conference, shall assume responsibility for considering and reporting to the Conference upon all matters that fall within their respective responsibilities (See Section VII.A).

2) The legislative committees shall consider and report upon that which is referred to them by the Committee on Reference or which has been referred to them directly by the Conference (See Rule 36).

VIII. Proposal Involving Expenditure of Unbudgeted Funds

A. Any action proposed to the General Conference plenary to establish an interim or continuing board, commission, committee, or task force shall be referred to the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table or their executive committees or their expenditure review
group for a report and recommendation before final action is taken. The General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table or their executive committees or their expenditure review group shall provide the General Conference with the following before action is taken:

1) an estimated budget for the proposed board, commission, committee or task force for the next quadrennium; and

2) a statement explaining how the creation of the proposed board, commission, committee, or task force will affect the budget or budgets for existing boards, commissions, committees and task forces already presented by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

B. Any action proposed to the General Conference plenary that involves the expenditure of funds shall be referred to the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table or their executive committees or their expenditure review group for advice and recommendation before final action is taken. Any general agency requests for supplemental funds shall be identified as such; otherwise, they shall be considered as having been included within the agency budget.

C. Any proposal falling under the provisions of this section shall be referred to the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table or their executive committees or their expenditure review group at least seventy-two hours prior to the scheduled adjournment of the General Conference.

IX. Delegate Expenses

A. Full travel expenses and per diem shall be paid for the number of allotted voting delegates from each conference according to the report of the chairperson of each annual conference delegation. If during the conference, a reserve delegate is seated for a principal delegate for one or more full days, the principal delegate shall adjust the per diem with such reserve based on the time served by each.
B. Air travel shall be by the most economical round-trip coach airfare directly to and from the site of the General Conference. Special excursion and promotional fares shall be utilized whenever possible. Additional expenses may be allowed delegates from conferences outside the United States for arrival and departure not to exceed two days before or after General Conference. The per diem expense allowance for all such days before and after General Conference shall be at the same rate as granted delegates during General Conference. Exceptions to these limitations must be approved by the Business Manager of the General Conference.

C. When one or more delegates come in the same automobile, the owner will be reimbursed for the actual cost of travel (parking, en route mileage and tolls, en route meals and lodging). Mileage shall be reimbursed at the business rate established by the IRS and will be measured from point of origin to the site of General Conference and return. Meals and lodging shall be reimbursed up to the established General Conference per diem. When the round trip exceeds 1,000 miles for any one round trip, the cost of transportation shall be paid either on the actual costs as defined above or at the most economical airfare available plus airport-related ground transportation cost, whichever is less. Passengers who are the principal voting delegates to the General Conference shall submit only the cost of room and meals en route up to the established General Conference per diem rate.

D. For the dates General Conference is in session, no General Conference delegate shall receive expense money from the general Church or any of its boards and agencies other than approved per diem and travel expenses available to all delegates. This provision is not to restrict official assistance to delegates from their own annual conferences.

X. Material to Be Included in the *Book of Discipline*

A. Non-legislative material (Pages 1- 22, 24, 2012-2016 *Book of Discipline*) shall be referred to the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision for consideration and possible consultation with the General Commission on Archives and History or referral to the Committee on Reference.
B. The Book Editor, the Secretary of the General Conference, the Publisher of The United Methodist Church, and the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision shall be charged with editing the *Book of Discipline*. Any Disciplinary amendments that are not dependent on constitutional amendments for their effective date will be incorporated in the appropriate paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline* in the order of their adoption.

The editors, in the exercise of their judgment, shall have the authority to make changes in wording as may be necessary to harmonize legislation without changing its substance. The editors, in consultation with the Judicial Council, shall also have authority to delete provisions of the *Book of Discipline* that have been ruled unconstitutional by the Judicial Council. Any challenge of a decision made by the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision shall be in writing. If the matter should go to the Judicial Council, the appealing party shall give notice thereof to the committee. Any established errata in the *Book of Discipline* shall be forwarded by The United Methodist Publishing House to the Council of Bishops, the Secretary of the General Conference, Annual Conference Secretaries, and Annual Conference Directors of Connectional Ministries, and shall be published by the Book Editor on The United Methodist Publishing House website.

Constitutional amendments certified in accordance with ¶ 59 and enabling legislation adopted in anticipation of the constitutional amendments shall be published by the Book Editor on the United Methodist Publishing House website following certification. They shall be published in the subsequent *Book of Discipline*. The constitutional amendments take effect at the time of certification. The enabling legislation will be effective on January 1, of the year following the certification of the constitutional amendments and will be given effect as if it had been adopted after all other Disciplinary changes affecting a particular paragraph.

**XI. Distribution of Materials within the Bar of the Conference**

After the first day, only the *Daily Christian Advocate* and materials related to General Conference presentations and produced by official bodies of The United Methodist Church, and properly received amendments and substitutions,
if approved by the Secretary of the General Conference, shall be distributed by
the pages. Pages will distribute communications to individual delegates
provided the communication bears the name and location of both the recipient
and the sender.

XII. Distribution of Materials Outside of the Plenary or Committee Room

Newsletters or any special interest material from United Methodist boards,
agencies, and related United Methodist groups may be distributed under the
following conditions:

A. One copy of each item shall be submitted to the office of the Commission on
the General Conference in advance of distribution.

B. Material distributed shall be relevant to the General Conference and not for
soliciting membership in an organization.

C. No distributor shall be allowed to distribute within the convention center
unless they have obtained written approval from the Business Manager of
the General Conference. Each group shall have one contact person who
shall register all group members and receive identification for each
member.

D. Distribution shall be at least 30 feet outside any entrance door to the plenary
or committee meeting room.

E. Distribution shall be done by representatives of the above-named groups. It is
the responsibility of the distributors not to impede or interfere with the entrance
or exit of persons or to hamper the general flow of pedestrian traffic.

F. Distributors are responsible for the disposal of unused or unclaimed
materials.

G. Distributors violating these regulations will be prohibited from future
distributions.
XIII. Reports to Be Mailed Distributed Before General Conference

The reports, recommendations, and resolutions requiring action by the General Conference, as well as petitions submitted in accordance with the Book of Discipline ¶ 507.7, shall first be assigned a Petition Number by the Secretary of the General Conference or the Petitions Secretary and then shall be published in an Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate and distributed to all delegates and to the first clergy and first lay reserve delegates at least ninety days prior to the opening of the General Conference. Reports shall be published in the same style as the Daily Christian Advocate. In order to accomplish this, the finished copy of all such reports and recommendations shall be submitted to the editor of the Daily Christian Advocate at least 230 days prior to the opening of the General Conference. Reports and recommendations not published in an Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate may be received by the General Conference only upon three-fourths vote of the General Conference. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall be exempt from this requirement to the extent necessary to allow inclusion of general funds receipts information for the first three years of the quadrennium. The General Council on Finance and Administration will provide data including the third year of the quadrennium and other appropriate information to delegates prior to the convening of the General Conference.

3 Editor’s note: The Book of Discipline 2016 ¶ 507.6-7 changed the deadline from 210 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference to 230 days prior. The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order has been updated to reflect this disciplinary change.
RULES OF ORDER

I. Daily Schedule

Rule 1. Hours of Meetings

The following shall be the daily order for the General Conference, Sundays excepted:

1. 8:00 A.M. Morning Praise and Prayer
2. 8:20 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Christian conferencing through plenary or committee meetings
3. 1:30 or 2:30 P.M. (as specified by the daily schedule) to 5:00 P.M. Christian conferencing through plenary or committee meetings
4. During a Memorial Service, the names of the bishops, bishops’ spouses, and delegates-elect who have died since the adjournment of the previous General Conference shall be called.
5. Recess may be called during any plenary session at a time deemed appropriate by the presiding officer.
6. Daily adjournment shall be called by 6:30 P.M. each evening, except for the day when leader training is scheduled and Saturday when adjournment shall be called by 9:30 P.M. Adjournment shall be an order of the day.

Rule 2. Order of Christian Conferencing

The daily sessions of the Conference shall be conducted as follows:

1. Reports of administrative and special committees
2. Agenda and calendar items
3. Consent calendar (See Rule 33.5)
4. Miscellaneous business

II. Presiding Officers

Rule 3. Authority of the Presiding Officer

1. The presiding officer (plenary, administrative committees, legislative committees, and sub-committees) shall decide and rule on points of order. A delegate may appeal the ruling to the body without debate, except that the presiding officer and the appellant, in the order here named, shall each have
three minutes for a statement in support of their respective positions. A tie vote in the case of appeal shall sustain the presiding officer (See Rule 31.5). Any delegate who raises a point of order shall cite the rule believed to have been violated.

(2) At the discretion of the presiding officer, a time for prayerful discernment may be taken during deliberation. Such a time should be for group meditation and prayer and shall end at the call of the presiding officer, at which time deliberation shall be resumed.

(3) The presiding officer shall have the right to recess a session of the body at any time at the presiding officer’s discretion and to reconvene at such time as the presiding officer shall propose. Consistent with the spirit of ¶ 722 of the Book of Discipline, in rare circumstances the presiding officer shall also have the right to stipulate that the session shall reconvene in closed session with only delegates, authorized personnel, and authorized guests permitted to attend such a session following recess (See Section VII.G.1).

Rule 4. Calling the Conference to Order
When the presiding officer calls the body to order, no delegate shall speak, address the chair, or stand.

III. Rights and Duties of Delegates

Rule 5. Attendance and Seating Reserves
(1) The chairperson of each delegation shall be provided with a form on which to report daily the attendance of its delegates. All delegates arriving after the opening roll call shall be reported by the chairperson of the delegation to the Secretary of the General Conference or designee. No delegate who is duly registered, unless hindered by sickness or other emergency, shall be absent from the sessions of the Conference without permission of the Conference. All absences shall be reported by the chairpersons of the delegations to the Secretary of the General Conference or designee on a form provided for this purpose.
Any reserve seated in the place of a regular delegate shall have been duly elected as a reserve delegate by the annual conference and shall meet the requirements set forth in the *Book of Discipline* ¶¶ 34-36. Delegates, including reserves when the latter are substituted for a delegate or delegates, shall be seated in the order of their election, except when a reserve is seated temporarily or in case of special need as determined by the delegation chairperson. The reserve shall occupy the seat of the delegate for whom the substitution is made. Reserves shall not be seated for delegates presenting on the platform. All delegates arriving after the opening roll call shall be reported by the chairperson of the delegation to the Secretary of the General Conference or designee. No delegate who is duly registered, unless hindered by sickness or other emergency, shall be absent from the sessions of the Conference without permission of the Conference. All absences shall be reported by the chairpersons of the delegations to the Secretary of the General Conference or designee on a form provided for this purpose. Reserve delegates are to function within the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference (See Rules 29 and 33). A reserve delegate may be seated upon authority of the chairperson of the delegation who shall report the substitution in writing to the Secretary of the General Conference or designee on a form provided for this purpose. Reserves are chosen to be seated:

1. by reason of being of the same order as the absent delegate,
2. in order of their election as reserve delegates.

If the substitution is challenged, the Committee on Credentials after consultation with the chairperson of the delegation may report its recommendation to the General Conference.

*Rule 6. Directions for Securing the Plenary Floor*

A delegate desiring to speak to the Conference shall use the tablet at the table to register in the manner(s) provided and make a request to speak. The presiding bishop shall choose from the requests and direct the speaker to the appropriate microphone. Unless raising a point of order or parliamentary inquiry, the delegate shall not speak until given the floor. The bishop
presiding shall consider the various sections of the auditorium in rotation.

The delegate recognized shall first announce her or his name and the name of
the conference represented and their reason for speaking. A delegate
recognized by the presiding bishop may not yield the floor to another
delegate. In the event of tablet failure, a delegate desiring to speak to the
Conference shall hold up the appropriate placard to be recognized by the
bishop presiding.

Rule 7. Plenary Speakers For and Against

(1) When the report of a committee is under consideration, it shall be the duty of
the bishop presiding to ascertain, when recognizing a delegate to the
Conference, on which side the delegate proposes to speak; the bishop presiding
shall not assign the floor to any delegate proposing to speak on the same side of
the pending question as the speaker immediately preceding if any delegate
desires to speak on the other side.

(2) Except for non-debatable motions (Rule 23), no report shall be adopted or
question relating to the same decided, without opportunity having been given
for at least two speeches for and two against the said proposal.

(3) The motion to call for the previous question, which is itself non-debatable,
is not in order without opportunity having been given for at least two speeches
for and two against the proposal. Any delegate who moves to call for the
previous question (that is, that the vote be now taken on the motion or motions
pending) shall also indicate to what it is intended to apply, if any secondary
motion or motions are also pending. If said delegate does not so indicate, it
shall be regarded as applying only to the immediately pending question. This
motion shall be taken without debate and shall require a two-thirds vote of
those present and voting for its adoption. If it is adopted, the vote shall be taken
on the motion or motions to which it applies without further debate (See Rule
23). After three speeches for and three against and provided no secondary
motions come before the floor, the questions shall be put automatically.
However, the chairperson and/or duly authorized delegate or delegates
presenting the committee’s report, and if there is a minority report, the
presenter shall be entitled to speak before the vote is taken (See Rule 29).
These speeches shall be limited to three (3) minutes (See Rule 9). After three speeches for and three against, if there are secondary motions on the floor, the motion to call for the previous question is non-debatable and shall be put to the vote after the presider provides the number of speakers in the pool for speeches for, speeches against, and amendments.

Rule 8. Interrupting the Speaker

No delegate who has the floor may be interrupted except for a point of order, a parliamentary inquiry, a point of information, to challenge a misrepresentation, or to call attention that the time has arrived for an order of the day.

Rule 9. Speaking More Than Once; Length of Speech

(1) No delegate shall speak a second time on the same question if any delegate who has not previously spoken on the question desires the floor.

(2) No delegate shall speak more than twice on the same subject under the same motion, except as provided in Rule 7.2

(3) No delegate shall speak longer than three minutes unless that time is extended by the body (See Rule 7.3). Time of translation shall not count against the three-minute limit.

(4) The three-minute limit on delegate speeches may be amended by a majority vote of the body at any time and for any period of duration.

Rule 10. Point of Order

A delegate wishing to raise a point of order shall use the tablet at the table to register and make a request to speak. The presiding bishop shall choose from the requests, interrupt the proceedings, and direct the speaker to the appropriate microphone. In the event of tablet failure, a delegate wishing to raise a point of order shall address the presiding officer and say, “I rise to a point of order.” Register a request to speak in the manner provided by the Commission on the General Conference and explained by the presider. The presiding officer shall interrupt the proceeding. If a delegate is speaking, that one shall immediately yield the floor. The presiding officer shall then direct the delegate raising the
point of order to first cite the rule involved and then state the point as briefly and concisely as possible. The delegate shall not presume to decide the question or argue the point. A point of order is decided by the presiding officer without debate unless in doubtful cases the presiding officer submits the question to the body for advice or decision. When the presiding officer rules on a point, debate is closed, but the decision may be appealed (See Rule 3).  

Rule 11. Bar of the Conference

The bar of the conference shall provide for the integrity of the General Conference. It is for delegates, pages, and others who have been granted access to the area for General Conference business as provided through the Rules or through the suspension of the Rules.

Rule 12. Distracting Behavior

A spirit of Christian conferencing is expected. Delegates are not to distract others. Audible cell-phone use is not permitted in the plenary hall or the legislative committee rooms. All electronic devices shall be muted or turned off. In addition, the use of electronic devices should be in a manner that does not disturb other participants. Respect should be shown in the use of social media at all times. Verbal and non-verbal distractions are prohibited. The presiding officer or members of the General Conference staff may ask individuals to leave the plenary hall or the legislative committee room if they persist in behavior that interferes with the participation of other delegates.

Rule 13. Electronic Recording

No electronic recording by either video or audio may be made of any portion of the General Conference unless specifically authorized by the Business Manager of the General Conference in order to maintain the integrity of all performance licenses.

Rule 14. Right to Make Motions

Only voting delegates have the right to make or second motions in accordance with the rules and upon recognition by the presiding officer.
Rule 15. Plenary Voting Procedure

(1) Voting shall be by electronic means unless otherwise ordered by the Conference, provided, however, that in elections, voting may be by written ballot. Electronic voting devices shall be available on the platform for delegates making a presentation to the Conference.

(2) When electronic voting is not in use or operating, a standing count vote or vote by written ballot may be ordered on call of any delegate, supported by one-third of the delegates present and voting, with pages serving as tellers.

(3) Only delegates within the bar of the Conference when the vote is taken shall be entitled to vote. No delegate shall cast a vote in place of any other delegate.

(4) No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken or when the previous question has been called until the process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself or such business as the presiding officer may deem appropriate.

(5) Delegates are free to vote according to their conscience without interference by others observing, monitoring, or recording their votes. Persons shall not give or accept bribes or threaten delegates in order to influence voting.

Rule 16. Elections

For any election requiring balloting by the plenary, an election shall occur when the number of ballots cast for a nominee meets or exceeds the required percentage of the total valid ballots cast.

A ballot is valid if it meets the following standards:

(1) It is cast by a voting delegate or properly seated reserve delegate.

(2) It contains votes for the same number of nominees, as there are vacancies to be filled.

(3) Every name receiving a vote has been properly nominated according to the provisions.
(4) No more than one vote is cast for the same nominee.
(5) No vote is cast for a person who has already been elected.

Rule 17. Division of Question
Before a vote is taken, any delegate shall have the right to call for a division of any question, if it is subject to such division as the delegate indicates. If no delegate objects, the division shall be made; but if there is objection, the presiding officer shall put the question of division to vote, not waiting for a second.

IV. Behavior of Guests and Observers

Rule 18. Distracting Behavior
A spirit of Christian conferencing is expected. Guests and observers are not to distract others. Audible cell-phone use is not permitted in the plenary hall or the legislative committee rooms. All electronic devices shall be muted or turned off. In addition, the use of electronic devices should be in a manner that does not disturb other participants. Respect should be shown in the use of social media at all times. Verbal and non-verbal distractions are prohibited. The presiding officer or members of the General Conference staff may ask individuals to leave the plenary hall or the legislative committee room if they persist in behavior that interferes with the participation of delegates. Guests and observers are not to enter the bar of the conference except as provided in Rule 11.

Rule 19. Electronic Recording
No electronic recording by either video or audio may be made of any portion of the General Conference unless specifically authorized by the Business Manager of the General Conference in order to maintain the integrity of all performance licenses.
V. Business Procedure

Rule 20. Motion for Adoption of Legislative and Administrative Committee Reports
Whenever a report of a legislative committee or an administrative committee is presented to the Conference for action, it shall be deemed in proper order for consideration by the Conference without the formality of a second.

Rule 21. Required Forms for Reports, Resolutions, Motions, Amendments
All resolutions and committee reports shall be prepared in accordance with instructions from the Secretary of the General Conference; and all motions, including amendments, shall be presented in writing (See Rules 33.2, 34.3, 36.2, 38).

Rule 22. Alterations of Motions
When a motion is made and seconded, a resolution is introduced and seconded, or a committee report is read or published in the Daily Christian Advocate, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Conference and may not be altered except by action of the Conference (See Rule 39).

Rule 23. Non-Debatable Motions
The following motions shall be acted upon without debate:

1. To adjourn, when unqualified, except for final adjournment.
2. To suspend the rules.
3. To lay on the table.
   No motion, which adheres to another motion or has another motion adhering to it, can be laid on the table by itself. Such motions, if laid on the table, carry with them the motions to which they adhere or which adhere to them.
4. To take from the table.
5. To call for the previous questions, when in order (See Rules 7 and 24).
6. To reconsider a non-debatable motion (See Rule 32).
7. To limit or extend the limits of debate.
8. To take time for prayerful discernment at the immediate moment.
(9) To request a Judicial Council decision (*Book of Discipline* ¶¶ 56.1, 2609.1).

**Rule 24. Rights of the Main Question**

The main question may be opened to debate under the following motions: to adopt, to refer, to substitute, to postpone, or to reconsider. No new motion, resolution, or subject shall be entertained until the one under consideration shall have been disposed of except as provided in Rule 15.4. This rule does not apply to secondary motions if otherwise allowable.

**Rule 25. Precedence of Secondary Motions**

If any one or more of the following motions shall be made when one or more other motions are pending, the order of their precedence in relation to one another shall be the same as the order of their listing below:

1. To fix the time the conference shall adjourn (This motion is subject to amendment, or it may be laid on the table.);
2. To adjourn;
3. To take a recess;
4. To lay on the table;
5. To order *call* the previous question (See Rules 23.5, 28);
6. To limit or extend the limits of debate;
7. To postpone to a given time;
8. To refer;
9. To amend or to amend by substitution (one amendment being allowed to an amendment);
10. To postpone indefinitely.

**Rule 26. Motion to Adjourn**

The motion to adjourn, when unqualified, shall be taken without debate and shall always be in order, except:

1. When a delegate has the floor;
2. When a question is actually put or a vote is being taken and before it is finally decided;
(3) When the previous question has been ordered called and action is pending;
(4) When a motion to adjourn has been lost and no business or debate has intervened;
(5) When the motion to fix the time to which the Conference shall adjourn is pending.

This rule does not apply to a motion for final adjournment of the Conference.

Rule 27. Final Adjournment
At final adjournment all unfinished business shall remain unfinished.

Rule 28. Procedure for Amending by Substitution
(1) When a resolution or committee report is properly before the Conference for consideration and action, even if amendments are pending, a substitute may be offered by any delegate moving that the same be substituted for the report, resolution, or amendment under consideration. The substitute shall be an alternative to what is before the body and not simply a negation of the main motion.

(2) Debate on the motion to substitute will be limited to the question of substitution only. No amendments to the main motion or the substitute will be considered during this period of initial consideration.

(3) Following the debate on the motion to substitute, a vote on substitution will occur. If the motion to substitute prevails by majority vote, the substitute motion becomes the main motion. If the motion to substitute fails to receive a majority vote, the original main motion remains on the floor for consideration. Debate including the offering of amendments moves forward on the main motion as per the rules of procedure.

(4) The motion to call for the previous questions shall not be in order on the motion to substitute until opportunity has been given for at least two speakers on each side of the question.
Rule 29. Minority Report

A minority report may be attached to a report from a legislative committee in the following manner:

1. Delegates intending to offer a minority report must notify the chair of the committee within two hours (excluding breaks) of final committee action on the relative petition.

2. The chair of the legislative committee shall receive the minority report signed by 10 persons or 10% of the legislative committee membership (whichever is less) who voted against the proposal, whose names shall be attached to the request. A reserve delegate may sign the minority report only while seated as a voting delegate in the legislative committee or if seated as a voting delegate in the legislative committee at the time the committee acted upon the relevant petition. The committee and minority reports shall be submitted and presented together in the Daily Christian Advocate.

3. A minority report shall be presented as a substitute for the report of the committee, in conformity with Rule 28 and Rule 36 respectively, and it shall be managed in the plenary according to Rule 28 for substitute motions. The signers of the minority report shall select one of their signers to present the report as a substitute motion. In closing debate on the motion to substitute, the delegate presenting the minority report shall speak first and the presenter of the committee report shall be last.

4. If the motion to substitute the minority report for the majority report prevails by majority vote of the plenary, the minority report becomes the main motion. If the motion to substitute fails to prevail by a majority vote of the plenary, the majority report of the committee remains on the floor as the main motion for consideration. Debate including the offering of amendments moves forward on the main motion as per the rules of procedure.
Rule 30. Unlawful Motion After Speech
After making a speech on a pending question, a delegate may not make a motion that would limit or stop debate without first relinquishing the floor.

Rule 31. Exceptions to Majority Vote
A majority of those voting, a quorum being present (Book of Discipline ¶ 506), shall decide all questions, with the following exceptions:

(1) A one-fifth vote of the Conference shall be required to request a Judicial Council decision (Book of Discipline ¶¶ 56.1, 2609.1).

(2) A one-fifth vote of the Conference shall refer a matter to the Committee on Ethics.

(3) A non-delegate may be invited to a full legislative committee or sub-committee either by invitation of the chair or by one-third vote of either body to speak for no more than three (3) minutes on any one matter.

(4) One-third of those present and voting shall suffice to sustain a call for a recorded vote in case the decision of the presiding officer is challenged (See Rule 15.2).

(5) A tie vote sustains the presiding officer (Rule 3.1).

(6) A two-thirds vote shall be required to sustain a motion to suspend (Rule 41) or amend (Rule 42) the rules; to set aside a special order (Rule 33.1); to consider a special order before the time set therefore; to sustain the request of the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges for the presentation of any person after the sixth day of the General Conference (See Section VII.A.3).

(7) A two-thirds vote shall be required to sustain a call for the previous question.

(8) A two-thirds vote shall be required to approve a proposal for a constitutional amendment (Book of Discipline ¶¶ 59-61).
Rule 32. Reconsideration

A motion to reconsider an action of the body shall be in order at any time if offered by a delegate who voted with the prevailing side. If the motion proposed for reconsideration was non-debatable, the motion to reconsider shall be non-debatable (See Rule 23).

Rule 33. Regular Calendar and Consent Calendar

(1) The Secretary of the General Conference shall keep the Calendar which includes the orders of the day and the reports of committees (See Rule 39). Business placed on the calendar shall be considered in the order recommended by the Committee on Agenda and Calendar, unless by two-thirds vote of the Conference, an item is taken up out of order (See Rule 31.6).

(2) Whenever possible, a legislative committee shall recommend for adoption only one calendar item for each paragraph or sub-paragraph in the Book of Discipline. All other related petitions shall be combined for rejection or referral.

(3) Action from a legislative committee shall be placed on the Consent Calendar if:

(a) No more than ten votes were cast against the prevailing position in the committee;
(b) The item has been previously published in the Daily Christian Advocate;
(c) The item has been in the hands of delegates for at least 24 hours;
(d) The item is neither a constitutional amendment nor one having financial implications; and
(e) No minority report is attached (See Rule 29).

(4) The Daily Christian Advocate shall clearly identify the Consent Calendar, which will list items in three sections sub-headed as follows:

(a) Disciplinary Items Recommended for Adoption.
(b) Non-Disciplinary Items Recommended for Adoption.
(c) Items Recommended for Referral.
Delegate Handbook

(5) The Consent Calendar shall be called up daily pursuant to Rule 2. Adoption of the Consent Calendar by vote of the Conference shall be deemed action on all calendar items on the Consent Calendar.

(6) If an error in assignment of a Consent Calendar item is discovered and reported by the legislative chair to the Coordinator of the Calendar, the Coordinator of the Calendar shall have the authority to report the error to the plenary session for reconsideration.

(7) Any 20 delegates may have a Consent Calendar item removed by having such a request on file with the Secretary of the General Conference by 3:00 P.M. of the day the calendar item first appears in the Daily Christian Advocate. Reserve delegates may sign requests to remove item from the Consent Calendar only while seated as voting delegates. Such items shall be called up in the regular order of business.

(8) Items lifted from the Consent Calendar may not be returned to the Consent Calendar.

Rule 34. Report of Non-Calendar Items

(1) In addition to calendar items to be presented to the plenary, each legislative committee shall report all items not presented in the following categories:

(a) Petitions not supported because another petition dealing with the same subject was acted upon.

(b) Petitions not supported by the legislative committee. The committee shall report the vote of the committee.

(2) These reports shall be printed in the Daily Christian Advocate.

(3) Any 20 delegates may have an item in (1)(b) or (1)(c) above presented to the plenary by having such a request on file with the Secretary of the

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4 Editor’s note: The Book of Discipline 2016 ¶ 507.11 requires that all petitions submitted to the General Conference shall receive a vote of a legislative committee. Rule 34.1 has been updated and former Rule 37 has been deleted to reflect this disciplinary change.
General Conference by 3:00 P.M. of the day the item first appears in the
*Daily Christian Advocate*. Reserve delegates may sign requests to present
an item in (1)(b) or (1)(c) above only while seated as voting delegates. Such
items shall be called up in the regular order of business while the chair of
the relevant committee is on the platform. Those supporting consideration
of said items shall select one of their number to present the item to the
plenary.

*Rule 35. Rules of Order of Legislative Committees*

The rules of order of the General Conference, except for Rule 7, shall be
observed in meetings of standing legislative committees insofar as they apply.

*Rule 36. Duties and Prerogatives of Legislative Committees*

(1) Following orientation of officers, committee leadership, utilizing the
resources of its petitions coordinator, shall evaluate the petitions assigned to the
committee, establish priorities, and outline the committee’s work on the basis of
those priorities unless it is given special instructions by the General Conference
(See Section VII.A.(7)(a)).

(2) A legislative sub-committee chair shall ensure that all votes taken within a
sub-committee are recorded and reported to the legislative committee plenary on
the forms provided by the Secretary of the General Conference.

(3) When a petition or resolution or any similar item is referred to one of the
legislative committees, it shall be understood that the whole question with
which the item has to do is referred to that committee for such action as it may
deem wise. Every matter supported by the legislative committee shall be
reported to the plenary with a motion to adopt or a motion to refer to a board,
council, commission, or committee either for action or for report to the next
General Conference.

(4) Committees shall report to the Conference upon all matters referred to them
by the Conference, directly or through the Committee on Reference. Committee
reports on resolutions, petitions, etc., shall cite the same, identifying them by
numbers they bear respectively in the published reports of the Committee on
Reference or in some other suitable manner.
(5) When a committee ascertains that another committee is, or in its judgment should be, considering a subject that the former is considering, it shall report the matter to the Committee on Reference for such adjustment as the situation may require.

(6) The chairperson of each legislative committee shall coordinate the report of the committee to the plenary.

(7) When the chairperson of a committee is not in agreement with a report adopted by the committee, it shall be the chairperson’s duty to state the fact to the committee. The committee shall elect one of its members for the presentation and discussion of the report in the plenary. If, in such a case, the committee shall fail to select a representative, the chairperson shall designate a member to represent the committee, and said representative shall have all the rights and privileges of the chairperson in relation to such a report.

[Editor’s note: The Book of Discipline 2016 ¶ 507.11 requires that all petitions submitted to the General Conference shall receive a vote of a legislative committee. Rule 34.1 has been updated and former Rule 37 has been deleted to reflect this disciplinary change. The following rules have been renumbered to reflect the deletion of former Rule 37.]

Rule 37. Legislative Committee Report to the Daily Christian Advocate

(1) As quickly as material can be prepared, each secretary of a legislative committee shall present each of the committee’s reports to a recorder assigned to the committee. The recorder will prepare the report and the report will be approved and signed by the chair, vice-chair and secretary. After the report has been approved, it will be electronically transmitted to the Coordinator of the Calendar. A calendar number will be assigned and it will be published as approved.

(2) Committee and minority reports that propose changes in the Book of Discipline shall give the paragraph number to be affected and shall be prepared in the following manner: Existing words used as reference points shall be in quotation marks; words to be deleted shall be in strike through; words to be
Rule 38. Published Reports in Possession of Conference

Reports submitted by the committee according to the deadline, as announced by the Secretary of the General Conference, shall appear in the next day’s *Daily Christian Advocate*. The report as published in the *Daily Christian Advocate* is the official copy, subject only to grammatical or other obvious editorial changes and shall be regarded as in the possession of the Conference. On the day following its first appearance in the *Daily Christian Advocate* or any time thereafter, a report is in order for consideration at the pleasure of the conference. The same rule shall apply to a minority report from any committee (See Rules 22, 29).

Rule 39. Preparation and Publishing of Reports

(1) All committee reports shall be prepared using the approved General Conference Legislative System approved by the Commission on the General Conference.

(2) The report to the Coordinator of the Calendar for items voted in committee shall include the name of the committee, its total membership, the number present at the time the item was adopted, and the number voting for and against the item.

(3) Reports of the legislative committees shall be published in the *Daily Christian Advocate* at least one day before being presented for consideration by the Conference. Committee reports with minority reports shall be published in sequence, and so numbered.

(4) Every effort should be made by the secretary of the legislative committee to report consecutively all petitions that address the same issue.
VI. Suspending, Amending, and Supplementing

Rule 40. Suspension of the Rules

The operation of any of the provisions of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds vote of the Conference (See Rule 31.6).

Rule 41. Amending Rules

The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order may be amended or changed by a two-thirds vote of the Conference; provided the proposed change or amendment has originated in the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order or has been presented to the Conference in writing and referred to this committee, which committee shall report thereon not later than the following day (See Rule 31.6).

The Plan of Organization and Rules of Order as adopted at the opening session shall be published in the next *Daily Christian Advocate*.

Rule 42. Robert’s Rules of Order, Supplemental Authority

In any parliamentary situation not covered by the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, the General Conference shall be governed in its action by the current edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order*. 
Legislative Process

Petitions are sent by agencies, conferences, churches, and individuals.

The Petitions Secretary assigns petition numbers. The numbers indicate the legislative committee, the chronological order, if it affects the Constitution, if there are any financial implications, if there is global significance, and whether the petition applies to the Book of Discipline, the Book of Resolutions, or other.

The Committee on Reference reviews the assignments by the Petitions Secretary. It has authority to combine petitions and make new assignments to legislative committees as deemed necessary.

Requested changes in the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions and other petitions are printed in the ADCA.

Legislative committees act upon petitions and make recommendations to the plenary session.

Recommendations are reported as approved by legislative committee officers to the Coordinator of the Calendar, assigned a calendar number, and printed in the DCA.

Plenary session (the whole assembly) acts upon calendar items.

The actions are used to update the Book of Discipline or the Book of Resolutions. The DCA becomes the official journal of the General Conference.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Do This:</th>
<th>You Say This:</th>
<th>(See Key Below)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECONDARY MOTIONS IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>“I move to adjourn.”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call an intermission</td>
<td>“I move we recess until . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend further consideration of an issue, especially in an emergency</td>
<td>“I move we table the motion . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End debate and amendments</td>
<td>“I move the previous question . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit or extend the limits of debate</td>
<td>“I move the debate be limited (or extended) to . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone debate to a specific time</td>
<td>“I move to postpone this matter until . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the matter studied further</td>
<td>“I move that this matter be referred to . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend a motion, including amend by substitution</td>
<td>“I move to amend by . . .” or “I move to substitute . . .”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone indefinitely (Kills the main motion)</td>
<td>“I move to postpone indefinitely.”</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAIN MOTION (Introduction of a Petition)**

| Introduce New Business | “I move that . . .” | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maj | R |

**INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (Pertaining to the business under consideration)**

| Correct an error in parliamentary procedure | “I rise to a point of order” | Yes | No | No | No | Chair Rules |
| Obtain advice on parliamentary procedure | “I raise a parliamentary inquiry” | Yes | No | No | No | Chair Rules |
| Request information | “Point of information.” (must be in form of a question) | Yes | No | No | No |
| Question the ruling of the presiding officer | “I appeal the chair’s decision.” | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Maj | R |
| Suspend the rules temporarily | “I move to suspend the rules so that . . .” | No | Yes | No | No | 2/3 |

**BRING A MATTER BACK BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY**

| Take up a matter previously tabled | “I move that we take from the table . . .” | No | Yes | No | No | Maj |
| Reconsider previous action (May be made only by a member who voted previously on the prevailing side) | “I move to reconsider the vote on . . .” | No | Yes | ** | No | Maj |

I = Interrupt Speaker?; S = Second Needed?; D = Debatable?; A = Amendable?; R = May be Reconsidered.

*See GC rule 9.4 (an exception to usual 2/3 vote parliamentary procedure).

** See GC Rules 21 and 30.
Abbreviations and Codes

Petition Packets

During General Conference, petition packets, including copies of each multiple submission, will be issued to the Committee on Reference and the legislative committees to which they are assigned. Any delegate desiring to see a petition packet may contact the Petitions Secretary.

Petition Text

Proposed deletions to existing material are indicated by strike through.
Proposed additions to existing material are indicated by single underline.

Each petition is numbered using the following code:

Petition Coding

First series of numbers................................. Chronological listing of petitions (begins with 20001)
First two letters ...................................... Legislative committee
Petition Number...................................... Positions 1-5
Separator 1 ........................................... Position 6 Value “.”
Legislative Committee Code........................ Positions 7-8
Separator 2 ........................................... Position 9 Value “.”

The type of petition determines the next several positions.

Discipline paragraph number with Paragraph Symbol ........ ¶XXXX.XXXX
   Petitions with an even one hundred number (200, 400, 1200, etc.) indicate that the petition requests a new paragraph.

Or resolution number................................. RXXXX
   R9999 indicates that a petition requests a new resolution.
Or the word, “NonDis” for a petition that does not deal with Discipline paragraphs or resolutions

Separator 3.......................................... Next Available Position Value “.”

The type of petition determines the next position.
“C” if a petition impacts the Constitution, all other petition types are not signified in the Petition Identification Code.

The financial indicator code occupies the next available position.
Blank if petition does not impact budget.
Or “$” if petition has Financial Implications for an existing budget line item.
Or “!” if petition has Financial Implications for a new budget line item.

The global indicator code occupies the next available position.
Blank if petition does not impact the global church.
Or “G” if petition impacts the global church.
Abbreviations

Legislative Committees

CA ......... Church and Society 1
CB ......... Church and Society 2
CC ......... Church and Society 3
CO ......... Conferences
DI ......... Discipleship
FA ........ Financial Administration
FO ......... Faith and Order
GA ......... General Administration
GM ......... Global Ministries
IC ......... Independent Commissions
JA ......... Judicial Administration
LC ......... Local Church
MH ......... Higher Education/Superintendency
OM ......... Ordained Ministry

Standing Committee

ST ......... Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

General Agencies

GBCS ...... General Board of Church and Society
GBOD ...... General Board of Discipleship (Discipleship Ministries)
GBGM ...... General Board of Global Ministries
GBHEM ...... General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
GBPHEL ...... General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)
GCAH ...... General Commission on Archives and History
GCFA ...... General Council on Finance and Administration
GCRR ...... General Commission on Religion and Race
GCSRW ...... General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
GCUMM ...... General Commission on United Methodist Men
UMCOM ...... General Commission on Communication (United Methodist Communications)
UMPH ...... General Board of The United Methodist Publishing House
UMW ...... United Methodist Women

Other Organizations

CT ......... Connectional Table
OCUIR ...... Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships of the Council of Bishops
SCCCM ...... Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters
Alphabetical List of Voting Delegates and First Reserves

Clergy are italics. Committee code follows name. Some annual conferences have not been listed because their delegate information was unavailable at the time of printing. Updated delegate lists will be published in the *Daily Christian Advocate* at the beginning of General Conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegate Name</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abel, Russell L.</td>
<td>(CO)</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abramov, Sergei</td>
<td>(CC)</td>
<td>South Russia Provisional</td>
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<td>Adamu, Saidu Mbaisha</td>
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<td>Austin, Emma Charis</td>
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Cativo, Glenn Caspe (DI) ........ Hundred Island

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Collier, Theodore Cody .......... Missouri
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Colorado, Judy C. (GM) .......... Greater New Jersey

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Daszuta, Bozena Elzbieta (GM) .......... Poland
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Davis, Cynthia Miller .......... Memphis
Davis, Jennifer Pharr (LC) .......... Western North Carolina
Dawson, Katie Marie Ziskovsky (GM) .... Iowa
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Drae, Lindsay Kay (CO) .......... Iowa
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Fogle-Miller, Carlene Rebecca (HS) ... Western Pennsylvania
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Fux, Thomas (CA) ..................... Austria Provisional
Gaines-Cirelli, Ginger Elise (CO) ... Baltimore-Washington
Galan, Esteban Miguel ................ Oregon-Idaho
Garza, Oscar Luis (JA) ............... Texas
Gaston, Leslie Camille (OM) ....... North Texas
Gaynor, Jill Walker (GM) ............. Virginia
Gilbert, Mary Lynne (FA) ............. Western North Carolina
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Gillon, Lee, Elizabeth Ann (LC) .... North Alabama
Gipson, Mattie Dickens (OM) ......... Mississippi
Girrell, Rebecca Joy (GA) ............. New England
Givens, Frances Elizabeth (JA) ...... Virginia
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Gobel, Jessica Anne (CA) ............. Wisconsin
Goddard, Kimberly Mustard (CO) ..... Holston
Godwin, Lauren Ann (CB) .......... West Virginia
Golov, Artem (GM) ..................... Eastern Russia and Central Asia
Gomez, Paul Sebastien (CB) ........... Desert Southwest
Gordy-Sith, Vicki Lynn (CO) ........ Peninsula-Delaware
Grace, Roger L. (LC) ................. West Ohio
Graebe, Susan (OM) .................... North Carolina
Grant, Holly Jean (LC) ............... East Ohio
Gray, Sandra C. (CA) ................. Kentucky
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Greene, Robert William ............... South Georgia
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Griebl, Thomas B. ..................... Kentucky
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Gross, Gregory D. (GA) ............... Northern Illinois
Grout, David Theodore (CB) .......... Kentucky
Guenther, André (GM) ................. Germany East
Guilfoyle, Anna Catherine (CB) ..... West Ohio
Gume, Jose Jamisse (DI) .............. Mozambique South
Guy, Beverly Ann (HS) ............... Michigan
Gwartney, Charla Beth (CC) .......... Oklahoma
Habonimana, Silas (GA) ............. Burundi
Hafner, Lea (DI) ........... Switzerland France North Africa
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Harris, Joseph Lewin (CO) .......... Oklahoma
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Ntahoturi, Jean (CO) ................. Burundi
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Opalinski, Brett Michael (OM) .... Florida
Osborne, Marilyn Ruth (CB) .... Red Bird Missionary
Ow, Kenneth (FA) .............. Baltimore-Washington
Paggett, Leah Christine (CB) .... Indiana
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Pancoast, Heather Ann (LC) ...... Florida
Pannell, Sara Beth (DI) .......... North Carolina
Panong, Apolonia Bogate (FA) .... Bicol Philippines
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Parker, Caleb (CC) ............... North Carolina
Partin, Randall Wayne (CO) ........ New Mexico
Passour, William A ............. Western Pennsylvania
Paysour, Jacob Stephen (FA) ..... Virginia
Pepsy, Jetai Audu (JA) .......... Southern Nigeria
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Pererva, Aleksandar (CA) ........ South Russia Provisional
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Perry, Carmen Lynette (LC) ...... Upper New York
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Peters, Jennifer Renee (FA) ...... Michigan
Peva, Emmanuel (CO) ........... Sierra Leone
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Picardo, Katherine Callaway Brooks (CC) . West Ohio
Pidgeon, Karli Danett (OM) .... Louisiana
Pierre-Okerson, Marie Judith (IC) .... Florida
Plambeck, Lanette Lorelle (DI) ........ Iowa
Pope, Michael (CB) ............ California-Nevada
Powers, Samuel Tyler (FO) .... Oklahoma
Price, James Larry (GA) ........ South Georgia
Priddy, Shannon Rachel (IC) ........ Indiana
Prochazka, Petr (OM) ......... Czech and Slovak Republics
Prochazkova, Lenka (GM) ....... Czech and Slovak Republics
Prusha, Connor James ............ East Ohio
Quigg, Stephen Paul (CC) .... Greater New Jersey
Rand, Thomas A. (FO) .......... West Ohio
Reed, David Raill (FA) .......... Memphis
Refsdal, Knut (OM) .............. Norway
Reisinger, Mark F .............. Susquehanna
Reyes, Luis F. (HS) ............ Northern Illinois
Reynolds, Sherri Jones ......... North Alabama
Rhodes, Phillip M .......... Central Texas
Rinehart, Gerald Robert (FA) ... East Ohio
Riss, Timothy J. (CO) ......... New York
Roberts, Elizabeth (CB) ...... North Carolina
Roberts, Michael Lawrence (FO) .... Arkansas
Robinson, Randall Lee (OM) ..... Illinois Great Rivers
Rodriguez Alphonso, Ana Maria .... New England
Rodriguez-Perez, Esther (CC) ... Florida
Roelfs, Ravi Paul (JA) .......... Wisconsin
Rogers, Patricia Alice (CO) .... North Georgia
Rogers, Timothy Julian .... South Carolina
Rollins, Benita (CA) .......... East Ohio
Ross, Spencer Daniel (GM) ...... Susquehanna
Rothlisberger, John Charles (FA) .... Iowa
Rowley, Pam ................. New Mexico
Rudolph, Eileen (HS) .......... Switzerland France
North Africa
Rushing, Dalton Troy (LC)........ North Georgia
Russell, Kara Grace (GM) ...... West Ohio
Ryde, Helen Valerie (LC) ....... Western North Carolina
Saffa, Ndi (IC) ............. Sierra Leone
Salley, James Henry (FA) ...... South Carolina
Salsgiver, Thomas L. (CO) ...... Susquehanna
Savage, Charles Walter (FA) .......... North Georgia
Savage, James Caskey .......... Red Bird Missionary
Schindler, Elizabeth Ingram (FA) .. Pacific Northwest
Schleickert, Christopher John ... Baltimore-Washington
Schleickert, Sarah Andrews (OM) . Baltimore-Washington
Schneider, Mark (GM) .......... North Carolina
Schonert, Steven L. (CO) .... Illinois Great Rivers
Schröeckenfuchs, Stefan (CB) ... Austria Provisional
Schroeder, Philip Daniel (FA) ... North Georgia
Schubert Nowling, Lisa D. (FO) ........ Indiana
Schutt, Erin Eliissa .......... Peninsula-Delaware
Schwerin, Daniel William (CO) .... Wisconsin
Scott, Allison Renee .......... Wisconsin
Scott, Derrick Louie (CO) ......... Florida
Scott, Robin Bradley (OM) ................ North Alabama
Sealey, Gregory Scott ...................... Pacific Northwest
Sears, Erin Elizabeth (OM) .................. West Virginia
Seay, Paul Daniel (OM) ..................... Holston
Seth, John William .......................... Western Pennsylvania
Shaffer, Richard Allen (FA) ............... West Virginia
Schantz, Amy Mock (GA) .................... West Virginia
Shanks, Alex Arthur (JA) ................... Florida
Shannon Stueve, Erica Lea (JA) ........... Iowa
Shaw, Joshua Maurice ........................ Memphis
Sherief, Lucretia Marian (CC) ............. Sierra Leone
Sherfey, Joshua Harlan (GM) .............. Western North Carolina
Sherfey, Shannon Marie (CB) ............. Western North Carolina
Sheton, Connie M. .......................... Mississippi
Shinhoster, Wiley R. ........................ South Georgia
Simbine Sambo, Leonarda Edome (FO) ... Mozambique South
Simpson, Kathryn McKay (CO) ............. Louisiana
Simpson, Kim Quetone (HS) ............... Central Texas
Sinzohagera, Emmanuel ..................... Burundi
Sjanta, Daniel (CO) ......................... Serbia-Macedonia Provisional
Slauzon, Gayla Jo (HS) ..................... Rocky Mountain
Sligar, Mary Janet (DI) .................... North Georgia
Smalls, Doreen (LC) ...................... South Carolina
Smartt, Denise Adrienne (FO) ............. New York
Smith, LaNella Diane (LC) ............... North Carolina
Smith, Rita L. .......................... Northern Illinois
Smith, Samuel Edward (GA) ............. Upper New York
Smothers, Jasmine Rose (FO) ............ North Georgia
Soendenther Nicholson, Trista Denae (OM) ........... Missouri
Solomon, Nelly Gatune (CB) .......... Kenya-Ethiopia
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence (JA) ............ Mississippi
Spencer, Lester Harden (LC) ............. Alabama-West Florida
Spiva, Nobuhle Blossom (DI) .......... South Africa Provisional
Spradlin, Mary Kathryn (FO) ............ Central Texas
Stahlman, Vicki J. (FA) .................. Western Pennsylvania
Stallons, Mark A. (LC) ................... Kentucky
Stamper, Cynthia Bai ....................... Red Bird Missionary
Standifer, Riley Ethan ....................... Florida
Stanley, Ashley Crowder (OM) ............ Western North Carolina
Stanley, Jason Carter (CA) ............. Virginia
Starodubets, Yulia (FO) ............ Ukraine-Moldova Provisional
Steele, Valerie Dorette (IC) ................. Oklahoma
Steiner, Chris E. (JA) .................... West Ohio
Stephenson, Mark (FA) .................. California-Pacific
Stewart, Amy (OM) ........................ North Carolina
Stewart, Charles R. .................. Oklahoma
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E. (CO) ............ West Ohio
Stokes, Martha Ensley (FO) ................ Virginia
Stotts, James David (FA) ............. Mississippi
Strebeck, Sid (GA) ...................... New Mexico
Stukalova, Julia (DI) ..................... Eastern Russia and Central Asia
Stultz, Costello, Cara Elizabeth .......... East Ohio
Stutes, Randy Don .......................... Northwest Texas
Sule, Eli Yakku (CO) ...................... Central Nigeria
Sullivan, Catherine Sue (LC) ............. Texas
Sutton, Emily Scales (GM) .............. South Carolina
Swann, Jennifer Eileen ...................... Louisiana
Swanson, Eric N. (HS) ...................... Illinois Great Rivers
Sweet, Marthaly Kellogg (CA) .......... Upper New York
Sweet, Rebekah Beth (HS) .............. Upper New York
Talbot-Burrows, Ellen M. (CO) ........... East Ohio
Tamm, Priti (FO) ......................... Estonia
Tang, Anthony James ...................... Desert Southwest
Taylor, Cynthia Ann (DI) ............ Baltimore-Washington
Taylor, Jeffrey Allen (JA) .............. West Virginia
Taylor, Maggie Elizabeth (FO) .......... Tennessee
Taylor, Steve (CA) ................... North Carolina
Taylor-Storm, Dawn Elizabeth (CO) ........ Eastern Pennsylvania
Tchomba, Adalbert Ngoy (GA) .......... Kivu Provisional
Thaarup, Jørgen (CO) ................... Denmark
Thomas, Byron Eric (GA) ............. North Georgia
Thompson, Amy LeAnn (DI) ............... Missouri
Thompson, LaToya Redd (DI) ............ Mississippi
Thompson, Lenora (GM) ............ Eastern Pennsylvania
Thompson, Martha Fridy (OM) .......... South Carolina
Thompson, Mary Carol (HS) ............. Holston
Thompson, Ralph Gene (LC) ............ Rio Texas
Tiainen, Sarah Maria (CA) .......... Finland-Swedish Provisional
Togel, Kara Ann (HS) .................... Dakotas
Travis, Anne St. Claire (GA) ............. Holston
Trefz, Rebecca Grinager (OM) .......... Dakotas
Troxler, Jeremy Issac (CO) ............. Western North Carolina
Tuitahi, Monalisa (GM) ................ California-Pacific
Tukutau, Havea Hikule’o (GA) .......... Rocky Mountain
Tullos, Bryan Haley (GA) .............. Texas
Tunda, Prosper Kasongo (JA) .......... East Congo
Urundai, Emile Njandu (CC) ............. East Congo
Urriola, Ian Carlos (JA) ................ Upper New York
Valdez, Buson Panguntan (GA) ........ Northwest Phillipines
Valendy, Jason Matthew (GA) .......... Central Texas
VanDyke, Rhonda Ann (HS) ............. Virginia
Vaughn, Robert Emory (CB) .......... Virginia
Vetter, Molly ...................... California-Pacific
Vittorio, Jessica Lynn (JA) .......... North Texas
Void, Betty Jeffcoat ....................... South Carolina
Waddell Teegarden, Jessica Hope (CA) .... Arkansas
Wagner, Robert D. (DI) .................. East Ohio
Walther, Megan Jo-Crumm (CB) ........... Michigan
Walton, Terry Eugene .................... North Georgia
Warner, Laceye Cammarano (HS) ........... Texas
Warren, Jeffrey Joseph (CB) .............. Upper New York
Watson, Frankie Fonteneaux .............. Texas
Watts, Michael Brent (FA) ................. Kentucky
Weatherspoon, Dale Maurice .............. California-Nevada
Webb, Shelly Fay (CA) ............. Western North Carolina
Weems, Cynthia Dee (FA) .............. Florida
Wellman, Jason R. ...................... West Ohio
Wembakoy, Albert Okolongo (GM) ........ Oriental and Equator
Westad, Audun (CB) ..................... Norway
Westbrook, William Ernest (FA) ........ Peninsula-Delaware
Weston, Megan Kyoko Shitama (HS) .... Peninsula-Delaware
Whitaker, Lynette (IC) ................. Western North Carolina
Whitehead, Larry K. (FA) ............... Indiana
Whitton, Brady Stephen (FO) .......... Louisiana
Wilbourn, Gordon Miller (CO) .......... Arkansas
Wilcox, Daniel Paul .................... Alaska Missionary
Wildi, Michael Stephens ............... North Alabama
Wilkes-Null, Beverly L. (JA) .......... Illinois Great Rivers
Williams, Alice Marie (HS) .......... Florida
Williams, Catherine E. ................. Greater New Jersey
Williams, David Bennett (GA) ........... North Carolina
Williams, Gerald Lamar (CO) .......... New England
Williams, James Andrew (JA) .......... Kentucky
Williams, Thomas Andrew (FO) .......... Texas
Williamson, Delores J. (FO) .......... Great Plains
Wilson, Betty (JA) ...................... East Ohio
Wilson, David Mark (GA) .............. Oklahoma Indian Missionary
Wilson, Janey Louise (HS) .......... Oklahoma
Wilson, Stacey Cole .................... Baltimore-Washington
Witkowski, Laura Beth (FO) .......... Michigan
Wolverton, Kenneth Ray (GA) .......... North Texas
Womack, W. Michael (JA) ............... Indiana
Wondel, Jill Alison (JA) .......... Missouri
Woods, Kimberly Dawn (CB) .......... Illinois Great Rivers
Woodworth, Wendy Joy (OM) .......... Oregon-Idaho
Wright, Rachel Ruth (HS) .......... Rio Texas
Yanusa, Peter Ngai (GA) .......... Southern Nigeria
Yebuah, Lisa (CO) .................. North Carolina
Yoila, Bzael Yayuba (FO) .......... Southern Nigeria
Zaagsma, Carol Ann (CO) .......... Minnesota
Zafrnov, Petar (GA) ........ Serbia-Macedonia Provisional
Zailani, Yahuda Nero (HS) .......... Northeast Nigeria
Zilhaver, Robert F. (JA) .......... Western Pennsylvania
Voting and Reserve Delegates by Conference

Voting delegates are listed in order of election. Names of clergy appear in italics. Reserves are those elected in accordance with ¶ 34 of the Constitution. The chairperson of a delegation is indicated with an asterisk. To comply with the latest privacy laws, delegate addresses have not been published in the Advance Daily Christian Advocate. Some annual conferences have not been listed because their delegate information was unavailable at the time of printing. Updated delegate lists will be published in the Daily Christian Advocate at the beginning of General Conference.

The delegate information is provided by the respective secretaries of the annual conferences as a part of the credentialing process. Corrections may be sent to the Reverend Gary W. Graves, Secretary of the General Conference, ggraves@umcgc.org.

### Alabama-West Florida (8)

#### Delegates

*Bryars, Paul Lawrence* (OM)
Furr, Steven Paul (CB)
*Ausley, Lisa Friedman* (HS)
Maddox, Beverly Baggett (FO)
*Hong, Sung Kuk* (GM)
Floore, Malcolm Eugene (CO)
*Spencer, Lester Harden* (LC)
Mlingedorff, George E. (FA)

#### Reserves

Newton, Riley Allen
Moore, James Frank
*Ausley, Rurel Reuben*
Frost Whiting, Notalsia Lonett
Kagoro, Virginia
Moneyham, John Perry
*Pennington, Douglas Charles*
Brooks, Robert Lavon
*Barrett, Misty Edwards*
Gulledge, Robert Ivan
*Mobley, Matthew Alan*
Barnes, Antonius Genzarra

### Arkansas (8)

#### Delegates

Norman, Mark K. (HS)
*Mann, Karon Sue* (GA)
Roberts, Michael Lawrence (FO)
Burris, James Todd (FA)
*Kilbourne, Elizabeth L.* (OM)
Wilbourn, Gordon Miller (CO)
Waddell Teegarden, Jessica Hope (CA)
Fink, Elizabeth Ashley (JA)

#### Reserves

Murray, Natasha J.
Norwood, Regina L.
*Delony, Rebekah Miles*
Argue, Sarah E.
*Evans, Hamnett Nichols*
Bates, Brandon Kyle
*Pearce, Katherine Goss*
Forbus, Amy Meredith
*Estes, Pamela Jean*
Swain, Brian T.
*DeLano, Lauren Kristine*
Whitaker, Asa L.

### Alaska Missionary (2)

#### Delegates

*Doepken, James McIntyre* (OM)
Hayden, Jo Anne Kay (HS)

#### Reserves

Wilcox, Daniel Paul
Brooks, Lonnie Douglas
*Talbott, Lisa Marie*

### Austria Provisional (2)

#### Delegates

*Schröeckenfuchs, Stefan* (CB)
Fux, Thomas (CA)
Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Baltimore-Washington (12)**

**Section 9**
Row P Seats 49-54
Row Q Seats 49-54

**Delegates**

*Mills, Ianther Marie* (JA)  
Taylor, Cynthia Ann (DI)  
Daniels, Joseph Wayne (GA)  
Blizzard, Megan Elizabeth (CB)  
Gaines-Cirelli, Ginger Elise (CO)  
Lauber, Melissa Morris (CA)  
Hunt, Charles Anthony (GM)  
Ow, Kenneth (FA)  
Arroyo, Giovanni (FO)  
Colbert, Daniel Joseph (LC)  
Schlieckert, Sarah Andrews (OM)  
Ford, Sarah Virginia (IC)

**Reserves**
Wilson, Stacey Cole  
Schlieckert, Christopher John  
Park, Jong Woo  
Latona, Christine Laural Shinn  
Link, Conrad Oscar  
Collins, Tracy Ledell  
Yates, Leo Allen  
Milton, Sharon Georgia  
Reynolds, Kirkland  
Jones, Nathan Peter  
Oskvig, Bryant Melvin  
Jechura, Chet Mitchell  
Rivera Rivera, Edgardo  
Quinn, Mittie Theobuld  
Frazier, Malcolm Larry  
Moore, Charles Eric  
Norvell, Laura Marie  
Pembamoto, Lutebula D.  
Rudolph, Melissa Corinne Hamill  
Kraus, Heather Holt

**Bicol Phillippines Provisional (2)**

**Section 4**
Row K Seats 13-14

**Delegates**

*Alvarez, Jerome De La Cruz* (FO)  
Panong, Apolonio Bogate (FA)

**Burundi (6)**

**Section 5**
Row G Seats 27-28  
Row H Seats 27-30

**Delegates**

*Ntalhoturi, Jean* (CO)  
Ndikumana, Zephirin (HS)  
Bankurunaze, Lazare (FA)  
Habonimana, Silas (GA)  
Sinzohagera, Emmanuel (FO)  
Manirakiza, Godelieve (CB)

**Reserves**
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**California-Nevada (6)**

**Section 2**
Row E Seats 19-22  
Row F Seats 21-22

**Delegates**

Kuan, Kah-Jin Jeffrey (HS)  
*Pope, Michael* (CB)  
Brick, Elizabeth Ann (OM)  
Allen, Emily Ruth (CO)  
Current, Staci Lynne (FA)  
Bernstein, Rebecca Anne (CA)

**Reserves**

Weatherspoon, Dale Maurice  
Hsu, Michael  
Hingano, Siosifa  
Fernandez, Ryland Christian  
Brown, Angela  
Stevens, Lauren Michelle  
Stoneking, Kristin Sue  
Miller, Randolph Harlan  
Cao, Felicisimo Santos  
Shearman, Gayle Anne  
Pearson, Matthew Alexander  
Cramer-Mowder, Rebecca Roland  
Johnson, Theon Lemure  
Bago, Ruby Ramos  
Yamada, Motoe
Barrow, Audrey Caroline  
*La Point-Collup, Kathleen Fay  
Boxill-German, Beverley-Ann Susan  
Kwon, Hyok In  
Bulls, Amanda Alice  
Brown, Craig Scott  
Troescher, David Lin  
Bernadel-Huey, Eugenie-Myrna  
Rickerd, Leslie Marie  
Aggarap, Bener Baysa  
Klepac, Nina Marie

### California-Pacific (6)

**Section 6**  
**Row L**  
**Seats 39-44**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeforth, Cedrick (JA)</td>
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<td>Tuitahi, Monalisa (GM)</td>
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<td>Mark, Allison (CA)</td>
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<td>Stephenson, Mark (FA)</td>
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<td>Olewine, Sandra (CO)</td>
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<td>Maka, Mele (CB)</td>
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<td>Vetter, Molly</td>
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<td>Fukumoto, JoAnn</td>
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<td>Choi, Thoms</td>
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<td>Gipson, Rachel</td>
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<td>Farley, John</td>
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<td>Schmitt, Erich</td>
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<td>Wulf, Frank</td>
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<td>Takagi, Jason</td>
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<td>Arntson, Darin</td>
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<td>Williams, Claire</td>
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<td>Bentley, Richard</td>
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<td>Taylor, Dione</td>
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<td>Farris, Patricia</td>
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<td>Blagojovich, Mele Faiva</td>
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<td>Chung, Judy</td>
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<td>Ahn, Stuart</td>
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<td>Kim, Sam</td>
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<td>Valdes, Phillip</td>
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<td>Han, Eugene</td>
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<td>Esposo, Andrew</td>
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<td>Harris, Tonya</td>
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<td>Roark, Liz</td>
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<td>McDow, Mandy</td>
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<td>Henry, Katharine</td>
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### Central Luzon Philippines (2)

**Section 7**  
**Row P**  
**Seats 1-2**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Delegates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estioko, Nixon Baladad (DI)</td>
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<td>Baniqued, Jeremias Fragata (FA)</td>
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<th>Reserves</th>
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<td>Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.</td>
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### Central Nigeria (6)

**Section 8**  
**Row R**  
**Seats 19-24**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Delegates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sule, Eli Yakku (CO)</td>
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<td>Ibrahim, Godwin John (CB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auta, John Pena (HS)</td>
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<td>Bambur, Virginia Baba (FO)</td>
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<td>Bitrus, Paulina Isa (OM)</td>
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<td>Peter, Edward (FA)</td>
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### Central Russia (2)

**Section 5**  
**Row M**  
**Seats 35-36**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margulis, Irina (OM)</td>
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<td>Kobzeva, Olga (DI)</td>
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<th>Reserves</th>
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### Central Texas (8)

**Section 1**  
**Row A**  
**Seats 7-10**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Delegates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruster, Timothy Keith (CO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simpson, Kim Quetone (HS)</td>
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<td>Crumpton, Debra Marie (FA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfred, Darlene Rochelle (CB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spradlin, Mary Kathryn (FO)</td>
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<td>Ford, Michael Dale (JA)</td>
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<td>Valendy, Jason Matthew (GA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ezell, Kathy Moseley (OM)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reserves

Rhodes, Phillip M.
Gregory, Kevin Blake
Smith, Ramon Frashawn
Campbell, Kylie Heather
Evers, Beth Ann
Bell, Christopher Tyres
Conner, Jim David
Wood, Patricia Anne
Jones, Marilyn Lavonne
Johnson, Cathryne Abigail
Hawkins, Daniel Koos
Spidell, Jennifer Johnson
Farrer, Jonathan Michael
Reeves, James W.

Czech and Slovak Republics (2)
Section 9 Row R Seats 45-46

Delegates

Prochazka, Petr (OM)
*Prochazkova, Lenka (GM)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Dakotas (2)
Section 2 Row A Seats 27-28

Delegates

Trefz, Rebecca Grinager (OM)
*Togel, Kara Ann (HS)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Desert Southwest (2)
Section 8 Row T Seats 29-30

Delegates

*Hurlbert, Daniel David (OM)
Gomez, Paul Sebastian (CB)

Reserves

Tang, Anthony James
O’Neal, Julie Hyun Choi
Rambikur, Elizabeth Ann
Donovan, Trinity Michelle
Lombardi, Deanna Dee Azhikakath
Whitmire, Carla Marie
Klaehn, Mary Beth
Hill, Glenda Gay
Olivares, Javier
Brown, Jessica Danielle
Kennedy, Gary
Harris, Matthew Louis
Plukala, Timote
Hrabe, Marjorie Irene

East Congo (16)
Section 9 Row P Seats 37-44
Section 9 Row Q Seats 37-44

Delegates

Kalema, Antoine Tambwe (LC)
Muthoma, Sylvestre Bushiri (CB)
Ndjeka, Paul Shango (DI)
Mupasa, Germain Unda (FO)
Ketoka, Paul Lokondo (FA)
Lushima, Damas Wuhu (CO)
Mahamudi, Benoit Ngereza (OM)
Ukundji, Emile Ngandu (CC)
Okonda, Andre Omesumbu (CO)
Tunda, Prosper Kasongo (JA)
Okende, Felix Ndjulu (IC)
Furaha, Francisca Mwayuma (IC)
Kombe, Helene Djamba (GA)
Lumumba, Jacqueline Luhahi (HS)
Kibatuli, Hilaire Bununu (CA)
Manafundu, Marie Claire Diandja (GM)
**Delegates**

*Henderson, Gary Ray* (GA)

*Rinehart, Gerald Robert* (FA)

*Call, Andrew R.* (HS)

*Talbot-Burrows, Ellen M.* (CO)

*Bryant, Danny C.* (OM)

*Banks, Martha E.* (CB)

*Laferty, Matthew Allen* (FO)

*Wilson, Betty* (JA)

*Arellano, Armando Contreras* (GM)

*Wagner, Robert D.* (DI)

*Rollins, Benita* (CA)

*Grant, Holly Jean* (LC)

**Reserves**

*Stultz Costello, Cara Elizabeth*

*Prusha, Connor James*

*Auman, Abby G. M.*

*Dixon, Sarah E.*

*Nazario, Nestor*

*Burdsall, Donald Elmer*

*Oehl, Karen McCartney*

*Lewis, Thomas Andrew*

*Priebe, Jonathan Richard*

*Achberger, Susan L.*

*Brown, Susan Elizabeth*

*Starr, Lucinda H.*

*Antczak, Carrie A.*

*Laferty, Allen Dean*

*Welch, Heidi M.*

*Green, Kimberly D.*

*Gadomski Littleton, Jared M.*

*Watts, William A.*

*Jaissle, Laura Kay*

*Corder, Richard Alan*

*Quillen, Clint*

*Palmer, Kathy Ellen*

---

**Reserves**

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

---

**Delegates**

*Machinga, Gift Kudakwashe* (DI)

*Mwayera, Molly Hlekani* (JA)

*Bob, Togara* (OM)

*Mironga, Maxwell* (GM)

**Reserves**

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

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**Delegates**

*Taylor-Storm, Dawn Elizabeth* (CO)

*Ehninger, Judith Kay* (HS)

*Brown, Andrea Sue* (FO)

*Johnson, Krystl D.* (FA)

*Muñoz, Lydia Esther* (IC)

*Jacob, Ann Chris* (GA)

*Dodla, Johnson Edwin* (JA)

*Thompson, Lenora* (GM)

**Reserves**

*Hynicka, Robin Michael*

*Koch, David Louis*

*Lebo, Daniel Eric*

*Longmire, Samuel John*

*Cameron, Edward L.*

*Krall, Clarita Anderman*

*Bonner, Hannah Adair*

*Fisher, Elizabeth Santos*

*Kurien, Christopher Jacob*

*Calderone, Matthew*

*Miller, Mandy Stanley*

*Adams, Kristine D.*

*Guepet, Monica B.*

*McCoy, Susan Grimm*

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**Delegates**

*Golov, Artem* (GM)

*Stukalova, Julia* (DI)

**Reserves**

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.
Estonia (2)

Section 4  Row H  Seats 15-16

Delegates
*Tamm, Priit (FO)
Avotina, Inara (HS)

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Finland-Finnish Provisional (2)

Section 4  Row H  Seats 17-18

Delegates
*Loponen, Veli Kristian (CO)
Loponen, Säde Tuulia (CC)

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Finland-Swedish Provisional (2)

Section 4  Row J  Seats 15-16

Delegates
*Tiainen, Sarah Maria (CA)
Jansson, Jenny Frida (DI)

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Florida (16)

Section 6  Row M  Seats 37-44
Section 6  Row N  Seats 37-44

Delegates
*Shanks, Alex Arthur (JA)
McEntire, Molly Rebecca (GM)
Weems, Cynthia Dee (FA)
Scott, Derrick Luruth (CO)
Opalinski, Brett Michael (OM)
Williams, Alice Marie (HS)
deVega, Magrey Rojas (FO)
Pancoast, Heather Ann (LC)
Evans, John Clarke (CA)
Fogle-Miller, Carlene Rebecca (HS)
Jones, Corey Antoine (GA)
Pierre-Okerson, Marie Judith (IC)
Austin, Sharon Genise (CB)
Dailey, Matthew Lee (CO)
Rodriguez-Perez, Esther (CC)
Larry, Antony Lavone (DI)

Reserves
Lewis, Candace Montel
Standifer, Riley Ethan
LaRosa, Justin James
Duncan, Martha Gay
Cooper, Melissa Ann
Salemi, Alejandra
Stiles-Williams, Jennifer Ruth
Gardner, James Stephen
Allen, Deborah Louise
Robinson, Wyatt Russell
Williams, Matthew Morgan
Cooper, William Christopher
Walker, Vicki Renee
Scott, Jessica Barber
Chance, Clare Watson
Kimball, Rushing Johnstone
Lopez, Vidalis Teresa
Aspinwall, Heidi Marie
Downey, Mary Jo
Lee, Robert Kimbark
Hocho, Emily Davis
Grizzard, Robert Harold
Lazinski, Michael Joseph
Royer, Caryn Leanne
Hager, Robin Lynne
Holdren, James Britten
Johnson, Daphne Elizabeth
Pandley, Raymond Larkin
Corbin, Ivan Garth
Preston-Hughes, Nancy Elizabeth

Germany East (2)

Section 6  Row L  Seats 51-52

Delegates
*Philipp, Werner Eberhard (HS)
Guenther, André (GM)

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.
Germany North (2)  
Section 6  Row L  Seats 53-54  

Delegates  
*Detjen, Anne Marie (GA)  
Dannenberg, Kai Uwe (FA)  

Reserves  
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.  

Germany South (2)  
Section 6  Row M  Seats 53-54  

Delegates  
*Jung, Markus Ulrich (CB)  
Flick, Christine Dagmar (DI)  

Reserves  
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.  

Great Plains (14)  
Section 9  Row R  Seats 49-54  
Section 9  Row S  Seats 47-54  

Delegates  
*Hamilton, Adam J. (CB)  
Green, Oliver Deck (CO)  
Lippoldt, Amy Elizabeth (GA)  
Maupin, Lisa L. (LC)  
Dotson, Junius Boyd (DI)  
Brewer, Scott Roettmer (FA)  
Chali, Kalaba (CA)  
Hodgkinson, Randall L. (JA)  
Williamston, Delores J. (FO)  
Baccus, Steven Lee (GM)  
Livingston, David S. (OM)  
Brewster, Dixie Kay (HS)  
Bell, Cheryl Jefferson (CC)  
Buffum, Lisa A. (IC)  

Reserves  
Kiome-Gatobu, Anne  
Koech, Abigail Chepngeno  
Holland, Mark Ronald  
Entwistle, David Daniel  
Bousson, Hector Eduardo  

Lipp, Jessica Marie  
Barlow, Ashley Prescott  
Jordan, Shayla Allyssa RaeAnne  
Ahlschwede, Stephanie M.  
Drummond, Allyson Nicole  
Anderson, Zachary Lee  
Hay, Esther I.  
Conard, Andrew Eric  
Jones, Joyce M.  
Crawford, Ashlee Alley  
Koech, Roy K.  
Cooper, Kurt J.  
Ruffcorn, Abraham Russell  
Stanton, Nathan David  
File, Charles Marion  

Greater New Jersey (8)  
Section 2  Row E  Seats 23-26  
Section 2  Row F  Seats 23-26  

Delegates  
*Dyson, Drew A. (FA)  
Amey, Bethany L. (IC)  
Burgos, Hector A. (OM)  
Colorado, Judy C. (GM)  
Corbett, Kaleigh Ann (CO)  
Olson, Harriett Jane (GA)  
Cho, Jennifer H. (LC)  
Quigg, Stephen Paul (CC)  

Reserves  
Williams, Catherine E.  
Caldwell, Dale G.  
Lank, Thomas Albert  
Kent, Cynthia Ann  
Williams, William McKinley  
Jules, Moselle Grace  
Vega Perez, Eunice  
Pendelton, Carolyn Davis  
Bennett, Tanya Linn  
Ehlers, Jane Isabelle  
Costello, Robert E.  
Pogue, Creed Samuel  
Doh, Sang Won  
Wren-Hardin, Andrea  

Holston (12)  
Section 8  Row P  Seats 19-24  
Section 8  Row Q  Seats 19-24
Delegates

Goddard, Kimberly Mustard (CO)
*Ballard, Emily Elizabeth (DI)
Cantrell, Robert Wilson (FO)
Holley, James Delray (JA)
Seay, Paul Daniel (OM)
Travis, Anne St. Claire (GA)
Thompson, Mary Carol (HS)
Eldridge, John Edward (FA)
Frye, William Randall (GM)
Mosby, Donna Mims (IC)
Bowers, Sharon Louise (CB)
Hall, Rebecca Gantz (LC)

Reserves

Cranford, Lauri Jo
Onks, Amanda Glenn
Kilbourne, Joshua Daniel
McEntyre, Charles Lawrence
Graybeal, David Whiting
Kelly, Reagan Maeve
Burkhart, Kristen Ann
Gass, James David
Varnell, Sarah Moody
Roark, Nathaniel Parker
Flynn, Mark Roger
Lawson, Leamon Burl
Sumrall, Amy Rebecca
England, Samuel Arthur
Frazier, Caleb Raymond
Kitts, Dawson Lantz

Hundred Island Philippines (2)

Section 2 Row 7 Seats 15-16

Delegates

*Catico, Glenn Caspe (DI)
Ballares, Abraham Alejos (FA)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Illinois Great Rivers (10)

Section 7 Row Q Seats 7-12
Section 7 Row R Seats 7-10

Delegates

Isbell, Sara Lynn (FO)
*Black, Paul Emmerson (LC)
Robinson, Randall Lee (OM)
Fender, Anna C. (DI)
Griffith, Janice Louise (FA)
McDavid, Pamela Hammond (IC)
Wilkes-Null, Beverly L. (JA)
Woods, Kimberly Dawn (CB)
Swanson, Eric N. (HS)
Schonert, Steven L. (CO)

Indiana (16)

Section 8 Row P Seats 25-32
Section 8 Row Q Seats 25-32

Delegates

*Abel, Russell L. (CO)
Hancock, Christopher J. (OM)
Fulbright, Aleze Michelle (HS)
Hall, Ian Jonathan (FA)
Schubert Nowling, Lisa D. (FO)
Dominick, Shirley Ann (LC)
Bell, Ronald Hardy (GM)
Padgett, Leah Christine (CB)
Fuquay, Robert Earl (GA)
Womack, W. Michael (JA)
Howard, Jill Moffett (DI)
Lomperis, John Scott Anders (CA)
Carlisle, Duane Charles (CC)
Priddy, Shannon Rachel (IC)
Whitehead, Larry K. (FA)
Land, Amy Louise (CO)
Reserves

Nunley, Chris David
Arnott, Kimberly Ann
Pimlott, Gregory R.
Shive, John Kimball
Curtis, Adriane Rene
Loyd, Brett Ashley
Landry, Matthew Wayne
Einselen, Kenneth Lee
Weber, Derek Christopher
Muhlbaier, Robert Clarence
Lundy, Marti Gates
Fridlund, Mary Carol
Tiedeman, Christopher Allen
Stauffer, Nancy B.
Cho, Daniel
Hidalgo, Alberto Francisco
Bourne, Chiyona A’Leeta
Johnson, Carolyn E.
Lassiat, Margaret Bernadette
Jennings, Marcus Allen
Adams, Dennis Charles
Lundy, Nathan Charles

Iowa (12)

| Section 3 | Row C | Seats 45-48 |
| Section 3 | Row D | Seats 45-48 |
| Section 3 | Row E | Seats 45-48 |

Delegates

*Arnold, Billy Tribble (FO)
Beuscher, Alan L. (CO)
Coleman, Tamara Leanne (DI)
Gray, Sandra C. (CA)
Alvarez Alfonso, Iosmar (OM)
Stallons, Mark A. (LC)
Grout, David Theodore (CB)
Watts, Michael Brent (FA)
Williams, James Andrew (IA)
Harting, Bethany Ruth (CC)

Reserves

Kraushaar, Andrea Michelle
Hollingsworth, Rachel Jeane
Lewis, Frederick James
Rohret, Catherine
Schwallier, Tyler Matthew

Kentucky (10)

| Section 1 | Row D | Seats 17-18 |
| Section 1 | Row E | Seats 15-18 |
| Section 1 | Row F | Seats 15-18 |

Delegates

*Arnold, Billy Tribble (FO)
Beuscher, Alan L. (CO)
Coleman, Tamara Leanne (DI)
Gray, Sandra C. (CA)
Alvarez Alfonso, Iosmar (OM)
Stallons, Mark A. (LC)
Grout, David Theodore (CB)
Watts, Michael Brent (FA)
Williams, James Andrew (IA)
Harting, Bethany Ruth (CC)

Reserves

Grieb, Thomas B.
Hoffman, Maggie Mae
Singh, Arpan Andrew
Canada, Delace R.
Moore, William Harry
Daugherty, Elaine Berry
McClelond, Kelly Dee
Denham, John Rees
Heid, Rebecca Kathleen
Wells, Larry E.
Seel, Matthew Thomas
King, Linda U.
Sweeney, Carey Michael
Brown Thompson, Janis
Jadhav, Esther Damodar
McCormick, Adam Lee

**Kenya-Ethiopia (2)**

Section 2  Row F  Seats 27-28

**Delegates**

*Odongo, Wilton Thomas (HS)*  
Solomon, Nelly Gatune (CB)

**Reserves**
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Kivu Provisional (2)**

Section 9  Row R  Seats 37-38

**Delegates**

*Kachiko, Esther Furaha (HS)*  
Tchomba, Adalbert Ngoy (GA)

**Reserves**
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Louisiana (6)**

Section 3  Row C  Seats 39-44

**Delegates**

*Whitton, Brady Stephen (FO)*  
Kreutziger, Sarah S. (HS)  
Pidgeon, Karli Danett (OM)  
Helaire, Ronald K. (FA)  
Simpson, Kathryn McKay (CO)  
DeRouen, Michelle Nicole (JA)

**Reserves**

Cannon, John Allison  
Swann, Jennifer Eileen  
Rawle, Matthew Berke  
Brown, Lesh Nettles  
Chigumira, Simon  
Washington, Margaret Jane  
Teauseau, Marissa Sue  
Philley, Adam Kyle  
Alston, Ellen Rhea  
Todd, Deborah

**Memphis (4)**

Section 8  Row R  Seats 33-36

**Delegates**

*Eason-Williams, Autura (OM)*  
Reed, David Ralls (FA)  
Martin, Robert Dean (FO)  
Holbrook, Frank Malvin (CO)

**Reserves**

Davis, Cynthia Miller  
Shaw, Joshua Maurice  
Harmann Westmoreland, Amanda  
Christian, Solomon K.  
Jeffords, Jonathan Lee  
Bell, Elyse Jeanette  
Corum, Sara Katherine  
Mitchell, Melba Burnette

**Michigan (8)**

Section 6  Row J  Seats 37-38  
Section 6  Row K  Seats 37-40  
Section 6  Row L  Seats 37-38

**Delegates**

*Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha Jo (CO)*  
Witkowski, Laura Beth (FO)  
Perez, Paul David (JA)  
Brown, Diane Louise (GA)  
Barrett, Joy Anna (OM)  
Peters, Jennifer Renee (FA)  
Walther, Megan Jo-Cramm (CB)  
Guy, Beverly Ann (HS)

**Reserves**

Boayue, Charles Sei  
Anderson, Ruby D.  
Fitzgerald, Joel Thomas-Pier  
Hopgood, Hoon-Yung  
Wright, Christina Lynn  
Hahn, Lisa Rae  
Bartelmay, Bradley Scott  
Sutton, Ruth Marie  
Swanson, Sherri Leigh  
DuPree, Brenda Kay  
Weiler, John Matthew  
Grigg, Gordon Clinton
**Minnesota (2)**

Section 2  Row A  Seats 29-30

Delegates

Zaagsma, Carol Ann (CO)
*Nuckols, David Branch (FA)

Reserves

Im, Woojae
Boland, Becky Rene
Ozanne, Jeffrey Steven
Brault, Walker Arthur
Mullin, Susan Marie
Saufferer, Cynthia Faye
Dolopei, Henry S.
Durr, Shirley Theresa
Dempewolf, Donna Mary

**Mississippi (10)**

Section 4  Row M  Seats 9-12
Section 4  Row N  Seats 9-14

Delegates

*Britton, Fred Shell (CO)
Stotts, James David (FA)
Gipson, Mattie Dickens (OM)
Beckley, David Lenard (HS)
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence (JA)
Thompson, LaToya Redd (DI)
Beasley, Zachary Carl (GA)
Arant, Turner (CB)
Hedgepeth, Mitchell Bertist (FO)
Harrington, Mary Anne (LC)

Reserves

Sheton, Connie M.
Ainsworth, Jimmy David
Burris, Leanne Michelle
Walters, Connie B.
Bramming, John Mark
Murden, Jaci Aimée
Daniels, Amy L.
Hitt, Jan Cheryl
Jackson, Embra Knox
McAlilley, Stephen L.
Lovett, Fitzgerald
LaSalle, Ann
McCaleb, Karie Sue

**Missouri (12)**

Section 5  Row G  Seats 31-36
Section 5  Row H  Seats 31-36

Delegates

*Bryan, Robert Andrew (CO)
Thompson, Amy LeAnn (DI)
Cleaver, Emanuel (FO)
James, Ivan Cecil (LC)
Jenne, Kimberly K. (GA)
Wondel, Jill Alison (JA)
Miofsky, Matthew Thomas (FA)
Cummings, Colette M. (HS)
Haynes, Sarah Hughes (CB)
Copeland, Charles Jonathan (CC)
Soendker Nicholson, Trista Denae (OM)
DeWilde, Steven Wayne (CA)

Reserves

Collier, Theodore Cody
Biggerstaff, Randy Lee
Berneking, Nathanael Ray
Gray, Jon Reginald
Goodwin, Charity LaWanda
Briggs, Margie Marie
Lampert, Lori Firth
Wimberly, Abigail Frances
Kwon, Choongho Daniel
Krakos, Joshua Brian
Kidwell, Joel Philip
Hammons, Brian Kent
Gastreich, Linda Belle
Shanks, Hannah Elizabeth
Jenkins, Hank Allen

**Mozambique North (2)**

Section 3  Row F  Seats 41-42

Delegates

*Isaac Machauene, Alzira Sebastião (GM)
Nhassengo, Americo Julião (DI)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.
Mozambique South (4)

Section 3 Row F Seats 43-46

Delegates

*Langa Bacela, Hortencia Americo (CB)
Gume, Jose Jamisse (DI)
Chichava, Mauricio Samussone (HS)
Simbine Sambo, Leonarda Edome (FO)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

New England (6)

Section 1 Row C Seats 1-6

Delegates

*Williams, Gerald Lamar (CO)
Marden, Bonnie Ives (FA)
Girrell, Rebecca Joy (GA)
Bonnette-Kim, Amanda Dahnbee (HS)
McAvoy McClain, Effie Elizabeth (CB)
Oduor, Ralph R. (FO)

Reserves

Pérez, René A.
Rodriguez Alphnse, Ana Maria
Goodrich, Leigh Elizabeth
Spicer, Noah
Bonnette-Kim, Sandra J.
Holston, Clarinda Y.
Calhoun, David Van
Brown-Hathaway, Adama
De La Rosa, Cristian
Awa, Uchenna Joan
Pridgen-Randolph, Charlotte Laverne
Bragan, Roberta Boyd

New Mexico (2)

Section 8 Row T Seats 23-24

Delegates

Partin, Randall Wayne (CO)
*Strebeck, Sid (GA)

Reserves

Rowley, Pam
Brumbaugh, Susan Mearl

Salzwedel, Todd Ryan
Salzwedel, Daniel Allen
Rivera, Eduardo
Husted, Heath Andrew

New York (6)

Section 2 Row C Seats 31-36

Delegates

Chin, Noel N. (FA)
*Brewington, Frederick Kevin (GA)
Smartt, Denise Adrienne (FO)
Lockward, Jorge (HS)
Riss, Timothy J. (CO)
Douglas Boykin, Gail (OM)

Reserves

da Silva Souto, Alexandre
French-Goffe, Tiffany Marie
Kim, Sungchan
Craig, Ann
Brewington, Adrienne
Prudente, Karen Garcia
Fleck, Paul A.
Littlejohn, Roena Annette
Kim, Chongho
Reimer, Katie
Nunes, Marjorie Elaine
Tavarez, Daisy M.

North Alabama (8)

Section 8 Row P Seats 33-36
Section 8 Row Q Seats 33-36

Delegates

*Conner, Glenn Davis (CO)
Lyles, Steve (GA)
Cowser, Dedric Amad (FO)
Meadows, John Patton (JA)
Haugh Clem, Kelly Ann (FA)
Kufarimai, Precious Tatenda (CB)
Scott, Robin Bradley (OM)
Gillon Lee, Elizabeth Ann (LC)

Reserves

Reynolds, Sherri Jones
Wilder, Michael Stephens
Kufarimai, Tiwirai
Hiett, Melanie Gail  
Stafford, William Vaughn  
Bowlin, Elizabeth B.  
Henley, Mary  
Ham, Jon Randall  
Ferguson, Sherilyn S.  
Selman, Scott  
Lawler, Cheney Paul  
Rew, Howard Murry  
Erickson, Brian  
Riggs, Jacqueline  

Hunt, Miles Baker  
Kim, Sangwoo  
Baker, Denise Maes  
Roberts, Benjamin Brodie  
Jefferson, Phillip Henry  
Banks, Donna Morrisette  
Cauley, Lydia Carole  
Arledge, Nathan Daniel  
Caves, Martha Bullock  
Beam, Joseph David  
Parker, Mack Bernette  

**North Carolina (16)**

<table>
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<td>6</td>
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**Delegates**

Joyner, Frank Belton (JA)  
*Dodson, Christine (FA)  
Yebuah, Lisa (CO)  
Beasley, Ellen (IC)  
Colón-Emeric, Edgardo (HS)  
Smith, LaNella Diane (LC)  
Stewart, Amie (OM)  
Taylor, Steve (CA)  
Gleaves, Edith (FO)  
Lain, Emily (CB)  
Pannell, Sara Beth (DI)  
Graebe, Susan (OM)  
Roberts, Elizabeth (CB)  
Parker, Caleb (CC)  
Williams, David Bennett (GA)  
Schneider, Mark (GM)  

**Reserves**

Baker, Kevin  
Lee, Jin  
Ruiz-Millan, Ismael Agustin  
Peck, Daniel William  
Stern, Laura Katherine Wacker  
Cox-Woodlief, Claire Maria  
Lain, William Douglas  
Stallsmith, Mary Catherine  
Brady, Chris Lanier  
Thompson, Catherine Elizabeth  
Wittman, Laura Wyant  
Rodio, Lee  
Taylor, Harriet Tucker  
Mitchelle, Louise  
Cartlett, Timothy Davis  

**North Georgia (22)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>9-14</td>
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**Delegates**

*Thomas, Byron Eric (GA)  
Finley, Margaret Jane (LC)  
Schroeder, Philip Daniel (FA)  
Brown, Randy (FA)  
Rogers, Patricia Alice (CO)  
Jernigan, Jeffrey Scott (CO)  
Smothers, Jasmine Rose (FO)  
Horne, Odell (CB)  
Ethridge, Leland Glenn (JA)  
Savage, Charles Walter (FA)  
Kirkland, Bernice Williams (HS)  
Stikes, Deborah Alice (FO)  
Karafanda, Shannon Elizabeth (OM)  
Fuller, Gary Thomas (HS)  
LaRocca-Pitts, Elizabeth Camak (CB)  
Sligar, Mary Janet (DI)  
Colmenares, Nora Elizabeth (CA)  
Murphy, Tonya L. (IC)  
Rushing, Dalton Troy (LC)  
Fullerton, Rachel Anne (GM)  
Lee, Eric Matthew (CC)  
Martin, William Gary (JA)  

**Reserves**

Walton, Terry Eugene  
Cann, Rayford Earl  
Brown, Quincy Durand  
Abrams, Nathaniel Hawthorne  
Cantrell, James Carlton  
Gray, David Scott  
Abrams, Joya Lenita  
Jourolmon, Leon
Delegate Handbook

Everhart, Dana Allen
King, Amy Norton
Kagiyama, Karen Miyoshi
King, Jay Norton
Zant, Will Carther
Fletcher, Benjamin Jordan
Valdez-Barker, Amihan Robin
Highsmith, Lee Drinkard
Kim, Millie Luke
Hamill, Gwendelyn Jordan
Massey, Yvette Denise
Kittle, Elizabeth Bryan
Setnor, Blair Bosta
Eason, Maxine Pinson
Terrell, Jessica Elizabeth
Parr, Daniel Loyd
Long, Michael Harvey
Shoaf, Elijah Walker
Olson, Catherine Boothe
Corrie, Elizabeth Warden
Allen Grady, Howard Davidson
Kirkland, Tina Ayers
Stephens, Carolyn Albertha

North Texas (8)

Section 2 Row D Seats 27-30
Section 2 Row E Seats 27-30

Delegates

*Oliphint, John Clayton (FA)
Carpenter, Kelly Jo (FO)
Copeland, Stanley Reagan (CO)
Wolverton, Kenneth Ray (GA)
Gaston, Leslie Camille (OM)
Klein, Shandon Chasity (CB)
Dixon, Maria Antoinette (HS)
Vittorio, Jessica Lynn (JA)

Reserves

Baughman, Rachel Elizabeth
Crouch, Timothy Charles
Henderson, Ronald David
Lucas, Keri Lynn
Harrison, Richard Thomas
Pryor, Kathleen Rozanne
Spencer, Robert Lee
Echols-Richter, Collin Joseph
Cowley, Eden Oltrent
Parks, Linda Moore
Bazan, Edgar Gerardo

Vonner, Sally Lee
Morrison, Jenna Nicole
Soliz, Daniel
Stoker, Andrew Craig
Hudec, Laura Ann

Northeast Nigeria (6)

Section 8 Row S Seats 19-24

Delegates

Juji, Danjuma (CO);
Adamu, Saidu Mbaisha (CB)
Zailani, Yahuda Nero (HS)
Davidson, Safiya Amos (GA)
Ibrahim, Titus Mafindi (FO)
Luther, Aliyuda (JA)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Northeast Phillipines (2)

Section 7 Row P Seats 7-8

*Balagan, Lilabeth Asis (FO)
Caluya, Hector Santos (DI)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Northern Illinois (6)

Section 6 Row J Seats 49-54

Delegates

*Lyall, Alka David (FO)
Chafin, Lonnie A. (CO)
Reyes, Luis F. (HS)
Kanhai, Nadia R. (CB)
Gross, Gregory D. (GA)
Hill, Adrian Jumaane (JA)

Reserves

Chong, Hwa Young Hannah
Smith, Rita L.
Conway, Jacques A.
Cunningham, Jessie Hawkins
Gilbert, Brian D.
Lyall, Ronit Derrick
Cox, Brittany Ryan Mysen
Pendergrass, Nancy Jean
Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, Rachel E.
Manzi, Mark D.

**Northern Nigeria (2)**

Section 8   Row T   Seats 21-22

Delegates

* Dunah, Isa Audu (CO)
Haske, Bellison Titus (FA)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Northwest Philippines (2)**

Section 4   Row P   Seats 11-12

Delegates

* Valdez, Buson Panguntan (GA)
Peralta, Nimia Castillo (JA)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Northwest Russia Provisional (2)**

Section 5   Row N   Seats 31-32

Delegates

* Kim, Khen Su Andrei (OM)
Kitaeva, Elena Antonovna (LC)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Northwest Texas (2)**

Section 8   Row T   Seats 25-26

Delegates

Jones, Richard Anthony (CB)
Enns, Ronald Eugene (JA)

Reserves

Cosby, James Stanley
Stutes, Randy Don

**Norway (2)**

Section 4   Row J   Seats 17-18

Delegates

* Refsdal, Knut (OM)
Westad, Audun (CB)

Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Oklahoma (14)**

Section 5   Row G   Seats 21-26
Section 5   Row H   Seats 19-26

Delegates

Harris, Joseph Lewin (CO)
* Junk, Thomas Michael (FA)
Belase, Derrek Don (DI)
Kim, Donald H. (GA)
Powers, Samuel Tyler (FO)
Nicklas, Cara Sue (OM)
Moffatt, Jessica Farish (CB)
Perry, Barbara Jean (GM)
Gwartney, Charla Beth (CC)
Beard, John Herschel (LC)
Steele, Valerie Dorette (IC)
Fulton, Kenton Wade (JA)
Harrison, Hugh Thomas (CA)
Wilson, Janey Louise (HS)

Reserves

Cook Moore, Carol Ann
Stewart, Charles R.
Wang, Fuxia
Calhoun, Kira Dawn
Bennett, Donald Adrian
Dollarhite, Andrea Beth
Judkins, Matthew Blake
Ajinomisangham, Tsematosan Gloria
Lambert, James A.
Joy, Holly Lee
Ramirez-Romero, Modesto Carlos
Freese, Piper Nigel
Malloy, Patricia Ann
Delegate Handbook

Shahan, Alyson Elizabeth
Broadbent, Lesly Leon
Nicklas, Evan Hal
Long, Jennifer JoAnn
Powers, Kyla Anne
Shahan, Adam Wayne
Blacksten, Courtney Lee

**Oklahoma Indian Missionary (2)**

**Section 5**  **Row G**  **Seats 19-20**

**Delegates**

*Wilson, David Mark* (GA)
Marshall, Anne (CO)

**Reserves**

McHenry, Eli
Deere, Josephine
*Johnson, Margaret B.*
Eyachabbe, Patsy Jo

**Oregon-Idaho (2)**

**Section 4**  **Row L**  **Seats 11-12**

**Delegates**

*Woodworth, Wendy Joy* (OM)
Nelson, Janice Eileen (CO)

**Reserves**

Cho, Anna
Galan, Esteban Miguel
*Pritchard, Donna Marie Lowman*
Bateman, Mark Eric
*Smith, Jeremy David*
Nelson, Kylie Juan
*Blanksman, Daryl Marvin*
Henry, Lydia W.
*Nielsen, Julia Louise*
Lybeck, Cara Renee

**Pangasinan Philippines (2)**

**Section 7**  **Row P**  **Seats 13-14**

**Delegates**

*Barte, Romel Parayno* (GA)
Nabua, Jaime Legaspi (OM)

**Reserves**

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Peninsula-Delaware (4)**

**Section 3**  **Row C**  **Seats 49-52**

**Delegates**

*Gordy-Stith, Vicki Lynn* (CO)
Jackson, Yvonne Denise (LC)
*Weston, Megan Kyoko Shitama* (HS)
Westbrook, William Ernest (FA)

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.
### Reserves

*Bennett, David Glenn  
Schutt, Erin Elissa  
*Ford, Jacqueline Davis  
Samans, Carl Walter  
*Jones, Karen Kraft  
Nichols, Regina Elaine  
Whitney, Jonathan  
Spyres, Chelsea Lynn

### Poland (2)

**Section 59**  
**Row Q**  
**Seats 47-48**

#### Delegates

*Malicki, Andrzej Jacek (CC)  
Daszuta, Bozena Elzbieta (GM)

### Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

### Red Bird Missionary (2)

**Section 2**  
**Row F**  
**Seats 19-20**

#### Delegates

*Amundsen, Robert Earl (GM)  
Osborne, Marilyn Ruth (CB)

### Reserves

*Savage, James Caskey  
Stamper, Cynthia Bai  
Griffiths, Dan  
Crawford, Timothy Dale

### Rocky Mountain (4)

**Section 6**  
**Row H**  
**Seats 51-54**

#### Delegates

*Peters, Jasper Darneal (CO)  
*Tukutau, Havea Hikule’o (GA)  
Ingram, Kent Parker (FA)  
Slauson, Gayla Jo (HS)

### Reserves

*Jackson, Valerie Lomax  
Jimenez, Aileen  
Rooks, Jessica Beth  
Moffitt, Stephanie  
Armstrong, Megan Marie  
Palmer, Douglas William  
Rainwater, Jeffrey Olen  
Taiwo, Nathaniel Adekunle  
Hagan, Emily Leslie Ann  
Go, Amy Christine  
Walker, Travis Kinworthy  
Hill, Judith Ann  
Smith, Eric Van Thomas  
Strauss, Isaac William  
Rogers, Philip Mather  
Angermayr, Maris J.  
Keith, Tiffany Leah  
McIntosh, Susan Ruth  
Tukutau, Sione Teiapa’a  
Spradley, Lola L.
### Rwanda Provisional (2)

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#### Delegates

*Baliyanga, Marc* (CO)
Nyiramahirwe, Adeline (CB)

#### Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

### Serbia-Macedonia Provisional (2)

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#### Delegates

*Sjanta, Daniel* (CO)
Zafirov, Petar (GA)

#### Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

### Sierra Leone (14)

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#### Delegates

*Momoh, Edwin Julius Jeblar* (GM)
Koroma, Anne Konima (GA)
*Lassayo, Francis Ben* (HS)
Ngakui, Easmon Nathaniel Belden (JA)
*Lassayo, Alice* (LC)
Kamara, Yeabu (FA)
*Caulker, James Boye* (FO)
Fullah, Adam (DI)
*Pewa, Emmanuel* (CO)
Lappia, Jaka (CB)
*Saffa, Ndapi* (IC)
Shereef, Lucretia Marian (CC)
*Kainyande, Mabel* (CA)
Jalloh, Rose-Marie (OM)

#### Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

### South Africa Provisional (2)

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#### Delegates

*Spiva, Nobuhle Blossom* (DI)
Mandeya, Abel Tafagzwa (LC)

#### Reserves

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

### South Carolina (16)

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#### Delegates

*Nelson, Kenneth Lee* (OM)
*Jenkins, Jacqueline G.* (CB)
*Dease, Robin* (CA)
Salley, James Henry (FA)
*Hunter, Keith* (CC)
Cheatham, Laurence Michael (CO)
*Leonard, Susan Paige* (FO)
Lightsey, H. B. (HS)
*Sutton, Emily Scales* (GM)
Lynch, Christopher Michael (LC)
*Malambri, William Francis* (JA)
Thompson, Martha Fridy (OM)
*Knowlin Boykin, Tiffany Denise* (IC)
Braddon, David Verne (GA)
*Jones, Karen Hanyea Lail* (LC)
Evans, Emily Rogers (DI)

#### Reserves

*Rogers, Timothy Julian*
Void, Betty Jeffcoat
*Mitchell, Cathy Delphine*
Salter, David W.
*Elrod, Frances McMahon*
Brooks-Madden, Valerie Denise
*Barnes, Constance Nelson Y.*
Spencer, Marlene Quinn
*Teasley, Mary V.*
Price, Jennifer Alane
*Hunter, Kathryn O’Shields*
Watson, Williams A.
*Murray, Elizabeth Adams*
Jordon, Lou
*Reams, Richard Hancock*
Coffeen, Douglas Frederick
*Love, Stephen Lopaz*
Horton, Marvin Jackson
*White, Sara Ann*
McCartha, Vicki Taylor
**South Georgia (8)**

Section 1  Row C  Seats 7-14

**Delegates**

*Cowart, James Arch (OM)*
Hatcher, William S. (FA)
*Beckum, James Robert (HS)*
Cowart, Jennifer Twiggs (CB)
*Smalls, Doreen (LC)*
Lindsey, Allison Ross (FO)
*Hanson, Jay David (CO)*
Price, James Larry (GA)

**Reserves**

*Greene, Robert William*
Shinhoster, Willie R.
*Hagan, Daniel Scott*
Adams, Brenda Kay
*Towson, James Vernon*
Coward, Charles Elwood
*Thompson, David W.*
Rumford, Steven Lee
*Tucker, Scott Irwin*
Turner, Deborah Kent
*Harrison, Alaina Avera*
Barker, Jeffrey Barden

**South Russia Provisional (2)**

Section 5  Row N  Seats 33-34

**Delegates**

*Pererva, Aleksandr (CA)*
Abramov, Sergei (CC)

**Reserves**

Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

**Southern Nigeria (8)**

Section 8  Row R  Seats 25-28
Section 8  Row S  Seats 25-28

**Delegates**

Balutu, Danladi (CB)
Yanusa, Peter Ngai (GA)
*Emmanuel, Ande Ikimun (CO)*
Dio, Mike Jen (HS)
*Yoila, Bzael Yayuba (FO)*

**Switzerland-France-North Africa (2)**

Section 9  Row R  Seats 43-44

**Delegates**

*Rudolph, Eittenne (HS)*
Hafner, Lea (DI)
Delegate Handbook

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Tennessee (8)

| Section 8 | Row S | Seats 33-36 |
| Section 8 | Row T | Seats 33-36 |

Delegates

*Bryan, Harriet Jean (CO)
Allen, James Ralph (FA)
Handy, Stephen (HS)
Clark, Cornelia Anne (GA)
King, Marie Channiece (OM)
Taylor, Maggie Elizabeth (FO)
McGlothlin, Samantha Tashman (CB)
Brown, George (LC)

Reserves

Armstrong, Jacob Clark
Furtado, Linda Louise
Furtado, Jefferson Magalhães
Lee, Thomas Hayden
Purdue, Paul Robert
Vaughn, Jacob Lee
Brantley, Laura Bunch
Hotzfeld, Leslie Owens
Mowdy, Monica Denise
Archer, Claire Ellen
Dodge, Stephanie Ann
Hagewood, Rachel Britt

Texas (18)

| Section 9 | Row S | Seats 37-46 |
| Section 9 | Row T | Seats 37-44 |

Delegates

*Pace, Thomas Jennings (CO)
House, Donald R. (FA)
Malone-Wardley, Romonica Marquis (FO)
Hawkins, Stacie Yvonne (IC)
Harris, Vincent (LC)
Augustine, Melba Wilson (GM)
Williams, Thomas Andrew (FO)
Bass, Jason Michael (OM)
McDonald, Jeffery B. (CA)
Erwin, Edgar Lee (DI)
Warner, Laceye Cammarano (HS)
Sullivan, Catherine Sue (LC)

Reserves

Jordan, Todd Eric (CB)
Garza, Oscar Luis (JA)
Duffin, Elizabeth Matthews (OM)
Tullos, Bryan Haley (GA)
Levingston, Kenneth R. (JA)
Estes, Clarence (CC)

Ukraine-Moldova Provisional (2)

| Section 5 | Row N | Seats 35-36 |

Delegates

*Starodubets, Yulia (FO)
Hrab, Alina (CB)

Reserves
Delegate information unavailable at time of printing.

Upper New York (10)

| Section 4 | Row J | Seats 9-14 |
| Section 4 | Row K | Seats 9-12 |
Delegates

Mudge, Samuel William (FO)
*Vianese, Carmen F. S. (GM)
Cady, Stephen Michael (CO)
Warren, Jeffrey Joseph (CB)
Sweet, Rebekah Beth (HS)
Urriola, Ian Carlos (JA)
Perry, Carmen Lynette (LC)
Sweet, Marthalyn Kellogg (CA)
Morse, Rachel Ann (OM)
Smith, Samuel Edward (GA)

Reserves

Bogue-Trost, Dona Michelle
Mudge, Samuel William
Rosa Laguer, Carlos Manuel
Griffin, Drew Eric
Swords-Horrell, Martha Ellen
Barczykowski, Linda
Sperry, Andrew P.
Kissell, Andrew Rinker

Gaynor, Jill Walker (GM)
Stanley, Jason Carter (CA)
Blakely, Joshua Kendell (HS)
Nave, Gary Kirk (CO)
Paysour, Jacob Stephen (FA)
Page, Jonathan Joseph (CC)
Elder, Mark David (CB)

Reserves

Mickel, Jeffrey Paul
McElfish, Karen Roberts
Forrester, Joseph Douglas
Taylor, Leigh Anne
Johnson, Kimberly Page
Kim, Chinyho
Calvi, Deborah Carlos
Ward, Timothy Lee
Mohr, Philipp
Innis Lee, Chenda D.
Bowers Angerman, Deborah Kaye
Vaughan, David Franklin
Kiger, Anthony Shawn
Blakely, Lyndsie Nicole Kidd
Holmes, Amanda Lynn
Lobenhofer, Lauren Chafin
Speicher, Kenneth Dale
Johnson, Brian William
Wise, Neal Earman

Virginia (22)

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Delegates

*Berlin, Thomas Martin (FA)
Harper, Warren Randolph (DI)
Maynham, Lindsey Michelle (OM)
Stokes, Martha Ensley (FO)
McNabb, Meredith Leigh (FO)
Cauffman, Shirley Marie (GA)
Vaughn, Robert Emory (CB)
Amon, Darlene Vancamp (LC)
VanDyke, Rhonda Ann (HS)
Christian, Elizabeth V. (IC)
Ogren, Mark Victor (LC)
Malloy, Alison Marie (CO)
Han, Grace Sun Kih (GA)
Bailey, Marshall Siddons (JA)
Givens, Frances Elizabeth (JA)
### Delegate Handbook

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<td><strong>Row A</strong></td>
<td><em>Shanholtzer, Amy Mock</em> (GA)</td>
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<td>Kenaston, Judith Modlin (CO)</td>
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<td><strong>Row B</strong></td>
<td>Taylor, Jeffrey Allen (JA)</td>
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<td>Shaffer, Richard Allen (FA)</td>
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<td><strong>Row C</strong></td>
<td>Godwin, Lauren Ann (CB)</td>
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<td><strong>Seats 37-46</strong></td>
<td>Sears, Erin Elizabeth (OM)</td>
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#### Delegates

*Grace, Roger L.* (LC)
Brownson, William H. (FA)
*Cook, Karen M.* (CA)
Howard, George Glenn (GA)
*Casperson, April M.* (HS)
Russell, Kara Grace (GM)
*Stickley-Miner, Deanna E.* (CO)
Steiner, Chris E. (JA)
*Guillozet, Anna Catherine* (CB)
Picardo, Katherine Callaway Brooks (CC)
*Rand, Thomas A.* (FO)
Perry, Joy Lynn (IC)
*Miller, Rachel* (OM)
Chambers, Tracy V. (DI)

#### Reserves

Wellman, Jason R.
Condrey, Cynthia Robbins
*Giffin, Wade Eric*
Smith, William Layton
*Allen, Suzanne C.*
Hansen, Katelin L. F.
*Anderson, Todd Douglas*
Tay, Harris Kodjoe Glover
*Langstraat, Kristin Sue*
Gillen, Joseph P. (DL)
*Cunningham, Leonard A.*
Reed, Brenda K.
*Picardo, Rosario*
Straub, Kathleen Iva
*Riddle, John Andrew*
Ruddock, Roberta J.
*Wilson, Don*
Rohrs, Kathy Susan
*Schwertfeger, Glenn Eldon*
Defibaugh, Cynthia A.
*Sayre, J. Benjamin*
Giffin, Alexander

### Western North Carolina (20)

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<td>Davis, Jennifer Pharr (LC)</td>
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<td>Coles, Amy Louise (GA)</td>
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<td>Troxler, Jeremy Issac (CO)</td>
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#### Delegates

*Ingram, Kimberly Tyree* (OM)
Davis, Jennifer Pharr (LC)
*Coles, Amy Louise* (GA)
Johnson, Amy Long (DI)
*Troxler, Jeremy Issac* (CO)
Huffman, Gregory Daniel (JA)
*Howell, James Comer* (CB)
Gilbert, Mary Lynne (FA)
*Lee, In Yong* (CO)
Austin, Emma Charis (DI)
*Stanley, Ashley Crowder* (OM)
Havelka, Haveleh Ann (FO)
*Webb, Shelly Fay* (CA)
Sherfey, Shannon Marie (CB)
*Ellis, Elizabeth Carter* (FO)
Ryde, Helen Valerie (LC)
*Dayson, Darryl Diwayne* (HS)
Whitaker, Lynette (IC)
*Sherfey, Joshua Harlan* (GM)
Linfors, Linda Vogl (CC)

#### Reserves

Wellman, Jason R.
Condrey, Cynthia Robbins
*Giffin, Wade Eric*
Smith, William Layton
*Allen, Suzanne C.*
Hansen, Katelin L. F.
*Anderson, Todd Douglas*
Tay, Harris Kodjoe Glover
*Langstraat, Kristin Sue*
Gillen, Joseph P. (DL)
*Cunningham, Leonard A.*
Reed, Brenda K.
*Picardo, Rosario*
Straub, Kathleen Iva
*Riddle, John Andrew*
Ruddock, Roberta J.
*Wilson, Don*
Rohrs, Kathy Susan
*Schwertfeger, Glenn Eldon*
Defibaugh, Cynthia A.
*Sayre, J. Benjamin*
Giffin, Alexander

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<td>Lanier, Tonya Ann</td>
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#### Reserves

Hockett, David Carl
Lanier, Tonya Ann
Western Pennsylvania (12)

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Delegates

*Dunn, Alyce Weaver* (HS)
Denardo, Nancy L. (CO)
*Han, Duk Hee* (GM)
Morelli, Paul M. (DI)
Zilhaver, Robert F. (JA)
Stahlman, Vicki J. (FA)
*Cordle, Stephen H.* (GA)
Fugate, Holly Victoria (CA)
*Lord, Janet Faye* (OM)
Hoffman, Richard Christian (CB)
*Mcilvain, Keith Howard* (FO)
Fehl, Katherine Marie (IC)

Reserves

*Seth, John William*
Patrick, William A.
*Park, Eric S.*
Rechtenwald, Jerry J.
Bain, Randall W.

Hoffman, Alexander Richard
*Mikell, Doris Renee*
Meterko, Sherry Lee
*Saffell, Laura Ann*
Emigh, Joseph A.
*Stains, Joseph R.*
Schwanke, Kayla J.
*Meekins, William B.*
Chung, Andrew Eunpa
*Hussian, Anais Lura*
Stone, Denise Nicole Ward
Wagner, Amy R.
Ward, Peggy D.
*Chung, Sung S.*
Merrick, Tracy R.
*Goodman, Timothy James*
Gordon, Jennifer L. B.
*Dinger, Brett Matthew*
Smith, Bradford C.

Wisconsin (6)

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Delegates

*Schwerin, Daniel William* (CO)
*King, Lisa Marie* (FA)
*Arneson, Jennifer Mary* (CB)
Roelfs, Ravi Paul (JA)
*Deede, Krysta Leigh* (OM)
Gobel, Jessica Anne (CA)

Reserves

*Scott, Allison Renee*
Jones, Lisa M.
*Jones, Kathryn Croskery*
Cramer, Donald Kenneth
*Deaner, Jeremy Reed*
Lawson, John Mark
*Carlson, Scott Douglas*
Vasby, Judith Grace
*Dembinski, Kevin A.*
Spors, Meredith
*Frost, Joan Carrolyn*
Messner, Sharon Lynn
*Martinelli, Clarissa LaFaye*
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<td><strong>Calhoun, Mark Dwight</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Castles, Camille Nicole</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Seats 53-54</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pack-Toner, Sami Carey</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Martin, Diane Wolf</strong></td>
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<td><em>Maurer-Skerritt, Dawn Marie</em> (FO)</td>
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<td><em>McCammon, Donald Lee</em> (LC)</td>
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Membership of Legislative Committees

Some annual conferences have not been listed because their delegate information was unavailable at the time of printing. Updated delegate lists will be published in the Daily Christian Advocate at the beginning of General Conference.

The delegate information is provided by the respective secretaries of the annual conferences as a part of the credentialing process. Corrections may be sent to the Reverend Gary W. Graves, Secretary of the General Conference, ggraves@umcgc.org.

**Church and Society 1 (CA)**
27 Members

Bernstein, Rebecca Anne .................................................. California-Nevada
Chali, Kalaba ................................................................. Great Plains
Colmenares, Nora Elizabeth .............................................. North Georgia
Cook, Karen M. ............................................................... West Ohio
Dease, Robin ................................................................. South Carolina
DeWilde, Steven Wayne ...................................................... Missouri
Evans, John Clarke ............................................................ Florida
Fugate, Holly Victoria ...................................................... Western Pennsylvania
Fux, Thomas ................................................................. Austria Provisional
Gobel, Jessica Anne .......................................................... Wisconsin
Gray, Sandra C. ............................................................... Kentucky
Harrison, Hugh Thomas ..................................................... Oklahoma
Kainyande, Mabel ............................................................. Sierra Leone
Kibatuli, Hilaire Bununu ..................................................... East Congo
Lauber, Melissa Morris ...................................................... Baltimore-Washington
Leight, William Carl .......................................................... Susquehanna
Lomperis, John Scott Anders ............................................. Indiana
Mark, Allison ................................................................. California-Pacific
McDonald, Jeffery B ........................................................... Texas
Pererva, Aleksandr ............................................................. South Russia Provisional
Rollins, Benita ................................................................. East Ohio
Stanley, Jason Carter ........................................................ Virginia
Sweet, Marthalyne Kellogg ................................................ Upper New York
Taylor, Steve ................................................................. North Carolina
Tiainen, Sarah Maria ........................................................ Finland-Swedish Provisional
Waddell Teegarden, Jessica Hope ......................................... Arkansas
Webb, Shelly Fay ............................................................. Western North Carolina
Cowart, Jennifer Twiggs .................................................... South Georgia
Digebjerg, Shanti Rani ........................................................ Denmark
Elder, Mark David .............................................................. Virginia
Furr, Steven Paul ............................................................... Alabama-West Florida
Godwin, Lauren Ann .......................................................... West Virginia
Gomez, Paul Sebastian ..................................................... Desert Southwest
Grout, David Theodore ...................................................... Kentucky
Guilloyet, Anna Catherine ................................................ West Ohio
Hamilton, Adam J ............................................................... Great Plains
Haynes, Sarah Hughes ..................................................... Missouri
Hoffman, Richard Christian ............................................... Western Pennsylvania
Horne, Odell ................................................................. North Georgia
Howell, James Comer ....................................................... Western North Carolina
Hrab, Alina ................................................................. Ukraine-Moldova Provisional
Ibrahim, Godwin John ..................................................... Central Nigeria
Jenkins, Jacqueline G ......................................................... South Carolina
Jones, Richard Anthony .................................................... Northwest Texas
Jordan, Todd Eric ............................................................... Texas
Jung, Markus Ulrich .......................................................... Germany South
Kanhai, Nadia R ................................................................. Northern Illinois
Kind, Kathleen E ............................................................... Susquehanna
Klein, Shandon Chasity ...................................................... North Texas
Kufarimai, Precious Tatenda ................................................. North Alabama
Lain, Emily ................................................................. North Carolina
Langa Bacela, Hortencia America ......................................... Mozambique South
Lappia, Jaka ................................................................. Sierra Leone
LaRocca-Pitts, Elizabeth Camak ........................................ North Georgia
Maka, Mele ............................................................... California-Pacific
Manirakiza, Godelieve ........................................................ Burundi
McAvoy McClain, Effie Elizabeth ......................................... New England
McGlothlin, Samantha Tashman ........................................ Tennessee
Moffett, Jessica Farish ....................................................... Oklahoma
Muthoma, Sylvestre Bushiri ................................................. East Congo
Nyiramahire, Adeline ....................................................... Rwanda Provisional
Osborne, Marilyn Ruth ................................................... Red Bird Missionary
Padgett, Leah Christine ................................................... Indiana
Pope, Michael ............................................................... California-Nevada
Roberts, Elizabeth ......................................................... North Carolina
Schröckenfuchs, Stefan ....................................................... Austria Provisional
Sherfey, Shannon Marie .................................................. Western North Carolina
Solomon, Nelly Gatune ..................................................... Kenya-Ethiopia
Vaughn, Robert Emory ..................................................... Virginia
Walther, Megan Jo-Crumm ................................................ Michigan
Warren, Jeffrey Joseph ..................................................... Upper New York

**Church and Society 2 (CB)**
56 Members

Adamu, Saidu Mbaishie .................................................. Northeast Nigeria
Alfred, Darlene Rochelle ................................................ Central Texas
Arant, Turner ............................................................... Mississippi
Arneson, Jennifer Mary ................................................... Wisconsin
Austin, Sharon Genise ..................................................... Florida
Baluta, Danladi ............................................................... Southern Nigeria
Banks, Martha E ............................................................... East Ohio
Blizzard, Megan Elizabeth .............................................. Baltimore-Washington
Bowers, Sharon Louise .................................................. Holston
Calderon, LaTonya Patrice ............................................... Iowa
Cowsert, James .............................................................. South Georgia
Digebjerg, Shanti Rani ........................................................ Denmark
Elder, Mark David .............................................................. Virginia
Furr, Steven Paul ............................................................... Alabama-West Florida
Godwin, Lauren Ann .......................................................... West Virginia
Gomez, Paul Sebastian ..................................................... Desert Southwest
Grout, David Theodore ...................................................... Kentucky
Guilloyet, Anna Catherine ................................................ West Ohio
Hamilton, Adam J ............................................................... Great Plains
Haynes, Sarah Hughes ..................................................... Missouri
Hoffman, Richard Christian ............................................... Western Pennsylvania
Horne, Odell ................................................................. North Georgia
Howell, James Comer ....................................................... Western North Carolina
Hrab, Alina ................................................................. Ukraine-Moldova Provisional
Ibrahim, Godwin John ..................................................... Central Nigeria
Jenkins, Jacqueline G ......................................................... South Carolina
Jones, Richard Anthony .................................................... Northwest Texas
Jordan, Todd Eric ............................................................... Texas
Jung, Markus Ulrich .......................................................... Germany South
Kanhai, Nadia R ................................................................. Northern Illinois
Kind, Kathleen E ............................................................... Susquehanna
Klein, Shandon Chasity ...................................................... North Texas
Kufarimai, Precious Tatenda ................................................. North Alabama
Lain, Emily ................................................................. North Carolina
Langa Bacela, Hortencia America ......................................... Mozambique South
Lappia, Jaka ................................................................. Sierra Leone
LaRocca-Pitts, Elizabeth Camak ........................................ North Georgia
Maka, Mele ............................................................... California-Pacific
Manirakiza, Godelieve ........................................................ Burundi
McAvoy McClain, Effie Elizabeth ......................................... New England
McGlothlin, Samantha Tashman ........................................ Tennessee
Moffett, Jessica Farish ....................................................... Oklahoma
Muthoma, Sylvestre Bushiri ................................................. East Congo
Nyiramahire, Adeline ....................................................... Rwanda Provisional
Osborne, Marilyn Ruth ................................................... Red Bird Missionary
Padgett, Leah Christine ................................................... Indiana
Pope, Michael ............................................................... California-Nevada
Roberts, Elizabeth ......................................................... North Carolina
Schröckenfuchs, Stefan ....................................................... Austria Provisional
Sherfey, Shannon Marie .................................................. Western North Carolina
Solomon, Nelly Gatune ..................................................... Kenya-Ethiopia
Vaughn, Robert Emory ..................................................... Virginia
Walther, Megan Jo-Crumm ................................................ Michigan
Warren, Jeffrey Joseph ..................................................... Upper New York
Westad, Audun .................................. Norway
Woods, Kimberly Dawn ...................... Illinois Great Rivers

Church and Society 3 (CC)
20 Members

Abramov, Sergei ................................. South Russia Provisional
Bell, Cheryl Jefferson .......................... Great Plains
Carlisle, Duane Charles ......................... Indiana
Copeland, Charles Jonathan ...................... Missouri
Estes, Clarence .................................. Texas
Gwartney, Charla Beth ............................ Oklahoma

Hunter, Keith .................................... South Carolina
Lee, Eric Matthew ................................. North Carolina
Linfors, Linda Vogl ................................. Western North Carolina
Loponen, Säde Tuulia ............................. Finland-Finnish Provisional
Mackey, Jason R. ................................ Susquehanna
Malicki, Andrez Jacek ............................. Poland
Page, Jonathan Joseph ............................. Virginia
Parker, Caleb ..................................... North Carolina
Picardo, Katherine Callaway Brooks ............. West Ohio
Quigg, Stephen Paul .............................. Greater New Jersey
Rodriguez-Perez, Esther ........................... Florida
Shereef, Lucretia Marian ......................... Sierra Leone
Ukundji, Emile Ngandu ............................ East Congo

Conferences (CO)
65 Members

Abel, Russell L. ................................ Indiana
Allen, Emily Ruth ................................. California-Nevada
Baliyangha, Marc ................................. Rwanda Provisional
Beuscher, Alan L. ................................. Kentucky
Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha Jo ......................... Michigan
Britton, Fred Sheld ............................... Mississippi
Bruster, Timothy Keith .......................... Central Texas
Bryan, Harriet Jean ............................... Tennessee
Bryan, Robert Andrew ............................. Missouri
Cady, Stephen Michael .......................... Upper New York
Chafin, Lonnie A. .................................. Northern Illinois
Cheatham, Laurence Michael ...................... South Carolina
Conner, Glenn Davis .......................... North Alabama
Copeland, Stanley Reagan ....................... North Texas
Corbett, Kaleigh Ann ........................... Greater New Jersey
Dailey, Matthew Lee ............................... Florida
Denardo, Nancy L. ................................ Western Pennsylvania
Drake, Lindsay Kay ............................... Iowa
Dunah, Isa Audu .................................. Northern Nigeria
Emmanuel, Ande Ikimun .......................... Southern Nigeria
Floore, Malcolm Eugene ....................... Alabama-West Florida
Gaines-Cirelli, Ginger Elise ..................... Baltimore-Washington

Goddard, Kimberly Mustard .......................... Holston
Gordy-Stih, Vicki Lynn .......................... Peninsula-Delaware
Green, Oliver Deck ................................ Great Plains
Hanson, Jay David ................................. South Georgia
Harris, Joseph Lewin ............................. Oklahoma
Holbrook, Frank Malvin ........................... Memphis
Jernigan, Jeffrey Scott .......................... North Georgia
Juji, Danjuma ................................. Northeast Nigeria
Kenaston, Judith Modlin ......................... West Virginia
Land, Amy Louise ............................... Indiana
Lee, In Yong ................................. Western North Carolina
Loponen, Veli Kristian .......................... Finland-Finnish Provisional
Lushima, Damas Wuhu .......................... East Congo
Malloy, Alison Marie ............................. Virginia
Marshall, Anne ................................. Oklahoma Indian Missionary
Merrill, Laura Anne ............................... Rio Texas
Nave, Gary Kirk ................................... Virginia
Nelson, Janice Eileen ............................ Oregon-Idaho
Nhahoturi, Jean ..................................... Burundi
Okonda, Andre Omensumbu ....................... East Congo
Olewine, Sandra ................................. California-Pacific
Pace, Thomas Jennings ......................... Texas
Partin, Randall Wayne .......................... New Mexico
Peters, Jasper Darneal .......................... Rocky Mountain
Pewa, Emmanuel .................................. Sierra Leone
Riss, Timothy J. ..................................... New York
Rogers, Patricia Alice .......................... North Georgia
Salsgiver, Thomas L. .............................. Susquehanna
Schonert, Steven L. ............................. Illinois Great Rivers
Schererin, Daniel William ....................... Wisconsin
Scott, Derrick Luruth ............................. Florida
Simpson, Kathryn McKay ......................... Louisiana
Sjanta, Dan ................................... Serbia-Macedonia Provisional
Stickley-Miner, Deanna E. ..................... Western Ohio
Sule, Eli Yakku ................................ Central Nigeria
Talbot-Burrows, Ellen M. ....................... East Ohio
Taylor-Storm, Dawn Elizabeth ........................... Eastern Pennsylvania
Thaarup, Jørgen ................................. Denmark
Troxler, Jeremy Isaac ........................... Western North Carolina
Wilbourn, Gordon Miller ......................... Arkansas
Williams, Gerald Lamar ........................ New England
Yebua, Lisa .................................. North Carolina
Zaagsma, Carol Ann ............................. Minnesota

Discipleship (DI)
37 Members

Austin, Emma Charis .......................... Western North Carolina
Ballard, Emily Elizabeth ......................... Holston
Belase, Derek Don ............................... Oklahoma
Caluya, Hector Santos .......................... Northeast Philippines
Cativo, Glenn Caspe .......................... Hundred Island Philippines
Chambers, Tracy V. ...................... West Ohio
Coleman, Tamara Leanne ............... Kentucky
Dondja, Henriette Ohumi ............. Oriental and Equator
Dotson, Junius Boyd .................. Great Plains
Erwin, Edgar Lee ....................... Texas
Estioko, Nixon Baladad .............. Central Luzon Philippines
Evans, Emily Rogers ................... South Carolina
Fender, Anna C. ........................ Illinois Great Rivers
Flick, Christine Dagmar .............. Germany South
Fullah, Adam ............................ Sierra Leone
Gume, Jose Jamisse .................... Mozambique South
Hafner, Lea ............................. Switzerland France North Africa
Harper, Warren Randolph ............. Virginia
Howard, Jill Moffett .................... Indiana
Jansson, Jenny Frida .................. Finland-Swedish Provisional
Johnson, Amy Long .................... Western North Carolina
Kobzeva, Olga ......................... Central Russia
Larry, Antony Lavone ................ Florida
Machinga, Gift Kudakwashe ......... East Zimbabwe
McDermott, Christina Marie ......... Susquehanna
Morelli, Paul M. ....................... Western Pennsylvania
Ndjeka, Paul Shango .................. East Congo
Nhassengo, Americo Juliano ......... Mozambique North
Pannell, Sara Beth ..................... North Carolina
Plambeck, Lanette Lorette ......... Iowa
Sigrar, Mary Janet .................... North Georgia
Spiva, Nobuhle Blossom .............. South Africa Provisional
Stukalova, Julia ...................... Eastern Russia and Central Asia
Taylor, Cynthia Ann .................. Baltimore-Washington
Thompson, Amy LeAnn ................ Missouri
Thompson, LaToya Redd ............. Mississippi
Wagner, Robert D. ..................... East Ohio
Feagins, Raquel Cajiri ............... Rio Texas
Gleaves, Edith ....................... North Carolina
Havelka, Haveleh Ann ................ Western North Carolina
Hedgepeth, Mitchell Bertist ......... Mississippi
Hughes, Kaytlynn Elizabeth ......... Susquehanna
Ibrahim, Titus Mafindi .............. Northeast Nigeria
Isbell, Sara Lynn ..................... Illinois Great Rivers
Laferty, Matthew Allen .............. East Ohio
Leonard, Susan Paige ................. South Carolina
Lindsey, Allison Ross ................. South Georgia
Lyall, Alka David .................... Northern Illinois
Maddox, Beverly Baggett .......... Alabama-West Florida
Malone-Wardley, Romonica Marquis ...... Texas
Martin, Robert Dean ................. Memphis
Maurer-Skerritt, Dawn Marie ....... Yellowstone
McNabb, Meredith Leigh ............ Virginia
McIlwain, Keith Howard ............. Western Pennsylvania
Mudge, Samuel William ............. Upper New York
Mupasa, Germain Una ................. East Congo
Oduor, Ralph R. ...................... New England
Powers, Samuel Tyler ................. Oklahoma
Rand, Thomas A. ..................... West Ohio
Roberts, Michael Lawrence ........ Arkansas
Schubert Nowling, Lisa D. ........ Indiana
Simbine Sambo, Leonarda Edome . Mozambique South
Sinzohagera, Emmanuel ............. Burundi
Smartt, Denise Adrienne ............ New York
Smothers, Jasmine Rose ............. North Georgia
Spradlin, Mary Kathryn ............. Central Texas
Starodubets, Yulia ................. Ukraine-Moldova Provisional
Stikes, Deborah Alice ............... North Georgia
Stokes, Martha Ensley ............... Virginia
Tamm, Priit ............................ Estonia
Taylor, Maggie Elizabeth .......... Tennessee
Whitton, Brady Stephen ............. Louisiana
Williams, Thomas Andrew .......... Texas
Williamson, Delores I. ............. Great Plains
Witkowski, Laura Beth ............. Michigan
Yoila, Bzael Yayuba ............... Southern Nigeria

Faith and Order (FO)
54 Members

Alvarez, Jerome De La Cruz ........ Bicol Phillippines Provisional
Arnold, Billy Tribble ................ Kentucky
Arroyo, Giovanni ..................... Baltimore-Washington
Balagan, Lilibeth Asis .............. Northeast Phillippines
Bambur, Virginia Baba ............. Central Nigeria
Batale, Jean Felix Esele .......... Oriental and Equator
Brown, Andrea Sue .................... Eastern Pennsylvania
Calvert, Linda Karen ................. Iowa
Cantrell, Robert Wilson ............. Holston
Carpenter, Kelly Jo ................... North Texas
Caulker, James Boye ................ Sierra Leone
Cleaver, Emanuel ..................... Missouri
Cowser, Dedric Amad ............... North Alabama
deVega, Magrey Rojas ............... Florida
Ellis, Elizabeth Carter .............. Western North Carolina

Financial Administration (FA)
57 Members

Allen, James Ralph ..................... Tennessee
Ballares, Abraham Alejos ............ Hundred Island Philippines
Banqued, Jeremias Fragata .......... Central Luzon Philippines
Bankurunaze, Lazare ................. Burundi
Berlin, Thomas Martin .............. Virginia
Brewer, Scott Roettmer ............. Great Plains
Brown, Randy ......................... North Georgia
Brownson, William H. .............. West Ohio
Burris, James Todd .................. Arkansas
Chin, Noel N. ........................ New York
Crumpton, Debra Marie .............. Central Texas
Current, Staci Lynne .................. California-Nevada
Dannenberg, Kai Uwe ................ Germany North
Dodson, Christine ................... North Carolina
Dyson, Drew A. ........................ Greater New Jersey
Eldridge, John Edward .............. Holston
Gilbert, Mary Lynne ................ Western North Carolina
Griffith, Janice Louise .............. Illinois Great Rivers
Hall, Ian Jonathan .................. Indiana
Haske, Bellison Titus ............... Northern Nigeria
Hatcher, William S. ................ South Georgia
Haugh Clem, Kelly Ann ................ North Alabama
Helaire, Ronald K. ................... Louisiana
House, Donald R. ........................ Texas
Ingram, Kent Parker ...................... Rocky Mountain
Johnson, Krystl D. .................... Eastern Pennsylvania
Junk, Thomas Michael .............. Oklahoma
Kamara, Yeabu ...................... Sierra Leone
Ketoka, Paul Lokondo .................. East Congo
King, Lisa Marie ...................... Wisconsin
Lake, Matthew Earl .................... Susquehanna
Marden, Bonnie Ives ..................... New England
McGarity, Charles E. .................. Rio Texas
Mingledorff, George E. .............. Alabama-West Florida
Miofsky, Matthew Thomas .......... Missouri
Nuckols, David Branch .............. Minnesota
Oliphint, John Clayton ............. North Texas
Ow, Kenneth ......................... Baltimore-Washington
Panong, Apolonio Bogate ........ Bicol Philippines
Provisional
Paysour, Jacob Stephen .......... Virginia
Peter, Edward ........................ Central Nigeria
Peters, Jennifer Renee ............. Michigan
Reed, David Rails .................... Memphis
Rinehart, Gerald Robert ............ East Ohio
Rothlisberger, John Charles ........ Iowa
Salley, James Henry ............... South Carolina
Savage, Charles Walter .............. North Georgia
Schindler, Elizabeth Ingram ....... Pacific Northwest
Schroeder, Philip Daniel ........... North Georgia
Shaffer, Richard Allen .............. West Virginia
Stahlman, Vicki J. .................. Western Pennsylvania
Stephenson, Mark .................... California-Pacific
Stotts, James David ................ Mississippi
Watts, Michael Brent ............... Kentucky
Weems, Cynthia Dee .................. Florida
Westbrook, William Ernest ........ Peninsula-Delaware
Whitehead, Larry K. .................. Indiana

General Administration (GA)
47 Members

Barte, Romel Parayno .............. Pangasinan Philippines
Beasley, Zachary Carl .............. Mississippi
Braddock, David Verne ............. South Carolina
Brewington, Frederick Kevin ........ New York
Brown, Diane Louise ................ Michigan
Cauffman, Shirley Kevin .......... Virginia
Clark, Cornelia Marie ................ Tennessee
Coles, Amy Louise .................... Western North Carolina
Cordle, Stephen H. .................. Western Pennsylvania
Daniels, Joseph Wayne ............ Baltimore-Washington
Davidson, Saifya Amos ............ Northeast Nigeria
Detjen, Anne Marie .................. Germany North
Dovenspike, Nitza Edith .......... Iowa
Fuert, Taylor Meador .............. Rio Texas
Fuquay, Robert Earl ............... Indiana
Girrell, Rebecca Joy .............. New England
Gross, Gregory D. .................. Northern Illinois
Habonimana, Silas ................. Burundi
Han, Grace Sun Khil .............. Virginia
Henderson, Gary Ray .............. East Ohio
Howard, George Glenn .......... West Ohio
Jacob, Ann Chris ..................... Eastern Pennsylvania
Jenne, Kimberly K. ................ Missouri
Jones, Corey Antoine ............... Florida
Kim, Donald H. ...................... Oklahoma
Kombo, Helene Djamba .......... East Congo
Koroma, Anne Konima .......... Sierra Leone
Lippoldt, Amy Elizabeth .......... Great Plains
Lyles, Steve ....................... North Alabama
Mann, Karon Sue .................. Arkansas
Olson, Harriett Jane .............. Greater New Jersey
Price, James Larry ................ South Georgia
Shanholtzer, Amy Mock .......... West Virginia
Smith, Samuel Edward .............. Upper New York
Strebeck, Sid ...................... New Mexico
Tchomba, Adalbert Ngoy .......... Kivu Provisional
Thomas, Byron Eric ............... North Georgia
Travis, Anne St. Claire .......... Holston
Tukutau, Havea Hikule’o .... Rocky Mountain
Tullos, Bryan Haley ............... Texas
Valdez, Buson Panguntan ........ Northwest Philippines
Valendy, Jason Matthew ........ Central Texas
Williams, David Bennett .... North Carolina
Wilson, David Mark .............. Oklahoma Indian Missionary
Wolverton, Kenneth Ray ............. North Texas
Yanusa, Peter Ngai .............. Southern Nigeria
Zafirov, Petar .................... Serbia-Macedonia Provisional
Global Ministries (GM)  
32 Members

Amundsen, Robert Earl……………… Red Bird Missionary  
Arello, Armando Contreras……………… East Ohio  
Augustine, Melba Wilson……………… Texas  
Baccus, Steven Lee……………… Great Plains  
Bell, Ronald Hardy……………… Indiana  
Colorado, Judy C……………… Greater New Jersey  
Daszuta, Bozena Elzbieta……………… Poland  
Dawson, Katie Marie Ziskovksy……………… Iowa  
Frye, William Randall……………… Holston  
Fullerton, Rachel Anne……………… North Georgia  
Gaynor, Jill Walker……………… Virginia  
Golov, Artem……………… Eastern Russia and Central Asia  
Guenther, André……………… Germany East  
Han, Duk Hee……………… Western Pennsylvania  
Hong, Sang Kuk……………… Alabama-West Florida  
Hunt, Charles Anthony……………… Baltimore-Washington  
Isaac Machaune, Alzira Sebastião……………… Mozambique North  
Manafundu, Marie Claire Diandja……………… East Congo  
McEntire, Molly Rebecca……………… Florida  
Mironga, Maxwell……………… East Zimbabwe  
Momoh, Edwin Julius jetbar……………… Sierra Leone  
Perry, Barbara Jean……………… Oklahoma  
Prochazkova, Lenka……………… Czech and Slovak Republics  
Ross, Spencer Daniel……………… Susquehanna  
Russell, Kara Grace……………… West Ohio  
Schneider, Mark……………… North Carolina  
Sherfey, Joshua Harlan……………… Western North Carolina  
Sutton, Emily Scales……………… South Carolina  
Thompson, Lenora……………… Eastern Pennsylvania  
Tuitahi, Monalisa……………… California-Pacific  
Vianese, Carmen F. S……………… Upper New York  
Wembakoy, Albert Okolongo……………… Oriental and Equator  

Higher Education/Supertendency (HS)  
54 Members

Ausley, Lisa Friedeman……………… Alabama-West Florida  
Auta, John Pena……………… Central Nigeria  
Avotina, Inara……………… Estonia  
Beckley, David Lenard……………… Mississippi  
Beckum, James Robert……………… South Georgia  
Bihl, Allison Skylar……………… Pacific Northwest  
Blakely, Joshua Kendell……………… Virginia  
Bonnette-Kim, Amanda Dahbhee……………… New England  
Brewster, Dixie Kay……………… Great Plains  
Call, Andrew R……………… East Ohio  
Casperson, April M……………… West Ohio  
Chichava, Mauricio Samussone……………… Mozambique South  

Cosman, Edgardo……………… North Carolina  
Cummings, Colette M……………… Missouri  
Dayson, Darryl Diwayne……………… Western North Carolina  
Dio, Mike Jen……………… Southern Nigeria  
Dixon, Maria Antoinette……………… North Texas  
Dunn, Alyce Weaver……………… Western Pennsylvania  
Ehninger, Judith Kay……………… Eastern Pennsylvania  
Fogle-Miller, Carlene Rebecca……………… Florida  
Fulbright, Aleze Michelle……………… Indiana  
Fuller, Gary Thomas……………… North Georgia  
Guy, Beverly Ann……………… Michigan  
Handy, Stephen……………… Tennessee  
Hayden, Jo Anne Kay……………… Alaska Missionary  
Kachiko, Esther Furaha……………… Kivu Provisional  
Kirkland, Bernice Williams……………… North Georgia  
Kreutziger, Sarah S……………… Louisiana  
Kuan, Cah-Jin Jeffrey……………… California-Nevada  
Lassayo, Francis Ben……………… Sierra Leone  
Lightsey, H. B……………… South Carolina  
Lockward, Jorge……………… New York  
Loyer, Kenneth Milton……………… Susquehanna  
Lumumba, Jacqueline Luhahi……………… East Congo  
Ndikumana, Zephirin……………… Burundi  
Nims, Nathaniel Wesley……………… Iowa  
Norman, Mark K……………… Arkansas  
Odongo, Wilton Thomas……………… Kenya-Ethiopia  
Philipp, Werner Eberhard……………… Germany East  
Reyes, Luis F……………… Northern Illinois  
Rudolph, Etiene……………… Switzerland France North Africa  
Simpson, Kim Quetone……………… Central Texas  
Slauson, Gayla Jo……………… Rocky Mountain  
Swanson, Eric N……………… Illinois Great Rivers  
Sweet, Rebekah Beth……………… Upper New York  
Thompson, Mary Carol……………… Holston  
Togel, Kara Ann……………… Dakotas  
VanDyke, Rhonda Ann……………… Virginia  
Warner, Laceye Cammarrano……………… Texas  
Weston, Megan Kyoko Shitama……………… Peninsula-Delaware  
Williams, Alice Marie……………… Florida  
Wilson, Janey Louise……………… Oklahoma  
Wright, Rachel Ruth……………… Rio Texas  
Zailani, Yahuda Nero……………… Northeast Nigeria  

Independent Commissions (IC)  
23 Members

Alfaro Santiz, Hugo Alejandro……………… Iowa  
Amerson, James Patrick……………… Rio Texas  
Amey, Bethany L……………… Greater New Jersey  
Beasley, Ellen……………… North Carolina  
Buffum, Lisa A……………… Great Plains  
Christian, Elizabeth V……………… Virginia
Fehl, Katherine Marie ................ Western Pennsylvania
Ford, Sarah Virginia .................. Baltimore-Washington
Furaha, Francisca Mwayuma ........ East Congo
Hawkins, Stacie Yvonne .............. Texas
Knowlin Boykin, Tiffany Denise .... South Carolina
Loyer, Milton W. ........................ Susquehanna
McDavid, Pamela Hammond .......... Illinois Great Rivers
Mosby, Donna Mims .................. Holston
Muñoz, Lydia Esther .................. Southeastern Pennsylvania
Murphy, Tonya L. ...................... North Georgia
Okende, Felix Ndjulu .................. East Congo
Perry, Joy Lynn ........................ West Ohio
Pierre-Okerson, Marie Judith ...... Florida
Pridy, Shannon Rachel ............... Indiana
Saffa, Ndapi ............................ Sierra Leone
Steele, Valerie Dorette .............. Oklahoma
Whitaker, Lynette ..................... Western North Carolina

Judicial Administration (JA)

44 Members

Bailey, Marshall Siddons .............. Virginia
Brennecke, Craig Furman .............. Susquehanna
Bridgeforth, Cedrick ................. California-Pacific
Brim, Jefferson Kearney .............. Texas
DeRouen, Michelle Nicole ............ Louisiana
Dodla, Johnson Edwin ................. Eastern Pennsylvania
Enns, Ronald Eugene ................. North Carolina
Ethridge, Leland Glenn ............... North Georgia
Fink, Elizabeth Ashley ................ Arkansas
Ford, Michael Dale .................... Central Texas
Fulton, Kenton Wade .................. Oklahoma
Garza, Oscar Luis .................... Texas
Givens, Frances Elizabeth .......... Virginia
Hill, Adrian Jumaane .................. Northern Illinois
Hodgkinson, Randall L. .............. Great Plains
Holley, James Delray ................. Holston
Huffman, Gregory Daniel ............. Western North Carolina
Joyner, Frank Belton ................ North Carolina
Levingston, Kenneth R. .............. Texas
Luther, Aliyuda ........................ Northeast Nigeria
Malambri, William Francis .......... South Carolina
Martin, William Gary ................. North Georgia
Meadows, John Patton ................. North Alabama
Mills, Ianther Marie ................. Baltimore-Washington
Mwayera, Molly Hlekan .............. East Zimbabwe
Ngakui, Easmon Nathaniel Belden .... Sierra Leone
Pepsy, Jetai Audu ........................ Southern Nigeria
Peralta, Nimia Castillo .............. Northwest Philippines
Perez, Paul David ..................... Michigan
Roelfs, Ravi Paul ...................... Wisconsin
Shanks, Alex Arthur .................. Florida
Shannon Stueve, Erica Lea ............ Iowa
Sparks, Stephen Lawrence .......... Mississippi
Steiner, Chris E. ...................... West Virginia
Taylor, Jeffrey Allen ................. West Virginia
Tunda, Prosper Kasongo ............. East Congo
Urriola, Ian Carlos .................... Upper New York
Vittorio, Jessica Lynn ............... North Texas
Wilkes-Null, Beverly L. ............. Illinois Great Rivers
Williams, James Andrew ............. Kentucky
Wilson, Betty .......................... East Ohio
Womack, W. Michael .................. Indiana
Wondel, Jill Alison .................. Missouri
Zilhaver, Robert F. ................... Western Pennsylvania

Local Church (LC)

39 Members

Aliyuda, Japheth ........................ Southern Nigeria
Amon, Darlene Vancamp .............. Virginia
Beard, John Herschel .................. Oklahoma
Black, Paul Emmerson ............... Illinois Great Rivers
Brown, George .......................... Tennessee
Cho, Jennifer H. ....................... Greater New Jersey
Colbert, Daniel Joseph ............... Baltimore-Washington
Davis, Jennifer Pharr ................. Western North Carolina
Dominick, Shirley Ann ............... Indiana
Finley, Margaret Jane ................. North Georgia
Gillon Lee, Elizabeth Ann ........... North Alabama
Grace, Roger L. ......................... West Ohio
Grant, Holly Jean ...................... East Ohio
Hall, Rebecca Gantz .................. Holston
Hansen-Abbas, Angela Faye .......... Iowa
Harrington, Mary Anne ............... Mississippi
Harris, Vincent ......................... Texas
Jackson, Yvonne Denise .............. Peninsula-Delaware
James, Ivan Cecil ...................... Missouri
Jones, Karen Hanyea Lail .......... South Carolina
Kalena, Antoine Tumbwe ............. East Congo
Kitaeva, Elena Antonovna .......... Northwest Russia

Lassayo, Alice ........................ Sierra Leone
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Mandeya, Abel Tafagwa .............. South Africa Provisional
Maupin, Lisa L. ......................... Great Plains
McCormon, Donald Lee ............... Yellowstone
Ogren, Mark Victor .................. Virginia
Omonole, Jean Paul Owandjakoy .... Oriental and Equator
Pancoast, Heather Ann .............. Florida
Perry, Carmen Lynette ............... Upper New York
Rushing, Dalton Troy ................. North Georgia
Ryde, Helen Valerie ................. Western North Carolina
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- **55 Members**

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Barrett, Joy Anna .......................... Michigan
Bass, Jason Michael ........................ Texas
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Bob, Togara .................................. East Zimbabwe
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Jennings, Chad Eric ....................... Iowa
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Church and Society
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2
Nashville, Tennessee

The General Board of Church and Society:
“Living Faith, Seeking Justice Pursuing Peace”

Introduction

Church and Society educates, advocates, and connects with United Methodists in living faith, seeking justice, and pursuing peace across the connection and the world. Church and Society has four main responsibilities (Book of Discipline ¶ 1004):

- Seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns;
- Work for a world where God’s peace and justice reign;
- Analyze long-range social trends and their underlying ethical values;
- Speak its convictions, interpretations, and concerns to the church and to the world.

We recognize that there is a continued rise in individualism over and against serving the greater good of humankind; stigmatization of the poor, women, and migrants; nationalism and xenophobia; extreme weather patterns disproportionately having an impact on marginalized communities; and increasing disparities in the well-being of all people and creation. Now more than ever, the clarion call for social change is urgent, and United Methodists are faithfully living out their witness in Christ for justice and peace.

This quadrennium, Church and Society focused on five main priorities:

- climate
- health
- immigration/migration
- peace
- poverty

Church leadership at all levels connected and advocated on these critical issues. Church and Society supported these efforts in a variety of ways, adapting and pivoting to where the most pressing concerns emerged.

United Methodist Building:
Our Legacy and Landmark

The General Board of Church and Society is the proprietor of the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The structure is adjacent to the U.S. Capitol and the Supreme Court. As a public witness to justice and peace, the United Methodist Building has offered an ecumenical and interfaith setting for rich dialogue and social action since 1923.

By action of the General Conference 2016, the United Methodist Building became a Heritage Landmark of United Methodism—one of about fifty landmarks around the world.

The Heritage Landmarks of United Methodism are tangible reminders of our denominational history. They represent significant touchstones in the life and history of United Methodism as a whole.

The United Methodist Building also serves as a vital witness through a variety of press briefings, art installations, and sign postings, garnering national attention for the building’s work for pressing social issues of the day.

Under the stewardship of its trustees, Church and Society continues to preserve and maintain the building for future generations to enjoy in such a unique location.

Church and Society also maintains an office in the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City, New York.

Social Principles Revision

The Social Principles serve as the church’s official summary of stated convictions on important issues of the day. At the direction of the General Conference, Church and Society has undertaken an eight-year process to develop revised Social Principles for a worldwide church. (See the full report on the Social Principles Revision for further details, page 130.)

Living Faith

Educating, communicating, and resourcing United Methodists facilitate paths for justice and peace. From
gathering new bishops, young clergy, and young people for civic engagement, to new resources and a new website, Church and Society is reaching out to conference leadership across the connection.

**Resourcing for Community Engagement**

Our award-winning website as well as our social media presence have dramatically increased this quadrennium. Since its 2017 launch, the newly redesigned website continues to enjoy a strong reach. The site offers important educational resources as well as a place for United Methodists to take action and contact decision makers. Notably, in 2018 the site received 257,506 unique visitors, a 65 percent increase from 2017. We expanded our reach by adding more than 5,600 new followers to our Facebook page and more than 2,500 followers to Twitter.

Church and Society completed and refreshed thirty-three Faith and Facts cards. The cards, designed to fit church bulletins, provide biblical, denominational, statistical, and policy resources on specific issues.

A new resource, “Creating Change Together: A Toolkit for Civic Engagement,” was developed and released in 2019 for United Methodists to assist both new and seasoned advocates alike in the pursuit of changing policies and systems. The toolkit includes theologically grounded practices and strategies for identifying issues and connecting with decision makers as well as information on engaging in the electoral process.

As of spring 2019, Church and Society issued sixty-eight grants totaling more than $382,000 through its three funding streams: Peace with Justice, Human Relations Day, and Ethnic Local Church. Recipients represented ministries in the Congo Central Conference, Philippines Central Conference, Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, Nigeria Central Conference, Germany Central Conference, and South Russia Conference, as well as every jurisdiction within the United States.

**Commitment to Young People in Ministry**

The Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Program continues to be a signature summer program of Church and Society. Students from across the connection come and live in intentional community while interning with a partner agency to address a variety of social concerns.

**Educating for Faithful Action**

The United Methodist Seminar Program on National and International Affairs aims to awaken a desire for justice and peace from a perspective of faith through custom-designed seminars for groups.

The program served 2,232 participants this quadrennium. Notably, in 2017 the Seminar Program had a record high of 814 participants, more than double from 2016. Seminar topics included immigration, poverty, conflict transformation, creation care, interfaith dialogue, and human trafficking.

A new initiative this quadrennium developed a yearly fall Called Seminar for multiday learning and action on a topic. Themes included: gun violence prevention, peace on the Korean Peninsula, hunger in America, and migration.

**Seeking Justice**

Over the course of the quadrennium, United Methodists witnessed for gun violence prevention, indigenous people’s rights, climate change, and anti-racism. Yearly gatherings, including Ecumenical Advocacy Days, provided United Methodists opportunities along with ecumenical and denominational partners to advocate with policy makers.

**Ministry with the Poor**

Since 2008, The United Methodist Church has encouraged ministry efforts at all levels of the church to focus engagement around four areas: global health, leadership development, new worshiping communities, and ministry with the poor.

Ministering among people and communities who are struggling in poverty is core to our identity as Christians. Jesus—anointed to “proclaim good news to the poor”—made clear that when we encounter the poor, the hungry, the prisoner, and the stranger, we encounter Christ himself.

The focus area on ministry with the poor has encouraged United Methodists to rethink how we do ministry: shifting away from ministries “to” people and communities, which often seem transactional, and toward ministries “with” people and communities that are built around relationships. These relationships are what inspire and in-
form our ministries and give rise to a shared vision, shared commitment, and shared leadership.

At the direction of the Board of Director’s Ministry with Task Force, Church and Society has reached out to identify and celebrate relationship-based ministries across the connection. To date, 230 relationship-based ministries have been identified across the U.S., Europe, Africa, and the Philippines. A Ministry with the Poor Advisory Team has been developed this quadrennium. The team is made up of seasoned practitioners in ministry with those most marginalized.

**Immigration, Global Migration, and Refugees**

In a political climate where immigrants and communities in which they reside and work increasingly live in fear and anxiety, Church and Society partnered across the connection to fulfill the ministries of both welcoming the stranger and loving the neighbor. The agency, in partnership with Churches Witnessing with Migrants, worked to support civil society actors who contributed to the Marrakesh Compact on Migration.

Church and Society also partnered with the Connectional Table and the United Methodist Immigration Task Force (UMITF) in mobilizing efforts for migrant justice. Church and Society coordinates with the UMITF on the implementation of World Service Contingency funds in support of jurisdictional immigration witness and advocacy. Church and Society hosted fly-in meetings; supported JFON’s (Justice for Our Neighbors) chapter and national advocacy efforts; issued statements from the board of directors and general secretary opposing zero tolerance policies and family separation; hosted two delegations to the U.S./Mexico border, supported refugee work in Germany and Europe; offered a workshop at the Global Young People’s Convocation; and supported more than 3,500 United Methodists writing to decision makers opposing U.S. immigration policies.

**Health**

Church and Society heard the call to faithfully advocate for access to healthcare for those most vulnerable and in need in the U.S. Praying, offering communion, and witnessing to the lives of low-income families and individuals most affected by unjust access to healthcare were all part of the ministry for healthcare for all.

In partnership with annual conferences, Church and Society mobilized across the U.S. with focus in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee to successfully preserve Medicaid for the most vulnerable in need. The organization joined sign-on letters, issued a general secretary statement on healthcare as a human right, and held two webinars on the Global Health, Empowerment, and Rights (HER) Act. Six hundred seventy postcards advocating for healthcare were delivered to both Pennsylvania and Tennessee decision makers. Seventy-five offices on Capitol Hill were visited 106 times to urge access to healthcare for all.

Both Church and Society and Global Ministries worked with United Methodist Global AIDS Committee (UMGAC) to support ongoing efforts related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This gathering examined the ongoing research related to HIV/AIDS. The committee also developed an integrated, holistic approach for moving forward on addressing the epidemic.

**Climate**

The urgent need for addressing creation justice continues. Church and Society has partnered with sister agencies, as well as national and international entities such as EcoAmerica, to address this growing global concern. Church and Society in collaboration with UMW, GBGM, and Wespath communicate regularly to strategize and understand how the connection can best address this global issue. At the 2017 United Nations Climate Change Conference, a letter from the four executive leaders of the agencies called for a continued commitment toward realizing the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Church and Society joined with sister agencies, bishops, and annual conferences as United Methodists witnessed with Standing Rock for the rights of indigenous peoples. Church and Society garnered more than 1,100 letters calling for the U.S. president and the Army Corps of Engineers to listen to the voices of adversely affected communities and to pursue a course of action that will protect God’s people and planet. Signers included persons from all fifty states. Through social media 109,446 individuals were influenced by the witness on Standing Rock over the course of three days.

In addition, partnerships with Creation Justice Ministries and National Farmworker’s Ministry continue to provide vital connections for building justice for the water health of our communities from Flint, Michigan, to small towns of Appalachia.

Church and Society staff members met yearly with Philippines conference leaders throughout this quadrennium. In each of the three Philippines episcopal areas, Church and Society staff members supported capacity building for Board of Women’s Work, Church and Society, and United Methodist Youth Fellowship leaders on organizing and advocacy. Solidarity visits, fact-finding
trips, and action plans have all been developed to address climate change and women’s health.

**Pursuing Peace**

From violence in Colombia to the rise of global racism, Church and Society has diligently advocated for peace building across the globe. Gun violence prevention, ongoing peace efforts in conflict zones, and addressing gender-based violence in U.S. policies all reflect efforts to reduce violence and work for peace.

Church and Society in partnership with Global Ministries supported many efforts to work for peace, particularly in Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel-Palestine, and the Korean Peninsula.

In collaboration with GBGM and the Connectional Table, Church and Society supported all four annual conferences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage in civic and electoral education leading up to the December 2018 elections.

In partnership with GBGM, United Methodist Women, and Wespath, Church and Society held a consultation on the ministry and work of the Israel-Palestine Task Force. (For more on the Israel-Palestine Task Force, see Global Ministries report.)

Church and Society in both 2017 and 2018 supported the celebration of the International Day of Peace in Seoul, South Korea. The agency also participated in the United Nations conference on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Church and Society continues to support the United Methodist Korea Peace Table, which, working with other faith and secular peace organizations, held a Korea Peace Festival and Vigil to show support for the Panmunjom Declaration in response to the U.S.-North Korea Summit.

**Peace with Justice Coordinators**

Church and Society welcomed annual conference Peace with Justice Coordinators annually for a time of fellowship, information gathering, and resourcing. Topics included War and Race: Reflections on Martin Luther King Jr.; Peace on the Korean Peninsula; and Israel-Palestine. Peace with Justice Coordinators are dedicated to working for shalom in communities and around the world.

**Religious Minorities and Religious Liberty**

The 8th World Congress for Religious Freedom paid attention to migration, refugees, and religious freedom. It was an important space to address the critical intersection of religious freedom and migration.

Church and Society continues to maintain active membership in the Committee on Religious Liberty and the International Religious Freedom Roundtable. Both International Religious Freedom Day and International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church were also uplifted and recognized by Church and Society this quadrennium.

**Gender-based Violence**

Church and Society in partnership with the World Council of Churches of Zimbabwe, IRW (UMW), and Zimbabwe Annual Conference, led a gender-based violence and strategy building workshop with United Methodists. The board also served as a principal resource for a grassroots community organizing workshop to equip United Methodists to address gender-based violence in their communities.

Church and Society met with U.S. decision makers to address reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act to promote a strong bill for protections against gender-based violence. Additionally, in partnership with the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference, Church and Society offered a reflection and workshop on domestic violence as part of the Penn-Del Annual Clergywomen Gathering.

**Indigenous Peoples**

This quadrennium, Church and Society worked in partnership with United Methodists to address the rights of indigenous peoples. More than thirty United Methodists participated in events commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the founding congress of Sami Peoples and celebrated the role of The Methodist Church in their community. In addition, a delegation of nineteen United Methodists from around the world, consisting mostly of indigenous representatives including from the Philippines and native American tribes, conducted a solidarity visit in Norway with the Sami People.

**Celebrating Faith in Action**

This quadrennium has witnessed United Methodists the world over putting their faith into action. Together in Christ we continue to seek peace and justice for all of God’s people and creation. For the full quadrennial report, please visit www.umcjustice.org/report.

Bishop Sally Dyck
President of the Board

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe
General Secretary
General Board of Church & Society
Quadrennial Report of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee 2017-2020

Led by Bishop Julius C. Trimble of Indiana, the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee (UMGAC) during this quadrennium (2017-2020) provided a persistent voice against stigma and offered a powerful vision of compassion and care for persons living with HIV and AIDS around the world.

Education and Advocacy

Fulfilling its General Conference mandate to mobilize programs of education and advocacy, and following Jesus’ mandate to bring healing and wholeness, the committee has sought with limited financial resources to remind persons that HIV and AIDS are still a health crisis. This crucial work can enable the church to be an effective force in helping end HIV in our lifetime.

The primary methods used by the interagency committee have been to sensitize the church through sponsoring educational symposiums, an electronic monthly newsletter, a website offering multiple resources, a Facebook page, and promoting the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (Advance No. 982345). That fund is now administered by Global Ministries. Administratively the committee has been “housed” in the General Board of Church and Society, but its members have included persons from that agency, the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Women, the General Commission on Communication, Young People’s Ministries, and the Council of Bishops. At-large members have also served, including two persons living with HIV. The committee believes in the AIDS principle: “nothing about us, without us.”

Four Major AIDS Conferences

Each year a major AIDS Conference has been sponsored. In 2017, at the invitation of the three bishops serving the Philippines, an AIDS seminar open to the entire central conference was organized in the Philippines. In 2018, United Methodists gathered in Indianapolis for a three-day symposium on “breaking barriers” by addressing stigma and discrimination. A highlight was launching the Bishop Fritz and Etta Mae Lectureship on AIDS that was presented by Jeanne White-Ginder, mother of the 1980s teenage AIDS activist Ryan White.

In 2019, Bishop Benjamin Boni presided at the West Africa United Methodist AIDS Summit in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire. Speakers living with HIV spoke of the stigma they face and the need for church involvement. In 2020, the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee will host a one-day seminar just prior to General Conference in Minneapolis. Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, U.S. AIDS Coordinator, and Bishop Karen P. Oliveto, longtime AIDS activist, are scheduled keynote speakers.

Future Funding Unknown

The committee is authorized by the General Conference to serve in the upcoming quadrennium (2021-2024), but funding must yet be secured if the church is to continue to contribute to the quest to conquer HIV and AIDS and overcome stigma. This is an unmet challenge for The UMC.
General Board of Church and Society
Report to General Conference 2020 on Social Principles Revision

The Social Principles serve as the church’s official summary of stated convictions on presenting issues of the day. The United Methodist Church’s Social Principles, first adopted by the 1972 General Conference, stands in the Wesleyan tradition of forthright moral witness and ethical action. Taking its inspiration and grounding from both the Evangelical United Brethren’s Moral Standards and the Methodist Episcopal Church’s social creed, the Social Principles reflect the church’s concern for both personal and social holiness in communities.

Discovery Phase (2012-2016)

The General Conference 2012 called the General Board of Church and Society, as the agency charged with implementation of the Social Principles, “to engage in a process for considering and revising the Social Principles . . . with the goal of making them more succinct and theologically relevant.” Over the course of the quadrennium, Church and Society in partnership with the Connectional Table and the Commission on General Conference convened a series of conversations to learn how the Social Principles are implemented in specific regional contexts. The 2012-2016 listening sessions:

• included a total of 193 participants from across the connection;
• included four listening sessions in Africa, the Philippines, and Europe; and
• included two sessions for the U.S. jurisdictional conferences.

Out of these listening sessions, we learned there is:

• a deep appreciation for the Social Principles as a resource for mission and ministry;
• a desire to clarify the worldwide relevance of the Social Principles; and
• a need to articulate a theological grounding of the principles.

Revision Process (2017-2020)

Based on the findings from the previous quadrennium, General Conference 2016 recommended that Church and Society continue to “give priority to developing Social Principles for a worldwide church” and to bring this work to General Conference 2020. The aim of the process was to produce a version of the Social Principles that reflects a strong theological foundation in a more focused, succinct, and globally meaningful form.

Writing Teams

Guided by the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore, dean of Boston School of Theology, six writing team leaders were responsible for a major section of the document. With each lead convener, writing teams came together to develop a first draft of a Revised Social Principles. Over the course of 2017, six writing teams made up of fifty-two total participants from across the connection worked together to develop a first draft. Twenty-one laity and thirty-one clergy contributed as both scholars and practitioners. Attention to both young adult representation and inclusion of the ethnic and racial caucuses in the teams was vital.

• 52 total participants
• Five U.S. jurisdictions
• Philippines Central Conference
• Africa Central Conference
• Congo Central Conference
• West Africa Central Conference
• Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
• Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

The first draft was reviewed by the Church and Society’s Social Principles Task Force at the Spring 2018 board meeting. Following action by the Task Force, the draft was then made available for public comment.

Public Feedback

The open-comment period invited all United Methodists to read and offer feedback on the first draft. It was available online in four languages: Swahili, French, Portuguese, and English.

Following release of the document, Church and Society developed an online survey that collected responses from across the connection. In addition, with the support of the Church and Society chairs of U.S. annual conferences and leaders in central conferences, a series of public conversations were conducted to solicit feedback on the first draft.
The open survey was available for comment from April to August 2018. It received 2,507 responses. Public conversations were held in 31 U.S. annual conferences, 11 convenings of schools, seminaries, and ethnic caucuses, and 12 sessions in central conferences including Africa, Europe, and the Philippines. An estimated 2,100 people participated in a public conversation. More than 25 scholars from around the world were also consulted.

Written feedback including reports from the public conversations informed the shape and direction of subsequent drafts. Key findings from the feedback included:

- defining key problems and terms stated in each principle and sub-principle;
- a desire for Hebrew and Christian texts that include gender balance and scriptural references from a range of narratives and parables, rather than a few imperatives or injunctions;
- each principle should include specific calls to action with attention to the worldwide church, while avoiding lengthy interpretations of a principle once defined;
- an acknowledgment of the interpretive challenges presented in each principle; and
- reduce duplication on principles, themes, and biblical references across the document.

**Draft Reduces Duplication**

Taking in this feedback, a final draft was presented by the Board’s Social Principles Revision Task Force and passed by the board of directors.

The draft preserves a preface and preamble, and includes four major sections, reduced from the current six. The sections included in the proposed legislation are:

- Community of All Creation
- Economic Community
- Social Community
- Political Community

The preface and preamble serve two distinct purposes. The preface contains a history of the social creed tradition in Methodism while the preamble includes a theological and ethical foundation that grounds the rest of the document.

The topics included under the current Nurturing Community section were incorporated into both the Social Community and the Political Community. The topics found in the World Community are now integrated and addressed across the whole document.

The document also presents a uniformity in its organization of each section and subsection. Each section begins with a preface that describes the sphere of concern being addressed. A quotation from John Wesley grounds the section in a Methodist framework. Each subsection then names a principle, defines any necessary key terms, offers biblical and theological grounding, and ends with a call to action.

**A Vital Witness Together**

The document stands as a continuation of a great tradition of public social teachings in the Methodist tradition. It reflects a connection both deeply rooted in community while steadfast in its desire for forthright witness as a church.

Social Principles are vital for Methodist witness across the globe. The social teachings are utilized in a variety of contexts to raise the Methodist public witness for social change. Its commitment to human rights, social welfare, and environment with attention to marginalized people is a key aspect of this revision.

Aspects of this project’s process were effective and should be considered for future projects: multiple translations of the draft released simultaneously, attention to hearing from across the connection both geographically and contextually, utilization of the connectional structure to reach many voices.

We celebrate the open process by which multiple iterations of the document could be formulated and receive feedback throughout the quadrennium.

Special thanks to the leaders of ethnic caucuses and national plans, directors of connectional ministries, and Church and Society chairs for their support, particularly in contributing thoughtful and careful feedback on the document. Thanks to the Council of Bishops for support and attention to the process.

The immensity of the work could not have happened without key input and support from the following leaders.

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## Revised United Methodist Social Principles

**Addendum to General Board of Church and Society Report**

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The United Methodist Church, including its predecessor bodies, has a long and rich history of concern for social justice. Its members have often taken forthright positions on controversial issues involving Christian principles. In addition to carrying out acts of mercy, Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, spoke out against the abuse of animals, the exploitation of poor people, and the treatment of human beings as chattel. Following in Wesley’s footsteps, some early Methodists expressed their opposition to the slave trade, to smuggling, and to the cruel treatment of prisoners. Similarly, the United Brethren strongly condemned slavery.

In 1908, The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) was the first denomination to adopt a Social Creed, which called for “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.” Within the next decade similar statements were adopted by The Methodist Episcopal Church (South) and by The Methodist Protestant Church. The Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted a statement of Social Principles in 1946 at the time of the uniting of The United Brethren and The Evangelical Church. In 1972, four years after the uniting in 1968 of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a new statement of Social Principles, which was revised in 1976 and by each successive General Conference. In 2008, the General Conference added a Social Creed companion litany.

The Social Principles are not church law. Instead, they represent the prayerful and earnest efforts of the General Conference to speak to issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation that is in keeping with the best of our United Methodist traditions. The Social Principles are thus a call to faithfulness and to social engagement and intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. Moreover, they challenge all members of The United Methodist Church to engage in deliberative reflection and encourage intentional dialogue between faith and practice. (See BOD ¶ 509.)

The Social Principles are also a living document. In recognition of the important changes that have taken place in The United Methodist Church over the past fifty years, including significant developments in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, the 2012 General Conference mandated that the Social Principles be revised to increase their theological grounding, succinctness, and global relevance. To accomplish this task, the General Board of Church and Society initially sought input and advice through consultations held in each of the five U.S. jurisdictions and a majority of the central conferences. The initial draft of the revised Social Principles was developed by six writing teams, whose members reflected the broad diversity of the church. Following this, an editorial revision team perfected additional drafts, based on feedback received via online surveys, extensive consultations with central and annual conferences, and comments solicited from United Methodist scholars, bishops, church bodies, and leaders across the denomination.

Special Editorial Notes

Throughout the Social Principles, the term “we” refers specifically to the General Conference and more broadly to members of The United Methodist Church. Unless otherwise stated, the term “church” refers specifically to The United Methodist Church rather than, for example, the church universal.
Preamble

We, the people called United Methodists, affirm our faith in the living God, who created everything that is and called it good, and created human beings in God’s own image. We give thanks for Jesus Christ, incarnation of God’s love and our Savior, who redeems and heals our relationship with God. We trust in the movements of the Holy Spirit, transforming human lives and the whole creation. Further, we declare our faith that God’s grace is available to all and “nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created” (Romans 8:38-39 CEB).

From the beginning, God called us into covenant, bound with God, with one another, and with God’s wonderfully diverse creation. God called us, further, to live lovingly in those relationships and to be stewards of God’s created world, to tend God’s garden. As we do our part in caring for creation, we allow all other parts of creation to fulfill their distinctive roles in the covenantal relationship with God (Genesis 2:7-15). According to Jesus’ commandment, we are to love one another: “Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other” (John 13:34-35 CEB).

Created in God’s image to live in covenant with God and the world, we honor the dignity of all beings and affirm the goodness of life. Knowing that we are held in God’s grace, we are able to confess our sins. We have failed to love God with our whole hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have participated in unjust and life-destroying social systems. We have not been faithful stewards of God’s creation, nor have we valued the role that every part of creation plays in the flourishing of God’s world. Further, we have not followed Jesus Christ in sharing God’s extravagant love and ministering with “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45 CEB). We have closed ourselves to God’s guiding Spirit in our daily interactions with the human family and the earth. We have fallen short, and yet God loves us still.

We are grateful for God’s forgiving and sanctifying love, given to us and to all and drawing us toward perfect love. By God’s grace, we are called to be more Christ like and thus to be merciful, just, and compassionate. Responding to that call, we seek to follow Jesus, who gave boundless love to all—the children, the outcast, the condemned, and the confused. Jesus calls every generation to wholehearted discipleship: opening our hearts to the people we encounter daily; practicing compassion with our families and neighbors; honoring the dignity and worth of all people near and far; recognizing the systems that destroy human lives through poverty, war, and exclusion; and advocating justice and care in our churches, communities, and social structures. God calls us further to be stewards of creation, caring for the skies and waters, soil and plants, and all beings.

We give thanks for God’s good gift of the church universal and for the Christian values embodied in the Wesleyan tradition and in The United Methodist Church. We recognize that the body of Christ has many parts, and all are valuable. Thus, we respect differences within Christ’s body, including differences in understanding and expressing faith, in gifts and practices of ministry, and in life experiences, as shaped by ethnicities, cultures, communities, abilities, age, sexual orientation, and gender. We affirm our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual to whom God gives unique gifts. We renew our commitment to be faithful witnesses to the gospel in our daily lives and work and to magnify our witness as the church.

Differences are a precious gift and daunting challenge. They can stretch the church’s capacity to live and minister faithfully. Yet God calls our church to difficult discipleship, with Jesus as our guide and the Spirit as our daily strength. With God’s help, we accept the challenge to follow the high calling “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8 NRSV). John Wesley’s General Rules continue to inspire United Methodists to faithful practices that will do no harm, do good, and follow the ordinances of God (BOD ¶ 104, “The General Rules of the Methodist Church: The Nature, Design, and General Rules of our United Societies”). We recognize the challenges before the church to engage with honesty and compassion through deep listening, hard conversations, and shared ministry, even when we do not agree on all matters.

We acknowledge that the church is a living body gathered from the many and diverse parts of the human community. Thus, unanimity of beliefs, opinion, and practice have never been characteristic of the church from the beginning. From its earliest times, as witnessed in the Gospels, Paul’s letters, the Acts of the Apostles, and other New Testament texts, diverse understandings and controversies on many matters have been the reality. Therefore, whenever significant differences of opinion occur among Christians, some of which continue to divide the church deeply today, faithful Christians need to face their dis-
agreements and even their despair, and not cover differences with false claims of consensus or unanimity. On the contrary, the church needs to embrace conflicts with courage and perseverance as we seek together to discern God’s will. With that understanding and commitment, we pledge ourselves to acknowledge and to embrace with courage, trust, and hope those controversies that arise among us, accepting them as evidence that God is not yet finished in sculpting us to be God’s people.

Recognizing that God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we seek to center our lives and witness on God. We are confident that nothing can separate us from the grace of God, and that the social witness of the church is a testimony to that grace. With God’s help, we pledge to share ministry and honor everyone’s dignity, even when we disagree, to seek the mind of Christ, and to follow God’s will in all things.
Community of All Creation

Preface

The great lesson which our blessed Lord inculcates here . . . is that God is in all things, and that we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature; that we should use and look upon nothing as separate from God . . . who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true sense, the soul of the universe. (John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount: Discourse Three”)

We affirm that all creation belongs to God and is a manifestation of God’s goodness and providential care. Human beings, nonhuman animals, plants, and other sentient and non-sentient beings participate in the community of creation, and their flourishing depends on the care of all God’s creation. Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation (Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 6:26-30; Romans 8:22-24). We are also called to honor the role of every part of creation in healing the whole; thus we praise God with the whole of creation (Psalm 148) and recognize that we are part of complex ecosystems, all valued by God.

We affirm our sacred calling to be responsible stewards and to lovingly tend all that God has wrought. We recognize the inherent worth of God’s creation, celebrate earth’s abundance and diversity, and, along with the entirety of the cosmos, give praise to its Creator. We recognize we are interconnected members of complex ecosystems, intricate webs of life, all of which have their origins in God’s gracious act of Creation.

Creation in Peril

We acknowledge that unsustainable human activities have placed the entirety of God’s creation in peril. Further, we confess that the degradation and wholesale destruction of the natural environment threatens unprecedented harm, bringing danger to human and nonhuman life alike.

A. Destruction of Ecosystems

Whether human beings are conscious of it or not, we are participants in and beneficiaries of complex natural ecosystems made up of myriads of symbiotic relationships between living organisms such as animals, plants, insects, and microorganisms, and the physical environs they inhabit, including air, water, and soil.

Overconsumption, shortsighted policies, poor management of natural resources, and other unsustainable practices have severely impacted the fragile, natural ecosystems on which all of life depends. Too often, humankind has treated the rest of the created world as if it were disposable and allowed the destruction of other living organisms and their natural habitats to go unchecked. Further, the experiences and voices of people most at risk have largely been ignored.

B. Global Warming and Climate Change

Global warming and climate change are already creating extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth. Overindustrialization, widespread deforestation, and overreliance on fossil fuels are but some of the human activities that have contributed to the buildup of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide in the earth’s atmosphere.

A sharp upsurge in greenhouse gases over past decades already has resulted in a steady rise in sea levels, growing acidification of the world’s oceans, increased droughts and famines, and the intensification of extreme weather events. Climate scientists warn that the window of opportunity for reversing the negative effects of global warming and climate change is rapidly closing. Without concerted action by individuals, churches, communities, shareholders, businesses, governments, and international organizations, the negative effects will become irreversible.

C. Dependence on Fossil Fuels

The burning of fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and, to a lesser extent, natural gas, is the greatest single contributor to the buildup of greenhouse gases and the consequent warming of earth’s atmosphere. To reverse the current trajectory of global climate change, increased investments are needed in the research, development, and distribution of alternatives to fossil fuels, including, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, and hydrogen-based energy sources.

In pursuing alternatives to fossil fuels, it is critical to avoid solutions that would worsen current problems or create new, unforeseen environmental challenges. Reliance on nuclear energy, for example, raises considerable concerns regarding the safe storage and containment of radioactive waste.
Similarly, recent proposals to reduce the buildup of greenhouse gases by geo-engineering earth’s biospheres, including its land, air, and water, risk unpredictable side effects and the further destabilization of the natural ecosystems on which all life depends.

Inevitably, transitioning from an overreliance on fossil fuels will have adverse impacts on individuals and communities whose livelihoods are still heavily dependent on the production, sale, and distribution of these commodities. To the greatest extent possible, plans for developing and deploying alternative sources of energy should minimize negative financial impacts by investing in strategies that support people in successfully transitioning to new employment, strengthen the social safety net to deal with the loss of jobs and income, and provide ample educational and retraining opportunities.

**Stewardship of Creation**

In Genesis 1, we read that God declares creation good (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25, 31), and we read in Genesis 2 that God “took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it” (Genesis 2:15 CEB). The goodness of God’s creation, and the value given to every part of it, call people to respect, protect, and care for the creation and all interrelated aspects of it.

**A. Environmental Racism**

We confess that the negative impacts resulting from the degradation of the natural world have fallen disproportionately on marginalized communities, including indigenous tribes, religious and ethnic communities, people living in poverty, and other vulnerable groups. We, therefore, pledge to resist all forms of environmental exploitation, neglect, and inequality. These practices condemn impoverished communities and developing countries to bear the brunt of hazardous environments, industrial pollution, toxic waste dumps, and urban decay. Such behaviors constitute environmental racism. We oppose policies and practices that relegate marginalized communities to a permanent underclass status and ignore indigenous and other sources of communal wisdom, which call for air, land, and water to be treated with profound respect.

Additionally, these groups suffer disproportionately from higher rates of asthma, cancer, birth defects, and other preventable medical conditions. These health problems are associated with pollutants and other chemicals in soil, water, and air that affect our drinking water, foods, and physical environment. We urge governments, businesses, and civic institutions to give priority to increasing access to prevention and treatment services.

We call for the institution of environmentally just principles, policies, and practices. We affirm the wisdom and agency of indigenous peoples and marginalized populations to determine for themselves practices and policies that best provide for their basic human needs, including food, water, shelter, and land free from toxic wastes. Self-determination entails, among other things, access to all pertinent information and significant decision-making power over industrial, agricultural, and other developments that have potential to wreak significant harm on land, air, and water.

**B. Sustainable Policies and Practices**

Sustainability is crucial to the development of ecologically sound policies and practices that seek to restore balance to the natural world and end the disruptive relationships between humanity and the rest of God’s creation.

Sustainable policies and practices aim to meet present human needs while ensuring that future generations have the resources they need to thrive. Sustainable policies and practices prioritize the protection of all forms of life and natural ecosystems, while supporting human beings to live in healthy balance with the earth.

We urge United Methodists to adopt sustainable habits and practices, including refraining from overconsumption, repurposing and recycling materials, avoiding products that pollute or otherwise harm the environment, and reducing the carbon footprints of individuals and families by reducing overall reliance on fossil fuels for heat, transportation, and other goods.

Recognizing that simply changing our personal habits will not be enough to reverse decades of environmental damage, the church supports local, regional, national, and international cooperative efforts aimed at redressing the ecological harms humans have wreaked on a global scale. Such cooperative efforts must include the development and enforcement of policies and practices that protect all sentient beings, and the promotion of sustainable economic development. We also encourage responsible consumption and urgent action against global warming and climate change.

**C. Food Justice**

Food systems that are ecologically sustainable, locally oriented, and equitably distributed are urgent priorities. We endorse policies and practices designed to ensure access to healthy nourishment and clean drinking water, especially for communities that have been subjected to environmental degradation or deprived of adequate resources to produce or purchase their own food.
We also affirm food sovereignty, which promotes the rights of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. We support local control of food production, which entails providing opportunities for local communities to participate meaningfully in decisions about the kinds of livestock to be raised and crops to be grown. We reject agricultural policies and practices that make food inaccessible to agricultural workers and the communities in which the food is produced. We advocate for strong protections of the land, food, and water rights of indigenous peoples.

We oppose the patenting of seed varieties and other organisms traditionally used in farming and agriculture. The rapidly expanding practice of patenting seed varieties and charging farmers for their use has reduced access to traditional crops and increased the indebtedness of subsistence and smaller-scale farms. Consequently, we support cooperative, open-source efforts aimed at making traditional seed varieties available to those who need them.

We also call for the creation of policies that reduce carbon-intensive agricultural methods, which increase climate change. Producers must be responsible for their adverse impact on food packaging, distribution, and transport, and seek the safety and well-being of agricultural and food processing workers.

D. Caring for All Creatures

We support the respectful and humane treatment of animals, who are crucial participants in God’s ongoing creation and of inherent worth. We embrace biblical teachings that envision a time when humans and other creatures shall live in peace and harmony in a restored creation (Isaiah 11:6).

This commitment to respectful and humane treatment of animals means, for instance, putting in place protections to ensure that animals employed in agricultural and other forms of labor are free from cruel or abusive types of treatment and provided with ample rest and nourishment. Additionally, we oppose forcing animals to combat each other.

Animals raised for human consumption should be provided with healthy living conditions and sufficient food and water. Animals raised for human consumption must likewise be reared in humane conditions and slaughtered in a manner that minimizes their overall suffering and pain.

With respect to creatures living in the wild, we urge cooperative efforts by international bodies, governments, civic institutions, churches, and concerned individuals and groups to end poaching and protect endangered and vulnerable species and preserve dwindling habitats. We decry the mass extinctions currently underway and call for the adoption of sustainable policies and practices that allow both animal and human life to flourish.

E. Protecting Space

God’s creation encompasses not only the earth but the entire cosmos, including space. Our charge to be responsible stewards thus extends well beyond humankind’s immediate environs and encompasses not only our own solar system but also other galaxies. Hence, we reject the exploitation, commodification, and militarization of space. We express our hope that the exploration and settlement of space, including the moon and other planetary bodies, take place peacefully and cooperatively, and in such fashion that the benefits and resources of any further exploration and development accrue to all humanity.

F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom

We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos. We also acknowledge that like all human endeavors, science can be misused and abused. We, therefore, urge all those involved in scientific investigations to adhere to the highest ethical standards in conducting research and applying their findings.

We also affirm the traditional wisdom found within indigenous communities, particularly the emphasis that native and first peoples have placed on living in harmony and balance with the earth and other animals as well as the need to protect the air, land, and water.
The Economic Community

Preface

When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, [God] placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward: As such [God] entrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these still rests in [God], nor can be alienated from [God]. As you yourself are not your own, but God’s, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. (John Wesley, “The Use of Money”)

As United Methodists, we profess that all we are and all that we possess belong to God. We are temporary stewards of the resources and material goods that we have accumulated. In our financial dealings and relationships no less than other aspects of discipleship, we are compelled to serve God and neighbor in all we do.

Few biblical themes are as prominent or as numerous as the scriptural injunctions to stand in solidarity with “the least of these,” including the poor, the orphan, the widow, the stranger, and all other vulnerable members of society (Amos 5:7-13; Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:15-16). Accordingly, we pledge ourselves to the establishment of just, equitable, and sustainable economies that work for all.

Economic Challenges

A. Globalization

We believe that global cooperation often contributes to human and environmental flourishing. However, we lament that globalization has created significant obstacles to achieving economic justice in too many instances. Globalization is marked by the growing integration of national economies and the emergence of multinational corporations that play an outsized role in global market systems.

While globalization undoubtedly has provided certain financial and other benefits, it has also undermined established wage and labor standards, weakened environmental protections, and accelerated the concentration of the world’s wealth in the hands of a relative few. Additionally, globalization has increased overconsumption due to the ready access of cheaper goods and has undermined indigenous land rights in a rush to acquire raw materials necessary for expanded production.

As a church, we recognize the importance of creating just, equitable, and sustainable economies that benefit all members of society, especially marginalized and vulnerable peoples. Further, because globalization transcends the capacity of any single individual, community, or government to manage, we call on international bodies, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and others, to hold multinational corporations and national governments accountable to provide for economies that promote people over profits and protect the environment.

B. Poverty and Income Inequality

As United Methodists, we follow in the footsteps of our founder, John Wesley, who sought to improve the lives of those who suffered from debilitating conditions such as poverty, starvation, illiteracy, imprisonment, slavery, addictions, and disease.

We decry the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the concentration of wealth in the hands of ever smaller percentages of the global population. We lament that too many of the world’s people lack the basic resources necessary for survival and pledge ourselves to work toward the eradication of the roots and effects of poverty. We further lament the multiple causes of poverty, such as war, famine, diseases, and desertification.

We reject religious teachings that view the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God’s favor and poverty as a sign of God’s disfavor. We confess that we have not always heeded the words of Jesus, who preached good news to people living in poverty, taught that they were not far from God’s coming reign, and challenged the rich young man to give up all that he had to follow him (Luke 6:20; Matthew 19:23-25).

We commit ourselves to be in active ministry with impoverished communities by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and by supporting their efforts to secure equal opportunities and meet human needs, including food, water, health care, and education. We reject preferential treatment in the church on the basis of wealth and income. We also commit to work toward eradicating unjust practices, policies, and systems that have condemned entire generations to live in unrelenting poverty.

C. Human Trafficking and Slavery

We condemn human trafficking and slavery as profound violations of the inherent dignity and worth of every person and of their fundamental rights related to autonomy, including the ability of every individual to make personal life choices. We understand slavery to be a repu-
diation of the basic Christian understanding that all people are created in the image of God.

Human trafficking entails the buying and selling of human beings for purposes of forced or indentured labor, including private and commercial sexual exploitation. We consider such trafficking to be abhorrent because it violates basic human rights and exploits the vulnerabilities of the weakest members of society. Those who are especially vulnerable include minor children and women, migrants, displaced people, and others living in poverty.

We support the abolition of human trafficking and slavery of any kind. We commit ourselves to work toward the elimination of the social and economic inequities that provide fertile ground for the flourishing of these evils. We also reject the practice of using enslaved, indentured, imprisoned, or coerced laborers in extractive industries or in the production of commercial goods. We urge individuals, families, congregations, and retailers to practice socially responsible consumerism by educating themselves about the sources of labor and the working conditions involved in production processes.

D. Graft, Bribery, and Corruption

We oppose graft, bribery, and other forms of corruption as breaches of the public trust and impediments to the creation of just and equitable societies. We deplore the involvement of government officials, business executives, church leaders, and other people of authority in these practices, not only because of their illegality but because such practices erode public confidence in legitimate forms of authority. Additionally, they subvert basic principles related to equality under the law and serve as obstacles to establishing just and equitable economies. The consequence is the diversion of public funding and manipulation of public contracts that undermine projects and services that could benefit the entire society.

Economic Justice

I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatev­er your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No more covetousness! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all [people]! (John Wesley, "The Use of Money")

Our commitment to achieving economic justice is rooted in the covenantal understanding that God’s creation is meant to be shared by all humans and sentient beings. Just as the oikos or household served as the heart of the economy in ancient times, our belief in the inclusive nature of God’s global household motivates our pursuit of just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

As members of God’s oikos and followers of Jesus, who taught that we must “give to those who ask, and [not] turn away from those who want to borrow,” we embrace our charge to share the abundance of God’s creation in just and equitable ways (Matthew 5:42 NLT). We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, and civic associations to ensure that individuals, families, and communities not only survive, but also thrive.

A. Responsible Consumerism

Socially responsible consumerism is critical in life today. We urge individuals, families, and congregations to adopt life habits that reduce unnecessary waste, promote just and equitable compensation, promote sustainability, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

We urge consumers to exercise their economic power to encourage the manufacture of goods that are beneficial to humankind while avoiding those produced through exploitative labor practices. We support peaceful and nonviolent efforts, including boycotts, letter-writing campaigns, appeals to stockholders, and divestiture as effective means of expressing collective dissatisfaction with companies that engage in unjust or harmful practices. We also call upon stockholders and employees to exercise their moral agency by seeking to influence corporate policies. When such actions are necessary, we urge that they be in alignment with the teachings of the gospel and the church’s commitment to the dignity and worth of all beings.

In recognition that developed nations now consume the vast majority of the world’s natural resources, we also support international policies and cooperative efforts aimed at producing economies that are more just and that promote human flourishing.

B. Farming and Agricultural Production

The emphasis placed on the necessity of “daily bread” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:11 NRSV) serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of daily sustenance and the crucial roles that farming and other forms of agricultural production play in meeting the nutritional needs of a rapidly expanding global population. We, therefore, call for the establishment of policies and practices to guarantee the safety and security of these lifelines and to ensure that the decision-making related to agricultural production, and the benefits of that production, are open to all.

We support local and family farms and appreciate their value in feeding the vast majority of the world’s
population. We deplore the growing monopolization of the means of agricultural production by corporations and large agribusinesses. These monopolies raise significant concerns about the loss of local input and decision-making power, and accelerate the degradation of ecosystems, including soil, water, and forests.

Large agribusinesses, in particular, have exacerbated practices that reserve the best lands for the exclusive production of exportable crops, rather than using those resources to feed local populations. They also have accelerated the depletion of the soil through monocultural farming, increased the release of methane gas by livestock, contributed to environmental degradation, and exposed workers to unsafe levels of pesticides and herbicides.

We endorse measures that protect the continued operation of local, family, and communal farms, and call for the elimination of government programs that disproportionately benefit large corporations and agribusinesses. We support efforts to restore local input and decision-making regarding the use of land, the production of crops, the raising of livestock, and the protection of local habitats in hopes that this will enable local communities to reap more of the benefits of farming and other forms of agricultural production.

We urge farmers, large and small, to engage in sustainable practices that preserve the integrity of the food chain, ensure that farmworkers and other laborers are justly compensated, and protect the natural environment.

C. The Dignity of Work

We believe in the dignity of work, not merely as a means of subsistence, but as a way for individuals to contribute to the flourishing of their families and contribute to the common good. This affirmation of the dignity of work leads us to support the right to safe and secure working conditions, free from health and safety hazards. We also endorse the establishment and enforcement of policies that guarantee workers fair and equitable compensation, sometimes referred to as a living wage. We recognize that full employment is a distant dream in many communities and cultures and, in such situations, the challenges in establishing workers’ rights are significant. Still, the church advocates for the fair and decent treatment of workers and supports policies that expand opportunities for more people to find meaningful work with just compensation and benefits.

We oppose the widespread reliance on child labor, which forces children under the age of eighteen to relinquish their childhoods and forgo educational opportunities, and instead to work in commercial agriculture, industrial manufacturing, or extractive industries.

We support workers’ freedom of association, including their rights to organize unions, to engage in collective bargaining, and to protest both unsafe working conditions and unjust employment policies and practices. We also support workers’ right to strike. We reject efforts to permanently replace workers engaged in strikes or to make organized work stoppages illegal.

We support measures that limit the length of both the workday and workweek and endorse policies that guarantee every worker paid time off, including but not limited to sick time and bereavement leave, opportunities to vote and carry out other civic duties, holiday or vacation time, and parental leave for those caring for newborns or newly adopted children.

D. Sabbath and Renewal Time

We recognize Sabbath as a gift of God for all people, remembering that God rested on the seventh day of Creation (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11). We affirm the importance of taking time away from work to rest and renew the mind, body, and spirit, engage in play and recreation, and serve the needs of our communities. We further affirm that Sabbath is also a time to provide rest for others in the human community.

We encourage all United Methodists to honor the Sabbath by actively participating in the worship life of a local congregation. We urge governments and businesses to promote policies and practices that allow people of all religious faiths to take ample time away from work to engage in worship, renewal, and fellowship opportunities.

E. Corporate Responsibility

We believe that corporations and businesses, like all other human institutions, are charged with doing good, promoting equity and justice, and making positive contributions to communal life. Rather than merely producing profits for their shareholders, we believe corporations and businesses have significant roles to play in promoting the social and economic health and welfare of society.

We call on corporations and businesses to place people above profits and to observe the highest ethical standards in conducting their business. We, therefore, urge corporate leaders and stockholders to comply with all laws, regulations, and international accords related to the defense of the environment, the safety and security of the workplace, and the guarantee of basic rights.

We lament the long history of injustice and of violations of formal treaties and agreements. We hold corporations, businesses, and governments responsible for any violations or infringements of the rights and lands of
individuals and communities and commit ourselves to ad-
vocate and work for justice.

We commend socially responsible investment as an
important mechanism to hold corporations accountable
for promoting the common good. We, therefore, urge indi-
viduals, families, congregations, and other church bodies
to educate themselves about the use of their investment
funds and to leverage their economic clout by mandating
the redirection of their funds from industries that nega-
tively impact people or the environment. After all other
avenues have been exhausted, other effective strategies in-
clude direct dialogue, joint shareholder actions, and boy-
cott and divestment efforts.

The Social Community

Preface

When it comes to faith, what a living, creative, ac-
tive, powerful thing it is! It cannot do other than good
at all times. It never waits to ask whether there is some
good which is to be done; rather, before the question
is raised, it has done the deed, and keeps on doing it.
[One] who is not active in this way is a [person] with-
out faith. (John Wesley, Preface, *Explanatory Notes on
Romans*)

The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but
social; no holiness but social holiness. (John Wesley,
Preface, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*)

As United Methodists, we affirm that human beings
are made for God and for one another (Genesis 1:26-27,
31; Philippians 2:3-8). We live out our lives, grow in the
faith, and engage in acts of discipleship and witness in
the context of a variety of interconnected communities,
including families, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces
and the broader society.

The church is called to be a distinctive community,
marked by preaching of the gospel, studying of Scrip-
ture, breaking of bread, and witnessing to the power of
redemption in the midst of a broken world. We respond
to God’s call in the world by giving witness to the trans-
formative power of the gospel, engaging in acts of mercy,
and striving toward the attainment of justice and peace as
hallmarks of God’s coming reign. In all of these efforts,
Christians are reminded that diverse as we may be, we are
all a part of the same body under the sovereignty of Christ
(1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

The Nurturing Community

A. The Family

We recognize that families come in a variety of siz-
es and forms, and acknowledge their significant role in
nurturing the physical, moral, and spiritual development
of children, youth, and adults. Nurture and support are
fundamental to the proper functioning of families. We,
therefore, urge all family members to treat one another
with love and respect. We also encourage parents and oth-
er caregivers to exercise appropriate diligence and care,
raising their children in ways that promote their physical,
spiritual, emotional, and moral growth.

Children are a gift from God to be welcomed and re-
ceived. We lament that in some instances, birth parents are
unable or unwilling to fulfill their caregiving obligations.
Under these circumstances, we applaud the willingness of
extended families and foster and adoptive parents to step
in as primary nurturers. Even in these situations, however,
we recognize the trauma that may be caused by separating
children from their families of origin and urge that such
actions be handled justly, sensitively, and compassionately.
Where appropriate and possible, we encourage open
adoption so that children may know all information rele-
ant to them, both medically and relationally.

B. Single People

We celebrate the contributions of single people and
reject all social practices that discriminate against them
or subject them to bias and prejudice. We respect the de-
cisions of single people regarding marriage and we af-
firm the many ways in which they may participate in family
and community life. This profound sense of respect ex-
tends to single parents. We recognize the extra burdens
and challenges that single parenthood entails and offer our
love, support, and care in the fulfillment of this special
vocation.

C. Human Sexuality

We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift and ac-
knowledge that sexual intimacy contributes to fostering
the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of indi-
viduals and to nurturing healthy sexual relationships that
are grounded in love, care, and respect.

Human sexuality is a healthy and natural part of life
that is expressed in wonderfully diverse ways from birth
to death. It is shaped by a combination of nature and nur-
ture: heredity and genetic factors on the one hand and
childhood development and environment on the other. We further honor the diversity of choices and vocations in relation to sexuality such as celibacy, marriage, and singleness.

We support the rights of all people to exercise personal consent in sexual relationships, to make decisions about their own bodies and be supported in those decisions, to receive comprehensive sexual education, to be free from sexual exploitation and violence, and to have access to adequate sexual health care.

D. Marriage

Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

While The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple’s faith, grounded in their relationship with God and one another. Marriage thus reflects a continued willingness to grow together in Christ and a commitment to cultivate a covenantal bond that encompasses intimacy, grace, and love.

As members of the larger society, we also affirm the importance of civil marriage, the legal recognition of domestic unions by the state. Such legal recognition is vital for guaranteeing family stability and the orderly regulation of inheritances, and for providing assurance that spouses and children are afforded all the rights, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled.

1. Child Marriage

We reject marital relationships with children and youth under the age of eighteen, even in places where such relationships are culturally or legally permissible. Child marriages and premature sexual activities disrupt the normal course of emotional, biological, and social development of minor children. For underage girls, in particular, premature sexual activities—and the pregnancies resulting from such activities—can permanently damage internal organs, lead to lifelong medical problems, and preclude other opportunities in their lives. Waiting until a more appropriate age to wed offers better opportunities for children and youth to grow into healthy adulthood and become full, contributing members of society. We therefore believe that young people should be of legal age to give their consent before entering into marriage.

2. Polygamy

We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy, which entails living in relationship with multiple spouses. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the forced dissolution of such relationships presents significant problems. All too often, the women and children forced out of polygamous relationships find themselves cast into abject poverty with no means of support.

We, therefore, urge church leaders, when dealing with the dissolution of polygamous relationships, to exercise the utmost care and to prioritize considerations related to the continued health and well-being of dependent women and children.

We reject attempts to ostracize families who are or have been in polygamous relationships, especially women and children, or deny them access to the ministries of the church, including participation in the sacraments. Instead, we urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need.

3. Divorce

We recognize that divorce may become a regrettable but necessary alternative when marital relationships are strained beyond repair or become destructive or when spouses become irrevocably estranged. In such instances, we advise married couples to seek appropriate counseling and, if divorce proceedings become unavoidable, to conduct them in a manner that minimizes detrimental impacts on all family members.

Fidelity to the marriage covenant does not require spouses to remain in a physically or mentally abusive relationship. We do not support efforts to withhold the church’s ministries from divorced people or to deny them opportunities for leadership in the church, whether clergy or lay. We urge pastors and congregations to provide ministries and programs that support divorced people in overcoming social and religious stigmas that they too often face. Divorce does not preclude remarriage.

Other Social Issues

A. Substance Abuse, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Substance abuse refers both to the devastating psychological and physiological effects of dependence and to the broader social consequences of abuse. In responding to the widespread realities of substance abuse disorders, we begin with the recognition of the devastating impacts of addiction and of the misuse and abuse of legal and illegal substances in the lives of individual users, extended families, and entire communities.
In many parts of the world, opioid and other substance abuse has reached crisis proportions. The church supports programs and policies that comprehensively address the causes and cures of debilitating addictions. We call upon society to refrain from judging people who are addicted and upon governments at all levels to provide resources commensurate with the scope of the problem.

In recognition of the devastation that substance abuse has wreaked on individuals, families, and entire communities, we urge United Methodists to refrain from the use of any licit or illicit intoxicants, drugs, or other substances that foster addiction, impair mental faculties and physical abilities, and result in long-lasting damage to individuals, families, and communities.

Regarding the consumption of alcohol, we acknowledge the historic United Methodist stance on abstinence as a safeguard against mental, physical, and spiritual harms caused by excessive drinking. Consequently, we urge those who choose to consume alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer, to do so wisely and in moderation. Another important consideration is the impact of such actions on those struggling to recover from alcohol use and abuse.

Due to mounting medical evidence regarding the highly addictive nature and serious health consequences of direct or indirect ingestion or inhalation of nicotine and other chemicals found in commercial tobacco products, the church recommends complete abstinence. In making this recommendation, we recognize the difficulties in overcoming nicotine addiction and urge congregations to find ways to provide meaningful support to those who decide to stop using nicotine.

B. Bullying and Other Forms of Violence

We decry all forms of bullying, which consists of unwanted and aggressive behaviors toward children, youth, and adults, including verbal taunts, physical violence, emotional manipulation, and social intimidation. When specifically targeted toward children and youth, bullying stunts emotional and intellectual development and turns schools, neighborhoods, and virtual or online settings into dangerous and unsafe environments. Bullying often has long-term traumatic effects on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of its victims. We support the enactment of policies aimed at safeguarding children, youth, and adults from bullying. In situations involving minor children and youth, we urge the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies that take into consideration the ongoing maturational processes of both the victims and perpetrators of bullying.

C. Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Their Consequences

We acknowledge that the tangled and complex legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism hang heavily over the global fellowship of United Methodists. Colonialism refers to the practice of establishing full or partial control of other countries, tribes, and peoples through conquest and exploitation. Neocolonialism continues the historic legacy of colonialism by maintaining economic, political, and social control of formerly colonized nations and peoples.

Some of us belong to countries and groups that have richly benefited from the subjugation of whole peoples and from the seizure of lands and other resources. Others of us live in countries or are a part of communities that continue to struggle with the ongoing history and impacts of all forms of colonialism, including social, economic, and political instability; widespread malnutrition; illiteracy; disease; and continuing infringements on indigenous and tribal lands.

We recognize that far from being innocent bystanders, the church has often been deeply involved in colonialism and neocolonialism. We, therefore, call on individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the troubling legacies of colonialism and, where appropriate, to seek repentance for our continued involvement. We urge United Methodists to find ways to support those still suffering from colonial legacies, including tangible acts of reparation and active support for sustainable development initiatives.

D. Death with Dignity

We recognize that every mortal life ends in death, and we affirm that God’s abiding love and care remain with us as we transition from life to death to greater life. These affirmations, together with our expressed commitment to the sacred worth of every human being, lead us to insist that individuals be treated with dignity and respect as they undergo the dying process.

This emphasis on death with dignity means that the choices of individuals and families must be heard and respected, the use of medical technology must be measured and appropriate, and any unnecessary pain and suffering must be minimized. We affirm the right of people in the process of dying to participate actively in the decision-making process. As communities of faith, we are called to support individuals and families as they confront the realities of suffering and death. In sensitive and caring ways, we bear witness to God’s enduring love and grace, even when they cannot be felt or experienced in an immediate way.
1. Faithful Care of Dying People

Our approach to death and dying is framed by our belief in the inherent dignity and worth of human beings, our concern for patient autonomy, and the affirmation that our lives ultimately belong to God. Within this framework, we strongly support efforts to empower patients and their loved ones to make informed decisions about continued treatment or end-of-life decisions that are consistent with applicable legal statutes and established medical protocols and standards.

Such informed decision-making may lead patients and their loved ones to choose to continue treatments that hold the promise of significant health improvements or enhanced quality of life. Conversely, such decisions may also lead patients or loved ones to discontinue medical interventions that cease to be of substantive benefit.

We affirm the benefits of palliative care in instances where a decision is made to stop other treatments. Palliative care stresses the importance of making patients as comfortable as possible, minimizing pain and suffering, and allowing the dying process to proceed unhindered. We also endorse the creation of advance medical directives, which clearly express the preferences of patients should they become incapacitated and unable to advise their doctors.

2. Euthanasia and Suicide

Our conviction that life is a sacred gift, along with persistent questions and concerns about potential abuse, lead us as a church to oppose both euthanasia and suicide while continuing our ministries of mercy with families who are affected by such actions. Euthanasia, also known as mercy killing and physician-directed or physician-assisted suicide, occurs when doctors or other health professionals make lethal doses of medications available to terminally ill patients, or, in some cases, directly administer or supervise the taking of such medications.

Suicide refers more generally to actions taken by individuals to end their own lives. The motivations for suicide often involve depression and other forms of mental illness, including substance abuse. Worldwide, suicide attempts often occur after significant personal or familial crises, including the loss of livelihoods, forced migration and displacement, cultural oppression, and prolonged exposure to bullying and other acts of violence.

While euthanasia or suicide cannot be condoned, we humbly confess the inadequacy of the church’s understanding and response. We urge congregations to educate themselves regarding the complex set of motivations and factors underlying these practices. Recognizing that final judgment lies in God’s hands rather than our own, we reject attempts to deny the ministries and services of the church to those who die by euthanasia or suicide or to their grieving families and other loved ones.

We believe that suicide does not bar people from God’s grace, which is all-sufficient. We urge pastors and local congregations to establish appropriate protocols in responding to people considering suicide and the survivors of suicide attempts. Such protocols should include referrals to experienced counselors or medical professionals. Rather than ostracizing or condemning survivors or family members affected by suicide, we urge pastors and congregations to provide compassion and support to these people.

E. Gambling

We reject the practice of gambling because it focuses society’s attention on the acquisition of monetary goods at the exclusion of all else and enriches a small minority at the expense of the larger majority. For too many people, gambling becomes a devastating and addictive practice that jeopardizes the economic well-being of both gamblers and their families.

We acknowledge that in some locales, First Nation, American Indian, and aboriginal peoples have opened gambling resorts and establishments as an act of self-determination and a crucial step toward economic survival. Rather than condemning such actions, we recognize that the church’s role is to encourage dialogue and education regarding the hopes and aspirations of these communities and to develop a deeper understanding of their histories and their continued quests for self-determination and survival.

We vow to work toward the eradication of poverty and a more equitable distribution of financial benefits as a constructive strategy to reduce the financial appeal of organized gambling which includes lotteries, casinos, and online games of chance.

F. Gender Equality and Diversity

We support both gender equality and gender diversity as important goals for ensuring that the aspirations of women and girls are taken seriously and guaranteeing that paid positions and leadership opportunities are distributed equally for all. We decry the persistence of sexism and misogyny in the church through its practices and theological teachings, as well as in the broader society. We regret that such prejudices have too often led to the denigration and dismissal of women’s leadership and participation.

Consequently, we reject any beliefs, policies, or practices that envision women and men as unequal in either religious or secular settings. We exhort congregations,
pastors, boards of ordained ministry, bishops, and other church officials to implement concrete efforts to nurture and promote the leadership of all people, regardless of gender. We also urge governments, businesses, and civil society to enact laws and policies to ensure that all members of society are afforded equal access, opportunities, and protections.

G. Media and Communication Technologies

We support freedom of public expression, which encompasses freedom of the press and the right of all societal members to share their perspectives and opinions. We also insist that all media companies operate with civility and respect and adhere to established journalistic standards. We affirm the positive roles that media and communication technologies play in educating the general public, holding government and other societal leaders accountable, and promoting the common good.

We are concerned about media monopolies and the tendency of media control to rest in the hands of a few large corporations, and we encourage individuals, communities, and governments to be vigilant in the enforcement of antitrust policies.

We also recognize that, like every other human endeavor, the media can be used by unscrupulous people to manipulate public opinions, distort facts, and spread misinformation, hostility, and fear. We deplore the proliferation of hate speech across social media, broadcast and print news, and other platforms, and we call upon citizens and regulators to do all in their power to eliminate it. We also encourage individuals to take care when expressing their views on social media, recognizing the need for compassion and the harm that can be done to others when such compassion is lacking.

Further, media and other communication technologies lack adequate or diverse representation of marginalized communities, including women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, impoverished people, and others. We believe that media and communications technologies should be open and accessible to all, foster norms that promote civility and respect, and protect the dignity and worth of all people, including society’s most vulnerable.

H. Pornography

We strongly oppose pornography and lament its destructive impact upon cultures, families, and individuals. Pornography is an affront to our deeply held conviction that human sexuality is a precious gift from God. The issue of pornography is one that has dramatically impacted many both within and outside of the worldwide church. Though graphic images have been available for centuries, the widespread prevalence and availability of sexually explicit and aggressive materials today have led to an increasing problem of addiction for many, including young people who have come of age with the internet in their homes and on mobile devices. We call upon all United Methodists to support actions to develop effective societal and governmental policies to eradicate child pornography as well as adult exploitation and enslavement. We further call on the church to offer nonjudgmental support, rehabilitation, and care to those who have been affected by the harmful impact of pornography on their lives.

I. Medical Experimentation and Research

We support medical experimentation and research procedures that hold the potential of eradicating illness and disease and/or extending and improving the quality of human life. We insist that medical experimentation, including genetic engineering, be performed within established bioethical parameters. These parameters, which derive from the physician’s responsibility to do no harm, include guarantees of patient autonomy and informed consent; assurances that the benefits and risks of medical experimentation are equitably distributed among various societal groups; the promise of significant benefits for patients involved in such experiments; and, to a lesser extent, the opportunity to significantly advance the medical field.

We advocate for meticulous oversight of all forms of medical experimentation to ensure that the highest ethical parameters are applied. We urge strong cooperation among governments, academic institutions, corporate researchers, and the medical profession to enforce prevailing medical research standards. Additionally, we insist on due diligence to ensure that people living in poverty, including those in developing countries and less affluent societies, are not overrepresented or underrepresented in medical studies and then denied the benefits derived from the studies.

J. Organ Donation and Transplantation

We strongly support organ donation as an expression of Christ’s admonition to love one’s neighbor. A worldwide shortage of transplantable organs means that hundreds of thousands of children, women, and men are subjected to needless pain and premature death. In light of this, United Methodists who are willing and able to participate are encouraged to volunteer through organ donation registries.

We believe that all donations must be voluntary and must be conducted in safe and secure medical environments in which the health, well-being, and privacy of both donors and recipients are protected. Further, we consid-
er the buying and selling of organs and blood, including those obtained through theft and coercion, to be profound violations of the inherent dignity of human life and of moral precepts that dictate against human beings being treated as commodities.

We urge governments and medical organizations to adopt laws and policies promoting organ donation while protecting vulnerable populations from abusive practices and ensuring that transplantable organs are equitably distributed regardless of a potential recipient’s social standing.

K. Reproductive Health and Abortion

We support the provision of comprehensive, age-appropriate education for sexual health, as well as access to consistent, effective, and affordable contraception. We also affirm ministries and initiatives aimed at promoting reproductive health and enhancing the quality of life for women and girls. Because of the dangers and risks involved in childbearing, we believe that women and girls should have consistent access to gynecological care. We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, churches, and other civic institutions to make access to prevention education, medical check-ups, treatment, and counseling high priorities for women and girls of childbearing age.

Our commitment to the sanctity of human life makes us reluctant to condone abortion. We unconditionally reject it as an acceptable means of birth control or a mechanism for gender selection and other forms of eugenics. We support measures requiring parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood, except in cases of alleged incest.

We oppose late-term or partial-birth abortion, a process also known as dilation and extraction. We call for the end to this practice, except when the life of the mother is in danger, no other medical treatments are feasible, or when severe abnormalities threaten the viability of the fetus. We recognize that these and other tragic conflicts of life with life may justify decisions to terminate the life of a fetus. In these limited circumstances, we support the legal option of abortion and insist that such procedures be performed by trained medical providers in clean and safe settings.

We urge all those considering abortions to seek appropriate medical advice and pastoral counseling and to engage in searching, prayerful inquiries into other alternatives, such as making babies available for adoption. We pray for those facing unintended pregnancies and offer our prayers and support as they attempt to discern God’s will and seek God’s wisdom and guidance. Regardless of the circumstances in which someone might get an abortion, we do not condone bullying or shaming people for their decisions or actions.

We acknowledge that young women of childbearing age frequently report that they lack the ability to make meaningful life choices or exercise effective control over their own lives. We challenge pastors, congregations, campus ministries, and others to be at the forefront of efforts to empower these young women. Additionally, we support resource centers that offer compassionate care and help women explore alternatives to abortion.

We recognize that access to reproductive health services is too often limited by economic factors. Women living in poverty are often unable to make choices about when to become pregnant or about the size of their families. They also lack access to safe prenatal and postnatal care. Such a lack of agency perpetuates cycles of poverty by restricting the ability of women to participate in the workforce and by increasing the strain on scarce family resources. We support policies and programs that extend reproductive health services to women in economically challenged areas.

We support the use of a variety of reproductive strategies for those desiring to have children, including fertility treatments, in vitro fertilization (IVF), embryo or sperm donation, surrogacy, and others. We believe the decision whether to use reproductive alternatives is best left to those considering the use of these options, in consultation with their health care providers. In all instances, the use of reproductive alternatives should be in keeping with the highest ethical standards, prioritizing the health and well-being of both women and children.

L. Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism

We condemn racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism, and any ideology or social practice based on false and misleading beliefs or ideologies that one group of human beings is superior to all other groups of human beings. Additionally, we utterly reject laws, policies, and social practices that marginalize, discriminate, and/or encourage the use of violence against individuals, communities or other social groups based on perceived racial, ethnic or tribal differences.

We call on congregations and on pastors, bishops, and other church authorities to educate themselves about the root causes and manifestations of racism, ethnocentrism, and tribalism within communities of faith and to develop strategies for overcoming these kinds of social divisions. We likewise urge governments, businesses, and civil society organizations to renounce statements, policies, and
actions aimed at promoting exclusion, discrimination, and violence.

M. Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, we condemn sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and consider them grave violations of the established behavioral norms within the church as well as our larger society. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks, gender-based remarks, or physical advances made in workplaces, professional settings, or social situations.

Sexual abuse or molestation entails unwanted sexual activity perpetrated through the use of force or threats, or by taking advantage of those who are unable to give consent or those in vulnerable situations with unequal power. Sexual assault includes all threats and forms of forcible sexual contact or bodily harm, including rape. We particularly deplore the sexual exploitation of children and youth and recognize that any sexual abuse is especially heinous and damaging when it occurs in the context of the church.

We urge pastors, congregations, and other church bodies to adopt clear policies and practices to prevent or address instances of sexual harassment. These policies and practices should include required training for all clergy and church staff, printed guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment, a safe and confidential reporting method, and a clear process for resolving grievance complaints, including escalating penalties that end with the dismissal of repeat offenders who fail to correct their behavior.

We advocate the development and implementation of comprehensive policies and practices in relation to cases of suspected sexual abuse and assault, especially when such cases involve minor children or others incapable of giving their consent. Even unsubstantiated reports of assault or abuse must be investigated immediately. Further, we urge pastors and congregations to comply fully with any legal statutes governing such matters and to be cognizant of any legal obligations as a mandated reporter.

The Political Community

Preface

“Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment.” Very excellent things are spoken of love; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one. “Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable,” or honorable; “if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,” they are all comprised in this one word,—love. (John Wesley, “The Circumcision of the Heart”)

Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good. We acknowledge that such political engagement demands humility and mindfulness of our own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It also necessitates compassion, prayer, and a willingness to discern God’s guidance.

We believe in the inherent worth of all people, which is established through God’s gracious act of Creation and most fully revealed in the power of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. The understanding that people are created in the image of God is a central theme in John Wesley’s teachings.

We further believe that God calls all members of the human family to recognize and protect the dignity and worth of all people and to work for the well-being of all God’s creation. We, therefore, support structures in the church and in civil society that honor the basic freedoms and rights of all human beings and protect God’s creation. In particular, we affirm the important work of the United Nations in promoting peace and security, championing human dignity and human rights, and advocating for sustainable development.

Government Responsibilities

A. Church and Governments

We affirm that both church and state have vital and distinct roles to play in relation to the larger society. Though the formal relationships between religious communities and governments vary from country to country, we generally affirm the independence and integrity of both institutions, and we advocate for a relationship of mutual respect in which neither institution seeks to dominate or unduly influence the other.

We affirm that every form of government stands under God’s judgment and must therefore be held accountable
for protecting the innocent, guaranteeing basic freedoms and liberties, protecting the natural world, and establishing just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

We urge those elected or appointed to public posts or holding other positions in government to act as responsible leaders and stewards of the authority and resources entrusted to them. We call on all government officials to aspire to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, and integrity. Furthermore, we urge all governments to adopt policies and practices that guarantee accountability and transparency in fostering and maintaining the trust of the public.

We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices. In keeping with international laws and ordinances, we vehemently protest the use of torture, slavery, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression by any government, and call for the strictest international sanctions to be imposed in such cases.

While we do not believe churches should affiliate with particular political parties, we do encourage churches to speak out boldly on social issues from a gospel perspective. We further believe churches have a right and a responsibility to educate and equip their members to be effective advocates for justice in the wider world.

B. Civil Disobedience

We support those who, acting under the constraints of moral conscience or religious conviction and having exhausted all other legal avenues, feel compelled to disobey or protest unjust or immoral laws. We urge those who engage in civil disobedience to do so nonviolently and with respect for the dignity and worth of all concerned. We also appeal to all governmental bodies, especially the police and any other institutions charged with protecting public safety, to provide appropriate training and to act with restraint and in a manner that protects basic rights and prevents emotional or bodily harm to those engaged in civil disobedience.

C. Restorative Justice

The Gospels place a premium on the restoration of right relationships (Matthew 18:15-20). When relationships are violated or broken through crime or wrongdoing, such restoration is critically important. We, therefore, urge governments to develop systems that emphasize restorative justice, which requires people who have committed crimes to make amends for their offenses, and allows victims, if they elect to do so, to share with offenders how they have been harmed. Restorative justice seeks to prioritize the victim and the victim’s family. It also seeks to repair damages, right wrongs, and bring healing to the victim, the offender, families, and the community.

We urge congregations, governments, and businesses to support diversion programs that allow those who have committed offenses to receive counseling, education, skills training, community service, and other assistance to help them become fully contributing members of society. We encourage citizens to partner with law enforcement personnel in local communities to create alternatives to practices that emphasize retribution rather than restoration.

D. The Death Penalty

Our commitment to the inherent dignity and worth of every person and our historic stance as United Methodists compels us to oppose capital punishment and the imposition of the death penalty. The death penalty is a sentence of execution imposed upon a legally convicted individual.

Tragically, the death penalty compounds the loss of human life with the deliberate taking of another life. Additionally, the administration of the death penalty disproportionately impacts people who live in poverty, those who are uneducated, people who live in marginalized racial and ethnic communities, and people with mental impairments. Further, modern advances in technology have shown that a significant number of people are wrongly convicted of the crimes with which they have been charged. Such injustices call us to question the fair application of the death penalty and its congruence with the fundamental right to fair and equal treatment under the law.

We, therefore, call for the abolition of the death penalty and urge individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the historical stance of The United Methodist Church and its predecessors, especially The Evangelical United Brethren Church. Further, we ask pastors and congregations to commit themselves to minister to those who have lost loved ones to violent crimes and to support families without judgment as they navigate the competing demands of justice, compassion, and healing.

E. Criminal Justice

John Wesley campaigned tirelessly for improved conditions for prisoners. Once, in a period of nine months, he preached at least sixty-seven times in various jails. He moaned the deplorable conditions under which most prisoners in his day lived. Claiming this heritage, we affirm the rule of law, the guarantee of civil liberties and rights,
and equal access to justice for all people. We condemn discriminatory enforcement or any abuse of power for reasons of tribe, ethnicity, native language, country of origin, economic disadvantage, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or citizenship status. We encourage systemic monitoring for prejudice and bias in all criminal justice systems. We further support access to competent legal representation for people who are accused and/or convicted of criminal acts.

We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures that prevent, deter, or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those who are imprisoned. We strongly support programs in prisons designed to promote rehabilitation and restoration of inmates. We do not believe that prisons should be for-profit enterprises.

In our communities, we support measures designed to address the root causes of crime, including poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, recreational activities, substance abuse treatment and counseling, mental health services, and job training. We endorse initiatives designed to promote positive interactions between law enforcement and members of local communities. Further, we encourage efforts to reintegrate people who have been released from prison back into the community, including the provision of employment opportunities, the restoration of voting rights, and, where appropriate, the sealing of criminal records.

We encourage churches to be in ministry with those who are incarcerated, advocating for these people and for criminal justice reform as well. As forgiven people, Christians must combat the stigma often attached to people who have been in prison. We applaud the involvement of many United Methodists in prison ministries centering on worship, education, and rehabilitation.

F. War and Military Service

The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.

We reject the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy and insist that every peaceful and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before the start of armed conflicts. Similarly, we oppose the increasing reliance on preemptive strikes unless they can be clearly demonstrated to be proportionate in response, delimited in human casualties, and undertaken in response to clear and immediate threats to human lives. We grieve that in a world where so many live in poverty, governments continue to dedicate enormous resources to preparing for and conducting wars. We are especially distressed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and call not only for an end to their production, but for their complete elimination.

Christians have struggled with the issue of war since the time of Jesus. Some Christians have argued historically that war and other acts of violence are never acceptable, while other believers have asserted that it is sometimes necessary to take up arms in self-defense or to defend the innocent and prevent unchecked aggression, tyranny, and genocide.

We urge all United Methodists to examine their own consciences and earnestly seek God’s guidance when it comes to matters of military service. We honor and offer support to those who choose military service as a result of personal conviction and urge that they perform their duties in harmony with the tenets of the Christian faith and in accordance with the laws of the Geneva Conventions.

We also honor and support the witness of pacifists whose consciences and religious convictions prevent them from serving in the military or limit them to taking noncombatant roles. The roots of such pacifist convictions are well established in the historic stances of The United Methodist Church and its predecessor bodies. We oppose compulsory military service and urge governments to abolish this practice and, instead, allow those who choose not to serve in the military to complete terms of community service or to contribute in other creative ways.

As a church, we commit ourselves to support all people as they discern how best to model the nonviolent example of Jesus. The church supports and guides those who serve in the military; those who are conscientious objectors; veterans living with physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral injury; and families of people affected by military service. We urge the church to care and work for systemic justice for all people affected by war, and to advocate for peacemaking and nonviolent conflict transformation in global and local conflicts.

Basic Rights and Freedoms

We declare that all individuals, no matter their circumstances or social standing, are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms. These rights are grounded in God’s gracious act in Creation (Genesis 1:27), and they are revealed fully in Jesus’ incarnation of divine love. As a church, we will work to protect these rights and freedoms within the church and to reform the structures of society to ensure that every human being can thrive.
As set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other important international treaties, basic rights and freedoms include the right to life, liberty, and security as well as to equal treatment before the law and freedom from unlawful detention. Additional liberties include the rights to fair trial, privacy, public assembly, free expression, democracy, food, and shelter. Further, workers have rights to engage in collective bargaining, receive just compensation, and work in safe, healthy environments.

Rights call forth responsibilities. We urge individuals, congregations, and other church bodies to advocate vigorously not only for their own rights, but also for the rights of those who are voiceless or whose voices are unheard in society. Governments must be held responsible for guaranteeing human rights and liberties; such responsibilities include ensuring that all people have access to affordable, high-quality education, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, or any other divisive marker.

We condemn all attempts to deny individuals their basic rights or freedoms or to strip human beings of their inherent dignity and worth. We, therefore, reject within the church and wider society any act of discrimination, hatred, or violence directed against individuals or groups based on national origin, tribal affiliation, ethnicity, age, gender identity, disability status, economic condition, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or other any factors. Additionally, in the face of historic wrongs perpetrated against indigenous peoples, enslaved African peoples, and other marginalized groups, we call for forthright confession and repentance as well as concrete acts of reparation to redress past and present forms of social injustice.

A. Health Care

We affirm health care as a basic human right and vow to work toward expanded access to all forms of medical treatment, including preventative, therapeutic, and palliative care. Half the world’s population lacks access to health care, and a growing number of people who do have access face increased medical expenses for themselves or their loved ones, pushing them toward poverty. To confront these painful realities, we urge United Methodists to join efforts aimed at creating systems that provide comprehensive health protections for all. Additionally, we believe that everyone has a right to decent living conditions, including adequate food and water, safe housing, and a healthy environment.

Health care as a human right also means that clinics, hospitals, and medical services and treatments must be accessible, affordable, and of good quality. They must also be available when and where they are needed and be provided on an equitable basis. We call on governments, businesses, churches, and civil society institutions to work cooperatively to ensure that every human being has access to medical services and treatment.

Additionally, we call on national governments and international health organizations and medical groups to work cooperatively and expeditiously to address global pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as outbreaks of contagious diseases that threaten the health and well-being of entire countries and regions. As a church, we support other measures and initiatives to improve human health, including investments in preventative care, good nutrition, continuing research in infectious disease prevention and treatment, pre- and postnatal health, and substance abuse treatment on demand. We commend churches that are involved in community-based health-care ministries.

B. Children and Young People

We call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people and for their safety, nurture, agency, education, and participation in church and community life. We condemn destructive practices of neglect, abuse, abduction, exploitation, human trafficking, use of children in armed conflict, and imprisonment. We recognize that perpetrators of abuse or endangerment are usually in positions of power. We hold them accountable for their actions, whether they are parents and family, teachers, clergy, or congregational or public leaders. We call on the church to stand firmly against the detention of children, and we challenge policies that deny basic rights to the young or discriminate against them based on gender identity, ethnicity, abilities, economic status, sexual orientation, migratory status, religion, or national origin. Further, we urge people in positions of authority and power to support and include young people in making decisions and contributing their gifts at all levels of church and society.

C. Elders and the Aging

Elders have many gifts to give. We call upon the church, governments, and civic bodies to provide continuing opportunities for them to participate in the human family and contribute to God’s work in the world. Elders also have the right to support and protection against the vulnerabilities of aging, expressed in economic disparities, unjust inheritance practices, inadequate public health care, and systemic neglect based on gender, ethnicity, abilities, and economic conditions.

We urge the church, governments, and civil society to develop and enact social policies and programs that provide for the needs and rights of people as they age. We support social policies that integrate elders into com-
munity life and guarantee resources for their well-being, including nondiscriminatory employment opportunities, educational and service opportunities, accessible medical care and housing, protection from economic or psychological exploitation, and high-quality, publicly assisted elder care. We affirm the self-determination of elders whether living independently or in families or institutions, and we condemn violations of their quality of life through unnecessary medication or restrictions on their social participation and agency.

D. Women and Girls

We affirm that the gifts of women and girls are vital to God’s creation and make important contributions to both church and society. We support equal opportunities and rights for all women and girls, regardless of national origin, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, or other characteristics.

To ensure these rights, we implore the church, governments, and civic institutions to develop more equitable structures and policies and to recognize women’s value, wisdom, and concerns. All women have a right to equal educational opportunities, protection of their bodies, reproductive justice, parental rights and responsibilities, employment, and equitable compensation and promotion.

We affirm the dignity and worth of all women and girls and we urge the church, governments, and civic bodies to nurture their leadership potential and enhance their opportunities to provide leadership in all aspects of church and social life. We ask the same bodies to ensure their rights to live free from gendered expectations that limit their full development as human beings, and from harassment, violence, discrimination, domestic or workplace abuse, human trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence in all times and places. In the strongest sense possible, we urge the church and all political and civic bodies to enact policies that promote and protect the status and role of women and girls in all facets of life so they can thrive and contribute their gifts to the well-being of society.

E. Men and Boys

We affirm that men and boys make important contributions to both church and society. We support equal opportunities for all men and boys regardless of national origin, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, or other characteristics.

To ensure these rights, opportunities and protections, we urge the church, governments, and civic institutions to develop equitable structures and policies to make certain that the dignity and worth of all men and boys are recognized and affirmed. We further call for the rights of men and boys to be safeguarded in education, employment, compensation and promotion, and parental rights and responsibilities.

We affirm the rights of men and boys to live free from harassment, violence, discrimination, domestic or workplace abuse, human trafficking, and gendered expectations that limit their full development as human beings. We encourage the creation of opportunities for their leadership potential to be nurtured, in order that they might thrive and contribute their gifts to the well-being of society.

F. Indigenous, Native, and Aboriginal Communities

We support the rights of indigenous, native, and aboriginal communities and affirm that like all people they must be afforded the basic rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We condemn acts of genocide against indigenous peoples and call for government treaties and contracts with native and aboriginal peoples to be honored and enforced.

We join with indigenous peoples and tribes to demand that their rights to exercise national sovereignty be upheld by governments and courts. We support the efforts of indigenous people to revitalize their languages and cultures in the face of concerted efforts to assimilate them into mainstream societies. We acknowledge that indigenous, native, and aboriginal peoples are entitled to control their land, water, and other resources, and we decry any attempts to forcibly seize these resources or to forcibly remove indigenous people from their territories.

G. Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees

We affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. In so doing, we acknowledge that the world today is facing an unprecedented crisis related to the displacement of vast numbers of people due to such factors as ongoing wars and other hostilities, foreign interventions, widespread famine and hunger, global warming and climate change, and the failure of nation-states to adequately protect and care for their people.

We recognize that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence, and abuse. We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment, and other kinds of support.
We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees. Additionally, we decry attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions. We challenge policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children, and we oppose the existence of for-profit detention centers for such purposes.

H. People with Disabilities

We affirm the full humanity and acknowledge the gifts of people living with disabilities. We call for the elimination of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in the life of local congregations and the broader society. Though no one term has gained universal acceptance throughout our global connection, “people with disabilities” refers to a broad group of people living with distinctive cognitive, physical, developmental, sensory, neurological, intellectual, and psychological conditions or challenges.

We lament that the church has often stigmatized and discriminated against people with disabilities by imposing labels with negative connotations, by failing to make space in church life for the full range of God’s people, and by interpreting words such as “blind,” “lame,” and “deaf” in pejorative ways. Because of this, people with disabilities are frequently dismissed or undervalued, both in the church and in civil society.

In response, we call the church to acts of repentance, to earnest listening, and to a collaborative ministry with people with disabilities so they can contribute their wisdom and gifts to the mission and ministry of local congregations and other church bodies.

We likewise call on civil society, business, and government leaders to work toward the removal of all barriers and to provide opportunities for those with disabilities to make their unique contributions to the entire society. We call for the protection of the rights of all people with disabilities, including the rights to health care, employment, education, housing and transportation, and to freedom from discrimination.

I. Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties, and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We see clear issues of equality and justice in protecting the rightful claims of those with shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion, and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.

J. Religious Minorities

We affirm the rights of religious minorities to worship in peace and to exercise their faith free from fear of discrimination or persecution. We condemn actions by any individual, group, or organization that denigrate or demean those belonging to another faith. As Christians, we consider such attitudes and actions to be antithetical to Jesus’ command to love one’s neighbor.

We urge governments, businesses, churches, and other institutions in civil society to take concerted action to preserve and protect the rights of all religious people. We object to any form of discrimination and intolerance toward religious minorities, including laws that ban religious clothing and symbols, and statements from public officials that incite intolerance, hatred, and violence. We call for responsible media coverage of religions and condemn the dissemination of stereotypes and untruths about religious minorities.

We endorse the rights of all religious people to practice their faith, free from unjustified and unnecessary legal, political, and financial restraints. We also support the right of individuals to choose their own faith, and we reject attempts to impose beliefs on people or to coerce or manipulate them into joining or remaining a part of a religious tradition when they have decided to disaffiliate. Individual religious belief must not be used to deny basic human rights.
Church and Society Committee 1
Proposed Amendments to the Book of Discipline

¶160.
Petition Number: 20004-CA-¶160-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Community of All Creation Social Principles

Delete ¶ 160 (The Natural World of the Social Principles) and substitute the following:

COMMUNITY OF ALL CREATION
Preface
The great lesson that our blessed Lord inculcates here . . . is that God is in all things, and that we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature; that we should use and look upon nothing as separate from God . . . who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true sense, the soul of the universe. (John Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount")

We affirm that all creation belongs to God and is a manifestation of God’s goodness and providential care. Human beings, nonhuman animals, plants, and other sentient and nonsentient beings participate in the community of creation, and their flourishing depends on the care of all God’s creation. Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation (Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 6:26-30; Romans 8:22-24). We are also called to honor the role of every part of creation in healing the whole; thus we praise God with the whole of creation (Psalm 148) and recognize that we are part of complex ecosystems, all valued by God.

We affirm our sacred calling to be responsible stewards and to lovingly tend all that God has wrought. We recognize the inherent worth of God’s creation, celebrate earth’s abundance and diversity, and, along with the entirety of the cosmos, give praise to its Creator. We recognize we are interconnected members of complex ecosystems, intricate webs of life, all of which have their origins in God’s gracious act of creation.

Creation in Peril
We acknowledge that unsustainable human activities have placed the entirety of God’s creation in peril. Further, we confess that the degradation and wholesale destruction of the natural environment threatens unprecedented harm, bringing danger to human and nonhuman life alike.

A. Destruction of Ecosystems
Whether human beings are conscious of it or not, we are participants in and beneficiaries of complex natural ecosystems made up of myriads of symbiotic relationships between living organisms such as animals, plants, insects, and microorganisms, and the physical environments they inhabit, including air, water, and soil.

Overconsumption, shortsighted policies, poor management of natural resources, and other unsustainable practices have severely impacted the fragile, natural ecosystems on which all of life depends. Too often, humankind has treated the rest of the created world as if it were disposable and allowed the destruction of other living organisms and their natural habitats to go unchecked. Further, the experiences and voices of people most at risk have largely been ignored.

B. Global Warming and Climate Change
Global warming and climate change are already creating extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth. Overindustrialization, widespread deforestation, and overreliance on fossil fuels are but some of the human activities that have contributed to the buildup of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide in the earth’s atmosphere.

A sharp upsurge in greenhouse gases over past decades already has resulted in a steady rise in sea levels, growing acidification of the world’s oceans, increased droughts and famines, and the intensification of extreme weather events. Climate scientists warn that the window of opportunity for reversing the negative effects of global warming and climate change is rapidly closing. Without concerted action by individuals, churches, communities, shareholders, businesses, governments, and international organizations, the negative effects will become irreversible.

C. Dependence on Fossil Fuels
The burning of fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and, to a lesser extent, natural gas, is the greatest single contributor to the buildup of greenhouse gases and the consequent warming of earth’s atmosphere. To reverse the current trajectory of global climate change, increased investments are needed in the research, development, and distribution of alternatives to fossil fuels, including, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, and hydrogen-based energy sources.

In pursuing alternatives to fossil fuels, it is critical to avoid solutions that would worsen current problems or create new, unforeseen environmental challenges. Reliance on nuclear energy, for example, raises considerable concerns regarding the safe storage and containment of radioactive waste.
Similarly, recent proposals to reduce the buildup of greenhouse gases by geo-engineering earth’s biospheres, including its land, air, and water, risk unpredictable side effects and the further destabilization of the natural ecosystems on which all life depends.

Inevitably, transitioning from an overreliance on fossil fuels will have adverse impacts on individuals and communities whose livelihoods are still heavily dependent on the production, sale, and distribution of these commodities. To the greatest extent possible, plans for developing and deploying alternative sources of energy should minimize negative financial impacts by investing in strategies that support people in successfully transitioning to new employment, strengthen the social safety net to deal with the loss of jobs and income, and provide ample educational and retraining opportunities.

Stewardship of Creation

In Genesis 1, we read that God declares creation good (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25, 31), and we read in Genesis 2 that God “took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it” (Genesis 2:15 CEB). The goodness of God’s creation, and the value given to every part of it, call people to respect, protect, and care for the creation and all interrelated aspects of it.

A. Environmental Justice

We confess that the negative impacts resulting from the degradation of the natural world have fallen disproportionately on marginalized communities, including indigenous tribes, religious and ethnic communities, people living in poverty, and other vulnerable groups. We, therefore, pledge to resist all forms of environmental exploitation, neglect, and inequality. These practices condemn impoverished communities and developing countries to bear the brunt of hazardous environments, industrial pollution, toxic waste dumps, and urban decay. Such behaviors constitute environmental racism. We oppose policies and practices that relegate marginalized communities to a permanent underclass status and ignore indigenous and other sources of communal wisdom, which call for air, land, and water to be treated with profound respect.

Additionally, these groups suffer disproportionately from higher rates of asthma, cancer, birth defects and other preventable medical conditions. These health problems are associated with pollutants and other chemicals in soil, water, and air that affect our drinking water, foods, and physical environment. We urge governments, businesses, and civic institutions to give priority to increasing access to prevention and treatment services.

We call for the institution of environmentally just principles, policies, and practices. We affirm the wisdom and agency of indigenous peoples and marginalized populations to determine for themselves practices and policies that best provide for their basic human needs, including food, water, shelter, and land free from toxic wastes. Self-determination entails, among other things, access to all pertinent information and significant decision-making power over industrial, agricultural, and other developments that have potential to wreak significant harm on land, air, and water.

B. Sustainable Policies and Practices

Sustainability is crucial to the development of ecologically sound policies and practices that seek to restore balance to the natural world and end the disruptive relationships between humanity and the rest of God’s creation.

Sustainable policies and practices aim to meet present human needs while ensuring that future generations have the resources they need to thrive. Sustainable policies and practices prioritize the protection of all forms of life and natural ecosystems, while supporting human beings to live in healthy balance with the earth.

We urge United Methodists to adopt sustainable habits and practices, including refraining from overconsumption, repurposing, and recycling materials, avoiding products that pollute or otherwise harm the environment, and reducing the carbon footprints of individuals and families by reducing overall reliance on fossil fuels for heat, transportation, and other goods.

Recognizing that simply changing our personal habits will not be enough to reverse decades of environmental damage, the church supports local, regional, national, and international cooperative efforts aimed at redressing the ecological harms humans have wreaked on a global scale. Such cooperative efforts must include the development and enforcement of policies and practices that protect all sentient beings, and the promotion of sustainable economic development. We also encourage responsible consumption and urgent action against global warming and climate change.

C. Food Justice

Food systems that are ecologically sustainable, locally oriented, and equitably distributed are urgent priorities. We endorse policies and practices designed to ensure access to healthy nourishment and clean drinking water, especially for communities that have been subjected to environmental degradation or deprived of adequate resources to produce or purchase their own food.

We affirm the rights of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. We support local control of food production, which entails providing opportunities for local communities to participate meaningfully in decisions about the kinds of livestock to be raised and crops to be grown. We reject agricultural policies and practices that make food inaccessible to agricultural workers and the
communities in which the food is produced. We advocate for strong protections of the land, food, and water rights of indigenous peoples.

We oppose the patenting of seed varieties and other organisms traditionally used in farming and agriculture. The rapidly expanding practice of patenting seed varieties and charging farmers for their use has reduced access to traditional crops and increased the indebtedness of subsistence and smaller-scale farms. Consequently, we support cooperative, open-source efforts aimed at making traditional seed varieties available to those who need them.

We also call for the creation of policies that reduce carbon-intensive agricultural methods, which increase climate change. Producers must be responsible for their adverse impact on food packaging, distribution, and transport, and seek the safety and well-being of agricultural and food processing workers.

D. Caring for All Creatures

We support the respectful and humane treatment of animals, who are crucial participants in God’s ongoing creation and of inherent worth. We embrace biblical teachings that envision a time when humans and other creatures shall live in peace and harmony in a restored creation (Isaiah 11:6).

This commitment to respectful and humane treatment of animals means, for instance, putting in place protections to ensure that animals employed in agricultural and other forms of labor are free from cruel or abusive types of treatment and provided with ample rest and nourishment. Additionally, we oppose forcing animals to combat each other.

Animals raised for human consumption should be provided with healthy living conditions and sufficient food and water. Animals raised for human consumption must likewise be reared in humane conditions and slaughtered in a manner that minimizes their overall suffering and pain.

With respect to creatures living in the wild, we urge cooperative efforts by international bodies, governments, civic institutions, churches, and concerned individuals and groups to end poaching and protect endangered and vulnerable species and preserve dwindling habitats. We decry the mass extinctions currently underway and call for the adoption of sustainable policies and practices that allow both animal and human life to flourish.

E. Protecting Space

God’s creation encompasses not only the earth but the entire cosmos, including space. Our charge to be responsible stewards thus extends well beyond humankind’s immediate environs and encompasses not only our own solar system but also other galaxies. Hence, we reject the exploitation, commodification, and militarization of space.

We express our hope that the exploration and settlement of space, including the moon and other planetary bodies, take place peacefully and cooperatively, and in such fashion that the benefits and resources of any further exploration and development accrue to all humanity.

F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom

We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos. We also acknowledge that like all human endeavors, science can be misused and abused. We, therefore, urge all those involved in scientific investigations to adhere to the highest ethical standards in conducting research and applying their findings.

We also affirm the traditional wisdom found within indigenous communities, particularly the emphasis that native and first peoples have placed on living in harmony and balance with the earth and other animals as well as the need to protect the air, land and water.

¶160.

Petition Number: 20005-CA-¶160; Westad, Audun - Oslo, Norway.

New Subparagraph I

Add new subparagraph I) to ¶ 160:

I) Rain forests and the polar areas—We support policies that safeguard the future of the rain forests and the polar areas. We believe these areas should be protected from being industrialized, and at the same time we acknowledge and support the rights of the indigenous people living in these areas.

¶160.

Petition Number: 20727-CA-¶160-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-Preface

Replace Preface with:

PREFACE

The United Methodist Church, including its predecessor bodies, has a long and rich history of concern for social justice. Its members have often taken forthright positions on controversial issues involving Christian principles. In addition to carrying out acts of mercy, Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, spoke out against the abuse of animals, the exploitation of poor people, and the treatment of human beings as chattel. Following in Wesley’s footsteps, some early Methodists expressed their opposition
to the slave trade, to smuggling, and to the cruel treatment of prisoners. Similarly, the United Brethren strongly condemned slavery.

In 1908, The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) was the first denomination to adopt a Social Creed, which called for “equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.” Within the next decade similar statements were adopted by The Methodist Episcopal Church (South) and by The Methodist Protestant Church. The Evangelical United Brethren Church adopted a statement of Social Principles in 1946 at the time of the uniting of The United Brethren and The Evangelical Church. In 1972, four years after the uniting in 1968 of The Methodist Church and The Evangelical United Brethren Church, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a new statement of Social Principles, which was revised in 1976 and by each successive General Conference. In 2008, the General Conference added a Social Creed companion litany.

The Social Principles are not church law. Instead, they represent the prayerful and earnest efforts of the General Conference to speak to issues in the contemporary world from a sound biblical and theological foundation that is in keeping with the best of our United Methodist traditions. The Social Principles are thus a call to faithfulness and to social engagement and intended to be instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit. Moreover, they challenge all members of The United Methodist Church to engage in deliberative reflection and encourage intentional dialogue between faith and practice. (See BOD ¶ 509.)

The Social Principles are also a living document. In recognition of the important changes that have taken place in The United Methodist Church over the past fifty years, including significant developments in Africa, Europe and the Philippines, the 2012 General Conference mandated that the Social Principles be revised to increase their theological grounding, succinctness, and global relevance. To accomplish this task, the General Board of Church and Society initially sought input and advice through consultations held in each of the five U.S. jurisdictions and a majority of the central conferences. The initial draft of the revised Social Principles was developed by six writing teams, whose members reflected the broad diversity of the church. Following this, an editorial revision team perfected additional drafts, based on feedback received via online surveys, extensive consultations with central and annual conferences, and comments solicited from United Methodist scholars, bishops, church bodies, and leaders across the denomination.

Special Editorial Notes
Throughout the Social Principles, the term “we” refers specifically to the General Conference and more broadly to members of The United Methodist Church. Unless otherwise stated, the term “church” refers specifically to The United Methodist Church rather than, for example, the church universal.

Rationale:
This petition replaces the current Preface as part of the Social Principles Revision. It gives greater emphasis to the Social Principles historic and worldwide relevance for the church. For the full revision of the text see the “Social Principles Report and Addendum” located in the ADCA.

¶160.
Petition Number: 20728-CA-¶160-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-Preamble
Replace Preamble with:
PREAMBLE

We, the people called United Methodists, affirm our faith in the living God, who created everything that is and called it good, and created human beings in God’s own image. We give thanks for Jesus Christ, incarnation of God’s love and our Savior, who redeems and heals our relationship with God. We trust in the movements of the Holy Spirit, transforming human lives and the whole creation. Further, we declare our faith that God’s grace is available to all and “nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created” (Romans 8:38-39 CEB).

From the beginning, God called us into covenant, bound with God, with one another, and with God’s wonderfully diverse creation. God called us, further, to live lovingly in those relationships and to be stewards of God’s created world, to tend God’s garden. As we do our part in caring for creation, we allow all other parts of creation to fulfill their distinctive roles in the covenantal relationship with God (Genesis 2:7-15). According to Jesus’ commandment, we are to love one another: “Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other” (John 13:34-35 CEB).

Created in God’s image to live in covenant with God and the world, we honor the dignity of all beings and affirm the goodness of life. Knowing that we are held in God’s grace, we are able to confess our sins. We have
failed to love God with our whole hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have participated in unjust and life-destroying social systems. We have not been faithful stewards of God’s creation, nor have we valued the role that every part of creation plays in the flourishing of God’s world. Further, we have not followed Jesus Christ in sharing God’s extravagant love and ministering with “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45 CEB). We have closed ourselves to God’s guiding Spirit in our daily interactions with the human family and the earth. We have fallen short, and yet God loves us still.

We are grateful for God’s forgiving and sanctifying love, given to us and to all and drawing us toward perfect love. By God’s grace, we are called to be more Christ-like, and thus to be merciful, just, and compassionate. Responding to that call, we seek to follow Jesus, who gave boundless love to all—the children, the outcast, the condemned and the confused. Jesus calls every generation to wholehearted discipleship: opening our hearts to the people we encounter daily, practicing compassion with our families and neighbors; honoring the dignity and worth of all people near and far; recognizing the systems that destroy human lives through poverty, war, and exclusion; and advocating justice and care in our churches, communities, and social structures. God calls us further to be stewards of creation, caring for the skies and waters, soil and plants, and all beings.

We give thanks for God’s good gift of the church universal and for the Christian values embodied in the Wesleyan tradition and in The United Methodist Church. We recognize that the body of Christ has many parts, and all are valuable. Thus, we respect differences within Christ’s body, including differences in understanding and expressing faith, in gifts and practices of ministry, and in life experiences, as shaped by ethnicities, cultures, communities, abilities, age, sexual orientation, and gender. We affirm our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual to whom God gives unique gifts. We renew our commitment to be faithful witnesses to the gospel in our daily lives and work and to magnify our witness as the church.

Differences are a precious gift and daunting challenge. They can stretch the church’s capacity to live and minister faithfully. Yet God calls our church to difficult discipleship, with Jesus as our guide and the Spirit as our daily strength. With God’s help, we accept the challenge to follow the high calling “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8 NRSV). John Wesley’s General Rules continue to inspire United Methodists to faithful practices that will do no harm, do good, and follow the ordinances of God (BOD ¶ 104, “The General Rules of the Methodist Church: The Nature, Design, and General Rules of our United Societies”). We recognize the challenges before the church to engage with honesty and compassion through deep listening, hard conversations and shared ministry, even when we do not agree on all matters.

We acknowledge that the church is a living body gathered from the many and diverse parts of the human community. Thus, unanimity of beliefs, opinion, and practice have never been characteristic of the church from the beginning. From its earliest times, as witnessed in the Gospels, Paul’s letters, the Acts of the Apostles, and other New Testament texts, diverse understandings and controversies on many matters have been the reality. Therefore, whenever significant differences of opinion occur among Christians, some of which continue to divide the church deeply today, faithful Christians need to face their disagreements and even their despair, and not cover differences with false claims of consensus or unanimity. On the contrary, the church needs to embrace conflicts with courage and perseverance as we seek together to discern God’s will. With that understanding and commitment, we pledge ourselves to acknowledge and to embrace with courage, trust, and hope those controversies that arise among us, accepting them as evidence that God is not yet finished in sculpting us to be God’s people.

Recognizing that God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we seek to center our lives and witness on God. We are confident that nothing can separate us from the grace of God, and that the social witness of the church is a testimony to that grace. With God’s help, we pledge to share ministry and honor everyone’s dignity, even when we disagree, to seek the mind of Christ, and to follow God’s will in all things.

Rationale:

This replaces the current Preamble as part of the Social Principles Revision. It amplifies the Social Principles theological and biblical grounding for The United Methodist tradition. A full revision of the text can be read in the “Social Principles Report and Addendum” located in the ADCA.

¶160.

Petition Number: 20729-CA-¶160-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-160

Replace ¶ 160 with:
Community of All Creation
Preface
The great lesson that our blessed Lord inculcates here . . . is that God is in all things, and that we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature; that we should use and look upon nothing as separate from God . . . who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true sense, the soul of the universe. (John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount”)

We affirm that all creation belongs to God and is a manifestation of God’s goodness and providential care. Human beings, nonhuman animals, plants, and other sentient and nonsentient beings participate in the community of creation, and their flourishing depends on the care of all God’s creation. Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation (Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 6:26-30; Romans 8:22–24). We are also called to honor the role of every part of creation in healing the whole; thus we praise God with the whole of creation (Psalm 148) and recognize that we are part of complex ecosystems, all valued by God.

We affirm our sacred calling to be responsible stewards and to lovingly tend all that God has wrought. We recognize the inherent worth of God’s creation, celebrate earth’s abundance and diversity, and, along with the entirety of the cosmos, give praise to its Creator. We recognize we are interconnected members of complex ecosystems, intricate webs of life, all of which have their origins in God’s gracious act of creation.

Creation in Peril

We acknowledge that unsustainable human activities have placed the entirety of God’s creation in peril. Further, we confess that the degradation and wholesale destruction of the natural environment threatens unprecedented harm, bringing danger to human and nonhuman life alike.

A. Destruction of Ecosystems

Whether human beings are conscious of it or not, we are participants in and beneficiaries of complex natural ecosystems made up of myriads of symbiotic relationships between living organisms such as animals, plants, insects and microorganisms, and the physical environments they inhabit, including air, water, and soil.

Overconsumption, shortsighted policies, poor management of natural resources, and other unsustainable practices have severely impacted the fragile, natural ecosystems on which all of life depends. Too often, humankind has treated the rest of the created world as if it were disposable and allowed the destruction of other living organisms and their natural habitats to go unchecked.

Further, the experiences and voices of people most at risk have largely been ignored.

B. Global Warming and Climate Change

Global warming and climate change are already creating extreme conditions that threaten the entirety of life on earth. Overindustrialization, widespread deforestation, and overreliance on fossil fuels are but some of the human activities that have contributed to the buildup of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide in the earth’s atmosphere.

A sharp upsurge in greenhouse gases over past decades already has resulted in a steady rise in sea levels, growing acidification of the world’s oceans, increased droughts and famines, and the intensification of extreme weather events. Climate scientists warn that the window of opportunity for reversing the negative effects of global warming and climate change is rapidly closing. Without concerted action by individuals, churches, communities, shareholders, businesses, governments, and international organizations, the negative effects will become irreversible.

C. Dependence on Fossil Fuels

The burning of fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and, to a lesser extent, natural gas, is the greatest single contributor to the buildup of greenhouse gases and the consequent warming of earth’s atmosphere. To reverse the current trajectory of global climate change, increased investments are needed in the research, development, and distribution of alternatives to fossil fuels, including, but not limited to, solar, wind, geothermal, and hydrogen-based energy sources.

In pursuing alternatives to fossil fuels, it is critical to avoid solutions that would worsen current problems or create new, unforeseen environmental challenges. Reliance on nuclear energy, for example, raises considerable concerns regarding the safe storage and containment of radioactive waste.

Similarly, recent proposals to reduce the buildup of greenhouse gases by geo-engineering earth’s biospheres, including its land, air, and water, risk unpredictable side effects and the further destabilization of the natural ecosystems on which all life depends.

Inevitably, transitioning from an overreliance on fossil fuels will have adverse impacts on individuals and communities whose livelihoods are still heavily dependent on the production, sale, and distribution of these commodities. To the greatest extent possible, plans for developing and deploying alternative sources of energy should minimize negative financial impacts by investing in strategies that support people in successfully transitioning to new employment, strengthen the social safety net to deal with the loss of jobs and income, and provide ample educational and retraining opportunities.
Sustainability is crucial to the development of ecologically sound policies and practices that seek to restore balance to the natural world and end the disruptive relationships between humanity and the rest of God’s creation. Sustainable policies and practices aim to meet present human needs while ensuring that future generations have the resources they need to thrive. Sustainable policies and practices prioritize the protection of all forms of life and natural ecosystems, while supporting human beings to live in healthy balance with the earth.

We urge United Methodists to adopt sustainable habits and practices, including refraining from overconsumption, repurposing and recycling materials, avoiding products that pollute or otherwise harm the environment, and reducing the carbon footprints of individuals and families by reducing overall reliance on fossil fuels for heat, transportation, and other goods.

Recognizing that simply changing our personal habits will not be enough to reverse decades of environmental damage, the church supports local, regional, national, and international cooperative efforts aimed at redressing the ecological harms humans have wreaked on a global scale. Such cooperative efforts must include the development and enforcement of policies and practices that protect all sentient beings, and the promotion of sustainable economic development. We also encourage responsible consumption and urgent action against global warming and climate change.

C. Food Justice

Food systems that are ecologically sustainable, locally oriented, and equitably distributed are urgent priorities. We endorse policies and practices designed to ensure access to healthy nourishment and clean drinking water, especially for communities that have been subjected to environmental degradation or deprived of adequate resources to produce or purchase their own food.

We also affirm food sovereignty, which promotes the rights of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. We support local control of food production, which entails providing opportunities for local communities to participate meaningfully in decisions about the kinds of livestock to be raised and crops to be grown. We reject agricultural policies and practices that make food inaccessible to agricultural workers and the communities in which the food is produced. We advocate for strong protections of the land, food, and water rights of indigenous peoples.

We oppose the patenting of seed varieties and other organisms traditionally used in farming and agriculture. The rapidly expanding practice of patenting seed varieties and charging farmers for their use has reduced access to traditional crops and increased the indebtedness of subsistence and smaller-scale farms. Consequently, we support cooperative, open-source efforts aimed at making traditional seed varieties available to those who need them.

We also call for the creation of policies that reduce carbon-intensive agricultural methods, which increase climate change. Producers must be responsible for their adverse impact on food packaging, distribution, and trans-
port, and seek the safety and well-being of agricultural and food processing workers.

D. Caring for All Creatures

We support the respectful and humane treatment of animals, who are crucial participants in God’s ongoing creation and of inherent worth. We embrace biblical teachings that envision a time when humans and other creatures shall live in peace and harmony in a restored creation (Isaiah 11:6).

This commitment to respectful and humane treatment of animals means, for instance, putting in place protections to ensure that animals employed in agricultural and other forms of labor are free from cruel or abusive types of treatment and provided with ample rest and nourishment. Additionally, we oppose forcing animals to combat each other.

Animals raised for human consumption should be provided with healthy living conditions and sufficient food and water. Animals raised for human consumption must likewise be reared in humane conditions and slaughtered in a manner that minimizes their overall suffering and pain.

With respect to creatures living in the wild, we urge cooperative efforts by international bodies, governments, civic institutions, churches, and concerned individuals and groups to end poaching and protect endangered and vulnerable species and preserve dwindling habitats. We deplore the mass extinctions currently underway and call for the adoption of sustainable policies and practices that allow both animal and human life to flourish.

E. Protecting Space

God’s creation encompasses not only the earth but the entire cosmos, including space. Our charge to be responsible stewards thus extends well beyond humankind’s immediate environs and encompasses not only our own solar system but also other galaxies. Hence, we reject the exploitation, commodification, and militarization of space. We express our hope that the exploration and settlement of space, including the moon and other planetary bodies, take place peacefully and cooperatively, and in such fashion that the benefits and resources of any further exploration and development accrue to all humanity.

F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom

We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos. We also acknowledge that like all human endeavors, science can be misused and abused. We, therefore, urge all those involved in scientific investigations to adhere to the highest ethical standards in conducting research and applying their findings.

We also affirm the traditional wisdom found within indigenous communities, particularly the emphasis that native and first peoples have placed on living in harmony and balance with the earth and other animals as well as the need to protect the air, land and water.

Rationale:

This petition replaces ¶ 160 The Natural World as part of the Social Principles revision. For the complete revision proposal and background on the process see "Social Principles Revision Report and Addendum" located in the ADCA.

¶163.

Petition Number: 20006-CA-¶163; Bergjord, Hege - Stavanger, Norway.

New Subparagraph N

Add new subparagraph N) to ¶ 163

N) Commercials—We support policies that protect people from commercials aimed at promoting gambling, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. Furthermore, we support policies that aim to limit or ban aggressive commercials aimed at children, and especially those commercials featuring retouched imagery giving unrealistic and dangerous ideals, which in turn can hurt children and young people’s emotional well-being.

¶163.

Petition Number: 20007-CA-¶163-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Economic Community of the Social Principles

Delete ¶ 163 (The Economic Community of the Social Principles) and substitute the following:

THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Preface

When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, [God] placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward: As such [God] entrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these still rests in [God], nor can be alienated from [God]. As you yourself are not your own, but God’s, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. (John Wesley, “The Use of Money”)

As United Methodists, we profess that all we are and all that we possess, belong to God. We are temporary stewards of the resources and material goods that we have accumulated. In our financial dealings and relationships no less than other aspects of discipleship, we are compelled to serve God and neighbor in all we do.
Few biblical themes are as prominent or as numerous as the scriptural injunctions to stand in solidarity with “the least of these,” including the poor, the orphan, the widow, the stranger, and all other vulnerable members of society (Amos 5:7-13; Matthew 25:3-46; James 2:15-16). Accordingly, we pledge ourselves to the establishment of just, equitable, and sustainable economies that work for all.

Economic Challenges

A. Globalization

We believe that global cooperation often contributes to human and environmental flourishing. However, we lament that globalization has created significant obstacles to achieving economic justice in too many instances. Globalization is marked by the growing integration of national economies and the emergence of multinational corporations that play an outsized role in global market systems.

While globalization undoubtedly has provided certain financial and other benefits, it has also undermined established wage and labor standards, weakened environmental protections, and accelerated the concentration of the world’s wealth in the hands of a relative few. Additionally, globalization has increased overconsumption due to the ready access of cheaper goods and has undermined indigenous land rights in a rush to acquire raw materials necessary for expanded production.

As a church, we recognize the importance of creating just, equitable, and sustainable economies that benefit all members of society, especially marginalized and vulnerable peoples. Further, because globalization transcends the capacity of any single individual, community, or government to manage, we call on international bodies, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and others, to hold multinational corporations and national governments accountable to provide for economies that promote people over profits and protect the environment.

B. Poverty and Income Inequality

As United Methodists, we follow in the footsteps of our founder, John Wesley, who sought to improve the lives of those who suffered from debilitating conditions such as poverty, starvation, illiteracy, imprisonment, slavery, addictions, and disease.

We decry the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the concentration of wealth in the hands of ever smaller percentages of the global population. We lament that too many of the world’s people lack the basic resources necessary for survival and pledge ourselves to work toward the eradication of the roots and effects of poverty. We further lament the multiple causes of poverty, such as war, famine, diseases, and desertification.

We reject religious teachings that view the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God’s favor and poverty as a sign of God’s disfavor. We confess that we have not always heeded the words of Jesus, who preached good news to people living in poverty, taught that they were not far from God’s coming reign, and challenged the rich young man to give up all that he had to follow him (Luke 6:20; Matthew 19:23-25).

We commit ourselves to be in active ministry with impoverished communities by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and by supporting their efforts to secure equal opportunities and meet human needs, including food, water, health care, and education. We reject preferential treatment in the church on the basis of wealth and income. We also commit to work toward eradicating unjust practices, policies, and systems that have condemned entire generations to live in unrelenting poverty.

C. Human Trafficking and Slavery

We condemn human trafficking and slavery as profound violations of the inherent dignity and worth of every person and of their fundamental rights related to autonomy, including the ability of every individual to make personal life choices. We understand slavery to be a repudiation of the basic Christian understanding that all people are created in the image of God.

Human trafficking entails the buying and selling of human beings for purposes of forced or indentured labor, including private and commercial sexual exploitation. We consider such trafficking to be abhorrent because it violates basic human rights and exploits the vulnerabilities of the weakest members of society. Those who are especially vulnerable include minor children and women, migrants, displaced people, and others living in poverty.

We support the abolition of human trafficking and slavery of any kind. We commit ourselves to work toward the elimination of the social and economic inequities that provide fertile ground for the flourishing of these evils. We also reject the practice of using enslaved, indentured, imprisoned, or coerced laborers in extractive industries or in the production of commercial goods. We urge individuals, families, congregations, and retailers to practice socially responsible consumerism by educating themselves about the sources of labor and the working conditions involved in production processes.

D. Graft, Bribery, and Corruption

We oppose graft, bribery, and other forms of corruption as breaches of the public trust and impediments to the creation of just and equitable societies. We deplore the involvement of government officials, business executives, church leaders, and other people of authority in these practices, not only because of their illegality but because such practices erode public confidence in legit-
imate forms of authority. Additionally, they subvert basic principles related to equality under the law and serve as obstacles to establishing just and equitable economies. The consequence is the diversion of public funding and manipulation of public contracts that undermine projects and services that could benefit the entire society.

Economic Justice

I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No more covetousness! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all people! (John Wesley, "The Use of Money")

Our commitment to achieving economic justice is rooted in the covenantal understanding that God’s creation is meant to be shared by all humans and sentient beings. Just as the oikos or household served as the heart of the economy in ancient times, our belief in the inclusive nature of God’s global household motivates our pursuit of just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

As members of God’s oikos and followers of Jesus, who taught that we must “give to those who ask, and don't refuse those who wish to borrow,” we embrace our charge to share the abundance of God’s creation in just and equitable ways (Matthew 5:42 CEB). We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, and civic associations to ensure that individuals, families, and communities not only survive, but also thrive.

A. Responsible Consumerism

Socially responsible consumerism is critical in life today. We urge individuals, families, and congregations to adopt life habits that reduce unnecessary waste, promote just and equitable compensation, promote sustainability, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

We urge consumers to exercise their economic power to encourage the manufacture of goods that are beneficial to humankind while avoiding those produced through exploitative labor practices. We support peaceful and nonviolent efforts, including boycotts, letter-writing campaigns, appeals to stockholders and divestiture, as effective means of expressing collective dissatisfaction with companies that engage in unjust or harmful practices. We also call upon stockholders and employees to exercise their moral agency by seeking to influence corporate policies. When such actions are necessary, we urge that they be in alignment with the teachings of the gospel and the church’s commitment to the dignity and worth of all beings.

In recognition that developed nations now consume the vast majority of the world’s natural resources, we also support international policies and cooperative efforts aimed at producing economies that are more just and that promote human flourishing.

B. Farming and Agricultural Production

The emphasis placed on the necessity of “daily bread” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:11) serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of daily sustenance and the crucial roles that farming and other forms of agricultural production play in meeting the nutritional needs of a rapidly expanding global population. We, therefore, call for the establishment of policies and practices to guarantee the safety and security of these lifelines and to ensure that the decision-making related to agricultural production, and the benefits of that production, are open to all.

We support local and family farms and appreciate their value in feeding the vast majority of the world’s population. We deplore the growing monopolization of the means of agricultural production by corporations and large agribusinesses. These monopolies raise significant concerns about the loss of local input and decision-making power, and accelerate the degradation of ecosystems, including soil, water, and forests.

Large agribusinesses, in particular, have exacerbated practices that reserve the best lands for the exclusive production of exportable crops, rather than using those resources to feed local populations. They also have accelerated the depletion of the soil through monocultural farming, increased the release of methane gas by livestock, contributed to environmental degradation, and exposed workers to unsafe levels of pesticides and herbicides.

We endorse measures that protect the continued operation of local, family, and communal farms and call for the elimination of government programs that disproportionately benefit large corporations and agribusinesses. We support efforts to restore local input and decision-making regarding the use of land, the production of crops, the raising of livestock, and the protection of local habitats in hopes that this will enable local communities to reap more of the benefits of farming and other forms of agricultural production.

We urge farmers, large and small, to engage in sustainable practices that preserve the integrity of the food chain, ensure that farmworkers and other laborers are justly compensated, and protect the natural environment.

C. The Dignity of Work

We believe in the dignity of work, not merely as a means of subsistence, but as a way for individuals to contribute to the flourishing of their families and contribute to the common good. This affirmation of the dignity of work leads us to support the right to safe and secure working conditions, free from health and safety hazards. We also endorse the establishment and enforcement of policies...
that guarantee workers fair and equitable compensation, sometimes referred to as a living wage. We recognize that full employment is a distant dream in many communities and cultures and, in such situations, the challenges in establishing workers’ rights are significant. Still, the church advocates for the fair and decent treatment of workers and supports policies that expand opportunities for more people to find meaningful work with just compensation and benefits.

We oppose the widespread reliance on child labor, which forces children under the age of eighteen (18) to relinquish their childhoods and forgo educational opportunities, and instead to work in commercial agriculture, industrial manufacturing, or extractive industries.

We support workers’ freedom of association, including their rights to organize unions, to engage in collective bargaining, and to protest both unsafe working conditions and unjust employment policies and practices. We also support workers’ right to strike. We reject efforts to permanently replace workers engaged in strikes or to make organized work stoppages illegal.

We support measures that limit the length of both the workday and workweek and endorse policies that guarantee every worker paid time off, including but not limited to sick time and bereavement leave, opportunities to vote and carry out other civic duties, holiday or vacation time, and parental leave for those caring for newborns or newly adopted children.

D. Sabbath and Renewal Time

We recognize Sabbath as a gift of God for all people, remembering that God rested on the seventh day of Creation (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11). We affirm the importance of taking time away from work to rest and renew the mind, body, and spirit, engage in play and recreation, and serve the needs of our communities. We further affirm that Sabbath is also a time to provide rest for others in the human community.

We encourage all United Methodists to honor the Sabbath by actively participating in the worship life of a local congregation. We urge governments and businesses to promote policies and practices that allow people of all religious faiths to take ample time away from work to engage in worship, renewal, and fellowship opportunities.

E. Corporate Responsibility

We believe that corporations and businesses, like all other human institutions, are charged with doing good, promoting equity and justice, and making positive contributions to communal life. Rather than merely producing profits for their shareholders, we believe corporations and businesses have significant roles to play in promoting the social and economic health and welfare of society.

We call on corporations and businesses to place people above profits and to observe the highest ethical standards in conducting their business. We, therefore, urge corporate leaders and stockholders to comply with all laws, regulations, and international accords related to the defense of the environment, the safety and security of the workplace, and the guarantee of basic rights.

We lament the long history of injustice and of violations of formal treaties and agreements. We hold corporations, businesses, and governments responsible for any violations or infringements of the rights and lands of individuals and communities and commit ourselves to advocate and work for justice.

We commend socially responsible investment as an important mechanism to hold corporations accountable for promoting the common good. We, therefore, urge individuals, families, congregations, and other church bodies to educate themselves about the use of their investment funds and to leverage their economic clout by mandating the redirection of their funds from industries that negatively impact people or the environment. After all other avenues have been exhausted, other effective strategies include direct dialogue, joint shareholder actions, and boycott and divestment efforts.

[163]

Petition Number: 20731-CA-¶163-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-163

Replace ¶ 163 with:

The Economic Community

Preface

When the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, [God] placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward: As such [God] entrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these still rests in [God], nor can be alienated from [God]. As you yourself are not your own, but God’s, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. (John Wesley, “The Use of Money”)

As United Methodists, we profess that all we are and all that we possess, belong to God. We are temporary stewards of the resources and material goods that we have accumulated. In our financial dealings and relationships no less than other aspects of discipleship, we are compelled to serve God and neighbor in all we do.

Few biblical themes are as prominent or as numerous as the scriptural injunctions to stand in solidarity with
We lament that globalization has created significant obstacles to achieving economic justice in too many instances. Globalization is marked by the growing integration of national economies and the emergence of multinational corporations that play an outsized role in global market systems.

While globalization undoubtedly has provided certain financial and other benefits, it has also undermined established wage and labor standards, weakened environmental protections, and accelerated the concentration of the world’s wealth in the hands of a relatively few. Additionally, globalization has increased overconsumption due to the ready access of cheaper goods and has undermined indigenous land rights in a rush to acquire raw materials necessary for expanded production.

As a church, we recognize the importance of creating just, equitable, and sustainable economies that benefit all members of society, especially marginalized and vulnerable peoples. Further, because globalization transcends the capacity of any single individual, community, or government to manage, we call on international bodies, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and others, to hold multinational corporations and national governments accountable to provide for economies that promote people over profits and protect the environment.

B. Poverty and Income Inequality

As United Methodists, we follow in the footsteps of our founder, John Wesley, who sought to improve the lives of those who suffered from debilitating conditions such as poverty, starvation, illiteracy, imprisonment, slavery, addictions, and disease.

We decry the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a smaller percentage of the global population. We lament that too many of the world’s people lack the basic resources necessary for survival and pledge ourselves to work toward the eradication of the roots and effects of poverty. We further lament the multiple causes of poverty, such as war, famine, diseases, and desertification.

We reject religious teachings that view the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God’s favor and poverty as a sign of God’s disfavor. We confess that we have not always heeded the words of Jesus, who preached good news to people living in poverty, taught that they were not far from God’s coming reign, and challenged the rich young man to give up all that he had to follow him (Luke 6:20; Matthew 19:23-25).

We commit ourselves to be in active ministry with impoverished communities by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and by supporting their efforts to secure equal opportunities and meet human needs, including food, water, health care, and education. We reject preferential treatment in the church on the basis of wealth and income. We also commit to work toward eradicating unjust practices, policies, and systems that have condemned entire generations to live in unrelenting poverty.

C. Human Trafficking and Slavery

We condemn human trafficking and slavery as profound violations of the inherent dignity and worth of every person and of their fundamental rights related to autonomy, including the ability of every individual to make personal life choices. We understand slavery to be a repudiation of the basic Christian understanding that all people are created in the image of God.

Human trafficking entails the buying and selling of human beings for purposes of forced or indentured labor, including private and commercial sexual exploitation. We consider such trafficking to be abhorrent because it violates basic human rights and exploits the vulnerabilities of the weakest members of society. Those who are especially vulnerable include minor children and women, migrants, displaced people, and others living in poverty.

We support the abolition of human trafficking and slavery of any kind. We commit ourselves to work toward the elimination of the social and economic inequities that provide fertile ground for the flourishing of these evils. We also reject the practice of using enslaved, indentured, imprisoned or coerced laborers in extractive industries or in the production of commercial goods. We urge individuals, families, congregations, and retailers to practice socially responsible consumerism by educating themselves about the sources of labor and the working conditions involved in production processes.

D. Graft, Bribery, and Corruption

We oppose graft, bribery, and other forms of corruption as breaches of the public trust and impediments to the creation of just and equitable societies. We deplore the involvement of government officials, business executives, church leaders, and other people of authority in these practices, not only because of their illegality but because such practices erode public confidence in legitimate forms of authority. Additionally, they subvert basic principles related to equality under the law and serve as
obstacles to establishing just and equitable economies. The consequence is the diversion of public funding and manipulation of public contracts that undermine projects and services that could benefit the entire society.

**Economic Justice**

I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No more covetousness! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, in every possible kind and degree to the household of faith, to all people! (John Wesley, “The Use of Money”)

Our commitment to achieving economic justice is rooted in the covenantal understanding that God’s creation is meant to be shared by all humans and sentient beings. Just as the oikos or household served as the heart of the economy in ancient times, our belief in the inclusive nature of God’s global household motivates our pursuit of just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

As members of God’s oikos and followers of Jesus, who taught that we must “give to those who ask and not turn away from those who want to borrow,” we embrace our charge to share the abundance of God’s creation in just and equitable ways (Matthew 5:42). We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, and civic associations to ensure that individuals, families, and communities not only survive, but also thrive.

**A. Responsible Consumerism**

Socially responsible consumerism is critical in life today. We urge individuals, families, and congregations to adopt life habits that reduce unnecessary waste, promote just and equitable compensation, promote sustainability, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

We urge consumers to exercise their economic power to encourage the manufacture of goods that are beneficial to humankind while avoiding those produced through exploitative labor practices. We support peaceful and nonviolent efforts, including boycotts, letter-writing campaigns, appeals to stockholders, and divestiture, as effective means of expressing collective dissatisfaction with companies that engage in unjust or harmful practices. We also call upon stockholders and employees to exercise their moral agency by seeking to influence corporate policies. When such actions are necessary, we urge that they be in alignment with the teachings of the gospel and the church’s commitment to the dignity and worth of all beings.

In recognition that developed nations now consume the vast majority of the world’s natural resources, we also support international policies and cooperative efforts aimed at producing economies that are more just and that promote human flourishing.

**B. Farming and Agricultural Production**

The emphasis placed on the necessity of “daily bread” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:11) serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of daily sustenance and the crucial roles that farming and other forms of agricultural production play in meeting the nutritional needs of a rapidly expanding global population. We, therefore, call for the establishment of policies and practices to guarantee the safety and security of these lifelines and to ensure that the decision-making related to agricultural production, and the benefits of that production, are open to all.

We support local and family farms and appreciate their value in feeding the vast majority of the world’s population. We deplore the growing monopolization of the means of agricultural production by corporations and large agribusinesses. These monopolies raise significant concerns about the loss of local input and decision-making power and accelerate the degradation of ecosystems, including soil, water and forests.

Large agribusinesses, in particular, have exacerbated practices that reserve the best lands for the exclusive production of exportable crops, rather than using those resources to feed local populations. They also have accelerated the depletion of the soil through monocultural farming, increased the release of methane gas by livestock, contributed to environmental degradation, and exposed workers to unsafe levels of pesticides and herbicides.

We endorse measures that protect the continued operation of local, family, and communal farms and call for the elimination of government programs that disproportionately benefit large corporations and agribusinesses. We support efforts to restore local input and decision-making regarding the use of land, the production of crops, the raising of livestock, and the protection of local habitats in hopes that this will enable local communities to reap more of the benefits of farming and other forms of agricultural production.

We urge farmers, large and small, to engage in sustainable practices that preserve the integrity of the food chain, ensure that farmworkers and other laborers are justly compensated, and protect the natural environment.

**C. The Dignity of Work**

We believe in the dignity of work, not merely as a means of subsistence, but as a way for individuals to contribute to the flourishing of their families and contribute to the common good. This affirmation of the dignity of work leads us to support the right to safe and secure working conditions, free from health and safety hazards. We also endorse the establishment and enforcement of policies that guarantee workers fair and equitable compensation.
sometimes referred to as a living wage. We recognize that full employment is a distant dream in many communities and cultures and, in such situations, the challenges in establishing workers’ rights are significant. Still, the church advocates for the fair and decent treatment of workers and supports policies that expand opportunities for more people to find meaningful work with just compensation and benefits.

We oppose the widespread reliance on child labor, which forces children under the age of eighteen (18) to relinquish their childhoods and forgo educational opportunities, and instead to work in commercial agriculture, industrial manufacturing, or extractive industries.

We support workers’ freedom of association, including their rights to organize unions, to engage in collective bargaining, and to protest both unsafe working conditions and unjust employment policies and practices. We also support workers’ right to strike. We reject efforts to permanently replace workers engaged in strikes or to make organized work stoppages illegal.

We support measures that limit the length of both the workday and workweek and endorse policies that guarantee every worker paid time off, including but not limited to sick time and bereavement leave, opportunities to vote and carry out other civic duties, holiday or vacation time, and parental leave for those caring for newborns or newly adopted children.

D. Sabbath and Renewal Time

We recognize Sabbath as a gift of God for all people, remembering that God rested on the seventh day of Creation (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11). We affirm the importance of taking time away from work to rest and renew the mind, body, and spirit, engage in play and recreation, and serve the needs of our communities. We further affirm that Sabbath is also a time to provide rest for others in the human community.

We encourage all United Methodists to honor the Sabbath by actively participating in the worship life of a local congregation. We urge governments and businesses to promote policies and practices that allow people of all religious faiths to take ample time away from work to engage in worship, renewal, and fellowship opportunities.

E. Corporate Responsibility

We believe that corporations and businesses, like all other human institutions, are charged with doing good, promoting equity and justice, and making positive contributions to communal life. Rather than merely producing profits for their shareholders, we believe corporations and businesses have significant roles to play in promoting the social and economic health and welfare of society.

We call on corporations and businesses to place people above profits and to observe the highest ethical standards in conducting their business. We, therefore, urge corporate leaders and stockholders to comply with all laws, regulations, and international accords related to the defense of the environment, the safety and security of the workplace, and the guarantee of basic rights.

We lament the long history of injustice and of violations of formal treaties and agreements. We hold corporations, businesses, and governments responsible for any violations or infringements of the rights and lands of individuals and communities and commit ourselves to advocate and work for justice.

We commend socially responsible investment as an important mechanism to hold corporations accountable for promoting the common good. We, therefore, urge individuals, families, congregations, and other church bodies to educate themselves about the use of their investment funds and to leverage their economic clout by mandating the redirection of their funds from industries that negatively impact people or the environment. After all other avenues have been exhausted, other effective strategies include direct dialogue, joint shareholder actions, and boycott and divestment efforts.

Rationale:

This petition replaces ¶ 163 The Economic Community as part of the Social Principles revision. For the complete revision proposal and background on the process see “Social Principles Revision Report and Addendum” located in the ADCA.

¶164.

Petition Number: 20008-CA-¶164; McKinley, Richard - Salem, NH, USA.

Removal of National Flags

Amend paragraph ¶ 164:

C) Church and State Relations—The United Methodist Church has for many years supported the separation of church and state. In some parts of the world this separation has guaranteed the diversity of religious expressions and the freedom to worship God according to each person’s conscience. Separation of church and state means no organic union of the two, but it does permit interaction. National flags, being political symbols that mark the divisions of humankind, do not belong in a space where we celebrate our baptismal oneness as citizens under the sovereignty of God. Symbols used in the church should affirm the unity that all peoples can know through baptism into Christ; national flags are by their nature exclusive and thus contrary to Galatians 3:27-28, which affirms
our oneness in Christ. The state should not use its authority to promote particular religious beliefs (including atheism), nor should it require prayer or worship in the public schools, but it should leave students free to practice their own religious convictions. We believe that the state should not attempt to control the church, nor should the church seek to dominate the state. The rightful and vital separation of church and state, which has served the cause of religious liberty, should not be misconstrued as the abolition of all religious expression from public life.

¶164.

Petition Number: 2009-CA-¶164-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Political Community of the Social Principles

Delete ¶ 164 (The Political Community of the Social Principles) and substitute the following:

THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

Preface

"Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." Very excellent things are spoken of love; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one. "Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable," or honorable; "if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," they are all comprised in this one word,—love. (John Wesley, "The Circumcision of the Heart")

Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good. We acknowledge that such political engagement demands humility and mindfulness of our own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It also necessitates compassion, prayer, and a willingness to discern God’s guidance.

We believe in the inherent worth of all people, which is established through God’s gracious act of creation and most fully revealed in the power of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. The understanding that people are created in the image of God is a central theme in John Wesley’s teachings.

We further believe that God calls all members of the human family to recognize and protect the dignity and worth of all people and to work for the well-being of all God’s creation. We, therefore, support structures in the church and in civil society that honor the basic freedoms and rights of all human beings and protect God’s creation. In particular, we affirm the important work of the United Nations in promoting peace and security, championing human dignity and human rights, and advocating for sustainable development.

Government Responsibilities

A. Church and Governments

Governments exist to preserve order, to protect their citizens, and to promote the common good, making possible a peaceful and productive life for all. Though the formal relationships between religious communities and governments vary from country to country, the independence and integrity of both institutions is important, and we advocate for a relationship of mutual respect in which neither institution seeks to dominate or unduly influence the other.

Whether as revealed in God’s Word or hidden in God’s world, it is ultimately God alone who reigns over the whole of creation. We affirm that every form of government thus stands under God’s judgment and must be held accountable for protecting the innocent, guaranteeing basic freedoms and liberties, protecting the natural world, and establishing just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

We urge those elected or appointed to public posts or holding other positions in government to act as responsible leaders and stewards of the authority and resources entrusted to them. We call on all government officials to aspire to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, and integrity. Furthermore, we urge all governments to adopt policies and practices that guarantee accountability and transparency in fostering and maintaining the trust of the public.

We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices. In keeping with international laws and ordinances, we vehemently protest the use of torture, slavery, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression by any government and call for the strictest international sanctions to be imposed in such cases.

While it is not the role of churches to affiliate with particular political parties, it is the special duty of Christians to support freedom of religion for all, to preserve a vital space within civic life for religious beliefs and expressions, and to advocate for policies and programs that benefit the greater society, while opposing the policies and programs that may be unjust. We further believe churches have a right and a responsibility to educate and equip their members to be effective advocates for justice in the wider
world, even as we are called as Christians to pray for those who lead us.

B. Civil Disobedience

We support those who, acting under the constraints of moral conscience or religious conviction and having exhausted all other legal avenues, feel compelled to disobey or protest unjust or immoral laws. We urge those who engage in civil disobedience to do so nonviolently and with respect for the dignity and worth of all concerned. We also appeal to all governmental bodies, especially the police and any other institutions charged with protecting public safety, to provide appropriate training and to act with restraint and in a manner that protects basic rights and prevents emotional or bodily harm to those engaged in civil disobedience.

C. Restorative Justice

The Gospels place a premium on the restoration of right relationships (Matthew 18:15-20). When relationships are violated or broken through crime or wrongdoing, such restoration is critically important. We, therefore, urge governments to develop systems that emphasize restorative justice, which requires people who have committed crimes to make amends for their offenses and allows victims, if they elect to do so, to share with offenders how they have been harmed. Restorative justice seeks to prioritize the victim and the victim’s family. It also seeks to repair damages, right wrongs, and bring healing to the victim, the offender, families, and the community.

We urge congregations, governments, and businesses to support diversion programs that allow those who have committed offenses to receive counseling, education, skills training, community service, and other assistance to help them become fully contributing members of society. We encourage citizens to partner with law enforcement personnel in local communities to create alternatives to practices that emphasize retribution rather than restoration.

D. The Death Penalty

Our commitment to the inherent dignity and worth of every person and our historic stance as United Methodists compels us to oppose capital punishment and the imposition of the death penalty. The death penalty is a sentence of execution imposed upon a legally convicted individual.

Tragically, the death penalty compounds the loss of human life with the deliberate taking of another life. Additionally, the administration of the death penalty disproportionately impacts people who live in poverty, those who are uneducated, people who live in marginalized racial and ethnic communities, and people with mental impairments. Further, modern advances in technology have shown that a significant number of people are wrongly convicted of the crimes with which they have been charged. Such injustices call us to question the fair application of the death penalty and its congruence with the fundamental right to fair and equal treatment under the law.

We, therefore, call for the abolition of the death penalty and urge individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the historical stance of The United Methodist Church and its predecessors, especially The Evangelical United Brethren Church. Further, we ask pastors and congregations to commit themselves to minister to those who have lost loved ones to violent crimes and to support families without judgment as they navigate the competing demands of justice, compassion, and healing.

E. Criminal Justice

John Wesley campaigned tirelessly for improved conditions for prisoners. Once, in a period of nine months, he preached at least sixty-seven (7) times in various jails. He bemoaned the deplorable conditions under which most prisoners in his day lived. Claiming this heritage, we affirm the rule of law, the guarantee of civil liberties and rights, and equal access to justice for all people. We condemn discriminatory enforcement or any abuse of power for reasons of tribe, ethnicity, native language, country of origin, economic disadvantage, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or citizenship status. We encourage systemic monitoring for prejudice and bias in all criminal justice systems. We further support access to competent legal representation for people who are accused and/or convicted of criminal acts.

We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures that prevent, deter, or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those who are imprisoned. We strongly support programs in prisons designed to promote rehabilitation and restoration of inmates. We do not believe that prisons should be for-profit enterprises.

In our communities, we support measures designed to address the root causes of crime, including poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, recreational activities, substance abuse treatment and counseling, mental health services, and job training. We endorse initiatives designed to promote positive interactions between law enforcement and members of local communities. Further, we encourage efforts to reintegrate people who have been released from prison back into the community, including the provision of employment opportunities, the restoration of voting rights and, where appropriate, the sealing of criminal records.

We encourage churches to be in ministry with those who are incarcerated, advocating for these people and for
criminal justice reform as well. As forgiven people, Christians must combat the stigma often attached to people who have been in prison. We applaud the involvement of many United Methodists in prison ministries centering on worship, education and rehabilitation.

F. War and Military Service

The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.

We reject the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy and insist that every peaceful and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before the start of armed conflicts. Similarly, we oppose the increasing reliance on preemptive strikes unless they can be clearly demonstrated to be proportionate in response, delimited in human casualties, and undertaken in response to clear and immediate threats to human lives. We grieve that in a world where so many live in poverty, governments continue to dedicate enormous resources to preparing for and conducting wars. We are especially distressed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and call not only for an end to their production, but for their complete elimination.

Christians have struggled with the issue of war since the time of Jesus. Some Christians have argued historically that war and other acts of violence are never acceptable, while other believers have asserted that it is sometimes necessary to take up arms in self-defense or to defend the innocent and prevent unchecked aggression, tyranny, and genocide.

We urge all United Methodists to examine their own consciences and earnestly seek God’s guidance when it comes to matters of military service. We honor and offer support to those who choose military service as a result of personal conviction and urge that they perform their duties in harmony with the tenets of the Christian faith and in accordance with the laws of the Geneva Conventions.

We also honor and support the witness of pacifists whose consciences and religious convictions prevent them from serving in the military or limit them to taking noncombatant roles. The roots of such pacifist convictions are well established in the historic stances of The United Methodist church and its predecessor bodies. We oppose compulsory military service and urge governments to abolish this practice and, instead, allow those who choose not to serve in the military to complete terms of community service or to contribute in other creative ways.

As a church, we commit ourselves to support all people as they discern how best to model the nonviolent example of Jesus. The church supports and guides those who serve in the military; those who are conscientious objectors; veterans living with physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral injury; and families of people affected by military service. We urge the church to care and work for systemic justice for all people affected by war and to advocate for peacemaking and nonviolent conflict transformation in global and local conflicts.

Basic Rights and Freedoms

We declare that all individuals, no matter their circumstances or social standing, are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms. These rights are grounded in God’s gracious act in creation (Genesis 1:27), and they are revealed fully in Jesus’ incarnation of divine love. As a church, we will work to protect these rights and freedoms within the church and to reform the structures of society to ensure that every human being can thrive.

As set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other important international treaties, basic rights and freedoms include the right to life, liberty, and security as well as to equal treatment before the law and freedom from unlawful detention. Additional liberties include the rights to fair trial, privacy, public assembly, free expression, democracy, food, and shelter. Further, workers have rights to engage in collective bargaining, receive just compensation and work in safe, healthy environments.

Rights call forth responsibilities. We urge individuals, congregations, and other church bodies to advocate vigorously not only for their own rights, but also for the rights of those who are voiceless or whose voices are unheard in society. Governments must be held responsible for guaranteeing human rights and liberties; such responsibilities include ensuring that all people have access to affordable, high-quality education, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, or any other divisive marker.

We condemn all attempts to deny individuals their basic rights or freedoms or to strip human beings of their inherent dignity and worth. We, therefore, reject within the church and wider society any act of discrimination, hatred, or violence directed against individuals or groups based on national origin, tribal affiliation, ethnicity, age, gender identity, disability status, economic condition, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or other any factors. Additionally, in the face of historic wrongs perpetrated against indigenous peoples, enslaved African peoples, and other marginalized groups, we call for forthright confession and repentance as well as concrete acts of reparation to redress past and present forms of social injustice.

A. Health Care

We affirm health care as a basic human right and vow to work toward expanded access to all forms of medical treatment, including preventative, therapeutic, and palliative care. Half the world’s population lack access to health care, and a growing number of people who do have access face increased medical expenses for themselves or
their loved ones, pushing them toward poverty. To confront these painful realities, we urge United Methodists to join efforts aimed at creating systems that provide comprehensive health protections for all. Additionally, we believe that everyone has a right to decent living conditions, including adequate food and water, safe housing, and a healthy environment.

Health care as a human right also means that clinics, hospitals, and medical services and treatments must be accessible, affordable, and of good quality. They must also be available when and where they are needed and be provided on an equitable basis. We call on governments, businesses, churches, and civil society institutions to work cooperatively to ensure that every human being has access to medical services and treatment.

Additionally, we call on national governments and international health organizations and medical groups to work cooperatively and expeditiously to address global pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as outbreaks of contagious diseases that threaten the health and well-being of entire countries and regions. As a church, we support other measures and initiatives to improve human health, including investments in preventative care, good nutrition, continuing research in infectious disease prevention and treatment, pre- and postnatal health, and substance abuse treatment on demand. We commend churches that are involved in community-based health care ministries.

B. Children and Young People

We call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people and for their safety, nurture, agency, education, and participation in church and community life. We condemn destructive practices of neglect, abuse, abduction, exploitation, human trafficking, use of children in armed conflict, and imprisonment. We recognize that perpetrators of abuse or endangerment are usually in positions of power. We hold them accountable for their actions, whether they are parents and family, teachers, clergy, or congregational or public leaders. We call on the church to stand firmly against the detention of children, and we challenge policies that deny basic rights to the young or discriminate against them based on gender identity, ethnicity, abilities, economic status, sexual orientation, migratory status, religion, or national origin. Further, we urge people in positions of authority and power to support and include young people in making decisions and contributing their gifts at all levels of church and society.

C. Elders and the Aging

Elders have many gifts to give. We call upon the church, governments, and civic bodies to provide continuing opportunities for them to participate in the human family and contribute to God’s work in the world. Elders also have the right to support and protection against the vulnerabilities of aging, expressed in economic disparities, unjust inheritance practices, inadequate public health care, and systemic neglect based on gender, ethnicity, abilities, and economic conditions.

We urge the church, governments, and civil society to develop and enact social policies and programs that provide for the needs and rights of people as they age. We support social policies that integrate elders into community life and guarantee resources for their well-being, including nondiscriminatory employment opportunities, educational and service opportunities, accessible medical care and housing, protection from economic or psychological exploitation, and high-quality, publicly assisted elder care. We affirm the self-determination of elders whether living independently or in families or institutions, and we condemn violations of their quality of life through unnecessary medication or restrictions on their social participation and agency.

D. Gender Equality

We affirm that those of both genders make important contributions to church and society and support equal opportunities for all regardless of gender, national origin, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, or other characteristics.

To ensure these rights, opportunities, and protections, we urge the church, governments, and civic institutions to develop equitable structures and policies to make certain that the dignity and worth of all are recognized and affirmed. We further call for the rights of all to be safeguarded in education, employment, compensation and promotion, and parental rights and responsibilities; and we affirm the right of every individual to live free from harassment, violence, discrimination, domestic or workplace abuse, human trafficking, and gendered expectations that limit their full development as human beings. We encourage the creation of opportunities for their leadership potential to be nurtured, in order that they might thrive and contribute their gifts to the well-being of society.

E. Indigenous, Native, and Aboriginal Communities

We support the rights of indigenous, native, and aboriginal communities and affirm that like all people they must be afforded the basic rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We condemn acts of genocide against indigenous peoples and call for government treaties and contracts with native and aboriginal peoples to be honored and enforced.

We join with indigenous peoples and tribes to demand that their rights to exercise national sovereignty be upheld by governments and courts. We support the efforts of indigenous people to revitalize their languages and cultures in the face of concerted efforts to assimilate them.
into mainstream societies. We acknowledge that indigenous, native, and aboriginal peoples are entitled to control their land, water, and other resources, and we decry any attempts to forcibly seize these resources or to forcibly remove indigenous people from their territories.

F. Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees

We affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. In so doing, we acknowledge that the world today is facing an unprecedented crisis related to the displacement of vast numbers of people due to such factors as ongoing wars and other hostilities, foreign interventions, widespread famine and hunger, global warming and climate change, and the failure of nation-states to adequately protect and care for their people.

We recognize that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence and abuse. We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment, and other kinds of support.

We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees. Additionally, we decry attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions. We challenge policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children, and we oppose the existence of for-profit detention centers for such purposes.

G. People with Disabilities

We affirm the full humanity and acknowledge the gifts of people living with disabilities. We call for the elimination of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in the life of local congregations and other church bodies. Though no one term has gained universal acceptance throughout our global connection, “people with disabilities” refers to a broad group of people living with distinctive cognitive, physical, developmental, sensory, neurological, intellectual, and psychological conditions or challenges.

We lament that the church has often stigmatized and discriminated against people with disabilities by imposing labels with negative connotations, by failing to make space in church life for the full range of God’s people, and by interpreting words such as blind, lame, and deaf in pejorative ways. Because of this, people with disabilities are frequently dismissed or undervalued, both in the church and in civil society. In response, we call the church to acts of repentance, to earnest listening, and to a collaborative ministry with people with disabilities so they can contribute their wisdom and gifts to the mission and ministry of local congregations and other church bodies.

We likewise call on civil society, business, and government leaders to work toward the removal of all barriers and to provide opportunities for those with disabilities to make their unique contributions to the entire society. We call for the protection of the rights of all people with disabilities, including the rights to health care, employment, education, housing and transportation, and to freedom from discrimination.

H. Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties, and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We see clear issues of equality and justice in protecting the rightful claims of those with shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion, and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.

I. Religious Minorities

We affirm the rights of religious minorities to worship in peace and to exercise their faith free from fear of discrimination or persecution. We condemn actions by any individual, group, or organization that denigrate or demean those belonging to another faith. As Christians, we consider such attitudes and actions to be antithetical to Jesus’ command to love one’s neighbor.

We urge governments, businesses, churches, and other institutions in civil society to take concerted action to preserve and protect the rights of all religious people. We object to any form of discrimination and intolerance toward religious minorities, including laws that ban religious clothing and symbols, and statements from public officials that incite intolerance, hatred, and violence. We call for responsible media coverage of religions and condemn the dissemination of stereotypes and untruths about religious minorities.
We endorse the rights of all religious people to practice their faith, free from unjustified and unnecessary legal, political, and financial restraints. We also support the right of individuals to choose their own faith, and we reject attempts to impose beliefs on people or to coerce or manipulate them into joining or remaining a part of a religious tradition when they have decided to disaffiliate. Individual religious belief must not be used to deny basic human rights.

¶629.

Petition Number: 20010-CA-¶629-G; Hanson, Jaydee - Arlington, VA, USA for Caretakers of God’s Creation.

Establish a Conference Caretakers of God’s Creation Coordinator in Each Annual Conference

Amend as follows:

¶ 629. Conference Board of Church and Society—

1. The annual conference shall organize a board of church and society or other structure to provide for the functions of this ministry and maintain the connectional relationship between the General Board of Church and Society and the conference, district, and local church, as well as for church and society responsibilities related to the objectives and scope of work of the General Board of Church and Society as set forth in ¶¶ 1002-1004.

2. The conference board of church and society or equivalent structure shall be composed of those persons as determined by the annual conference, including, by virtue of their offices, the mission coordinator for social action of the conference United Methodist Women and members of the General Board of Church and Society from the annual conference who shall serve within limits set by ¶¶ 610.6 and 710.6. The conference board of church and society or equivalent structure shall also name a conference Caretakers of God’s Creation Coordinator who will be responsible for helping the conference develop programs to help it become more ecologically sustainable and to address environmental injustices and shall name a Peace with Justice Coordinator who will be responsible for administering the conference Peace with Justice Special Sunday Offering receipts and for coordinating peace and justice ministries. Guidelines for inclusiveness in the membership shall be followed (¶ 610.5).

Support Persecuted Christians

Amend ¶ 1004 as follows:

¶ 1004. Responsibilities—The prime responsibility of the board is to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns.

... The board shall develop, promote, and distribute resources and conduct programs to inform, motivate, train, organize, and build networks for action toward social justice throughout society, particularly on the specific issues prioritized by the board. Special attention shall be given to the nurture of the active constituency of the board. The board will encourage an exchange of ideas on strategy and methodology for social change. Through conferences, districts, coalitions, and networks, it will assist church members as they identify and respond to critical social issues at community, regional, national, and international levels. The board shall devote at least one full-time staff position to promoting education, prayer, and advocacy on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who suffer persecution for their faith. This shall include making this specific concern one of the top priorities for the board’s programmatic work, visiting areas in which such persecution occurs, partnering with United Methodists and other Christians already working on such concerns at local and national levels, and submitting a report to each General Conference on the board’s work on behalf of the persecuted church in the previous quadrennium.

Rationale:
There is now increasing persecution of Christians in much of the world, therefore, it is important to treat this as a matter of greater urgency.

¶1004.

Petition Number: 20012-CA-¶1004-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Support for Intersectional Justice Work

Amend ¶ 1004 as follows:

New paragraph in ¶ 1004 inserted before “All the above shall be consistent with . . .”

The board shall 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.

¶1006.

Petition Number: 20013-CA-¶1006-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Membership of General Board of Church and Society

Amend ¶ 1006 as follows:

Organization—1. The General Board of Church and Society shall have sixty-two members, constituted in accordance with ¶ 705.3d, and shall be organized as specified in its bylaws and in harmony with ¶¶ 702-710 of the General Provisions. Other provisions of the Book of Discipline notwithstanding, the membership shall be constituted as follows:

a) Jurisdictional Members—Clergy, laywomen, and laymen shall be elected to the board from the jurisdictional conference upon nomination from the annual conference in accordance with ¶ 705.5b, based on the following formula reflective of each jurisdiction's membership: North Central 7 3, Northeastern 8 3, South Central 11 4, Southeastern 12 4, and Western 3 2.

b) Central Conference Members—Six central conference members shall be elected to the board on nomination by the Council of Bishops, according to the provisions in ¶ 705.4c.

c) Episcopal Members—Six episcopal members, including at least two from the central conferences, shall be named by the Council of Bishops.

d) Additional Members—(1) United Methodist—Additional members are nominated by a committee composed of three persons from each jurisdiction (one clergy, one laywoman, and one layman) elected by the jurisdictional conference. They shall elect up to nine additional members to ensure inclusivity and expertise.

(2) The board may elect one of the additional members with vote from our Full Communion Ecumenical Partners.

Increase Number of Central Conference Members to GBCS

Amend ¶ 1006 as follows:

¶ 1006. Organization—1. The General Board of Church and Society shall have sixty-two members, constituted in accordance with ¶ 705.3d, and shall be organized as specified in its bylaws and in harmony with ¶¶ 702-710 of the General Provisions. The membership shall be constituted as follows:

a) Jurisdictional and Central Conference Members—Clergy, laywomen, and laymen There shall be 22 members, including clergy, laywomen, and laymen, selected from the jurisdictions and central conferences. There shall be at least one member from each central conference and U.S. jurisdiction, with the additional members allocated to reflect the proportionate membership based upon the combined clergy and lay membership of the church. The jurisdictional members shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 705.4b. The central conference members shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 705.4c.

b) Central Conference Members-Six central conference members shall be elected to the board on nomination from the annual conference in accordance with ¶ 705.5b, based on the following formula: North Central 7, Northeastern 8, South Central 11, Southeastern 12, and Western 3. The jurisdictional members shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 705.4b. The central conference members shall be named in accordance with ¶ 705.4c.

c) Episcopal Members—Six episcopal members, including at least one from the central conferences, shall be named by the Council of Bishops.

d) Additional Members—(1) United Methodist—Additional members are nominated by a committee composed of three persons from each jurisdiction and central conference and the remaining members allocated to reflect the proportionate membership of the church based on the combined clergy and lay membership, persons from each jurisdiction and central conference (one clergy, one laywoman, and one layman) elected by the jurisdictional conference. They shall elect up to nine additional members to ensure inclusivity and expertise, at least three of whom shall be from the central conferences.

(2) The board may elect one of the additional members with vote from among our Full Communion Ecumenical Partners.

¶1006.

Petition Number: 20015-CA-¶1006-G; Masamba, Member - Harare, Zimbabwe.
Rationale:
Since the church stands for justice, we want to practice justice in all matters that concern us, to live as an example to the whole world. This amendment treats U.S. and non-U.S. areas equally.

¶1006.
Petition Number: 20016-CA-¶1006-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Reduce Size of General Board of Church and Society

¶ 1006. Organization—1. The General Board of Church and Society shall have sixty-two thirty-two members, constituted in accordance with ¶ 705.3d, and shall be organized as specified in its bylaws and in harmony with ¶¶ 702-710 of the General Provisions. The membership shall be constituted as follows:
   a) Jurisdictional Members—Clergy, laywomen, and laymen shall be elected to the board by the jurisdictional conference upon nomination from the annual conference in accordance with ¶ 705.5b, based on the following formula: North Central—7 3, Northeastern—8 3, South Central—4 3, Southeastern—12 3, and Western—3.
   b) Central Conference Members—Six central conference members shall be elected to the board on nomination by the Council of Bishops, according to the provisions in ¶ 705.4c.
   c) Episcopal Members—Six Three episcopal members, including at least one from the central conferences, shall be named by the Council of Bishops.
   d) Additional Members—(1) United Methodist—Additional members are nominated by a committee composed of three persons from each jurisdiction (one clergy, one laywoman, one layman) elected by the jurisdictional conference. They shall elect up to nine eight additional members from any jurisdiction or central conference to ensure inclusivity and expertise. (2) The board may elect one of the additional members with vote from among the Full Communion Ecumenical Partners.

Rationale:
In light of budget considerations and in alignment with the board size of other agencies, this petition reduces the size of the board, increases the percentage of central conference representation, and expands eligible additional members to include central conferences.

¶1006.1b.
Petition Number: 20014-CA-¶1006.1b-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

General Board of Church and Society Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 1006.1b) as follows:
The General Board of Church and Society ¶ 1006. Organization—1. The General Board of Church and Society ¶ 1006.1b) Central Conference Members—Six eight central conference members shall be elected to the board on nomination by the Council of Bishops, according to the provisions in ¶ 705.4c.

Rationale:
The change from six to eight central conference members is in alignment with ¶ 705.4c). This petition corrects the actual number of board members from 6 to 7, then adds one for the new central conference. It is dependent upon the petition adding one central
Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20718.

Petition Number: 20718-CA-NonDis; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Opposition to Late Term Abortion

The 2020 General Conference instructs the General Board of Church and Society to publicly reconfirm the church’s opposition to late term abortion as currently stated in ¶ 161K) Book of Discipline (2016).

Rationale:

In January 2019 New York passed a law expanding the permissibility of abortion up to the time of birth itself, the result of which is that babies who may well be viable can now be aborted at any time for virtually any reason.
Proposed Resolutions

R1001.

Petition Number: 20531-CA-R1001-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Energy Policy Statement

Add a sentence at the end of paragraph 1:
And as a reflection of our church’s global connection, our United Methodist values are rooted in our common faith and shaped by the diverse contexts and circumstances in which we live.

Modify sentence 3 in paragraph 2:
Confronting global issues such as climate change, energy inequity, and pollution will require international, local, national, and international solutions based upon the values of justice and sustainability.

Modify sentence 4 under paragraph 3 subparagraph 2:
In terms of energy policy, sustainability means harnessing, extracting, utilizing, and disposing of the byproducts of energy sources that will: ensure adequate resources and opportunity for present and future generations to enjoy a healthy quality of life; enhance local environmental and economic vitality while minimizing impacts on the health of both human and non-human creation; and promote social and intergenerational equity.

Modify sentence 5 paragraph 7:
The burning of fossil fuels causes large-scale pollution and seriously alters the environment by increasing the carbon dioxide content of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

Insert a new paragraph after paragraph 9:
Generating energy from plant-based materials and food and industrial waste raises concerns over food security, deforestation, land and water use, and toxic air emissions.

Modify paragraph 10:
Nuclear energy poses significant threats to the life and health of our eco-systems—including humans—for generations. From the extraction of materials on indigenous lands to the safety risks posed in communities near reactors and along transit and storage sites for the radioactive byproducts of nuclear energy, the full life cycle of nuclear energy poses deep challenges to our values of justice and sustainability. There are considerable concerns with regard to the nuclear energy option. The destructive potential of a catastrophic accident involves a great risk of irreversible damage to the environment and all living species. Nuclear waste remains active and dangerous for thousands of years. Additionally, the development of nuclear energy possibly has masked ambitions for nuclear armament. The United Methodist Church urges a review of the safety of currently operating nuclear plants, a moratorium on future development, and reaffirms its support for a full phase-out of nuclear production for the purpose of creating weapons.

Modify sentence 1 paragraph 11:
Today, cleaner alternatives to traditional energy sources are available and increasingly cost-competitive.

Modify subparagraph 1 to paragraph 11:
1. We support strenuous efforts to conserve energy, and increase energy efficiency, and transition to renewable energy.

Delete sentences 5 and 6 of subparagraph 1 under paragraph 11:
We include under conservation: insulation, cogeneration, recycling, public transportation, more efficient motors in appliances and automobiles, as well as the elimination of waste, and a more simplified lifestyle. The technology for such steps is already known and commercially available; it requires only dissemination of information and stronger public support, including larger tax incentives than are presently available.

Modify sentence 2 of subparagraph 2 under paragraph 11:
United Methodists, including churches, annual conferences, general boards and agencies will model energy conservation by doing such things as: installing dampers in furnaces, insulating adequately all church properties, heating and lighting only rooms that are in use, using air circulation, purchasing energy efficient appliances, using LED lighting and exploring alternative energy sources such as wind and solar energy.

Delete sentence 3 of subparagraph 2 under paragraph 11:
Local churches, camps, and agencies are urged to become involved in programs such as the Energy Stewardship Congregation and Interfaith Power and Light programs, thereby witnessing our shared values of justice and sustainability.

Insert a new subparagraph 3 under paragraph 11:
3. We will model rapid transition to clean renewable energy. We urge all annual conferences, churches, and agencies to develop ambitious, just, and equitable transition pathways for their energy sources to be clean and renewable. Clean, renewable energy is any form of energy from solar, geophysical, or biological sources that is
replenished by natural processes at a rate that equals or exceeds its rate of use and is not harmful to our communities and our environment. We urge the General Board of Church and Society and United Methodist Women to support its members to advocate for renewable energy policies and practices and the infrastructure needed to make renewable energy accessible and affordable at the local, federal, and global level. We support the development and utilization of appropriate technologies for small-scale, decentralized energy systems; and expansion of the infrastructure needed for cycling, cleaner energy vehicles, public transportation and ride-sharing.

Modify and renumber subparagraph 3 under paragraph 11:

34. We will model sustainable and just energy values.

Modify sentence 3 in newly numbered subparagraph 4 under paragraph 11:

We particularly urge the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) to support and fund renewable and energy efficient mission projects; and we urge the Church Architecture Office of the General Board of Global Ministries to make energy conservation and the use of renewables a prime design feature in new building design and renovations.

Renumber subparagraph 4 to 5 under paragraph 11:

45. We support increased government funding for research and development of renewable energy sources and elimination of fossil fuel subsidies.

Insert a new sentence 2 in newly numbered subparagraph 5 under paragraph 11:

We oppose mechanisms such as emission trading to meet targets for emission reductions which often perpetuate environmental injustice with continued emission impacts in countries and communities with fewest resources.

Modify newly numbered subparagraph 6, first sentence under paragraph 11:

56. We support local, regional, and national efforts to provide transition assistance pathways including economic development and training for communities currently dependent on old energy fossil fuel economies such as fossil fuels, nuclear power, and large-scale hydro projects.

Renumber subparagraph 6 under paragraph 11:

67. We encourage international lending institutions and aid agencies to promote sustainable and just energy policies.

Renumber subparagraph 7 under paragraph 11:

78. We oppose any energy policy that will result in continuing exploitation of indigenous peoples’ lands.

Renumber subparagraph 8 under paragraph 11:

89. We support national energy programs that do not increase the financial burden on the poor, the elderly, and those with fixed incomes.

Modify sentence 2 under newly numbered subparagraph 9 under paragraph 11:

Energy policies must guarantee universal, affordable service access to all consumers, with particular attention to the needs of protecting low-income and rural residents.

Renumber subparagraph 9 under paragraph 11:

910. We support full cooperation of all nations in efforts to ensure equitable distribution of necessary energy supplies, the control of global warming, and rapid development and deployment of appropriate technologies based on renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and water energy generation.

Insert new sentences 2 and 3 under newly numbered subparagraph 10 under paragraph 11:

We affirm that while we have common goals, communities and countries have different responsibilities based on their historic emissions and current economic realities. We believe it is a matter of justice that those most responsible for the crisis should bear additional responsibilities and be more ambitious in their targets for emissions reductions and financing for a transition to a cleaner, safer, energy future.

Renumber subparagraph 10 under paragraph 11:

1111. We urge transparency in global energy market transactions.

Renumber subparagraph 11 under paragraph 11 and modify first sentence:

1112. We exhort The United Methodist Church at all levels to engage in a serious study of these energy issues in the context of Christian faith, especially and the values of justice and sustainability.

Insert new sentence 2 under newly numbered subparagraph 12 under paragraph 11:

This includes educating our congregants on energy production and usage in relation to global warming, studying the consequences of our consumer choices, taking action to lessen our impact on the environment, and advocating for policies that respond to the growing threat of climate change.

Rationale:

The product of inter-agency collaboration, this petition seeks to revise the “Energy Policy Statement” to include key elements of Resolutions #1002 and #1003 (both of which expire in 2020) to form one consolidated, global statement on the church’s vision for a just and sustainable energy policy.
Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education for All

Resolution #3162: The Right of All to Quality Education—Amend and Readopt:

The United Methodist Church has long recognized the full worth of children and supported quality education for all. The Social Principles acknowledge that children are full human beings in their own right (Social Principles, ¶ 162C). Children have a right to education, and parents and governments have an obligation to provide them with the access to an adequate education. “Thus, we support the development of school systems and innovative methods of education designed to assist every child toward complete fulfillment as an individual person of worth. All children have the right to quality education” (¶ 162C).

The United Methodist Church is committed to the “achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community” (¶ 165).

While remarkable progress has been made in the last ten years toward achieving education for all, the right to education remains one of the most widely and systematically violated of all human rights. In 2017, 72 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school (2010 UNESCO Report 2017-18 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report). Gender disparities are still prevalent, even though the number of girls out of schools has declined. Girls and persons with disabilities are disproportionately underrepresented in school enrollment. There has been little progress in helping to eradicate adult illiteracy, a condition that plagues 759 million people, two-thirds being women. Millions of children are leaving school without having acquired basic skills.

As we are reminded by the Council of Bishops’ in their pastoral letter, God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action, “We all feel saddened by the state of the world, overwhelmed by the scope of these problems, and anxious about the future, but God calls us and equips us to respond. No matter how bad things are, God’s creative work continues.”

This was also true for the Israelites as for any of the peoples of the ancient world. Walter A. Elwell points out that in the Hebrew Scripture we find “repeatedly that the success of the community and the continuity of its culture were conditioned by the knowledge of and obedience to God’s revealed law (Joshua 1:6-8). Thus, to ensure their prosperity, growth, and longevity as the people of Yahweh, Israel’s mandate was one of education—diligently teaching their children to love God, and to know and obey his statutes and ordinances (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). Likewise, the New Testament record links the success of the church of Jesus Christ, as a worshiping community of “salt and light” reaching out to a dark world, to the teaching of sound doctrine” (see also John 13:34-35; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:14; Titus 2:1). Every additional year of schooling reduces a young man’s risk of becoming involved in conflict by 20 percent, creating a safer world for us all.

Clearly, the above example highlights the importance of teaching children about the faith; however, it also illustrates the importance of educating children in general. The above illustrates the need to instill in our children values that could benefit the entire human family. Thus, we can echo the international community in asserting that education is a human right. We can also affirm that education is a social and spiritual benefit from which no one should be barred or impeded.

Unfortunately, the right to education remains one of the most widely and systematically violated of all human rights. Today, 115 million children are not enrolled in school; the majority of them girls. Forty percent (40%) of children in Africa receive no education. Another 150 million children start primary school but drop out before they have completed four years of education, the vast majority before they have acquired basic literacy skills. Unless urgent action is taken, they will join the ranks of nearly one billion illiterate adults in the world.

The benefits of an education are enormous. A good education helps people gain access to better paying jobs, thus, helping reduce the number of people who live in poverty. By the same token, a good education is essential for a sustained economic growth. Education provides people with skills and empowers them to take advantage of new opportunities. Completing just five years of education can increase agricultural efficiency significantly. In addition, studies have shown that educating girls not only raises their future wages, but dramatically reduces infant and maternal mortality rates.

People across the world are demanding that the right to education for all children be upheld. Governments, local communities, and community-based organizations in poor countries are striving, often in spite of the most appalling adversity, to educate their children. Recent achievements to provide primary education could be derailed by the global economic crisis...
conditions, newly falling aid levels, and educational challenges. In May 2010, seven million people participated in the Global Campaign for Education’s week of action and called for an end to the global crisis in education. The mission of the Campaign is to make sure that governments act now to deliver the right to every girl, boy, and woman and man to a free quality public education.

In 2015, UNESCO, the World Bank, and other U.N. bodies issued a declaration on an Education 2030 Framework for Action. The declaration stressed the importance of inclusion and equity as one of the cornerstones of education for all. Governments must address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation, and learning outcomes. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, color, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous persons, and children and youths, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status should have access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The Framework calls for the provision of twelve years of free, publicly funded, equitable primary and secondary education, of which nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes.

In 2000 many communities around the world responded to The United Nations’ call to “Education for All.” In addition, the United Nations’ “Millennium Development Goals” document includes a goal to achieve universal primary education by 2015. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals. Goal 4 states: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Global Campaign is a way citizens throughout the world can promote education for all. The mission of the campaign is to make sure that governments act now to deliver the right to every girl, boy, and woman and man to a free quality public education.

Rich countries, including the United States, Canada, the European Union, China, and Japan, have repeatedly promised that poor countries with credible national education plans would not be allowed to fail due to a lack of resources, but this promise has yet to be translated into action. UNESCO estimates that $16 billion will be needed each year to achieve this goal. If current trends continue, 56 million primary school-aged children will still be out of school by 2015. Rich countries and the World Bank must increase and improve aid for basic education.

Therefore, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church calls on the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, India, and other rich nations as well as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to deliver on their promises to the world’s children articulated in SDG 4 by providing substantial and sustained increases in aid for basic education in poor countries through bilateral assistance and the and create a Global Fund for Education. The International Monetary Fund must not press governments to cut education spending as a means to “balance” their budgets, or to stimulate the economy.

In addition, we urge United Methodists in countries around the world to advocate for their governments to provide such support for their children’s and adults’ education.

Rationale:

This amends for adoption to include updated information on progress to provide education for all with an emphasis on education for girls.

R5012.

Petition Number: 20556-CA-R5012-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Church-Government Relations

Resolution #5012: Church-Government Relations - Rewrite:

In Luke 20:20-26, the teachers of the law and the scribes sent “spies” to watch Jesus closely hoping to entrap him in either a theological or political error. They asked him whether or not it was right to pay taxes to Caesar. Considering that taxes were a means of Roman oppression and the inscription on the coin represented submission to Caesar, this is a dangerous question for Jesus. To answer in the affirmative, for the Israelites suffering under Roman imperialism, would imply that Roman colonization is an appropriate form of governance and that God’s people should accept whatever form of government, they find themselves under, no matter how repressive. If Jesus had answered the question negatively he would have been openly calling for revolt against the ability of Rome to tax its people. Instead, Jesus replied, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what is God’s,” and thus refused to incriminate himself through the questions of those out to trap him (Luke 20:25).

Scripture presents various examples and ways for the people of God to relate with the governing authorities. Jesus does not call his followers to open revolt although there are times when biblical faithfulness will necessitate civil disobedience to the ruling authorities (Acts 4:1-20).
We recognize that persons of all religious backgrounds may have insight into the nature of ultimate reality, which will help to enrich the common life. It is therefore essential that the public schools take seriously the religious integrity of each child entrusted to their care. Public schools may not properly establish any preferred form of religion for common exercises of worship, religious observance, or study. At the same time, however, education should provide an opportunity for the examination of some of the various religious traditions of humankind.

To fulfill the government’s responsibility in education, sometimes government and nonpublic educational institutions need to enter a cooperative relationship. But public funds should be used only in the best interests of the whole society. Extreme caution must be exercised to ensure that religious institutions do not receive any aid directly or indirectly for the maintenance of their religious expression or the expansion of their institutional resources. Such funds must be used for the express purpose of fulfilling a strictly public responsibility, and should be subject to public accountability. This principle applies to other faith-based organizations and institutions in society.

Freedom of inquiry is a bedrock of intellectual flourishing which also poses a risk for established ideas, beliefs, programs, and institutions. We accept that risk in the faith that all truth is of God. Colleges and universities can best perform their vital tasks of adding to knowledge and to the perception of truth in an atmosphere of genuine academic freedom.

We affirm the principle that freedom to inquire, to discuss, and to teach should be regulated by the self-discipline of scholarship and the critical examination of ideas in the context of free public dialogue, rather than by censorship by supervisors, school boards, or any control imposed by churches, governments, or other organizations. In the educational process, individuals have the right to appropriate freely for themselves what they believe is real, important, useful, and satisfying.

Freedom to inquire, to discuss, and to teach is best preserved when colleges and universities are not dependent upon a single base or a few sources of support. When an educational institution relies upon multiple sources of financial support, and where those sources tend to balance one another, the institution is in a position to resist undue pressures toward control exerted from any one source of support. In the case of church-related colleges and universities, we believe that tuitions; scholarships; investment return; bequests; payments for services rendered; loans; government grants; and gifts from individuals, business corporations, foundations, and churches should be sought and accepted in as great a variety as possible. Care must be exercised to ensure that all support from any of these...
Military and public institutional chaplaincies reflect efforts to address the religious needs of people for whom both churches and governments are responsible. Within such a broad and complex undertaking there are real and serious tensions that produce genuine uneasiness on the part of government officials and church leaders. Patience and skill are required to navigate these tensions with understanding and without compromising religious liberty.

We believe that there are both ethical and juridical standards that must be observed by governments in the establishment and operation of public chaplaincies. At a minimum, those standards are as follows:

First, the only obligation that governments have is to ensure the provision of opportunities for military personnel, patients of hospitals, and inmates of correctional institutions to engage in religious worship or have access to religious nurture.

Second, participation in religious activities must be on a purely voluntary basis; there must be neither penalties for nonparticipation nor any rewards for participation.

Third, no preferential treatment should be given any particular church, denomination, or religious group in the establishment and administration of governmental chaplaincies.

Fourth, considerable care should be exercised in the role assignments of chaplains so they are not identified as the enforcers of morals. Precaution should also be taken to avoid chaplains being given duties not clearly related to their primary tasks.

Standards should be maintained to protect the integrity of both churches and governments. The practice of staffing governmental chaplaincies with clergy personnel who have ecclesiastical endorsement should be continued. The practice of terminating the services of such personnel in any instance where it becomes necessary for ecclesiastical endorsement to be withdrawn should also be continued. Supervision of clergy personnel in the performance of their religious services in governmental chaplaincies should be clearly effected through ecclesiastical channels with the cooperation of the public agencies and institutions involved. In the performance of these administrative functions, churches and agencies of government have an obligation to be fair and responsible and to ensure that due process is observed in all proceedings.

The role of a governmental chaplain should be primarily pastoral but with important priestly, prophetic, and teaching roles. The chaplain has an obligation to perform these ministries in as broad an ecumenical context as possible. A chaplain is responsible for the spiritual welfare and religious life of all the personnel of the military unit or the public institution to which he or she is assigned.
There are many persons, and some groups, whose personal religious practices or whose church’s rules make it impossible for them to accept the direct ministry of a particular chaplain. Chaplains, to the full extent of their powers, have an obligation to make provision for worship by these persons or groups. A chaplain is expected to answer specific questions by members of faith groups other than his or her own. Chaplains must know the basic tenets of their denominations in order to protect such members in the expression and development of their faith. The absence of parochialism on the part of a chaplain is more than an attitude; it necessitates specific, detailed, and accurate knowledge regarding many religions.

The churches should strive to make public chaplaincies integral expressions of their ministry and to face the implications of this for supervision and budget. The chaplain represents the church by affirming the dignity of all persons in military service through the chaplain’s function in upholding their freedom of religion and conscience. Every person exists within a broader set of values than those of the military, and within a broader spectrum of responsibilities than those created by military orders.

The chaplain is a bearer of the gospel to affirm the freedom of the individual and represents The United Methodist Church at that point of tension. Whether the freedom of the gospel is compromised or limited may be a result of either external pressures or internal submission, or both. Failure to sustain the freedom of the gospel lies within any human system or any individual. It is the task of the church to confront prophetically institutions or chaplains who compromise the gospel. The United Methodist Church provides presence, oversight, and support to chaplains who risk ministry in such a setting.

There are degrees of tension in present arrangements whereby a chaplain is a commissioned officer of the armed forces or an employee of a public institution. As such, he or she is a member of the staff of the military commander or of the director of the public institution involved. Government regulations and manuals describe him or her as the adviser on religion, morals, morale, and welfare. Therefore, we believe it is the chaplain’s duty in faithfulness to his or her religious commitments to act in accordance with his or her conscience and to make such viewpoints known in organizational matters affecting the total welfare of the people for whom the chaplain has any responsibility. The chaplain has the obligation and should have the opportunity to express his or her dissent within the structures in which the chaplain works, in instances where he or she feels this is necessary. With respect to such matters, it is the obligation of religious bodies to give the chaplain full support.

Churches must encourage chaplains who serve in the armed forces to resist the exaltation of power and its exercise for its own sake. They must also encourage chaplains who serve in public institutions to maintain sensitivity to human anguish. Churches and chaplains have an obligation to speak out conscientiously against the unforgiving and intransigent spirit in people and nations wherever and whenever it appears.

A Statement Concerning Church-Government Relations and Tax Exemption

We believe that governments recognize the unique category of religious institutions. To be in this unique category is not a privilege held by these institutions for their own benefit or self-glorification but is an acknowledgment of their special identity designed to protect their independence and to enable them to serve humankind in a way not expected of other types of institutions.

We urge churches to consider at least the following factors in determining their response to the granting of immunity from property taxes:

1. responsibility to make appropriate contributions for essential services provided by government; and
2. the danger that churches become so dependent upon government that they compromise their integrity or fail to exert their critical influence upon public policy.

A Statement Concerning Church Participation in Providing Social Services

We believe that all the organizations and resources of the private sector, as well as those of governments, should be taken into account in the formulation and execution of social welfare policies.

We recognize that appropriate government bodies have the right to prescribe minimum standards for all public and private social welfare agencies. We believe that no private agency, because of its religious affiliations, ought to be exempted from any of the requirements of such standards.

Governmental provision of material support for church-related agencies inevitably raises important questions of religious establishment. In recognition, however, that some health, education, and welfare agencies have been founded by churches without regard to religious proselytizing, we consider that such agencies may, under certain circumstances, be proper channels for public programs in these fields. When government provides support for programs administered by private agencies, it has the most serious obligation to establish and enforce standards guaranteeing the equitable administration of such programs and the accountability of such agencies to the public authority. In particular, we believe that government resources should not be provided to any church-related agency unless it meets the following minimum criteria:
1. The services to be provided by the church-related agency shall meet a genuine community need.

2. The services of the agency shall be designed and administered in such a way as to avoid serving a sectarian purpose or interest.

3. The services to be provided by the agency shall be available to all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, creed, or political persuasion.

4. The services to be rendered by the agency shall be performed in accordance with accepted professional and administrative standards.

5. Skill, competence, and integrity in the performance of duties shall be the principal considerations in the employment of personnel and shall not be superseded by any requirement of religious affiliation.

6. The right to collective bargaining shall be recognized by the agency.

We recognize that all of the values involved in the sponsorship of a social welfare agency by a church may not be fully expressed if that agency has to rely permanently on access to government resources for its existence. We are also aware that under certain circumstances, sponsorship of a social welfare agency by a church may inhibit the development of comprehensive welfare services in the community. Therefore, the church and the agency should choose which pattern of service to offer: (1) channeling standardized and conventional services supplied or supported by government, or (2) attempting experimental or unconventional ministries and criticizing government programs when they prove inadequate. We believe that these two patterns are difficult, if not impossible, to combine in the same agency and that the choice between them should be made before dependence upon government resources makes commitment to the first pattern irreversible. In their efforts to meet human needs, churches should never allow their preoccupation with religious affiliation to limit severely its own members.

We believe that churches have a moral obligation to challenge violations of the civil rights of the poor and marginalized. They should direct their efforts toward helping the poor overcome the powerlessness that makes such violations of civil rights possible. Specifically, churches should protest such policies and practices by welfare personnel as unwarranted invasions of privacy and oppose any requirement of attendance at church activities in order to qualify for social services.

We recognize that churches exist within the body politic, along with numerous other forms of human association. Like other social groups, their existence affects, and is affected by, governments. We believe that churches have the right and the duty to speak and act corporately on matters of public policy that involve basic moral or ethical issues and questions. Any concept of, or action regarding, church-government relations that denies churches this role in the body politic strikes at the very core of religious liberty.

The attempt to influence the formation and execution of public policy at all levels of government is often the most effective means available to churches to keep before humanity the ideal of a society in which power and order are made to serve the ends of justice and freedom for all people. Through such social action churches generate new ideas, challenge certain goals and methods, and help rearrange the emphasis on particular values in ways that facilitate the adoption and implementation of specific policies and programs that promote the goals of a responsible society.

We believe that any action that would deny the church the right to act corporately on public policy matters threatens religious liberty. We therefore oppose inclusion of churches in any lobby disclosure legislation.

This does not mean, in any way, that we wish to hide actions taken by the church on public issues. On the contrary, we are usually proud of such actions. It does recognize, however, that the church is already responding to members who request information with respect to church action on public policy questions. In effect, in accordance with legislation enacted by the 1976 General Conference, The United Methodist Church already has its own lobby disclosure provisions in place.

It is quite another matter, however, for the government to insist that it must know everything about what a church is saying in its private communications with its own members.

Furthermore, if the government insists on knowing everything the church is doing on public policy questions over a certain period of time and imposes a criminal sentence for violations, this could inhibit religion to the extent that the church might be tempted to limit severely its activity to avoid noncompliance.

If the government is going to require that religious groups keep burdensome records and make voluminous reports, and there is some question as to whether the churches are complying, federal authorities would be authorized to step in and check church records and files.
Such action would undoubtedly represent an excessive government entanglement with religion.

For these reasons, we oppose lobby disclosure measures for the churches. In its most stringent form, legislation such as this would inhibit our free exercise of religion. It would be impossible for the church to comply with certain provisions, thus subjecting our church leaders to criminal penalties.

We believe that churches must behave responsibly in the arena of public affairs. Responsible behavior requires adherence to ethically sound substantive and procedural norms.

Churches should seek to enlarge and clarify the ethical grounds of public discourse and to identify and define the foreseeable consequences of available choices of public policy.

In participating in the arena of public affairs, churches are not inherently superior to other participants; hence the stands that they take on particular issues of public policy are not above question or criticism.

Responsible behavior in the arena of public affairs requires churches to accept the fact that in dealing with complex issues of public policy, good intentions and high ideals need to be combined with as much practical and technical knowledge of politics and economics as possible.

Another norm of responsible behavior derives from the fact that no particular public policy that may be endorsed by churches at a given point in time should be regarded as an ultimate expression of Christian ethics in society. Churches should not assume that any particular social pattern, political order, or economic ideology represents a complete embodiment of the Christian ethic.

When churches speak to government, they also bear the responsibility to speak to their own members. Cultivation of ethically informed public opinion is particularly crucial in local congregations. It is essential to responsible behavior that procedures be established and maintained to ensure full, frank, and informed discussion by religious groups within the arena of public affairs. In the present period of human history, attention should be given to the dignity of every person, and appeal should be made to the consciences of all persons. Churches must acknowledge and respect the role of the laity as well as the clergy in determining their behavior in the arena of public affairs.

Because of their commitment to unity, and in the interest of an effective strategy, churches should, to the maximum extent feasible, coordinate their own efforts and, where appropriate, cooperate with other organizations when they seek to influence properly the formation and execution of public policy at all levels of government.

Finally, churches should not seek to utilize the processes of public affairs to further their own institutional interests or to obtain special privileges for themselves.

United Methodism is a part of the universal church. In the formulation and expression of the United Methodist voice in public affairs, we must listen to the concerns and insights of church members and churches in all nations. It is imperative that our expressions and actions be informed by participation in the universal church.

With particular reference to The United Methodist Church and public affairs, we express the following convictions: Connectional units of the denomination (such as General Conference, jurisdictional conference, annual conference, local congregation, or general board or agency) should continue to exercise the right to advocate government policies that involve basic moral or ethical issues or questions. In exercising this right, each such connectional unit, or any other official group within The United Methodist Church, should always make explicit for whom or in whose name it speaks or acts in the arena of public affairs. Only the General Conference is competent to speak or act in the name of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

This petition clarifies church-government relations, and positions the key issue of religious liberty in the context of human rights. The petition addresses pressing contemporary issues in which religious liberty is used to challenge human and civil rights. It articulates a strong statement of religious liberty appropriate for a global church.

R5031.

Petition Number: 20638-CA-R5031-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

No Church Support for Drugs and Prostitution

Amend Resolution #5031, Humanizing Criminal Justice, by DELETING language from the second paragraph under the “Criminal Laws and Penalties” section as follows:

Criminalization of personal behaviors or conditions perpetuates unfair racial disparity, class discrimination, stigmatization, and wastes resources needed for other purposes. Therefore, the church supports the repeal of laws that criminalize personal conditions or behaviors. Examples include vagrancy, homelessness, personal gambling, public drunkenness, drug use, prostitution, and real or perceived sexual orientation or consensual sexual activity.
Moreover, individuals forced or coerced into criminal behavior should not be criminalized. . . .

Rationale:

Such broad language urging church support for legalizing ALL drugs and prostitution is an extreme, embarrassing position. Normalizing drug use is especially harmful for children. Prostitution dehumanizes God’s gift of sex, always exploits people’s bodies as commodities, is inextricably tied to human trafficking, and is illegal in 49 U.S. states.

R5071.

Petition Number: 20555-CA-R5071-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Electoral Campaign Finance Reform

Amend paragraph 6:

We call upon all United Methodists to work within their own countries to build support for measures that would end the flood of special-interest monies to political campaigns and bring integrity to decision making.

Rationale:

This petition renews expiring Resolution #5071, which reaffirms the call for ethics in the life and financial dealings of the public square and emphasizes the need for campaign finance reform.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20539-CA-R9999-G; Blackadar, John - Bow, NH, USA for New England Annual Conference.

Exclude Government Debt of Countries Involved in Prolonged Military Occupations

WHEREAS, Amos 5:24 (CEB) says “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” and Psalm 103:6 (CEB) says “The LORD works righteousness; does justice for all who are oppressed,” and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church, through its general agencies and annual conferences, has endeavored to be accountable to our Social Principles through screening against investment in military occupations, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church’s Social Principles (¶ 165D) state “. . . we endorse the United Nations, its related bodies, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court as the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law,” and

WHEREAS, three nations have held subject populations under prolonged military occupation: Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories since 1967, Turkey has occupied Northern Cyprus since 1974, and Morocco has occupied Western Sahara since 1976, thus denying the subject populations their self-determination in violation of the system established by the Charter of the United Nations and International Law in general, and

WHEREAS, the above-named occupying powers have been named in United Nations Security Council resolutions and/or International Court of Justice rulings as having engaged in prolonged military occupations and are thereby violators of international law and are responsible for human rights abuses, generally including reduction of food assistance to refugees, failure to protect civilian persons, land confiscation, home demolition, and violence against civilians, and

WHEREAS, government debt (also called sovereign debt), especially that held in bonds denominated in foreign currencies, is unrestricted funds that a government uses at its own discretion and without any formal mechanism for advocacy by the bond holder, unlike stocks that represent an ownership interest in a corporation and provide a platform to advocate for change, and

WHEREAS, holders of the government debt of countries complicit in prolonged military occupations are effectively financing the high military expenditures of those governments that are necessitated by that military occupation and holders of that debt are therefore earning money in the form of interest payments from the human rights abuses and violations of international law of those countries, and

WHEREAS, Wespath Benefits and Investments, the holder of United Methodist pension funds (formally named the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits), in their human rights investment guideline says “Wespath also may exclude from investment the sovereign debt of any country demonstrating a prolonged and systematic pattern of human rights abuses,”

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference prayerfully calls upon the boards and agencies throughout the connection and its own investment managers to add to their human rights guidelines explicit language with regard to governmental debt so as to exclude those governments maintaining a prolonged military occupation that have been the subject of United Nations Security Council resolutions and/or International Court of Justice rulings, and to align their portfolios accordingly, avoiding the governmental debt of each such country until the time when each government ends their military occupation.
Reducing Resources in Construction

WHEREAS, we humans are tasked with governance over the living things of creation (Genesis 1:28); and
WHEREAS, we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27) and therefore should exercise that governance not exploitatively or for our own gain but rather with the same love and care God has for all creation and the knowledge that an integral part of the God’s salvation is that all “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NRSV); and
WHEREAS, our Social Principles (Discipline ¶ 160) affirm that “All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings”; and
WHEREAS, the Book of Resolutions, # 1035, states that “We understand climate justice not simply as an environmental or economic concern but rather as a deep ethical and spiritual concern that the church must address so that abundant life is ensured for our children and future generations” and calls “all United Methodist institutions, organizations, and local churches to incorporate climate stewardship . . . into the design of facilities.”

Therefore be it resolved, that the Upper New York Annual Conference petitions the 2020 General Conference to resolve the following:

• that all United Methodist institutions, organizations, and local churches shall prefer the modification of existing structures over demolition and replacement with new construction wherever the choice is available.
• that the same shall prioritize measures for decreasing environmental footprint and reliance on nonrenewable energy resources whenever additions or modifications are made to existing structures.
• that the same shall support the establishment of financial incentives both within and outside the church for modification of existing structures rather than new construction.

Protecting the Right to Peacefully Address Injustice

WHEREAS, United Methodists and other religious communities have long sought to address injustice using only nonviolent means, and
WHEREAS, measures such as boycotts have proven to be useful tools in helping bring constructive social change, as evidenced by the civil rights movement in the United States and the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa, and
WHEREAS, boycotts are constitutionally protected forms of free speech in the United States and many other nations, and
WHEREAS, the National Coalition of Christian Organizations in Palestine has issued a request asking church bodies around the world to prayerfully consider increasing their support for the human rights of all ethnic groups and religious bodies in the Holy Land, with particular regard to the rights of ethnic minorities, religious minorities including Christians, children who’ve been imprisoned, as well as the right to nonviolently protest such violations of basic rights, and to do so with actions as well as words, and
WHEREAS, in 2012 the United Methodist General Conference approved the resolution "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land" (2016 UM Book of Resolutions #6111), which calls on “all nations to prohibit . . . the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land,” i.e., calls for an international boycott of the Israeli settlements, and
WHEREAS, thirteen United Methodist annual conferences have called for their own conference and/or the denomination to consider divesting from companies that support and profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, and
WHEREAS, in 2016 the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church (Wespath) announced that five Israeli banks would be excluded from their investment portfolios after having previously announced their divestment from a company running Israeli prisons, and
WHEREAS, eleven annual conferences of The United Methodist Church and one jurisdiction have voted to specifically affirm the right to peacefully address injustice through boycotts, divestment and sanctions, and
WHEREAS, a recent wave of governmental measures has been proposed or has been passed in various state legislatures that impose penalties on citizens and corporations for engaging in boycott, divestment, and sanctions, and
WHEREAS, as a result of such state legislation, in 2017 the right of a Mennonite public school teacher in Kansas to be considered for a job was denied specifically because she refused to reject a personal boycott of products made in Israeli settlements in accordance with the stance of her church, and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has sought to officially condemn the use of time-honored economic methods for nonviolently addressing injustice, and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles calls on all Christians to resist unjust governmental interference in the work of the church (¶ 164B Book of Discipline).

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church opposes any interference by any local, regional, or national government in our right to address injustice through nonviolent economic means, and

Be it further resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church urges all United Methodist annual conferences, congregations, and church members to contact their local, regional, and national elected officials, to communicate this resolution and to advocate against suppression of time-honored and nonviolent means of addressing injustice.

Rationale:
The nonviolent use of boycotts is a constitutionally protected way to achieve social change. This right is threatened by governmental measures that punish citizens and corporations for engaging in certain boycotts. The church needs to advocate to regain this threatened right.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20614-CA-R9999-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

On Humility, Politics, and Christian Unity

Add a new resolution to the Book of Resolutions, to be entitled “On Humility, Politics, and Christian Unity,” with the following text:

WHEREAS, in recent years, there has been significant discussion of public policy issues within The United Methodist Church as well as a significant amount of religious rhetoric in the political arenas of the societies surrounding many of our churches; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church, as well as the broader body of Christ, includes faithful members with a very wide spectrum of political views; and

WHEREAS, this diversity should be celebrated as a strength rather than ignored or suppressed; and

WHEREAS, the unity that United Methodists enjoy in Christ Jesus transcends worldly divisions (Mark 9:38-41; 1 Corinthians 1:10-25; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11); and

WHEREAS, our unity as Christians is found in repentance for our sins, acceptance of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, and submission to the will of God as revealed in Scripture, rather than in any secular or partisan political agenda; and

WHEREAS, an important maxim of John Wesley for the Methodist movement was “As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think” (Book of Discipline ¶ 103); and

WHEREAS, many, if not most, disagreements over public policy issues amount to differing prudential judgments about the most effective means for advancing commonly desired ends, such as improving the economy or effectively protecting citizens from terrorism; and

WHEREAS, scriptural teaching does not unambiguously mandate a specific position that all Christians must take on every piece of legislation discussed in modern local, state, and national legislatures; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of love and unity that Christians are called to have with one another (John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 3:12-17) stands in sharp contrast to the harsh divisiveness that characterizes secular politics; and

WHEREAS, there is risk of an unnecessary and unscriptural (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21) divisiveness being injected into some United Methodist and other Christian churches because of fights over divisive public policy debates whose underlying principles “do not strike at the root of Christianity”;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference hereby affirms that differing opinions in public policy debates generally “do not strike at the root of Christianity”; and

Be it further resolved, that we call on all Christian people in political and ecclesiastical realms to have the humility to be cautious of asserting that God is on their side with regard to specific public policy proposals; and

Be it further resolved, that we continue to affirm the importance of conscientious and humble Christian social engagement for the sake of advancing justice and the common good.

Rationale:
This is identical to a resolution overwhelmingly adopted by the 2008 General Conference, with the exceptions of removing a single mention of the year 2008 and updating two references. This resolution was unfortunate-
ly allowed to expire in 2016. But its principles are still as timely and important today as ever.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20615-CA-R9999-G; Plemmons, Joseph - Emporia, VA, USA.

Resolution for Climate Rescue

WHEREAS, in the beginning, God created the natural world and called it “good” (Genesis 1:31);
WHEREAS, one of the very first commands God gave to humanity was to tend and care for creation (Genesis 2:15);
WHEREAS, in Christ God reconciled all of creation to himself, not only the spiritual things but also the physical creation (Colossians 1:20);
WHEREAS, the Earth is the Lord’s (Psalm 24:1), not ours;
WHEREAS, Jesus warns of dire consequences for the servant who selfishly abuses the master’s property (Luke 12:42-47);
WHEREAS, the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state “[t]he whole earth is God’s good creation and as such has inherent value. We are aware that the current utilization of energy resources threatens this creation at its very foundation. As members of The United Methodist Church we are committed to approaching creation, energy production, and especially creation’s resources in a responsible, careful, and economic way” (2016 Book of Discipline, Social Principles ¶ 160B);
WHEREAS, those same Social Principles further say “[w]e acknowledge the global impact of humanity’s disregard for God’s creation. Rampant industrialization and the corresponding increase in the use of fossil fuels have led to a buildup of pollutants in the earth’s atmosphere. These ‘greenhouse gas’ emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth’s climate for generations to come with severe environmental, economic, and social implications. The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions. We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions” (2016 Book of Discipline, Social Principles ¶ 160D);
WHEREAS, “the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of 1,300 independent scientific experts from countries all over the world under the auspices of the United Nations, concluded there’s a more than 95 percent probability that human activities over the past 50 years have warmed our planet” (quoted from climate.nasa.gov);
WHEREAS, the world is quickly approaching a “point of no return,” after which the catastrophic effects of climate change will be irreversible (https://www.earthsyst-dynam.net/9/1085/2018/);
Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the people of The United Methodist Church, do hereby call upon all world leaders—be their leadership religious, business, or political in nature—to enact plans for the world to be 100 percent carbon neutral (or net carbon negative) by no later than 2050.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20616-CA-R9999-G; Bryan, James - Graham, NC, USA for North Carolina Annual Conference.

Care of Creation

Desired Action: Add a new resolution to The Book of Resolutions:

WHEREAS, the Bible is clear, from Genesis to Revelation, that included in our job description as humans made in the image of God and as disciples of Jesus Christ is a responsibility to love and care for all that God has made, not just humanity. God instructed humanity to “till and keep” the garden (Genesis 2:15 NRSV). God made a covenant with the earth itself (Genesis 9:13). Creation belongs to God: “The earth is the LORD’s and the fulness thereof” (Psalm 24:1-2 KJV). The sabbath and glean- ing texts make it clear that care for the poor and care for the earth go hand in hand (Exodus 23:10-12; Leviticus 19:9-10; 25:1-17). Humanity’s disobedience of God has negative consequences to the earth (Hosea 4:1-3; Deuteronomy 11:13-17). Jesus Christ is the redeemer not just of humanity but of all creation (Romans 8:18-23; Colossians 1:19-20); and
WHEREAS, in the past two years, the disastrous repercussions of climate change have escalated at an alarming rate, with much greater frequency and intensity. Storms classified as 100- and 500-year events now occur only a few years apart, such as Hurricane Florence in North Carolina (35 killed), California wildfires (42 killed), Tropical Storm Michael in Florida (6 killed), and Cyclone Idai in Africa (820 killed). Such record-breaking storms have devastated millions of acres of land and displaced millions of people; and
WHEREAS, degradation of the environment continues at an extremely rapid pace. In just one example, plas-
tic is dumped into the oceans at the rate of a truckload a minute, resulting in a patch of plastic the size of Texas in the Pacific Ocean. By 2050, there will be more tons of plastic in the oceans than fish; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Ward, resident bishop of the Raleigh, NC Area of The United Methodist Church, has commissioned a conference-level Creation Care Committee whose mission is to inform, equip, lead, and inspire the church to care for God’s creation. Our approach is to foster action and accountability on all levels: individual, family, congregational, and in the world: corporate, local, state, national, and international. We promote balanced, bipartisan, and evidence-based environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles states: “All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it... God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect” (¶ 160, The Book of Discipline, 2016); and

WHEREAS, many beneficial actions for climate and the environment have been taken, but have fallen woefully short of the comprehensive response needed. Jesus calls on us to care for “the least of these,” yet our tepid response goes beyond failure to care for them. Because climate change inordinately afflicts the poor, our inadequate response contributes to the devastation of their homelands and to their unnecessary deaths;

Now, therefore be it resolved, The United Methodist Church recognizes climate change and its repercussions as a biblical and moral issue, and one that requires political action. We must not allow the political aspect of this issue to prevent the church from advocating for policy changes. We exhort all pastors and church leaders to speak out in support of effective policies; and

Be it further resolved, we urge all congregations to be faithful stewards of creation by responding to climate change through the promotion of energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and technology. We urge all congregations to adopt programs at their facilities, and in their homes, for the conservation of energy and water, and for recycling of materials that can be reused; and

Be it further resolved, we call on legislators at all levels of government to actively promote policies that will protect the environment and slow the warming trend of the Earth. We urge them to ignore the pressures of special interests that have too long impeded the development of enlightened policies by putting their financial gain first; and

Be it further resolved, we fully support the conclusions and recommended actions of the 2017 North Carolina Annual Conference Resolution on Climate change (https://ncumc.org/ac2017/files/2017/07/ncc-ac17-resolutions-final.pdf, pgs. 1-2).

Bibliography:

Rationale:
Adapted from a resolution submitted by the North Carolina Annual Conference Creation Care Committee and passed by the 2019 annual conference, clarifying the church’s stance on climate change and offering practical responses of faithfulness for congregations and individuals.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20617-CA-R9999-G; Urriola, Ian - Stephens City, VA, USA.

Recognizing United Methodist Support for Global Green New Deal Initiatives and Legislative Efforts

Add new Resolution #NEW to “The Natural World”: 
Recognizing United Methodist Support for Global Green New Deal Initiatives and Legislative Efforts

WHEREAS, the October 2018 report entitled “Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C” by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the November 2018 Fourth National Climate Assessment report found that—

1. human activity is the dominant cause of observed climate change over the past century;

2. a changing climate is causing sea levels to rise and an increase in wildfires, severe storms, droughts, and other extreme weather events that threaten human life, healthy communities, and critical infrastructure;

3. global warming at or above 2 degrees Celsius beyond pre-industrialized levels will cause—
   a. mass migration from the regions most affected by climate change;
   b. a loss of more than 99 percent of all coral reefs on Earth;
   c. a projected increase in hot days in most land regions, with the highest increases in the tropics;
   d. a higher risk from extreme weather-related events on a global scale;
   e. a higher risk from sea level rise and its amplified exposure on small islands, low-lying coastal areas and deltas;
   f. an increased risk for species loss and extinction and its subsequent impact on biodiversity and ecosystems;
   g. an increased negative impact on global human populations that are already disadvantaged and vulnerable, including but not limited to indigenous populations, the global poor, and local communities dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods;
   h. an increased negative impact on human health, including but not limited to heat-related morbidity and mortality, ozone-related mortality, vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, and amplified adverse impacts of heat waves in cities;
   i. an increased risk to global aggregated economic growth due to climate change impacts;
   j. an increased exposure to multiple and compound climate-related risks across energy, food, and water sectors with greater proportions of people both so exposed and susceptible to poverty in Africa and Asia; and

4. global temperature increases must be kept below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrialized levels to avoid the most severe impacts of a changing climate, which will require—
   a. global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from human sources of 40 to 60 percent from 2010 levels by 2030; and
   b. net-zero global emissions by 2050;

WHEREAS, reversing these troubling trends will require broad cooperation on a global scale between institutions, governments, businesses, and individuals;

WHEREAS, the command of Scripture is clear: we are called to take care of God’s creation (Genesis 2:15);

WHEREAS, the people of The United Methodist Church affirm that—

1. “all creation is the Lord’s and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it” (¶ 160, preamble, of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church);

2. “water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, [and] animal life . . . are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings” (¶ 160, preamble, of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church); and

3. the church and its members have a responsibility to “place a high priority on changes in economic, political, social, and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically equitable and sustainable world leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation” (¶ 160, preamble, of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church); and

Therefore, be it resolved, that the people of The United Methodist Church wholeheartedly support legislative and policy efforts by governments around the world akin to the “Green New Deal” in the United States of America;

Be it further resolved, that the people of The United Methodist Church call on global leaders and policy makers, especially those in the “Western” and “developed” world, which have historically led the world in greenhouse gas emissions, to take steps that will drastically reduce their nation’s greenhouse gas emissions, up to and beyond net-zero, in a manner that is compassionate toward the most disadvantaged and impoverished populations in their countries and reduces income and wealth inequality;

Be it further resolved, that the people of The United Methodist Church call on every level of its denomination to lead the way in this effort by—

1. striving continuously to reduce the carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions of local churches, districts, annual conferences, jurisdictions, central conferences, and general boards and agencies and their respective ministries up to and beyond carbon neutral and net zero, respectively; and

2. placing climate justice, and the ways in which climate justice intersects with every other systemic justice-related issue, at the forefront of their preaching, teaching, and programmatic ministries.
Rationale:

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity, and must be reversed in such a way that is just and compassionate for the most vulnerable peoples around the world. By vocally supporting legislative efforts that tackle this, the church can be at the forefront of this necessary global conversation.

A Call for Civility in Public Discourse

All too often public discourse on political and social issues devolves into name-calling, personal attacks, demonization of vulnerable groups, and a general dehumanization toward others. This climate is evident in the public square, the church, and other areas of society. It leads to real acts of violence against individuals and groups, contributes to the deterioration of civility, and impedes our search for possible solutions to the complex issues facing our church and world.

Scripture shows us another way. Jesus modeled a patient and welcoming love for even those who vehemently disagreed with him, while also never yielding in his commitment to truth and honesty. The apostle Paul reminded the divided Corinthians that "certainly the body of Christ isn’t one part but many" (1 Corinthians 12:14 CEB), and their greatest calling is to love (1 Corinthians 13). Jesus’ call to proclaim and live out God’s unconditional love for the world was not deterred or dissuaded by the false accusations or personal attacks by his critics. In staying committed to his mission, God’s love transformed the world.

Let us do likewise. Unfounded accusations, misleading charges, and personal attacks have no place among leaders in the church or society. Discourse that dehumanizes others, especially vulnerable groups, must end.

Let the whole earth be transformed and may it begin with the house of God.

Rationale:

This petition raises a call for civility in discourse in the public square. The urgency is uniquely heard in light of current political developments across the globe and within the global church.

Reparations

WHEREAS, reparation by definition means making amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged;

WHEREAS, reparations for slavery is not a new concept to America, General William T. Sherman first proposed it at the conclusion of the Civil War. He issued a Special Field Order 15 that would confiscate a strip of coastline property in Charleston, South Carolina to St. John’s river in Florida of approximately 400,000 acres. This property was to given to newly freed African-American families in 40-acre increments, there were also unneeded mules to be given, hence the term “40 acres and a mule.” The order was overturned by President Andrew Johnson after the assassination of President Lincoln;

WHEREAS, at the dawn of this country, Black reparations were actively considered and often effected. Quakers in New York, New England, and Baltimore went so far as to make membership contingent upon compensating one’s former slaves” [Historian, Roy E. Finkenbine];

WHEREAS, America, per the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, gave reparations to its Japanese citizens for their mistreatment and unfair confiscation of property during the World War II internments. The legislation stated that the government actions were based on “race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership” as opposed to legitimate security issues;

WHEREAS, approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States after being brought here 400 years ago in 1619. Slavery existed in the thirteen colonies and increased significantly due to the expansion of the cotton industry in the early 1800s;

WHEREAS, the institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the government of the United States from 1789 to 1865;

WHEREAS, slavery flourished in the United States constituted an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans’ life, liberty, African citizenship rights, cultural heritage, denied them the fruits of their own labor;

WHEREAS, slavery enhanced the income of “textile workers, bankers and ship builders in the North; to the elite planter class, working-class slave catchers and slave dealers in the South; to the yeoman farmers and poor white people who could not compete against free labor” [A Brief History of Slavery That You Didn’t Learn in School, New York Times, August 20, 2019];
WHEREAS, the defeat of the South in the Civil War only served to increase the Southern hatred of the Africans, which created the reign of white supremacy. This white supremacy took many forms to “keep the African in his place”;

WHEREAS, all of these policies, laws served to prevent the Africans from reaching their highest and natural potential if left alone;

WHEREAS, African Americans continued to suffer debilitating economic, educational, and health hardships;

WHEREAS, in 2001, the Associated Press published a three-part investigation into the theft of Black-owned land stretching back to the antebellum period. The series documented some 406 victims and 24,000 acres of land valued at tens of millions of dollars. Sharecropping added significantly to this loss;

WHEREAS, from the 1930s through the 1960s Black people across the country were cut out of the legitimate home mortgage market by restrictive covenants that served to keep neighborhoods segregated;

WHEREAS, the forced deaccumulation of Black wealth during the Jim Crow era played a key role in producing contemporary racial wealth differentials;

WHEREAS, the “Readjustment Act of 1944” the G.I. Bill better known as (the G.I. Bill) by 1956 when the bill ended. 1.2 million African American veterans found themselves locked out. Of the financial and academic gains offered—including mortgage support, college tuition and business loans—were denied.

WHEREAS, contract sales, and its close friend redlining, had to be the most injurious form of discrimination. Contract sales was a predatory agreement that combined all the responsibilities of homeownership with all the disadvantages of renting.

An African American would purchase a house for an inflated price, making a down payment. The seller would keep the deed until the contract was paid in full (which it never was). If a single payment was missed, they would forfeit the down payment and all of the monthly payments. The African American “owner” was responsible for all the utilities and the repairs of the property while paying on the contract. This was the only way to African American property ownership because African Americans could not acquire legitimate mortgages due to “redlining.” The Federal Housing of Administration’s passive way of denying African Americans legitimate home loans;

WHEREAS, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified in 1865, prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude, but explicitly exempted those convicted of crime. In response, southern state legislatures quickly passed “Black Codes”—new laws that explicitly applied only to Black people and subjected them to criminal prosecution for “offenses” such as loitering, breaking curfew, vagrancy, having weapons, and not carrying proof of employment. Crafted to ensnare Black people and return them to chains, these laws were effective; for the first time in United States history, many state penal systems held more Black prisoners than white—all of whom could be leased for profit;

WHEREAS, after the Civil War, slavery persisted in the form of convict leasing, a system in which Southern states leased prisoners to private railways, mines, and large plantations. While states profited, prisoners earned no pay and faced inhumane, dangerous, and often deadly conditions, termed “slavery by another name” until the 1930s;

WHEREAS, industrialization, economic shifts, and political pressure ended widespread convict leasing by World War II, but the Thirteenth Amendment’s dangerous loophole still permitted the enslavement of prisoners who continued to work without pay in various public and private industries. As recently as 2010, a federal court held that “prisoners have no enforceable right to be paid for their work under the Constitution”;

WHEREAS, now there are nearly 1,000,000 Black people incarcerated. In great part due to the recent prosecutions of African Americans in the “War Against Drugs.” Specifically, the disproportionate sentencing guidelines of powder cocaine versus rock cocaine. This factor along with the addiction that was rampant in the African American community during this same time nearly wiped out a generation of African Americans as viable, productive citizens of America;

WHEREAS, the family structure has been devastated, where children are brought to jail by their grandparents or guardian to visit their fathers and mothers in prison;

WHEREAS, leaving African Americans with an unemployment rate of more than twice the current white unemployment rate;

WHEREAS, the issue of the mis-education and non-education of the African American child has been to the highest court of our land to deal with “all deliberate speed”; and yet we wait;

WHEREAS, the decision of Brown v. Board of Education was rendered in 1954, in 2019 our schools are just as segregated and African American schools are just as understaffed and underresourced as any third world country and;

WHEREAS, it cannot be denied that the wealth of the United States and specific businesses were greatly enhanced by the exploitation of African-American slave labor;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church be called to repentance
for its implicit and explicit participation and profit gained by slavery of African Americans in the United States.

That local congregations participate in studies on reparations in their local area.

That every congregation write a letter of support for the passage of House of Representative Bill 40 and Senate Bill 1083.

Rationale:

Address the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and to demand a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact

R9999.

Petition Number: 20620-CA-R9999-G; Rueckert, Harald - Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

Use of Plastic

The whole earth is God's good creation and has as such an inherent value. We are aware that the current utilization of energy resources threatens this creation fundamentally. As members of The United Methodist Church we are committed to caring for creation and, especially, to responsible handling of its resources.

In its call to action “God’s Renewed Creation”, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church calls for the practice of environmental holiness to conserve natural resources including the use of only renewable resources in every gathering and every ministry of our congregations and church. An important expression of this is to reduce the amount of plastic we use during our church’s meetings.

This issue has a global impact, not only because of the pervasive presence of microplastic, including in our oceans and in our food. Plastic production and disposal also cause the emission of greenhouse gases. In 2019, the volume of such emissions to mid-year alone was 850 million tons. Across the globe, churched and unchurched people are reducing their use of plastic because of its impact on the climate. Resolution 1031 (“Resolution on Global Warming,” The Book of Resolutions, 2012) resolves "that (church-)members should make an effort to learn about human production and release of greenhouse gases and evaluate their own lifestyles to identify areas where reductions in production and release of greenhouse gases can be made. [...] [and] that members should also work to make their own congregations more aware of the

issue of global warming and create policies and practices which reduce greenhouse gas emissions from congregational infrastructure.” This includes not only church buildings, parsonages and vehicles but also single way dishes, plastic bags, wrapping material. Building on the experience of communities worldwide and of annual and central conferences (e.g., Germany) who have started the journey toward comprehensive mandatory concepts reducing the use of plastic in daily life and especially at church events, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church resolves

1. that for all church activities of local, annual, central, jurisdictional, and General Conference bodies, a two-fold strategy of avoiding (avoiding plastic where possible, replacing single-use plastic items such as dishes, coffee cups, or bags with items made of recyclable, preferably naturally occurring material) and reducing (e.g., using dishes that can be washed and reused) is to be pursued;

2. that all delegates commit to personal action of the same kind, modeling a change in behavior for the sake of environmental protection.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20621-CA-R9999-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

On Humility, Politics, and Christian Unity

Add a new resolution to the Book of Resolutions, to be entitled “On Humility, Politics, and Christian Unity,” with the following text:

WHEREAS, in recent years, there has been significant discussion of public policy issues within The United Methodist Church as well as a significant amount of religious rhetoric in the political arenas of the societies surrounding many of our churches; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church, as well as the broader body of Christ, includes faithful members with a very wide spectrum of political views; and

WHEREAS, this diversity should be celebrated as a strength rather than ignored or suppressed; and

WHEREAS, the unity that United Methodists enjoy in Christ Jesus transcends worldly divisions (Mark 9:38-
WHEREAS, our unity as Christians is found in repentance for our sins, acceptance of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, and submission to the will of God as revealed in Scripture, rather than in any secular or partisan political agenda; and

WHEREAS, an important maxim of John Wesley for the Methodist movement was “As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think” (Book of Discipline ¶ 103); and

WHEREAS, many, if not most, disagreements over public policy issues amount to differing prudential judgments about the most effective means for advancing commonly desired ends, such as improving the economy or effectively protecting citizens from terrorism; and

WHEREAS, scriptural teaching does not unambiguously mandate a specific position that all Christians must take on every piece of legislation discussed in modern local, state, and national legislatures; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of love and unity that Christians are called to have with one another (John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 3:12-17) stands in sharp contrast to the harsh divisiveness that characterizes secular politics; and

WHEREAS, there is risk of an unnecessary and unscriptural (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21) divisiveness being injected into some United Methodist and other Christian churches because of fights over divisive public policy debates whose underlying principles “do not strike at the root of Christianity”;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference hereby affirms that differing opinions in public policy debates generally “do not strike at the root of Christianity”; and

Be it further resolved, that we call on all Christian people in political and ecclesiastical realms to have the humility to be cautious of asserting that God is on their side with regard to specific public policy proposals; and

Be it further resolved, that we continue to affirm the importance of conscientious and humble Christian social engagement for the sake of advancing justice and the common good.

Rationale:

This is identical to a resolution overwhelmingly adopted by the 2008 General Conference, with the exceptions of removing a single mention of the year 2008 and updating two references. This resolution was unfortunately allowed to expire in 2016. But its principles are still as timely and important today as ever.
Church and Society Committee 2
Proposed Amendments to the Book of Discipline

¶161.
Petition Number: 20003-CB-¶161; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building an LGTBQ Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 161.C

C) Marriage—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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

G) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift. Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:
Given the recent response to the General Conference, this petition seeks to remove language that is harmful to the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) community and to create clear and concise language in the Book of Discipline. May we continue to build a church that reflects God’s heart.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20017-CB-¶161; Parker, Caleb - Durham, NC, USA.

Protection of LGBTQ+ and Marginalized People

Add the following text to the end of the paragraph:
To that end, no person, board, or legislative body in The United Methodist Church including annual conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and General Conferences has the authority to exclude from the full life and ministry of the church any person solely based on their God-given identities, including but not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, and race or ethnic background. We lament and reject our history of exclusionary legislation toward these persons and pledge to protect the rights of all persons from further dehumanizing legislative actions.

Rationale:
Our sexual orientation and gender identity are essential components of our being, of how we fall in love and create families. This is part of the fabric of how God has made us, and to repress or change our sexual orientation or gender identity is to tear at that fabric.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20018-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Eternal Potential

Amend ¶ 161:

We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor, and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest eternal potential in individuals.
Rationale:
All of our social principles, while encouraging a peaceful, fair temporal world, should also acknowledge the overriding responsibility of the church to attract individuals to an eternal life with Christ. Any social principle that encourages or accepts unrepented sin risks doing great harm to an individual’s eternity.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20019-CB-¶161-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

The Nurturing Community Social Principles
Delete ¶ 161 (The Nurturing Community of the Social Principles).

Rationale:
To incorporate material in other sections of the revised Social Principles.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20020-CB-¶161-G; Merrick, Tracy - Wexford, PA, USA.

Amend Social Principles—Human Sexuality
Amend ¶ 161 G as follows:

¶ 161 G) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We believe that marriage is a spiritual and sexual union blessed by God. We affirm that God looks with equal favor on the married and the unmarried as well as on those who have children and those who do not, and that God’s blessings are available to all.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, sexual violence, and exploitation of sex individuals within sexual relationships. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian, gay, members and friends bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and gender fluid persons and those who embrace them. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

We recognize that the members of The United Methodist Church hold widely divergent beliefs regarding the compatibility of the Christian faith with same gender relationships that are expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity. We acknowledge with regret that we have not reached a consensus on this issue. We pledge ourselves to be in authentic dialogue about this matter and to respect the dignity of all persons of sincere faith, recognizing that God’s grace is intended for all and is available to all.

Rationale:
The current condemnatory language is highly offensive to many persons of faith and has caused them to view our denomination as irrelevant. The existing language conflicts with current scientific knowledge and societal acceptance. It puts The UMC at odds with an emerging consensus among some of our closest ecumenical partners.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20021-CB-¶161-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference.

Human Sexuality—Elimination of References to Homosexuality and Marriage
Delete Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

Delete All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self.
Delete The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. . . We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:

SUPPORTED AS AMENDED BY THE INDIANA ANNUAL CONFERENCE – JUNE 8, 2019

¶161.
Petition Number: 20022-CB-¶161-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #4-
Social Principles-Amend 161G

Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only within the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. People of all sexual orientations and gender identities are members of The United Methodist Church and are present in our congregations. We urge our churches to welcome them equally. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:

The United Methodist Church affirms without exception that all persons are of sacred worth and made in the image of God. We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift. We affirm the sanctity of monogamous marriage. We welcome all people to our congregations.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20023-CB-¶161-G; Young, Laura - Lubbock, TX, USA.

Update Human Sexuality

Amend ¶ 161.g as follows:

Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, we believe sexual relations should be reserved for adulthood and must be characterized by sensuality and mutual respect, including sexual relations are affirmed only within the covenant of a monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against all forms of violence, including sexual violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.
cepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject gay, and bisexual members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:
Parts of this statement are factually inaccurate, parts are lovely but completely unrelated to human sexuality and established elsewhere, and parts are harmful. It also fails to insist upon mutually respectful sex within marriage.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20024-CB-¶161-G; Stallsworth, Paul - Whiteville, NC, USA.

A Proposal to Replace Paragraph 161 G

Delete current paragraph ¶ 161.G Human Sexuality, and substitute the following:

¶ 161.G Human Sexuality—Because the Sexual Revolution is now undermining Christian teaching on human sexuality and harming countless unsuspecting people, the church is compelled to propose its teaching with biblical clarity.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus speaks about marriage: "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mark 10:6-9, also see Matthew 19:4-6, NRSV here and below).

In his statement on marriage, Jesus is guided by "the beginning of creation" (Mark 10:6). He draws twice from Genesis. First, from Genesis 1:27c: "male and female he created them." And second, from Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh." To teach on marriage, Jesus reaches back to God's creation of humanity as male and female, and to what God intends for humanity (which is "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness"). Furthermore, Genesis asserts: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply ...'" (Genesis 1:28). And "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31a).

In his statement, Jesus indicates (among other things) the covenantal context—the marriage of a man and a woman—for sexual relations. In marriage, two people are united by God to become one. The gift of unity God gives is embodied in the marital act; that is, the union of souls is reflected in the union of bodies. This one-flesh union is so powerful and creative that it can beget a child (or children), whom the mother and father can welcome, protect, and raise.

In his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul claims the union of husband and wife is a reflection of the union of Christ and his church. Paul writes: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church" (5:31-32).

Therefore, the Christian understanding of marriage and sexuality is established at creation. It is revealed in Genesis, reinforced by Jesus Christ, and depicted in gospel terms by St. Paul. This biblical witness to marriage, which runs throughout the canon, grounds the church's understanding of human sexuality.

Because of this scriptural witness, the church through the ages preached, taught, and practiced that sexual expression is reserved for husband and wife within the covenant of marriage. For two thousand years, this teaching, proposed and observed with God's grace, has been essential in helping sustain Christians in discipleship, holiness, and true freedom. This teaching has assisted Christians in rightly loving God and neighbor. The church through the ages has also preached, taught, and practiced that sexual activities outside the marital covenant—for example, adultery, pre-marital sex, pornography-related sex, homosexual practice, and others—are indeed sins (and "incompatible with Christian teaching"); they are sins (among all other sins) for which Christ died, and for which forgiveness and freedom are available through the gospel.

The church's sexual morality is considered too rigorous and even mean-spirited by many in some contemporary societies. This is not new. This has been the case since the apostolic era of the church. However, often in spite of great cultural opposition, the church has lovingly proposed its sexual morality to its members as a witness to the world. The church through the ages has persisted in this difficult task because she considers this teaching to be not only faithful to the word of God, but also good for the people challenged by it and transformed by it. When this teaching is observed, marriages are strengthened; children are welcomed and nurtured; the weak are protected; the strong restrained; and all tend to flourish. When not observed, marriages are threatened and destroyed; marriage as an institution suffers; children are neglected; and the powerful generally have their way with the less powerful.

God's faithfulness is known by God's people through the ages and throughout the world. Because of God's faithfulness, our faithfulness to the covenants we make—baptismal and, for many, marital—is possible.
Rationale:
Because The United Methodist Church's doctrine and discipline on human sexuality are so vigorously contested, that same teaching and practice must be biblically and traditionally grounded and fortified. Containing biblical and traditional truths, this proposal would help the church to defend her faith and life.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20025-CB-¶161-G; Ingram, Kimberly Tyree - Huntersville, NC, USA for Western North Carolina Annual Conference. Reaves, Susan - Fort Defiance, VA, USA for Virginia Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Remove Incompatibility Language
Amend ¶ 161G by deletion in part:
G) Human Sexuality
. . . All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. . .

Rationale:
This statement in the Discipline has done great harm to the LGBTQ community. Of the few references to same sex behavior or desire within Scripture, none refers to long-term, committed, same sex relationships. It is time for this harmful statement to be removed from the Discipline.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20026-CB-¶161-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 10 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #2
Amend as follows:
G) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage:

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality, to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

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

¶161.
Petition Number: 20027-CB-¶161-G; Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 7 Similar Petitions

A Simple Plan #1

[Also submitted as:  
Next Generation UMC #3]

Amend ¶ 161.C as follows:
C) Marriage—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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.
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

¶161.

Petition Number: 20028-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Marriage

Amend ¶ 161 C:

We believe that God’s model for marriage is one man and one woman. We acknowledge biblical examples of other models but reject that all models described in Scripture adhere to God’s ideals. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Rationale:
It is clear in Genesis that God’s model is one man and one woman. Jesus quotes this model as well. Arguments that refer to other biblical models fail to understand that the Bible frequently describes situations that are outside of the will of God.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20029-CB-¶161-G; Prusha, Connor - Chardon, OH, USA for United Methodist Young People’s Convocation.

Specify the Rejection of Child Marriages

Amend ¶ 161 II C as follows:

C) Marriage—We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, equity 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. We also reject the use of marriage as a means for the exploitation, abuse, or power domination over any individual. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.


Rationale:
Such an amendment expands this social principle to be more global in nature, allowing for ministry in a variety of contexts, and addresses the acknowledgment of our rejection of social abuses of marriage, both in the reality of child marriage and any exploitive, abusive, or power-dominated marriages.

¶161.

Petition Number: 20031-CB-¶161; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Gender Neutral Marriage

Action proposed: Amend ¶ 161. C:

¶ 161. C) Marriage—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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of two adult persons, one man and one woman.

Rationale:
The changed language will make the paragraph inclusive. Without change of language, the text is exclud-
The amended paragraph opens for the different UMC definitions of marriage we find in different cultures and countries

¶161.
Petition Number: 20032-CB-¶161; Thaarup, Jorgen - Copenhagen, Denmark.

Marriage of the Two

Action proposed: Amend ¶ 161. C:

¶ 161. C) Marriage—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 or two adult persons. 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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman or two adult persons.

Rationale:
The added language will make the paragraph inclusive. Without adding language, the text is excluding, discriminating and homophobic, and that is illegal in several countries

¶161.
Petition Number: 20033-CB-¶161-G; Go, Amy - Aurora, CO, USA. 2 Similar Petitions

ALL BELONG: Including All Marriages

[Also submitted as:
A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 2 of 8]

Amend ¶ 161C as follows:
C) Marriage—We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between two people 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 spouses women than for men in marriage. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Rationale:
Because all belong in the body of Christ, the covenantal relationships of people in same-sex marriages strengthen the fabric of our communities and churches. Denying this institution to people in same-sex marriages, especially where they are legally recognized, breaks the bonds of community.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20034-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Birth Control

Amend ¶ 161K:
We cannot affirm reject abortion as a an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection or eugenics.

Rationale:
Previous language is softly worded and leaves open unaffirmed but unrejected use of abortion as birth control. This may create a controversy around the morning after pill. That may need more discussion related to the time that life begins.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20035-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Abstinence

Amend ¶ 161K:
Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us denounce all but the most dire reasons for abortion.

Rationale:
Today’s societal movements may indicate that abortion is the next controversy that The United Methodist Church will face. As such, the next several items strengthen the language with regard to abortion.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20036-CB-¶161-G; McGrath, Marian - Thornton, PA, USA for Bethlehem UMC Women’s Ministry.

Abortion Only as a Last Resort

Amend Discipline ¶ 161K by ADDING:
¶ 161) Abortion— . . .

We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers, but only as a last resort in extreme circumstances, . . .
Rationale:
This single sentence is so vaguely worded that it has been interpreted by many as saying that The United Methodist Church supports all or most abortions. Such an amendment would make it a little clearer that out of love for women and children, our church generally prefers life over abortion.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20037-CB-¶161-G; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, USA for Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Amend Paragraph on Abortion

Amend ¶ 161K of the Book of Discipline to read:

K) Abortion—The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant unwilling and unable to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child. We recognize tragic conflicts of physical life with physical life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm We unconditionally reject abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection, or eugenics (see Resolution 3184).

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice. We propose that the baby be delivered so as to decrease the risk of further endangering the life of the mother, while preserving the life of the child. Whenever the unborn child may be capable of surviving outside his or her mother’s womb, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve both lives. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion. We entrust God to provide guidance, wisdom, and discernment to those facing an unintended pregnancy.

The church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We propose that the baby be delivered so as to decrease the risk of further endangering the life of the mother, while preserving the life of the child. Whenever the unborn child may be capable of surviving outside his or her mother’s womb, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve both lives. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We particularly encourage the church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption as a preferable alternative to abortion. (See ¶ 161M.) We affirm and encourage the church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy. We particularly encourage the church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption as a preferable alternative to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel. (The Book of Discipline [2016])

Rationale:
The current wording of ¶ 161K has been treated by some United Methodists as a means for one-sidedly advocating for public policies advancing elective abortion. These amendments to ¶ 161K would more clearly align our church with biblical, historic Christian teaching that defends unborn children and their mothers.
Amend ¶ 161K by ADDING additional language as follows: 

... We recognize tragic conflicts of physical life with physical life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. Whenever the unborn child may be capable of surviving outside his or her mother’s womb, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve both lives. Before providing their services abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia. We call all Christians . . . We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates, avoiding abortion whenever possible. The Church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education grounded in Christian teaching, in regard to contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe. Young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they feel they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control. They should also support those crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy. We particularly encourage the option of adoption as a generally preferable alternative to abortion. (See ¶161.L) We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Rationale:
These changes will align our church with historic, biblical teaching that defends the unborn. They reflect what African United Methodists believe. This will also provide guidance for boards and agencies in advocacy work.

Paragraph 161
Petition Number: 20038-CB-¶161-G; Pacis-Alarine, Irambona - Bujumbura, Burundi.

Abortion

Amend ¶ 161K:
The church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive age-appropriate sexuality education, advocacy in regard to contraception, including abstinence before marriage, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the world.

Rationale:
Consistency in the message regarding human sexuality is important here as well. Sins of fornication and adultery are often at the root of abortion.

Paragraph 161
Petition Number: 20040-CB-¶161; Stallsworth, Paul - Whiteville, NC, USA.

Amend 161K Abortion

Amend ¶ 161.K of the Book of Discipline as follows:
K) Abortion—The beginning of life . . .

We recognize tragic conflicts of physical life with physical life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support . . .

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. This procedure shall be performed only by certified medical providers. Whenever the unborn child may be capable of surviving outside his or her mother’s womb, every reasonable effort should be made to preserve both lives. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia for themselves and/or for their unborn.

We call all Christians . . .

We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of diminishing high abortion rates. The church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education grounded in Christian teaching, advocacy in regard to contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe.

Young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they feel they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control. The church and its local congregations and campus ministries should be in the forefront of support-
ing existing ministries and developing new ministries that help such women in their communities. They should also support those crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy. We particularly encourage the church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption as a generally preferable alternative to abortion. (See ¶ 161.M.) We affirm and encourage the church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed faithful Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.

Rationale:

The current wording of ¶ 161.K has been used by some United Methodists to advocate one-sidedly for public policies that promote elective abortion. These amendments to ¶ 161.K would more clearly align our church with biblical, historic Christian teaching that defends unborn children and their mothers from abortion.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20041-CB-¶161-G; Lawrence, Jan - Washington, DC, USA. I Similar Petition

Update to the Family

Amend ¶ 161B:

B) The Family—We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity. We affirm the importance of loving parents for all children. We also understand the family as encompassing a wider range of options than that of the two-generational unit of parents and children (the nuclear family). We affirm shared responsibility for parenting where there are two parents and encourage social, economic, and religious efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships within families in order that every member may be assisted toward complete personhood.

We recognize the rights of families created by same-gender marriage and the families of LGBTQ persons as equal to those of all other families. We urge our churches to recognize these families as equal to other families in the church and to be in ministry with and to them. Children and youth from these families should be treated no differently than other children and youth. We encourage churches in conferences where homosexuality is a criminal offense to offer support to individuals and families impacted by those laws and to stand in opposition to persecution of individuals or those who love them.

Rationale:

Expanding the definition of family to embrace the sexual and gender minorities. Children in families that are not treated equally to other families suffer from discrimination and marginalization instead of being celebrated for who they are.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20042-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Pre-Divorce

Amend ¶ 161D):

God’s plan is for lifelong, faithful marriage. The church must be on the forefront of premarital, marital, and postmarital counseling in order to create, and preserve, and restore healthy relationships.

Rationale:

The church is all about restoration of the relationship between God and people. We should not ignore the duty to restore relationships between people, hopefully before a divorce.

Since divorce and remarriage was mentioned as a corollary to the current controversy, we should strengthen our stances on these topics.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20043-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Divorce

Amend ¶ 161D):

Although divorce publicly declares that a marriage no longer exists, other covenantal relationships resulting from the marriage remain, such as the nurture and support of children and extended family ties and the sacred vows made to and before God as part of the marriage ceremony.

Rationale:

Comparing divorce to homosexuality is erroneous. Divorce is allowed but not remarriage. God doesn’t re-
lease us from our vows. He allows us to live separately. This adulterous relationship can also be confessed and repented. It seems unlikely that the recourse for this of sin is divorce.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20044-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Remarriage

Amend ¶ 161D)

Every divorce does not preclude a new marriage. Remarriages should consider the previous marriage vows made before and to God, which should not be knowingly broken. Ministers should seriously consider and advise prospective marital partners of the importance of these previous vows and potentially refuse to perform a remarriage. We encourage an intentional commitment of the church and society to minister compassionately to those in the process of divorce, as well as members of divorced and remarried families, in a community of faith where God’s grace is shared by all.

Rationale:

Subsequent marriages fail at a higher rate. Clergy have a responsibility to divorcees to explain trends and biblical reasons divorce may not break the original marriage vows made before and to God. Consideration should be given to refuse performing a subsequent marriage when that action will cause an adulterous relationship.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20045-CB-¶161-G; Smithson, Mark - Louisville, KY, USA.

Sexuality Abuse

Amend ¶ 161I):

To lose freedom and be bought and/or sold by someone else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom.

Rationale:

This is the same issue whether someone else is selling a person for sex or if that same person is selling themselves for sex. The enslaver just changes to the buyer. Without a buyer there is no seller.

¶161.
Petition Number: 20730-CB-¶161-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-161 and 162

Replace ¶ 161 and ¶ 162 with

The Social Community

Preface

When it comes to faith, what a living, creative, active, powerful thing it is! It cannot do other than good at all times. It never waits to ask whether there is some good which is to be done; rather, before the question is raised, it has done the deed, and keeps on doing it. [One] who is not active in this way is a [person] without faith. (John Wesley, Preface, Explanatory Notes on Romans)

The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness. (John Wesley, Preface, Hymns and Sacred Poems)

As United Methodists, we affirm that human beings are made for God and for one another (Genesis 1:26-27, 31; Philippians 2:3-8). We live out our lives, grow in the faith, and engage in acts of discipleship and witness in the context of a variety of interconnected communities, including families, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and the broader society.

The church is called to be a distinctive community, marked by preaching of the gospel, studying of Scripture, breaking of bread, and witnessing to the power of redemption in the midst of a broken world. We respond to God’s call in the world by giving witness to the transformative power of the gospel, engaging in acts of mercy, and striving toward the attainment of justice and peace as hallmarks of God’s coming reign. In all of these efforts, Christians are reminded that diverse as we may be, we are all a part of the same body under the sovereignty of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

The Nurturing Community

A. The Family

We recognize that families come in a variety of sizes and forms, and acknowledge their significant role in nurturing the physical, moral, and spiritual development of children, youth, and adults. Nurture and support are fundamental to the proper functioning of families. We, therefore, urge all family members to treat one another with love and respect. We also encourage parents and other caregivers to exercise appropriate diligence and care, raising their children in ways that promote their physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral growth.
Children are a gift from God to be welcomed and received. We lament that in some instances, birth parents are unable or unwilling to fulfill their caregiving obligations. Under these circumstances, we applaud the willingness of extended families and foster and adoptive parents to step in as primary nurturers. Even in these situations, however, we recognize the trauma that may be caused by separating children from their families of origin and urge that such actions be handled justly, sensitively, and compassionately. Where appropriate and possible, we encourage open adoption so that children may know all information relevant to them, both medically and relationally.

B. Single People
We celebrate the contributions of single people and reject all social practices that discriminate against them or subject them to bias and prejudice. We respect the decisions of single people regarding marriage and we affirm the many ways in which they may participate in family and community life. This profound sense of respect extends to single parents. We recognize the extra burdens and challenges that single parenthood entails and offer our love, support, and care in the fulfillment of this special vocation.

C. Human Sexuality
We affirm human sexuality as a sacred gift and acknowledge that sexual intimacy contributes to fostering the emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being of individuals and to nurturing healthy sexual relationships that are grounded in love, care, and respect.

Human sexuality is a healthy and natural part of life that is expressed in wonderfully diverse ways from birth to death. It is shaped by a combination of nature and nurture: heredity and genetic factors on the one hand and childhood development and environment on the other. We further honor the diversity of choices and vocations in relation to sexuality such as celibacy, marriage, and singleness.

We support the rights of all people to exercise personal consent in sexual relationships, to make decisions about their own bodies and be supported in those decisions, to receive comprehensive sexual education, to be free from sexual exploitation and violence, and to have access to adequate sexual health care.

D. Marriage
Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

While The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple’s faith, grounded in their relationship with God and one another. Marriage thus reflects a continued willingness to grow together in Christ and a commitment to cultivate a covenantal bond that encompasses intimacy, grace, and love.

As members of the larger society, we also affirm the importance of civil marriage, the legal recognition of domestic unions by the state. Such legal recognition is vital for guaranteeing family stability and the orderly regulation of inheritances, and for providing assurance that spouses and children are afforded all the rights, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled.

1. Child Marriage
We reject marital relationships with children and youth under the age of eighteen (18), even in places where such relationships are culturally or legally permissible. Child marriages and premature sexual activities disrupt the normal course of emotional, biological, and social development of minor children. For underage girls, in particular, premature sexual activities—and the pregnancies resulting from such activities—can permanently damage internal organs, lead to lifelong medical problems, and preclude other opportunities in their lives. Waiting until a more appropriate age to wed offers better opportunities for children and youth to grow into healthy adulthood and become full, contributing members of society. We therefore believe that young people should be of legal age to give their consent before entering into marriage.

2. Polygamy
We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy, which entails living in relationship with multiple spouses. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the forced dissolution of such relationships presents significant problems. All too often, the women and children forced out of polygamous relationships find themselves cast into abject poverty with no means of support.

We, therefore, urge church leaders, when dealing with the dissolution of polygamous relationships, to exercise the utmost care and to prioritize considerations related to the continued health and well-being of dependent women and children.

We reject attempts to ostracize families who are or have been in polygamous relationships, especially women and children, or deny them access to the ministries of the church, including participation in the sacraments. Instead, we urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need.

3. Divorce
We recognize that divorce may become a regrettable but necessary alternative when marital relationships are strained beyond repair or become destructive or when spouses become irrevocably estranged. In such instances, we advise married couples to seek appropriate counseling and, if divorce proceedings become unavoidable, to con-
duct them in a manner that minimizes detrimental impacts on all family members.

Fidelity to the marriage covenant does not require spouses to remain in a physically or mentally abusive relationship. We do not support efforts to withhold the church’s ministries from divorced people or to deny them opportunities for leadership in the church, whether clergy or lay. We urge pastors and congregations to provide ministries and programs that support divorced people in overcoming social and religious stigmas that they too often face. Divorce does not preclude remarriage.

Other Social Issues

A. Substance Abuse, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Substance abuse refers both to the devastating psychological and physiological effects of dependence and to the broader social consequences of abuse. In responding to the widespread realities of substance abuse disorders, we begin with the recognition of the devastating impacts of addiction and of the misuse and abuse of legal and illegal substances in the lives of individual users, extended families and entire communities.

In many parts of the world, opioid and other substance abuse has reached crisis proportions. The church supports programs and policies that comprehensively address the causes and cures of debilitating addictions. We call upon society to refrain from judging people who are addicted and upon governments at all levels to provide resources commensurate with the scope of the problem.

In recognition of the devastation that substance abuse has wreaked on individuals, families and entire communities, we urge United Methodists to refrain from the use of any licit or illicit intoxicants, drugs, or other substances that foster addiction, impair mental faculties and physical abilities, and result in long-lasting damage to individuals, families, and communities.

Regarding the consumption of alcohol, we acknowledge the historic United Methodist stance on abstinence as a safeguard against mental, physical, and spiritual harms caused by excessive drinking. Consequently, we urge those who choose to consume alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer, to do so wisely and in moderation. Another important consideration is the impact of such actions on those struggling to recover from alcohol use and abuse.

Due to mounting medical evidence regarding the highly addictive nature and serious health consequences of direct or indirect ingestion or inhalation of nicotine and other chemicals found in commercial tobacco products, the church recommends complete abstinence. In making this recommendation, we recognize the difficulties in overcoming nicotine addiction and urge congregations to find ways to provide meaningful support to those who decide to stop using nicotine.

B. Bullying and Other Forms of Violence

We decry all forms of bullying, which consists of unwanted and aggressive behaviors toward children, youth, and adults, including verbal taunts, physical violence, emotional manipulation, and social intimidation. When specifically targeted toward children and youth, bullying stunts emotional and intellectual development and turns schools, neighborhoods, and virtual or online settings into dangerous and unsafe environments. Bullying often has long-term traumatic effects on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of its victims. We support the enactment of policies aimed at safeguarding children, youth, and adults from bullying. In situations involving minor children and youth, we urge the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies that take into consideration the ongoing maturational processes of both the victims and perpetrators of bullying.

C. Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Their Consequences

We acknowledge that the tangled and complex legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism hang heavily over the global fellowship of United Methodists. Colonialism refers to the practice of establishing full or partial control of other countries, tribes, and peoples through conquest and exploitation. Neocolonialism continues the historic legacy of colonialism by maintaining economic, political, and social control of formerly colonized nations and peoples.

Some of us belong to countries and groups that have richly benefited from the subjugation of whole peoples and from the seizure of lands and other resources. Others of us live in countries or are a part of communities that continue to struggle with the ongoing history and impacts of all forms of colonialism, including social, economic, and political instability; widespread malnutrition; illiteracy; disease; and continuing infringements on indigenous and tribal lands.

We recognize that far from being innocent bystanders, the church has often been deeply involved in colonialism and neocolonialism. We, therefore, call on individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the troubling legacies of colonialism and, when appropriate, to seek repentance for our continued involvement. We urge United Methodists to find ways to support those still suffering from colonial legacies, including tangible acts of reparation and active support for sustainable development initiatives.

D. Death with Dignity

We recognize that every mortal life ends in death, and we affirm that God’s abiding love and care remain with
us as we transition from life to death to greater life. These affirmations, together with our expressed commitment to the sacred worth of every human being, lead us to insist that individuals be treated with dignity and respect as they undergo the dying process.

This emphasis on death with dignity means that the choices of individuals and families must be heard and respected, the use of medical technology must be measured and appropriate, and any unnecessary pain and suffering must be minimized. We affirm the right of people in the process of dying to participate actively in the decision-making process. As communities of faith, we are called to support individuals and families as they confront the realities of suffering and death. In sensitive and caring ways, we bear witness to God’s enduring love and grace, even when they cannot be felt or experienced in an immediate way.

1. Faithful Care of Dying People

Our approach to death and dying is framed by our belief in the inherent dignity and worth of human beings, our concern for patient autonomy, and the affirmation that our lives ultimately belong to God. Within this framework, we strongly support efforts to empower patients and their loved ones to make informed decisions about continued treatment or end-of-life decisions that are consistent with applicable legal statutes and established medical protocols and standards.

Such informed decision-making may lead patients and their loved ones to choose to continue treatments that hold the promise of significant health improvements or enhanced quality of life. Conversely, such decisions may also lead patients or loved ones to discontinue medical interventions that cease to be of substantive benefit.

We affirm the benefits of palliative care in instances where a decision is made to stop other treatments. Palliative care stresses the importance of making patients as comfortable as possible, minimizing pain and suffering, and allowing the dying process to proceed unhindered. We also endorse the creation of advance medical directives, which clearly express the preferences of patients should they become incapacitated and unable to advise their doctors.

2. Euthanasia and Suicide

Our conviction that life is a sacred gift, along with persistent questions and concerns about potential abuse, lead us as a church to oppose both euthanasia and suicide while continuing our ministries of mercy with families who are affected by such actions. Euthanasia, also known as mercy killing and physician-directed or physician-assisted suicide, occurs when doctors or other health professionals make lethal doses of medications available to terminally ill patients, or, in some cases, directly administer or supervise the taking of such medications.

Suicide refers more generally to actions taken by individuals to end their own lives. The motivations for suicide often involve depression and other forms of mental illness, including substance abuse. Worldwide, suicide attempts often occur after significant personal or familial crises, including the loss of livelihoods, forced migration and displacement, cultural oppression, and prolonged exposure to bullying and other acts of violence.

While euthanasia or suicide cannot be condoned, we humbly confess the inadequacy of the church understanding and response. We urge congregations to educate themselves regarding the complex set of motivations and factors underlying these practices. Recognizing that final judgment lies in God’s hands rather than our own, we reject attempts to deny the ministries and services of the church to those who die by euthanasia or suicide or to their grieving families and other loved ones.

We believe that suicide does not bar people from God’s grace, which is all-sufficient. We urge pastors and local congregations to establish appropriate protocols in responding to people considering suicide and the survivors of suicide attempts. Such protocols should include referrals to experienced counselors or medical professionals. Rather than ostracizing or condemning survivors or family members affected by suicide, we urge pastors and congregations to provide compassion and support to these people.

E. Gambling

We reject the practice of gambling because it focuses society’s attention on the acquisition of monetary goods at the exclusion of all else and enriches a small minority at the expense of the larger majority. For too many people, gambling becomes a devastating and addictive practice that jeopardizes the economic well-being of both gamblers and their families.

We acknowledge that in some locales, First Nation, American Indian, and aboriginal peoples have opened gambling resorts and establishments as an act of self-determination and a crucial step toward economic survival. Rather than condemning such actions, we recognize that the church’s role is to encourage dialogue and education regarding the hopes and aspirations of these communities and to develop a deeper understanding of their histories and their continued quests for self-determination and survival.

We vow to work toward the eradication of poverty and a more equitable distribution of financial benefits as a constructive strategy to reduce the financial appeal of organized gambling, which includes lotteries, casinos, and online games of chance.
F. Gender Equality and Diversity

We support both gender equality and gender diversity as important goals for ensuring that the aspirations of women and girls are taken seriously and guaranteeing that paid positions and leadership opportunities are distributed equally for all. We decry the persistence of sexism and misogyny in the church through its practices and theological teachings, as well as in the broader society. We regret that such prejudices have too often led to the denigration and dismissal of women’s leadership and participation.

Consequently, we reject any beliefs, policies, or practices that envision women and men as unequal in either religious or secular settings. We exhort congregations, pastors, boards of ordained ministries, bishops, and other church officials to implement concrete efforts to nurture and promote the leadership of all people, regardless of gender. We also urge governments, businesses, and civil society to enact laws and policies to ensure that all members of society are afforded equal access, opportunities, and protections.

G. Media and Communication Technologies

We support freedom of public expression, which encompasses freedom of the press and the right of all societal members to share their perspectives and opinions. We also insist that all media companies operate with civility and respect and adhere to established journalistic standards. We affirm the positive roles that media and communication technologies play in educating the general public, holding government and other societal leaders accountable, and promoting the common good.

We are concerned about media monopolies and the tendency of media control to rest in the hands of a few large corporations, and we encourage individuals, communities, and governments to be vigilant in the enforcement of antitrust policies.

We also recognize that, like every other human endeavor, the media can be used by unscrupulous people to manipulate public opinions, distort facts, and spread misinformation, hostility and fear. We deplore the proliferation of hate speech across social media, broadcast and print news, and other platforms, and we call upon citizens and regulators to do all in their power to eliminate it. We also encourage individuals to take care when expressing their views on social media, recognizing the need for compassion and the harm that can be done to others when such compassion is lacking.

Further, media and other communication technologies lack adequate or diverse representation of marginalized communities, including women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, impoverished people and others. We believe that media and communications technologies should be open and accessible to all, foster norms that promote civility and respect, and protect the dignity and worth of all people, including society’s most vulnerable.

H. Pornography

We strongly oppose pornography and lament its destructive impact upon cultures, families, and individuals. Pornography is an affront to our deeply held conviction that human sexuality is a precious gift from God. The issue of pornography is one that has dramatically impacted many both within and outside of the worldwide church. Though graphic images have been available for centuries, the widespread prevalence and availability of sexually explicit and aggressive materials today have led to an increasing problem of addiction for many, including young people who have come of age with the internet in their homes and on mobile devices. We call upon all United Methodists to support actions to develop effective societal and governmental policies to eradicate child pornography as well as adult exploitation and enslavement. We further call on the church to offer nonjudgmental support, rehabilitation, and care to those who have been affected by the harmful impact of pornography on their lives.

I. Medical Experimentation and Research

We support medical experimentation and research procedures that hold the potential of eradicating illness and disease and/or extending and improving the quality of human life. We insist that medical experimentation, including genetic engineering, be performed within established bioethical parameters. These parameters, which derive from the physician’s responsibility to do no harm, include guarantees of patient autonomy and informed consent; assurances that the benefits and risks of medical experimentation are equitably distributed among various societal groups; the promise of significant benefits for patients involved in such experiments; and, to a lesser extent, the opportunity to significantly advance the medical field.

We advocate for meticulous oversight of all forms of medical experimentation to ensure that the highest ethical parameters are applied. We urge strong cooperation among governments, academic institutions, corporate researchers, and the medical profession to enforce prevailing medical research standards. Additionally, we insist on due diligence to ensure that people living in poverty, including those in developing countries and less affluent societies, are not overrepresented or underrepresented in medical studies and then denied the benefits derived from the studies.

J. Organ Donation and Transplantation

We strongly support organ donation as an expression of Christ’s admonition to love one’s neighbor. A worldwide shortage of transplantable organs means that hundreds of thousands of children, women, and men are subjected to needless pain and premature death. In light of
We believe that all donations must be voluntary and must be conducted in safe and secure medical environments in which the health, well-being, and privacy of both donors and recipients are protected. Further, we consider the buying and selling of organs and blood, including those obtained through theft and coercion, to be profound violations of the inherent dignity of human life and of moral precepts that dictate against human beings being treated as commodities.

We urge governments and medical organizations to adopt laws and policies promoting organ donation while protecting vulnerable populations from abusive practices and ensuring that transplantable organs are equitably distributed regardless of a potential recipient’s social standing.

K. Reproductive Health and Abortion
We support the provision of comprehensive, age-appropriate education for sexual health, as well as access to consistent, effective, and affordable contraception. We also affirm ministries and initiatives aimed at promoting reproductive health and enhancing the quality of life for women and girls. Because of the dangers and risks involved in childbearing, we believe that women and girls should have consistent access to gynecological care. We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, churches, and other civic institutions to make access to prevention education, medical check-ups, treatment, and counseling high priorities for women and girls of childbearing age.

Our commitment to the sanctity of human life makes us reluctant to condone abortion. We unconditionally reject it as an acceptable means of birth control or a mechanism for gender selection and other forms of eugenics. We support measures requiring parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood, except in cases of alleged incest.

We oppose late-term or partial-birth abortion, a process also known as dilation and extraction. We call for the end to this practice, except when the life of the mother is in danger, no other medical treatments are feasible, or when severe abnormalities threaten the viability of the fetus. We recognize that these and other tragic conflicts of life with life may justify decisions to terminate the life of a fetus. In these limited circumstances, we support the legal option of abortion and insist that such procedures be performed by trained medical providers in clean and safe settings.

We urge all those considering abortions to seek appropriate medical advice and pastoral counseling and to engage in searching, prayerful inquiries into other alternatives, such as making babies available for adoption. We pray for those facing unintended pregnancies and offer our prayers and support as they attempt to discern God’s will and seek God’s wisdom and guidance. Regardless of the circumstances in which someone might get an abortion, we do not condone bullying or shaming people for their decisions or actions.

We acknowledge that young women of childbearing age frequently report that they lack the ability to make meaningful life choices or exercise effective control over their own lives. We challenge pastors, congregations, campus ministries, and others to be at the forefront of efforts to empower these young women. Additionally, we support resource centers that offer compassionate care and help women explore alternatives to abortion.

We recognize that access to reproductive health services is too often limited by economic factors. Women living in poverty are often unable to make choices about when to become pregnant or about the size of their families. They also lack access to safe prenatal and postnatal care. Such a lack of agency perpetuates cycles of poverty by restricting the ability of women to participate in the workforce and by increasing the strain on scarce family resources. We support policies and programs that extend reproductive health services to women in economically challenged areas.

We support the use of a variety of reproductive strategies for those desiring to have children, including fertility treatments, in vitro fertilization (IVF), embryo or sperm donation, surrogacy, and others. We believe the decision whether to use reproductive alternatives is best left to those considering the use of these options, in consultation with their health care providers. In all instances, the use of reproductive alternatives should be in keeping with the highest ethical standards, prioritizing the health and well-being of both women and children.

L. Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism
We condemn racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism, and any ideology or social practice based on false and misleading beliefs or ideologies that one group of human beings is superior to all other groups of human beings. Additionally, we utterly reject laws, policies, and social practices that marginalize, discriminate, and/or encourage the use of violence against individuals, communities, or other social groups based on perceived racial, ethnic, or tribal differences.

We call on congregations and on pastors, bishops, and other church authorities to educate themselves about the root causes and manifestations of racism, ethnocentrism, and tribalism within communities of faith and to develop strategies for overcoming these kinds of social divisions.
We likewise urge governments, businesses, and civil society organizations to renounce statements, policies, and actions aimed at promoting exclusion, discrimination, and violence.

M. Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, we condemn sexual harassment, abuse, and assault and consider them grave violations of the established behavioral norms within the church as well as our larger society. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks, gender-based remarks or physical advances made in workplaces, professional settings, or social situations.

Sexual abuse or molestation entails unwanted sexual activity perpetrated through the use of force or threats, or by taking advantage of those who are unable to give consent or those in vulnerable situations with unequal power. Sexual assault includes all threats and forms of forcible sexual contact or bodily harm, including rape. We particularly deplore the sexual exploitation of children and youth and recognize that any sexual abuse is especially heinous and damaging when it occurs in the context of the church.

We urge pastors, congregations, and other church bodies to adopt clear policies and practices to prevent or address instances of sexual harassment. These policies and practices should include required training for all clergy and church staff, printed guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment, a safe and confidential reporting method, and a clear process for resolving grievance complaints, including escalating penalties that end with the dismissal of repeat offenders who fail to correct their behavior.

We advocate the development and implementation of comprehensive policies and practices in relation to cases of suspected sexual abuse and assault, especially when such cases involve minor children or others incapable of giving their consent. Even unsubstantiated reports of assault or abuse must be investigated immediately. Further, we urge pastors and congregations to comply fully with any legal statutes governing such matters and to be cognizant of any legal obligations as a mandated reporter.

Rationale:

This petition replaces ¶ 161 and ¶ 162 as part of the Social Principles revision and gives greater emphasis to their theological grounding and global relevance. For the complete revision proposal and background on the process, see "Social Principles Revision Report and Addendum" located in the ADCA.

¶161.C.

Petition Number: 20711-CB-¶161.C-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Marriage and Wedding Services

Amend ¶ 161C:

Marriage—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. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. No United Methodist clergy shall be required to officiate or bless a same-sex marriage.

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.

¶161.G.

Petition Number: 20745-CB-¶161.G-G; Go, Amy - Aurora, CO, USA.

ALL BELONG: Deleting Harmful Language

Amend ¶ 161G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality—We affirm that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

We deplore all forms of the commercialization, abuse, and exploitation of sex. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation of children and for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for abused children. All persons, regardless of age, gender, relationship marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured and to be protected against violence. The church should support the family in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults.

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fel-
lowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Rationale:
All belong in the body of Christ. The UMC recognizes Christian Scriptures as documents produced in historical context. We have chosen to differ on topics such as slavery, divorce, and the role of women. We propose doing the same regarding roles of LGBTQIA+ persons—vital, loving members of our churches.

¶161.G.
Petition Number: 20746-CB-¶161.g-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 2 of 8
¶ 161G) . . . Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage. . . . We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.

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.

¶162.
Petition Number: 20046-CB-¶162-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Social Community Social Principles
Delete ¶ 162 (The Social Community of the Social Principles) and substitute the following:

THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY
Preface
When it comes to faith, what a living, creative, active, powerful thing it is! It cannot do other than good at all times. It never waits to ask whether there is some good which is to be done; rather, before the question is raised, it has done the deed, and keeps on doing it. [One] who is not active in this way is a [person] without faith. (John Wesley, Preface, Explanatory Notes on Romans)
The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness. (John Wesley, Preface, Hymns and Sacred Poems)

As United Methodists, we affirm that human beings are made for God and for one another (Genesis 1:26-27, 31; Philippians 2:3-8). We live out our lives, grow in the faith, and engage in acts of discipleship and witness in the context of a variety of interconnected communities, including families, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and the broader society.
The church is called to be a distinctive community, marked by preaching of the gospel, studying of Scripture, breaking of bread, and witnessing to the power of redemption in the midst of a broken world. We respond to God’s call in the world by giving witness to the transformative power of the gospel, engaging in acts of mercy, and striving toward the attainment of justice and peace as hallmarks of God’s coming reign. In all of these efforts, Christians are reminded that diverse as we may be, we are all a part of the same body under the sovereignty of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

The Nurturing Community
A. The Family
We recognize that families come in a variety of sizes and forms and acknowledge their significant role in nurturing the physical, moral, and spiritual development of children, youth, and adults. Nurture and support are fundamental to the proper functioning of families. We, therefore, urge all family members to treat one another with love and respect. We also encourage parents and other caregivers to exercise appropriate diligence and care, raising their children in ways that promote their physical, spiritual, emotional, and moral growth.

Children are a gift from God to be welcomed and received. We lament that in some instances, birth parents are unable or unwilling to fulfill their caregiving obligations. Under these circumstances, we applaud the willingness of extended families and foster and adoptive parents to step in as primary nurturers. Even in these situations, however, we recognize the trauma that may be caused by separating children from their families of origin and urge that such actions be handled justly, sensitively, and compassionately.
Where appropriate and possible, we encourage open adoption so that children may know all information relevant to them, both medically and relationally.

B. Single People

We celebrate the contributions of single people and reject all social practices that discriminate against them or subject them to bias and prejudice. We respect the decisions of single people regarding marriage and we affirm the many ways in which they may participate in family and community life. This profound sense of respect extends to single parents. We recognize the extra burdens and challenges that single parenthood entails and offer our love, support, and care in the fulfillment of this special vocation.

C. Human Sexuality

By the design of God, human sexuality is a gift intended to bless the lives of all those who are created in the image of God. The gift of our sexuality, however, is one that requires careful stewardship and exercise. In our historic understanding of the Scriptures, 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.

We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual, or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, particularly any who may be unable to defend themselves. We similarly grieve at the destructive impact of promiscuity, infidelity, bigamy, multiple marriages, pornography, and all attempts to commercialize the gift of human sexuality within our societies.

We affirm that God’s grace is available to all and we commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons. Toward that end, we similarly exhort those within our families and churches not to reject or condemn any individuals based upon their gender, sexual identity, or orientation, and we call upon our congregations to be welcoming and safe places of hospitality and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives.

D. Marriage

Within the church, we affirm marriage as a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings a man and a woman into union with one another and into deeper relationship with God and the religious community.

While The United Methodist Church does not recognize marriage as a sacrament, we celebrate and cherish this union as an expression of the couple’s faith, grounded in their relationship with God and one another. Marriage thus reflects a continued willingness to grow together in Christ and a commitment to cultivate a covenantal bond that encompasses intimacy, grace, and love.

As members of the larger society, we also affirm the importance of civil marriage, the legal recognition of domestic unions by the state. Such legal recognition is vital for guaranteeing family stability and the orderly regulation of inheritances, and for providing assurance that spouses and children are afforded all the rights, benefits, and protections to which they are entitled.

1. Child Marriage

We reject marital relationships with children and youth under the age of eighteen (18), even in places where such relationships are culturally or legally permissible. Child marriages and premature sexual activities disrupt the normal course of emotional, biological, and social development of minor children. For underage girls, in particular, premature sexual activities—and the pregnancies resulting from such activities—can permanently damage internal organs, lead to lifelong medical problems, and preclude other opportunities in their lives. Waiting until a more appropriate age to wed offers better opportunities for children and youth to grow into healthy adulthood and become full, contributing members of society. We therefore believe that young people should be of legal age to give their consent before entering into marriage.

2. Polygamy

We cannot endorse the practice of polygamy, which entails living in relationship with multiple spouses. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the forced dissolution of such relationships presents significant problems. All too often, the women and children forced out of polygamous relationships find themselves cast into abject poverty with no means of support.

We, therefore, urge church leaders, when dealing with the dissolution of polygamous relationships, to exercise the utmost care and to prioritize considerations related to the continued health and well-being of dependent women and children.

We reject attempts to ostracize families who are or have been in polygamous relationships, especially women and children, or deny them access to the ministries of the church, including participation in the sacraments. Instead, we urge pastors and congregations to extend the same gracious welcome and hospitality to all those in need.

3. Divorce

We recognize that divorce may become a regrettable but necessary alternative when marital relationships are strained beyond repair or become destructive or when spouses become irrevocably estranged. In such instances, we advise married couples to seek appropriate counseling and, if divorce proceedings become unavoidable, to conduct them in a manner that minimizes detrimental impacts on all family members.
Fidelity to the marriage covenant does not require spouses to remain in a physically or mentally abusive relationship. We do not support efforts to withhold the church’s ministries from divorced people or to deny them opportunities for leadership in the church, whether clergy or lay. We urge pastors and congregations to provide ministries and programs that support divorced people in overcoming social and religious stigmas that they too often face. Given appropriate time and wise counsel, divorce does not preclude remarriage.

Other Social Issues
A. Substance Abuse, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Substance abuse refers both to the devastating psychological and physiological effects of dependence and to the broader social consequences of abuse. In responding to the widespread realities of substance abuse disorders, we begin with the recognition of the devastating impacts of addiction and of the misuse and abuse of legal and illegal substances in the lives of individual users, extended families, and entire communities.

In many parts of the world, opioid and other substance abuse has reached crisis proportions. The church supports programs and policies that comprehensively address the causes and cures of debilitating addictions. We call upon society to refrain from judging people who are addicted and upon governments at all levels to provide resources commensurate with the scope of the problem.

In recognition of the devastation that substance abuse has wreaked on individuals, families, and entire communities, we urge United Methodists to refrain from the use of any licit or illicit intoxicants, drugs, or other substances that foster addiction, impair mental faculties and physical abilities, and result in long-lasting damage to individuals, families, and communities.

Regarding the consumption of alcohol, we acknowledge the historic United Methodist stance on abstinence as a safeguard against mental, physical, and spiritual harms caused by excessive drinking. Consequently, we urge those who choose to consume alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer, to do so wisely and in moderation. Another important consideration is the impact of such actions on those struggling to recover from alcohol use and abuse.

Due to mounting medical evidence regarding the highly addictive nature and serious health consequences of direct or indirect ingestion or inhalation of nicotine and other chemicals found in commercial tobacco products, the church recommends complete abstinence. In making this recommendation, we recognize the difficulties in overcoming nicotine addiction and urge congregations to find ways to provide meaningful support to those who decide to stop using nicotine.

B. Bullying and Other Forms of Violence

We decry all forms of bullying, which consists of unwanted and aggressive behaviors toward children, youth, and adults, including verbal taunts, physical violence, emotional manipulation, and social intimidation. When specifically targeted toward children and youth, bullying stunts emotional and intellectual development and turns schools, neighborhoods, and virtual or online settings into dangerous and unsafe environments. Bullying often has long-term traumatic effects on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of its victims. We support the enactment of policies aimed at safeguarding children, youth, and adults from bullying. In situations involving minor children and youth, we urge the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies that take into consideration the ongoing maturational processes of both the victims and perpetrators of bullying.

C. Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Their Consequences

We acknowledge that the tangled and complex legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism hang heavily over the global fellowship of United Methodists. Colonialism refers to the practice of establishing full or partial control of other countries, tribes, and peoples through conquest and exploitation. Neocolonialism continues the historic legacy of colonialism by maintaining economic, political, and social control of formerly colonized nations and peoples.

Some of us belong to countries and groups that have richly benefited from the subjugation of whole peoples and from the seizure of lands and other resources. Others of us live in countries or are a part of communities that continue to struggle with the ongoing history and impacts of all forms of colonialism, including social, economic, and political instability; widespread malnutrition; illiteracy; disease; and continuing infringements on indigenous and tribal lands.

We recognize that far from being innocent bystanders, the church has often been deeply involved in colonialism and neocolonialism. We, therefore, call on individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the troubling legacies of colonialism and, where appropriate, to seek repentance for our continued involvement. We urge United Methodists to find ways to support those still suffering from colonial legacies, including tangible acts of reparation and active support for sustainable development initiatives.

D. Death with Dignity

We recognize that every mortal life ends in death, and we affirm that God’s abiding love and care remain with us as we transition from life to death to greater life. These affirmations, together with our expressed commitment to
the sacred worth of every human being, lead us to insist that individuals be treated with dignity and respect as they undergo the dying process.

This emphasis on death with dignity means that the choices of individuals and families must be heard and respected, the use of medical technology must be measured and appropriate, and any unnecessary pain and suffering must be minimized. We affirm the right of people in the process of dying to participate actively in the decision-making process. As communities of faith, we are called to support individuals and families as they confront the realities of suffering and death. In sensitive and caring ways, we bear witness to God’s enduring love and grace, even when they cannot be felt or experienced in an immediate way.

1. Faithful Care of Dying People

Our approach to death and dying is framed by our belief in the inherent dignity and worth of human beings, our concern for patient autonomy, and the affirmation that our lives ultimately belong to God. Within this framework, we strongly support efforts to empower patients and their loved ones to make informed decisions about continued treatment or end-of-life decisions that are consistent with applicable legal statutes and established medical protocols and standards.

Such informed decision-making may lead patients and their loved ones to choose to continue treatments that hold the promise of significant health improvements or enhanced quality of life. Conversely, such decisions may also lead patients or loved ones to discontinue medical interventions that cease to be of substantive benefit.

We affirm the benefits of palliative care in instances where a decision is made to stop other treatments. Palliative care stresses the importance of making patients as comfortable as possible, minimizing pain and suffering, and allowing the dying process to proceed unhindered. We also endorse the creation of advance medical directives, which clearly express the preferences of patients should they become incapacitated and unable to advise their doctors.

2. Euthanasia and Suicide

Our conviction that life is a sacred gift, along with persistent questions and concerns about potential abuse, lead us as a church to oppose both euthanasia and suicide while continuing our ministries of mercy with families who are affected by such actions. Euthanasia, also known as mercy killing and physician-directed or physician-assisted suicide, occurs when doctors or other health professionals make lethal doses of medications available to terminally ill patients, or, in some cases, directly administer or supervise the taking of such medications.

Suicide refers more generally to actions taken by individuals to end their own lives. The motivations for suicide often involve depression and other forms of mental illness, including substance abuse. Worldwide, suicide attempts often occur after significant personal or familial crises, including the loss of livelihoods, forced migration and displacement, cultural oppression, and prolonged exposure to bullying and other acts of violence.

While euthanasia or suicide cannot be condoned, we humbly confess the inadequacy of the church’s understanding and response. We urge congregations to educate themselves regarding the complex set of motivations and factors underlying these practices. Recognizing that final judgment lies in God’s hands rather than our own, we reject attempts to deny the ministries and services of the church to those who die by euthanasia or suicide or to their grieving families and other loved ones.

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We reject the practice of gambling because it focuses society’s attention on the acquisition of monetary goods at the exclusion of all else and enriches a small minority at the expense of the larger majority. For too many people, gambling becomes a devastating and addictive practice that jeopardizes the economic well-being of both gamblers and their families.

We acknowledge that in some locales, First Nation, American Indian, and aboriginal peoples have opened gambling resorts and establishments as an act of self-determination and a crucial step toward economic survival. Rather than condemning such actions, we recognize that the church’s role is to encourage dialogue and education regarding the hopes and aspirations of these communities and to develop a deeper understanding of their histories and their continued quests for self-determination and survival.

We vow to work toward the eradication of poverty and a more equitable distribution of financial benefits as a constructive strategy to reduce the financial appeal of organized gambling, which includes lotteries, casinos and online games of chance.

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Consequently, we reject any beliefs, policies or practices that envision women and men as unequal in either religious or secular settings. We exhort congregations, pastors, boards of ordained ministries, bishops, and other church officials to implement concrete efforts to nurture and promote the leadership of all people, regardless of gender. We also urge governments, businesses, and civil society to enact laws and policies to ensure that all members of society are afforded equal access, opportunities, and protections.

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We also recognize that, like every other human endeavor, the media can be used by unscrupulous people to manipulate public opinions, distort facts, and spread misinformation, hostility, and fear. We deplore the proliferation of hate speech across social media, broadcast, and print news, and other platforms; and we call upon citizens and regulators to do all in their power to eliminate it. We also encourage individuals to take care when expressing their views on social media, recognizing the need for compassion and the harm that can be done to others when such compassion is lacking.

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We strongly oppose pornography and lament its destructive impact upon cultures, families, and individuals. Pornography is an affront to our deeply held conviction that human sexuality is a precious gift from God. The issue of pornography is one that has dramatically impacted many both within and outside of the worldwide church. Though graphic images have been available for centuries, the widespread prevalence and availability of sexually explicit and aggressive materials today have led to an increasing problem of addiction for many, including young people who have come of age with the internet in their homes and on mobile devices. We call upon all United Methodists to support actions to develop effective societal and governmental policies to eradicate child pornography as well as adult exploitation and enslavement. We further call on the church to offer nonjudgmental support, rehabilitation, and care to those who have been affected by the harmful impact of pornography on their lives.

I. Medical Experimentation and Research

We support medical experimentation and research procedures that hold the potential of eradicating illness and disease and/or extending and improving the quality of human life. We insist that medical experimentation, including genetic engineering, be performed within established bioethical parameters. These parameters, which derive from the physician’s responsibility to do no harm, include guarantees of patient autonomy and informed consent; assurances that the benefits and risks of medical experimentation are equitably distributed among various societal groups; the promise of significant benefits for patients involved in such experiments; and, to a lesser extent, the opportunity to significantly advance the medical field.

We advocate for meticulous oversight of all forms of medical experimentation to ensure that the highest ethical parameters are applied. We urge strong cooperation among governments, academic institutions, corporate researchers, and the medical profession to enforce prevailing medical research standards. Additionally, we insist on due diligence to ensure that people living in poverty, including those in developing countries and less affluent societies, are not overrepresented or underrepresented in medical studies and then denied the benefits derived from the studies.

J. Organ Donation and Transplantation

We strongly support organ donation as an expression of Christ’s admonition to love one’s neighbor. A worldwide shortage of transplantable organs means that hundreds of thousands of children, women, and men are subjected to needless pain and premature death. In light of this, United Methodists who are willing and able to partic-
ipate are encouraged to volunteer through organ donation registries.

We believe that all donations must be voluntary and must be conducted in safe and secure medical environments in which the health, well-being, and privacy of both donors and recipients are protected. Further, we consider the buying and selling of organs and blood, including those obtained through theft and coercion, to be profound violations of the inherent dignity of human life and of moral precepts that dictate against human beings being treated as commodities.

We urge governments and medical organizations to adopt laws and policies promoting organ donation while protecting vulnerable populations from abusive practices and ensuring that transplantable organs are equitably distributed regardless of a potential recipient’s social standing.

K. Reproductive Health and Abortion

We support the provision of comprehensive, age-appropriate education for sexual health, as well as access to consistent, effective, and affordable contraception. We also affirm ministries and initiatives aimed at promoting reproductive health and enhancing the quality of life for women and girls. Because of the dangers and risks involved in childbearing, we believe that women and girls should have consistent access to gynecological care. We, therefore, urge governments, businesses, churches, and other civic institutions to make access to prevention education, medical check-ups, treatment, and counseling high priorities for women and girls of childbearing age.

Our commitment to the sanctity of human life makes us reluctant to condone abortion. We unconditionally reject it as an acceptable means of birth control or a mechanism for gender selection and other forms of eugenics. We support measures requiring parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood, except in cases of alleged incest.

We oppose late-term or partial-birth abortion, a process also known as dilation and extraction. We call for the end to this practice, except when the life of the mother is in danger, no other medical treatments are feasible, or when severe abnormalities threaten the viability of the fetus. We recognize that these and other tragic conflicts of life with life may justify decisions to terminate the life of a fetus. In these limited circumstances, we support the legal option of abortion and insist that such procedures be performed by trained medical providers in clean and safe settings.

We urge all those considering abortions to seek appropriate medical advice and pastoral counseling and to engage in searching, prayerful inquiries into other alternatives, such as making babies available for adoption. We pray for those facing unintended pregnancies and offer our prayers and support as they attempt to discern God’s will and seek God’s wisdom and guidance. Regardless of the circumstances in which someone might get an abortion, we do not condone bullying or shaming people for their decisions or actions.

We acknowledge that young women of childbearing age frequently report that they lack the ability to make meaningful life choices or exercise effective control over their own lives. We challenge pastors, congregations, campus ministries, and others to be at the forefront of efforts to empower these young women. Additionally, we support resource centers that offer compassionate care and help women explore alternatives to abortion.

We recognize that access to reproductive health services is too often limited by economic factors. Women living in poverty are often unable to make choices about when to become pregnant or about the size of their families. They also lack access to safe prenatal and postnatal care. Such a lack of agency perpetuates cycles of poverty by restricting the ability of women to participate in the workforce and by increasing the strain on scarce family resources. We support policies and programs that extend reproductive health services to women in economically challenged areas.

We support the use of a variety of reproductive strategies for those desiring to have children, including fertility treatments, in vitro fertilization (IVF), embryo or sperm donation, surrogacy, and others. We believe the decision whether to use reproductive alternatives is best left to those considering the use of these options, in consultation with their health care providers. In all instances, the use of reproductive alternatives should be in keeping with the highest ethical standards, prioritizing the health and well-being of both women and children.

L. Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism

We condemn racism, ethnocentrism, tribalism, and any ideology or social practice based on false and misleading beliefs or ideologies that one group of human beings is superior to all other groups of human beings. Additionally, we utterly reject laws, policies, and social practices that marginalize, discriminate, and/or encourage the use of violence against individuals, communities, or other social groups based on perceived racial, ethnic, or tribal differences.

We call on congregations and on pastors, bishops, and other church authorities to educate themselves about the root causes and manifestations of racism, ethnocentrism, and tribalism within communities of faith and to develop strategies for overcoming these kinds of social divisions. We likewise urge governments, businesses, and civil so-
ciety organizations to renounce statements, policies, and actions aimed at promoting exclusion, discrimination, and violence.

M. Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, we condemn sexual harassment, abuse, and assault and consider them grave violations of the established behavioral norms within the church as well as our larger society. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks, gender-based remarks or physical advances made in workplaces, professional settings, or social situations.

Sexual abuse or molestation entails unwanted sexual activity perpetrated through the use of force or threats, or by taking advantage of those who are unable to give consent or those in vulnerable situations with unequal power. Sexual assault includes all threats and forms of forcible sexual contact or bodily harm, including rape. We particularly deplore the sexual exploitation of children and youth and recognize that any sexual abuse is especially heinous and damaging when it occurs in the context of the church.

We urge pastors, congregations, and other church bodies to adopt clear policies and practices to prevent or address instances of sexual harassment. These policies and practices should include required training for all clergy and church staff, printed guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment, a safe and confidential reporting method, and a clear process for resolving grievance complaints, including escalating penalties that end with the dismissal of repeat offenders who fail to correct their behavior.

We advocate the development and implementation of comprehensive policies and practices in relation to cases of suspected sexual abuse and assault, especially when such cases involve minor children or others incapable of giving their consent. Even unsubstantiated reports of assault or abuse must be investigated immediately. Further, we urge pastors and congregations to comply fully with any legal statutes governing such matters and to be cognizant of any legal obligations as a mandated reporter.

¶162.


¶162 C) Rights of Children—Once considered the property of their parents, 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. Thus, we support the development of school systems and innovative methods of education designed to assist every child toward complete fulfillment as an individual person of worth. All children have the right to quality education, including full sex education appropriate to their stage of development that utilizes the best educational techniques and insights. Christian parents and guardians and the church have responsibility to ensure that children receive sex education consistent with Christian morality, including faithfulness in marriage, and abstinence in singleness. Moreover, children have the rights to food, shelter, clothing, health care, and emotional well-being as do adults, and these rights we affirm as theirs regardless of actions or inactions of their parents or guardians. In particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, all children are entitled to basic human rights, including but not limited to; nutrition, shelter, clothing, health care, protection, emotional well-being, freedom of speech; regardless of actions or inactions of their parents or guardians. Decisions regarding a child's life should always be done with the child's best interest in mind. When a child is old enough to have opinions about matters regarding their life, their opinions should always be heard and emphasized according to the child's age and maturity.

¶162.

Petition Number: 20048-CB-¶162; Prusha, Connor - Chardon, OH, USA for United Methodist Young People's Convocation. 1 Similar Petition

Expanding the Meaning of "Immigrant"

Amend ¶ 162 H as follows:

Rights of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Undocumented Persons, and Internally Displaced Persons—We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment. . . . We urge the church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented persons, and internally displaced persons and to advocate for justice for all.

Rationale:

The 2018 Global Young People's Convocation discussed various issues that face the global church. An issue facing our current societies is the movement of persons for various reasons. The Discipline does not reflect all migrants or draw attention to the diverse reasons individuals leave their countries of origin.


\section{Petition Number: 20049-CB-\textsection{162}; Westad, Audun - Oslo, Norway.}

\emph{Amendment to \textsection{162} H}

\textsection{H) Rights of Immigrants}—As we acknowledge that Jesus himself once was an immigrant when fleeing from Israel, we recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.

\section{Petition Number: 20050-CB-\textsection{162}-G; Land, Amy - Amboy, IN, USA for McGrawsville UMC Women’s Ministry.}

\emph{Bioethics}

Amend \textsection{162} of the Book of Discipline by adding a new section \textsection{O} after current section \textsection{N}, re-lettering subsequent sections accordingly, as follows:

\textsection{O) Bioethics}—We recognize the image of God in all human life. Therefore, we cannot support medical or scientific practices that treat any human life at any stage, including embryonic, as a mere commodity who is categorically unworthy of any respect or protection. We support embryo adoption programs that both give couples the chance to become adoptive parents and rescue so-called “excess embryos” by giving them a chance to develop into full-grown babies, children, and adults.

\textbf{Rationale:}

Treating any human life as beyond God’s image and love is contrary to Christ’s example of pushing boundaries to extend his love to marginalized humanity. We want to advance science and medicine, but within the boundaries of Christian ethics. The church must offer such prophetic witness for modern bioethical challenges.

\section{Petition Number: 20051-CB-\textsection{162}-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.}

\emph{Update Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation}

 Amend the Book of Discipline\textsection{162J} as follows:

Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, including the right to marry, enter into civil union, and to obtain employment in the career field of their choice. . . . Moreover, We support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. Moreover, we reject laws or practices that penalize or require incarceration of persons based solely on their sexual orientation.

\textbf{Rationale:}

As United Methodists, we agree that all people are of sacred worth and that no child of God should be incarcerated, penalized, or denied civil liberties based solely on their sexual orientation.

\section{Petition Number: 20052-CB-\textsection{162}-G; Hassmer, Sarah - Silver Spring, MD, USA.}

\emph{Update Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation}

Amend \textsection{162} as follows:

\emph{Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity}—We affirm all persons to be equal members of society regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI). All persons are created in God’s image and are of sacred worth. Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We see a clear issue of simple justice in which protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protections before the law. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion, and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.
Rationale:
This amendment would extend our commitment to protect the basic human dignity and human rights of all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or social location.

¶162.

Petition Number: 20053-CB-¶162-G; Cady, Stephen - Rochester, NY, USA.

New Social Principle on Guns and Gun Violence

A new letter be added to ¶ 162:

Y. Guns and Gun Violence

Safety is a human right. The increase in incidents of mass shootings should give pause to all Christians. The prophet Isaiah spoke of that day when we shall beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks. As followers of the Prince of Peace, we reject as false the idolatry of guns and their glorification in media. We recognize the increased threat of gun violence and mass shooting incidents, especially in places of worship, and encourage churches to work with their local law enforcement agencies to develop appropriate and strategic safety and crisis management response plans for all manner of threats. While the temptation to arm members of congregations may be great, most law enforcement agencies suggest that having armed members increases the risk of confusion when officers respond and are forced to make split-second decisions in assessing threats. We encourage churches to adopt policies that make their buildings and campuses gun-free zones.

We also recognize that many mass shootings are aided by the easy access to assault-style weapons. As there is no Christian reason for an assault-rifle, we call upon governments to ban all assault-style weapons. Further, we call for reasonable checks and balances on the purchase of weapons including, but not limited to background checks, waiting periods, and mandatory training. We encourage agencies, churches, and individual members to divest of investments in guns and weaponry.

Further, we acknowledge the intersectionality of gun violence, mental health, and racism, and call upon churches to take pro-active steps to address each within their ministry contexts. The attention paid to mass shootings in the media often overshadows the gun violence that is the daily reality in too many communities. We call upon churches to raise awareness of the issues of racism in the reporting of these stories and to take steps to address the economic disparities that often lead to violence.

Rationale:

Given the marked increase in gun violence and the new reality of mass shootings, The United Methodist Church can no longer remain silent about guns. This petition offers a statement that names our Christian commitment in the face of this new reality.
Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20646.

Petition Number: 20646-CB-NonDis-!-G; Kaye-Skinner, Nan - Lincoln, NE, USA for Great Plains Annual Conference.

Science of Sexual Orientation Study Guide

The General Board of Church and Society will appoint a commission to identify reliable, peer reviewed information regarding what is known about the factors influencing the development of sexual orientation and assemble a study guide to be distributed to local churches by January 2022. The Board of Church and Society will ask each annual conference to encourage and facilitate opportunities for this study within each district and local congregation.

Rationale:

Sexual orientation is part of God’s creation, obligating us to seek a better understanding of human sexuality. Scientific information provides the “reason” portion of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Scientific journals are thoroughly reviewed by experts, providing well-documented information essential for our discussion and decision-making.
Support for Adoption in a Global Context-Rewrite

"Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his cousin, for she had neither father nor mother; . . . when her father and her mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter" (Esther 2:7, NRSV). "When the fullness of time had come, God sent [God’s] son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children" (Galatians 4:4-5, NRSV).

Every child is a child of God and deserves to grow up in a safe, healthy, and loving family environment. The United Methodist Social Principles (¶ 161) state, “We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity.” For a variety of reasons, including unwanted pregnancy, family violence, addictions, or poverty, children are placed for adoption with hopes for a better future.

Our theological understanding of baptism as described in the New Testament is an image of adoption into the family of God. We affirm that God is our ultimate parent, and persons who choose to raise a family are called to be loving parents, whether they gave birth to or adopted their children.

Clinical and social service agencies that relate professionally to adoption issues look for and encourage the same attitudes and behaviors that should apply for birth children. These attitudes and behaviors include: parental love; parental responsibility; encouragement of identity development of the child; physical, emotional, and economic security of the child; educational growth of the child; and socialization of the child.

Those seeking to adopt a child are faced with many challenges and concerns about the high costs of adoption, international laws and restrictions, interracial or intercultural differences, the availability of licensed agencies, and the long waiting times for processing adoptions.

International adoptions have increased dramatically in recent years. This has created a multimillion-dollar-a-year “baby-selling” market where profit is often the primary motivation. Licensed adoption agencies are required by law to meet certain standards and ethical practices protecting the rights of the adoptive child(ren), the birth parents/family and the adoptive parent(s). High costs of international adoption call into question issues of stewardship while making adoption cost-prohibitive for families with moderate or low incomes. An international adoption may give a child a new chance to live a more secure life with greater opportunities. However, removing children from their native land can have dire consequences. Unresolved prejudices held by the adoptive parents can lead to abuse and neglect and keep children from adjusting emotionally or socially to their new homes.

Intercountry adoption is not a solution to the problems of high birth rates or poverty in the countries of origin. Countries where babies are being considered for adoption are concerned that they may suffer a “brain drain” since typically only healthy babies, without disabilities or birth defects, are chosen by adoptive parents.

While some may pursue the adoption of children from other countries, many thousands of children in the intra-country foster care systems wait in vain for families to adopt them. These children may come from difficult or painful families of origin or may have been harmed by years in successive and less-than-ideal placements. A form of “ageism” prevails in the adoption process, both in the selection of parents and the placement of children.

Inter-ethnic (understood as cross-racial in the U.S.) adoption also presents many challenges. There are divisions over the “correctness” of interracial or cross-cultural adoption. A family becomes a multicultural family when it adopts a child of a different ethnicity, race, or culture than its own. The family should be sensitive to the societal impact of racism or xenophobia upon the child. Adoptive parents should not neglect the history and heritage of the child’s family of origin (if known) and should affirm racial and ethnic ancestry and culture. Studies have shown that children from ethnic backgrounds different from their parents grow up with a stronger sense of identity and self-esteem if their birth ethnicity has been positively communicated within the family. Great sensitivity also needs to be expressed with regard to the intricacies of the social welfare system and the impact on people who are adopted cross-culturally.

Foster care and adoption do not alleviate the complexity of social problems that severely impact children, including racism, gender discrimination, poverty, alcoholism, and family violence. In a time when many seek to adopt children, and when many children need a lov-
God created humanity in God’s own image, in the divine image God created them. (Genesis 1:27a)

The issue of pornography has dramatically impacted many both within and outside of the worldwide church. Though graphic images have been available for centuries, the widespread prevalence and availability of sexually explicit and aggressive materials today have led to an increasing problem of addiction for many, including young people who have come of age with the internet in their homes and on their mobile devices.

Studies have shown that pornography is progressively damaging in both the areas of belief and behavior, as sex and intimacy have become synonymous with a specific kind of eroticism that denies the essential image of God that is found in all. In addition, the majority of pornography is linked to the oppression of women, especially those of color, distorting the sexual integrity of all persons. Most disturbing is the growth of child pornography, which has been shown to contribute to the abuse of the most vulnerable among us.

Thus, in accordance with our Social Principles, The United Methodist Church strongly opposes pornography and laments its destructive impact upon both cultures and individuals. We call upon all United Methodists to:

1. Support actions to develop effective societal and governmental policies that eradicate child pornography, adult exploitation, and enslavement;
2. Provide education materials that can help children and youths gain an appropriate and biblical understanding of and respect for mutually affirming sexuality, as well as how to live both faithfully and to view others through God’s eyes;
3. Work to break the link between sex and violence by encouraging healthy human relationships;
4. Enact strict policies that provide oversight of church-owned computers and sexual ethics education and training for both clergy and laity;
5. Provide resources and education for parents on how to minimize the risk to children from unhealthy use of the internet;
6. Offer nonjudgmental support, rehabilitation, and care to those who have been affected by production, distribution, and viewing of pornography;
7. Participate in ecumenical and community efforts to address the issue of pornography and its harmful impact upon society.

Rationale:
This petition amends the existing resolution to more concisely state the harm done by pornography. It affirms our Social Principles, which call upon United Methodists to respond through education and intervention.
R3041.

Petition Number: 20567-CB-R3041-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Alcohol Beverage Advertising at Sporting Events**

Delete Resolution #3041, Alcohol Beverage Advertising at Sporting Events, upon adoption of new resolution Global Call to Action on Alcohol.

**Rationale:**

The essence of this petition will be included in the new resolution petition A Call to Action on Alcohol.

R3043.

Petition Number: 20565-CB-R3043-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Keep Children and Youth Free from Alcohol and Other Drugs**

Delete Resolution #3043, Keep Children and Youth Free from Alcohol and Other Drugs, upon adoption of new resolution Global Call to Action on Alcohol.

**Rationale:**

The essence of this petition will be included in the new resolution, A Call to Action on Alcohol.

R3085.

Petition Number: 20564-CB-R3085-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Child Soldiers**

Resolution #3085: Child Soldiers—Amend and Re-adopt:

Delete Paragraph 1:

"Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."  
"Allow the children to come to me. Don’t forbid them, because God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children" (Luke 18:16 CEB).

Modify Paragraph 4:

As armed conflict proliferates around the world, an increasing number of children are exposed to the brutalities of war. In numerous countries, boys and girls under the age of 18 are recruited as child soldiers by armed forces and groups, either forcibly or voluntarily. Reports by the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations such as Amnesty International and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers Child Soldiers International reveal:

Insert new subparagraph after paragraph 4:

- More than 20,000 grave violations of children’s rights around the world, including their recruitment as soldiers in armed conflicts.

Modify first sentence in third subparagraph under paragraph 4:

- Hundreds of thousands of under-18-year-olds are estimated to have become a part of armed forces in at least 60 countries.

Insert new subparagraphs after subparagraph 4:

- Military training of children can cause psychological trauma, altered personalities, and long-term developmental damage. This training and the military environment subject children to bullying, physical violence, and sexual harassment. In most cases, child recruits have no right or opportunity to leave.

- Child soldiers lose their childhoods and often their lives. Perpetuating cycles of violence, the damage extends beyond the children to their families and communities.

Delete last sentence in paragraph 5:

Central conferences in Africa, such as the Liberia Conference, have initiated programs to rehabilitate and integrate ex-combatant children for productive and peaceful life in their families and communities.

Delete paragraph 6:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church urges the General Board of Church and Society and the General Board of Global Ministries to:

Insert new paragraph 7:

Even with this progress, much work remains to be done to protect the lives and dignity of all children. Therefore, individuals, churches, faith communities, and conferences are urged to connect with the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Church and Society so that together we can:

Modify subparagraph 5 under paragraph 7:

- provide financial resources and assistance to central conferences for programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate former child soldiers into their families and communities.

**Rationale:**

This petition amends for adoption updated information on child soldiers around the world, the emotional state of child soldiers, and organizations that work to end the use of child soldiers.
Discipline Children without Corporal Punishment, Including in Schools and Childcare Facilities

Resolution #3087: Prohibit Corporal Punishment in Schools and Childcare Facilities—Amend and Readopt:

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10:13-14 NRSV).

Jesus’ love for and commitment to the full development of children provides clear guidance for the ways that we must treat our children.

According to the World Health Organization’s Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, a 2014 UNICEF study entitled Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children “found that on average about four in five children aged 2-14 had experienced violent ‘discipline’ (physical punishment and/or psychological aggression) at home in the past month [and] 17% of children experienced severe physical punishment” in the same period.

The World Health Organization document above defines corporal punishment as “violence inflicted on children by parents, teachers, caregivers and others in the name of ‘discipline’” and the “most common form of violence against children. It violates children’s right to respect for their human dignity and physical integrity, as well as their rights to health, development, and education, and is associated with a wide range of negative health, developmental and behavioral outcomes for children that can follow them into adulthood.” (UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Medical Association are among many global and local organizations supporting this initiative.)

Some schools and childcare facilities around the world permit striking another person for the purpose of causing physical pain:

Corporal punishment is humiliating and degrading, and models aggressive behavior to children, causing emotional and sometimes physical injury. Research has associated corporal punishment with increased aggression in children and adults as well as increased substance abuse, risk of crime and violence, low self-esteem, and chronic depression.

It is difficult to imagine Jesus Christ condoning any action that is intended to hurt children physically or psychologically. Jesus’ teachings on loving our neighbor and living in peace with one another are foundational for opposition to corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment also sends a message that hitting smaller and weaker people is acceptable.

As people of faith who value children and who are committed to nonviolent conflict resolution, we are called to identify effective alternatives to corporal punishment that teach children to be self-disciplined rather than to submit out of fear. Punishment like time-outs and deprivation of privileges are as effective as corporal punishment in stopping undesirable behavior. Furthermore, the effectiveness of corporal punishment decreases with subsequent use. Everyone schools and childcare centers should inspire children to enjoy learning, and school and childcare personnel should be able to encourage and reinforce positive behavior without hitting or harming children.

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church calls upon governments and educational institutions to enact laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and day and residential childcare facilities.

We, The United Methodist Church, therefore call upon all members, governments, and educational institutions to adopt discipline methods that do not include corporal punishment of children.

In addition, we call upon United Methodist-related childcare facilities to adopt policies that explicitly prohibit corporal punishment.

Finally, we call upon congregations and agencies to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children.

Upon adoption of this resolution, delete Resolution 3088 – Discipline Children Without Corporal Punishment.

Rationale:

This petition combines two expiring resolutions (#3087 and #3088) to create one that defines corporal punishment in the global context. It clarifies the church’s role in opposing its use and supporting alternative, more effective forms of discipline.

R3164.

Petition Number: 20561-CB-R3164; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
In Support of US Dreamers

Resolution #3164: Dream Act—Amend and Readopt:
Whereas, For generations, workers millions of people and their young children have come migrated to the United States without authorization seeking freedom, peace, safety, and economic opportunity, to satisfy the labor needs of our nation, contributing to its economic development. These children are now young adults who are denied the opportunity to live fully in society; and,
Whereas, these children are being penalized by increased college tuition, facing various prohibitions to pursuing professional careers, and more and are denied the opportunity to practice their profession because of their immigration status; and,
Whereas, The Federal DREAM Act—first introduced in Congress in 2001 and reintroduced regularly since—is a bipartisan legislation that would open the possibility of higher education, as well as a conditional pathway to U.S. citizenship, for undocumented students individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children youths, (before their 16th birthday), and who are now caught in a situation that is not of their own making. The Act would require these undocumented young people such students, sometimes known as “The-Dreamers,” to complete a college degree certain educational requirements or two years of military service in order to be granted temporary residency and then be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

While other efforts, such as the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, have sought to provide some security for some Dreamers, DREAM legislation remains a comprehensive measure addressing the broad population of over 1.8 million “Dreamers” in the U.S.

Since 2012, The UMC has affirmed support of the DREAM Act. We continue that support.

We oppose attempts to use Dreamers as bargaining chips, exchanging their security and access to citizenship in the U.S. for that of their parents, family members, or others in the immigrant community. In immigration discussions, the parents of Dreamers have often been implicitly or explicitly vilified as the culprits of the situation in which Dreamers find themselves now. Dreamers have also been stereotyped as “good immigrants,” at the expense of other migrants who are stereotyped as “bad immigrants.” These characterizations are inaccurate and unjust. Christian ethics of migration acknowledge a broader and more complex spread of responsibility, one in which citizens and host countries are complicit in systemic failures of immigration justice.

Therefore, we, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, support U.S. Dreamers, their families, and legislation that provides Dreamers urge the US Congress to adopt the DREAM Act and provide for these children, who have lived most their lives in this country, access to educational opportunities, pathways to citizenship, and full participation in the life of the only nation they have known, and identify with the U.S., which they call home.

Rationale:
This petition amends for adoption updated language on U.S. DREAM legislation to address the current landscape for U.S. Dreamers, which has changed since the petition was originally written. The petition opposes arguments, debates, and framing of immigration issues that vilify migrants and pit Dreamers against their undocumented family members.

R3203.
Petition Number: 20560-CB-R3203-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Maternal Health: The Church’s Role

Resolution #3203, Maternal Health: The Church’s Role; Amend and Readopt:
“I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest” (John 10:10 CEB).

Motherhood is sacred. Mothers are important figures in our biblical tradition. Women like Eve, Hagar, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are remembered for their role as bearers of new life. But within the sacred texts, stories also tell of maternal tragedy and loss. Both Rachel (Genesis 35:16-20) and the wife of Phinehas (1 Samuel 4:19-20) died after prolonged and difficult labors.

Tragically, stories of maternal death are commonplace ordinary today. For many women, especially those living in poverty and in developing countries, giving birth is dangerous and life-threatening. Worldwide maternal mortality is a leading cause of death for women of child-bearing age. Every 90 seconds a woman dies somewhere in the world from complications during pregnancy or childbirth; for every woman who dies, another 20 suffer disability.

According to the World Health Organization, over 300,000 women die each year—roughly 830 every day—from pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications. The main causes of maternal mortality include infection, hemorrhaging, high blood pressure, and obstructed labor.
They are mostly preventable. Many of these deaths are preventable.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the disciples that he came so that they could live life to the fullest. God desires that every mother, every child, and every family not only survive, but thrive.

Tragically, with regards to maternal care, survival is often a daily struggle for those women who lack access to basic services that they need and care. God calls us to respond to the suffering around us in the world, to love our neighbors throughout the world. As followers of Christ, we are members of the same body. The loss of one member is a loss for all. We must care for everyone—especially women who are already navigating systems of oppression and often risking their lives during and following pregnancy and birth.

The global community is taking steps to address the tragedy of maternal mortality. Members of the United Nations established in 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that set targets for a better, more sustainable future for all. Every SDG is an essential part of saving mothers’ and babies’ lives and SDG 3 specifically includes the target of reducing global mortality to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. 2000 the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that set targets for improving health, reducing disease and poverty, and ensuring human rights of all people. The fifth MDG, to improve maternal health, sets a goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75 percent by 2015.

Maternal deaths have dropped by a third since 1990. While such progress is significant, increased efforts must be implemented globally to reach the 2015 target of 75 percent reduction. Maternal deaths exist in both developed and developing countries. An example among developed countries is that maternal mortality in the United States is on the rise. US maternal deaths have doubled since 1987.

Maternal deaths exist in all countries. According to the World Bank, maternal mortality rates range from 1,360 deaths per 100,000 live births in Sierra Leone to 114 deaths per 100,000 live births in the Philippines to 5 deaths per 100,000 live births in Norway. Most countries’ maternal death rates are decreasing with the exception of thirteen countries including North Korea and the United States.

Maternal mortality rates often vary within each country based on a number of factors. In the United States, for example, the Center for Disease Control reports that black women are more than twice as likely to die as a result of pregnancy than white women. Public health experts attribute two primary factors to this racial disparity in maternal deaths: implicit bias within the medical system and weathering that occurs over the lifespan of black women whose bodies are worn down more quickly from the daily impact of racism and sexism.

Maternal mortality is a moral tragedy and the church must address the health, economic, and cultural barriers that contribute to maternal deaths. Nearly all of the more than 250,000 annual maternal deaths occur in the developing world. Many factors contribute to this vast health inequity.

Health Barriers

In the developing world, many women of child-bearing age lack access to reproductive health services such as prenatal care, and postnatal care, including information and resources to space and time pregnancies and family planning services. This is particularly dangerous for pregnant women. With no hospital or clinic nearby, women customarily give birth at home in unsanitary conditions. This puts both the woman and her baby at risk of infection. If a woman experiences a life-threatening complication while in labor at home, she may not be able to reach emergency care in time. Situations like these could be prevented if women had access to health information and medical care that are essential to them.

Unintended pregnancy is also a health concern. Globally, more than 200 million women would like to avoid or delay pregnancy, but they lack access to modern contraceptive services. This results in millions of unintended pregnancies every year. Supply shortages, lack of education, misinformation, and cultural barriers all contribute to this unmet need. Without access to contraceptives, women are unable to manage the timing and birth spacing of their children. This is of particular concern to women who have given birth within the past two years and those who are HIV-positive: The former’s bodies may not have fully recovered, and the latter’s immunity system is compromised.

Birth spacing is a key health intervention for reducing both maternal and infant mortality. When a woman spaces her pregnancies at least three years apart, she is more likely to have a healthy delivery, and her children are more likely to survive infancy. If a woman becomes pregnant too soon after giving birth, her body does not have time to recover and her risk for complications increases. To be able to space her pregnancies in the healthiest manner, a woman must have access to safe, modern family-planning services.

Providing family-planning services to a woman is inexpensive, costing approximately $2 a year. The direct and indirect benefits, however, of women planning their families are priceless and countless: smaller family size,
better health for both children and mother, less economic burden on the family, and women’s continued economic contribution to the greater community. By meeting all the unmet need for family planning, maternal mortality rates would drop by a third, and the need for abortion would be reduced significantly. Furthermore, the use of condoms reduces the risk of infection for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases or infections. In particular, access to female condoms is crucial for empowering women to initiate their own protection against these infections.

**Economic Barriers**

Economic realities and policies can create additional barriers to maternal health. Lack of economic opportunities and quality education as well as the lack of quality, affordable health insurance, contraception, and feminine products can all contribute to declines in maternal health.

Women need access to affordable and equitable health care programs to thrive economically and to support their families. Health insurance and access to contraception as well as government policies and laws related to reproductive health can support or impede the ability of women to plan and space their pregnancies.

As a church we must advocate—speaking out and standing with women—to eradicate economic barriers that block access for women to affordable, quality, and equitable health care.

**Cultural Barriers**

Many cultural differences complicate this issue. As people of God we are created uniquely and we have cultural differences that make us diverse. In some areas of the world, having a large family is a sign of honor in many parts of the world. Having or having many children, especially boys, is a showcase of a man’s virility. There are men who expect their wives to bear many children but may not consider or support birth spacing or family planning.

The expectation of giving birth to many children is sometimes based on the traditions and norms of a community. There are societal and familial pressures that can undermine some women’s personal desires regarding her fertility and can adversely affect her health or decision to space and time pregnancies. Comes not only from the husband, but also from other family members, particularly the mother-in-law. In some areas of the developing world, the mother-in-law makes the decision regarding contraceptive use. Such societal and familial pressures often conflict with a woman’s personal desires regarding her fertility and can adversely affect her health.

Marrying age also affects maternal health. Child marriage is prevalent in many cultures. Girls marry and begin giving birth in early adolescence. If these young females are not practicing family planning, they could have multiple children before they are physiologically and emotionally mature. Young women not fully developed physically at the time of marriage are at great risk for complications such as obstetric fistula, a birth injury that leaves them incontinent, a tragic childbirth injury caused by prolonged, obstructed labor without access to timely, high-quality medical treatment. This can leave women leaking urine, feces, or both and often leads to chronic medical problems, depression, social isolation, and deepening poverty.

**The Call**

Women are crying out for not only their own survival but also the survival of their families and communities. They deserve access to services and care that empower their personal and economic decision-making and development. As a global church, we are called to eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women’s well-being.

**Recommendations**

We therefore call upon all local congregations to United Methodists to:

- Support United Methodist projects around the world working on maternal health and family planning;
- Address the root causes of maternal deaths in local contexts which could include addressing access to health services, racism or child marriage;
- Advocate with policy makers at all levels to increase access to maternal health and family-planning services; and
- Support local health initiatives that expand access to information and services for women’s health and projects around the world that include maternal health and family planning;
- Advocate with policy makers at all levels to increase access to maternal health and family-planning services; and
- Create projects in local churches and annual conferences that educate and advocate for women to have access to quality and affordable healthcare programs.

We call upon the General Board of Church and Society to continue placing a programmatic emphasis on maternal health.

**Rationale:**

This petition updates and expands the current global context of maternal health challenges, adds a section on “economic barriers” that limit access to affordable, equitable care, and clarifies the role for the global church in responding to this worldwide challenge.
R3304.
Petition Number: 20581-CB-R3304-G; Evans, Cindy - O'Fallon, MO, USA.

**Healing of Post-Abortion Stress**

Amend current resolution #3304 as follows:

WHEREAS, we recognize that there is a legal right to an abortion in many countries, we also recognize that some regret that event later in life,

WHEREAS, the church should be about offering healing ministries for all types of brokenness,

*Therefore, be it resolved,* that the 2012-2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church urges pastors to become informed about the symptoms and behaviors associated with post-abortion stress; and

*Be it further resolved,* that the 2012-2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages local churches to make available contact information for counseling agencies that offer programs to address post-abortion stress for all seeking help.

R3361.
Petition Number: 20558-CB-R3361-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**The World’s Population and the Church’s Response**

Amend and Readopt:

Historical and Theological Statement

The population of the world was about 300 million at the time of Christ and changed very little in the next thousand years. The population of the world reached one billion in 1804, three billion in 1960, and rose to about 6.8 billion in 2010-7.6 billion in 2017. It is expected to reach about 9.8 billion by 2050. (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/world-population-prospects-2017.html>). From a finite globe, each human being consumes air, water, food, shelter and energy, and leaves behind waste to accommodate. Though there is no agreement on what earth’s capacity is, simple mathematics asserts that at some point a growing population must reach the capacity of that finite globe.

Our Scriptures contain both continuous and time-limited commandments: The Great Commandment to love God and our neighbor as ourselves (Luke 10:27) is continuous in Scripture, it persists forever and its validity has no beginning or ending. By contrast, God’s commandment to the newly created man and woman, “Be fertile and multiply; and fill the earth . . .” (Genesis 1:28) is a time-limited commandment that ends when it has been fulfilled. For the first time in human history, humanity is faced with the challenge of determining if the commandment has been fulfilled, and if it has, whether human fruitfulness and multiplication is no longer mandated in the same way.

In Genesis 1:28, God goes on to command man and woman to “take charge,” meaning to exercise stewardship responsibility on behalf of God, the world’s creator and owner. As stewards of the earth, we now have the responsibility of identifying how our stewardship of human reproduction is fulfilling God’s will, and how it may be thwarting it. To assist us in this stewardship, God has provided humans with methods of contraception previously unknown. In clear distinction from faiths that reject use of such methods, The United Methodist Church believes effective, safe contraception is indeed responsible stewardship:

Our stewardship responsibility for human reproduction in the context of the population challenges of the world is in the service of God’s ongoing creative and re-creative concern for the universe. was expressed through Jesus Christ, who has called us to find the meaning of our lives in dual love of God and neighbor. In our exercise of stewardship, we live responsibly before God, writing history by the actions of our lives: The imperative for the individual Christian and the Christian community is to seek patterns of life, shape the structures of society, and foster those values that will dignify human life for all in a world in which God’s love is infinite but the earth’s resources are finite.

Human Population Growth Impacts Many Issues

Continued growth of population escalates the global realities of. A review of today’s major problems, such as hunger, poverty, disease, lack of potable water, denial of human rights, economic and environmental exploitation, over-consumption, technologies that are inadequate or inappropriate, and rapid depletion of resources, suggests that all are affected by continuing growth of population, which is estimated to reach 9.2 billion persons by 2050.

• Population Growth and Resources growth has significant impact on resources. While hunger, poverty, disease, injustice, and violence in the world cannot be simplistically blamed only on population growth, each is exacerbated by population increases, and swelling numbers of people makes addressing these issues more challenging. With each passing day we are discovering more and more connections between population and sustainable development. Population growth has an obvious impact on land use, water consumption, and air quality. Communities are called to be responsible stewards of all these resources.

How can we protect God’s gift of the natural environment
and at the same time provide a place of sustainability for humans?

- Population Growth and Climate Change. Numerous world bodies—including the International Conference on Population & Development and the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, as expressed in the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document—have affirmed the interrelationship of population growth and climate change. Environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change result from poverty and lack of access to resources, and also from excessive consumption and wasteful production patterns. Mountaintop removal for coal mining in Appalachia, destruction of the rain forest in Brazil, or fires to clear land in Borneo all result from population pressures, degrade the environment, and affect global climate. Slowing population growth can give countries more time to meet human needs while protecting the environment.

- Population and Aging. Population growth combined with improved health results in growing numbers of elderly, many of them are among the world’s most poor. It is estimated that the number of people over 60 years old is expected to outnumber children by 2040 for the first time in history. As communities engage in sustainable development, it will be important for the needs of the aging to be considered, such as economic sustenance, health care, housing, and nutrition. We must also insure the elimination of violence against older persons and provide support and care for the many elderly who are caring for their children and grandchildren, including those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These concerns for the challenges faced by persons of different ages remind us that in our stewardship of human reproduction, parents must be concerned not only with their capacity to nurture an infant, but with the world’s capacity to sustain fruitful, fulfilling lives of increasing length.

- Oppression of women is a significant driver of population growth. Gender inequality in parts of the world exacerbates these complex issues and gender roles persist in preventing women from experiencing abundant life. Women are often the engine of the family. For them to support the family, social and economic systems in their communities, women must have the ability to space and time pregnancies. We know that in many nations, women are considered property and lack basic human rights such as protection under the law and access to education, housing, and jobs. Women comprise 70 percent of the world’s poor and many are captives (knowingly or unknowingly) within patriarchal structures, policies, and practices. Numerous studies have demonstrated that when women’s status is improved by the building blocks of equal rights—access to basic health care, adequate nutrition, sanitation, increased educational opportunities—fertility declines dramatically. (See Nafis Sadik, Population Policies and Programmes: Lessons Learned From Two Decades of Experience [New York: UN Family Planning Association, New York University Press, 1991], pp. 247, 267, 384.) One of the most important building blocks of equal rights is women’s full partnership in marital decision making, including their expressions of sexuality. Meeting women’s unmet need for family planning would result in 150,000 fewer maternal deaths a year (Singh, Susheela, Jacqueline E. Darroch, Lori S. Ashford and Michael Vlassoff, Adding It Up: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Family Planning and Maternal and Newborn Health [New York: Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA, 2009]). Child mortality would decline by 13 percent if all women could delay their next pregnancy by at least 24 months. It would decline by 25 percent if women could delay their next pregnancy 36 months (United Nations [2009]). World population monitoring, focusing on the contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Report of the Secretary-General. E/ CN.9/2009/3).

A Call to Action

As people of faith, we are called to educate ourselves about the interconnectedness of life’s critical concerns and live as responsible stewards. The church can address these complex population-related issues on several fronts. We call on:

1. all United Methodists to access educational opportunities that focus on the issue of population and its inter-relatedness to other critical issues such as poverty, disease, hunger, environment, injustice, and violence, and to promote these opportunities in the local church; further, The United Methodist Church encourages all faith traditions to consider how their theological views about contraception may inhibit the development of women and the world and effective family planning and preventing unwanted pregnancies.

2. United Methodist medical and mission facilities around the world to provide a full range of reproductive health and family planning information and services;

3. the General Board of Church and Society and United Methodist Women to advocate for legislation around the world that can help in upgrading the social status of women and that includes women in development planning and processes. Specifically, we urge call on them to continue advocating those countries who have not yet done
so—Iran, Syria, and the United States—to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and encourage all countries to take action to ensure equal rights for women;

4. the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries to develop and implement programs within The United Methodist Church that provide and/or enhance educational opportunities for girls and women, making it possible for them to achieve levels of self-sufficiency and well-being;

5. governments around the world to give high priority to addressing the malaria crisis and HIV/AIDS pandemic and urge adequately funding to eradicate and prevent these diseases;

6. legislative bodies of the developed nations to recognize the crucial nature of population growth and to give maximum feasible funding to programs of population, environment, health, agriculture, and other technological-assistance programs for developing nations. International assistance programs should be based on mutual cooperation, should recognize the diversities of culture, should encourage self-development and not dependency, and should not require “effective population programs” as a prerequisite for other developmental assistance;

7. governments and private organizations to place a high priority on research aimed at developing a range of safe, inexpensive contraceptives that can be used in a variety of societies and medical situations. Promote greater understanding of attitudes, motivations, and social and economic factors affecting childbearing; and

8. governments to implement systems of social insurance and support for older persons to ensure adequate economic sustenance and housing, and quality health care and nutrition.

Rationale:

This petition revises the current resolution by updating and condensing the background information to focus more clearly on the call to action for the church.

R3425.

Petition Number: 20559-CB-R3425-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Prohibition of Bullying

Amend and Readopt:

Bullying is a behavioral expression of aggressiveness that attempts to yield power over another person(s) or people(s). This may be expressed by physical or psychological means. Bullying can keep a person from speaking up and result in the death of the victim. We have only to look at scripture for evidence. The Book of Esther is about the bullying of one man and the grace God expressed through God’s persons. The questioning, beating, and subsequent death on the cross of Jesus the Christ is the ultimate example of expressed abuse of power over a person, even the Son of God. Stephen and a host of Christian martyrs have suffered similar personal attacks that led to death for the cause of Christ. There are persons today who suffer and die because another person(s) seek to overwhelm them by aggressive behavior.

It is hereby resolved, that

In an effort to reduce bullying in society, United Methodist congregations will:

• categorically oppose the practices of adult, youth, and child bullying—mobbing (also known as scapegoating);
• diligently work to increase societal awareness of these destructive behaviors;
• welcome teens and offer safe places for teens to gather;
• post and widely distribute materials including contacts for hotlines and other local and national resources;
• incorporate the topic of adolescent bullying into sermons, making clear the church’s position;
• use language of responsibility and healing rather than blame and punishment;
• encourage family members, neighbors, and friends who suspect or know of abuse to come forward;
• accompany victims’ efforts to report, to confront, and to end bullying behavior;
• provide education and training for clergy and laity on abuse prevention, detection, and intervention that consider the ongoing maturational processes of both victims and perpetrators of bullying:
  • create and nurture peer groups for adolescents to raise awareness of the stresses in their own families and issues that are risk factors for abuse;
  • raise awareness about internet bullying and peer pressure;
• organize forums, inviting outside speakers, including survivors, abusers, and representatives of local and national organizations to facilitate discussions and encourage congregants to come forth about their own risk status; and
• encourage congregant volunteers to organize and run support groups and forums.
**Rationale:**

This petition amends the current resolution to focus on bullying as an act of aggression. It calls on congregations to address both its causes and to promote welcoming responses.

**R4021.**

Petition Number: 20557-CB-R4021-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Tobacco Marketing**

Insert new subhead before first paragraph:

_Theological Statement_

Modify first paragraph, second sentence:
The Bible reminds us that our bodies are “temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19; also see vv. 13-20) and since we are created in God’s own image, we are then called by God to _perfect_ protect our bodies in God’s image.

Insert new subhead after first paragraph:

_Effect of Tobacco Use_

Delete first sentence of second paragraph:
The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations have a long history of witness against the use and marketing of tobacco products.

Delete third sentence, second paragraph:
Alarming statistics point to the impact of tobacco companies and their marketing practices to entice people to smoke.

Insert new subhead after second paragraph:

_Impact of Tobacco Marketing_

Insert new first sentence in paragraph three:
Alarming statistics point to the impact of tobacco companies and their marketing practices to entice people to smoke which includes the use of e-cigarettes.

Insert new third sentence in paragraph three:
These are predatory practices of the powerful against the vulnerable.

Insert new subhead after paragraph thee:

_United Methodist Response_

Insert new first sentence to paragraph four:
The United Methodist Church has a long history of witness against the use and marketing of tobacco products.

Modify subparagraph number 2 under paragraph four:
commend the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) for its long-standing exclusion of tobacco manufacturers from its investment portfolio and ask it to challenge public media in its portfolio not to carry advertisements and promotion of tobacco products;

**Rationale:**

This petition reaffirms our long history of witness against the use and marketing of tobacco products. It also commends the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (Wespath) for its long-standing exclusion of tobacco manufacturers from its investment portfolio.

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20597-CB-R9999-G; Poujade, Doral - Portland, OR, USA. 8 Similar Petitions

**Child Incarceration**

_Whereas_, both the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church and the United Methodist Council of Bishops have commended the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard for all peoples and nations (¶ 162, _The Book of Discipline, 2016_); and

_Whereas_, the Social Principles in _The United Methodist Book of Discipline_ explicitly affirms the rights of children (¶162C, _The Book of Discipline 2016_); and

_Whereas_, The United Methodist Church has specifically affirmed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which says “No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” and that “No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time”; and

_Whereas_, the Nobel Prize-winning non-profit organization Human Rights Watch reports that the United States leads the industrialized world in the number and percentage of children in juvenile detention facilities; and

_Whereas_, Human Rights Watch also reports that children are routinely imprisoned in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria for alleged association with armed or extremist groups, that Egypt and Israel try and subsequently imprison children through military rather than civilian courts; and

_Whereas_, the United Methodist Council of Bishops, United Methodist Women, and the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society have all denounced parent child separations at the U.S. border; and

_Whereas_, United Methodist Women has made the issues of incarceration of racial minorities and the well-being of children and young people as two of their priorities for the 2016-2020 quadrennium;
Therefore, be it resolved, that the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church formally endorses the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it relates to incarcerated children; and

Be it further resolved, that the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church charges the General Board of Church and Society, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women, to formulate a plan that addresses:

A. how best to educate and inform United Methodists about the issue of child incarceration;

B. how best to interact with lawmakers and leaders around the world but particularly in the United States about the issue of child incarceration;

C. possible actions United Methodists can take to avoid contributing to the suffering, abuse, and imprisonment of children.

Be it further resolved, that recommendations produced by the aforementioned consultation be brought to the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church for review and/or action.

Rationale:
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and our church’s Book of Discipline speak to the rights of children, but they mean little in many countries where children are imprisoned. Children need more protection.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20598-CB-R9999-G; LaSalle, Ann - Ocean Springs, MS, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Contraception

ADD a new resolution to the Book of Resolutions as follows:

Contraception

We affirm that all children are a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). We also recognize the widespread desire of people to thoughtfully space and limit the number of their children, as a matter of carefully stewarding the resources, time, and health God has given them.

We reaffirm the teaching our church has had for many years in our Social Principles of rejecting abortion as an acceptable means of birth control (¶ 161K). There is a fundamental difference, however, between contraception, which prevents new life from being conceived in the first place, and abortion. These two things should not be equated or conflated.

Our church does not believe that contraception is inherently immoral. We respect the convictions and consciences of those of our brothers and sisters in Christ who believe differently.

With other Christians, we reaffirm the church’s long-held understanding that sexual relations are a gift from God, to be enjoyed only within the boundaries of the marriage covenant (¶ 161G). We believe that this moral standard is good and healthiest for all people, and are concerned about social pressures that celebrate promiscuity and other immoral behaviors.

We encourage married couples to have respectful, honest dialogue and mutual agreement in deciding what specific approach to contraception is healthiest for them. We oppose any stigmatization of large families.

Our church seeks to be aware of wider social trends related to procreation. One recent study found that by 2017, the world’s fertility rate had fallen to 2.4 children per woman, with the fertility rate being below population replacement level in nearly half of the world’s nations, while no nation was at this point in 1950 (James Gallagher, “Remarkable Decline in Fertility Rates,” BBC, 9 November 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-46118103>). We recognize that there is an ugly history of elitist efforts of some seeking to promote birth control in very targeted ways for the sake of treating those of less privileged races, classes, and nations as less worthy of having children and as being in particular need of having their populations limited. We reaffirm the positive step taken by the 2008 General Conference in adopting a statement of repentance for past Methodist support of eugenics.

In all things, we seek to be stewards of all that God has given us, careful in analyzing the challenges before us, and faithful to Christian values.

Rationale:
Contraception is important enough of a matter to provide a single resolution that clarifies our church’s principles in a succinct way, will be easy to find in the Book of Resolutions, focuses on values on which most United Methodists agree, and is not entangled with more complex or

R9999.

Petition Number: 20599-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
Global Call to Action on Alcohol

New Resolution (to Replace #3041 and #3043):

A. Theological and Historical Statement

At the completion of creation, “God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31, NRSV). Jesus affirmed the use of wine at a wedding in Cana of Galilee when the wine had given out and his mother asked his assistance. “Jesus said to [the servants], ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. . . . The steward tasted the water that had become wine . . . and said to [the bridegroom], . . . ‘you have kept the good wine until now’” (John 2:1-10, NRSV).

Yet from the very first, alcohol has been problematic for humanity. Genesis reminds us that Noah, the first to plant a vineyard, became drunk on the wine he drank (Genesis 9:21). And the book of Proverbs (23:20-21, 29-32, NRSV) is stark in its warning: “Do not be among winebibbers, or among gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them with rags. . . . Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger late over wine, those who keep trying mixed wines. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.”

Christians must in love always consider their neighbor as themselves (Matthew 19:19). The apostle Paul cautioned Christians that their liberty must not become a stumbling block to others (1 Corinthians 8:9). Paul highlighted our responsibility to the vulnerable: “Do not let what you eat [or drink] cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died . . . . For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:15b, 17 NRSV). Concern for those vulnerable must specifically include young people. Jesus also said, “Allow the children to come to me. . . . Don’t forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children” (Matthew 19:14 CEB).

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement, was keenly aware of the effects of alcohol abuse on individuals and families, including members of his own extended family, but was charitable to those individuals affected by alcohol in his culture.

The United Methodist Church has long opposed abuse of alcohol and other drugs. In 1916, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church authorized the formation of a Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals “to make more effectual the efforts of the Church to create public sentiment and crystallize the same into successful opposition to the organized traffic in intoxicating liquors.”

The rise of alcohol as an industry employing the psychological pressures of modern advertising has introduced a heightened issue of abuse of vulnerable populations such as youths and the poor.

In the context of these scriptural affirmations and warnings, Christians are called to a stewardship role of responsible management of God’s gifts, including the use or abstinence from alcohol, and the management of the social pressures and incentives around its use, and advocacy against the predations of the powerful against the vulnerable.

B. The Global Challenge

The abuse of alcohol tempts the vulnerable, and alcohol’s profits tempt the powerful. The price of giving in to these temptations is catastrophic.

Chronic alcohol consumption can have a damaging effect on every body organ, including brain, liver, heart, stomach, intestines, and mouth. The medical costs of alcohol abuse—excessive, harmful, and dangerous drinking—include fetal alcohol syndrome, which is a preventable cause of mental retardation, cardiac defects, and pre- and postnatal growth retardation. Alcohol is a factor in many other social problems such as crime, poverty, and family disorder. The societal costs of alcohol abuse include lost productivity, increased health-care costs, loss of lives in vehicular accidents, and criminal activity. The costs associated with alcohol use/abuse are more than the costs associated with all illegal drugs combined.

More than three decades of research have shown that alcohol abuse, dependence, and addiction have widespread effects on persons, families, communities, and institutions, and have documented not only the extent of the physical and social consequences but also the economic effects on health care, medical services, workforce productivity, crime and violence, child welfare, corrections, public safety, social services, education, and mental health.

More alcohol and other drugs are produced and consumed than ever before. In consuming countries, with their attendant problems of poverty, racism, domestic violence, hopelessness, and material despair, alcohol and other drug abuse is part of a continuing cycle of economic and spiritual turmoil.

Alcohol abuse has a special impact on youths, who are prone to binge drinking. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 grams percent or above. This typically happens when men consume more than four drinks and women consume more than three drinks in
about two hours. Binge drinking is an alarming and growing problem that can lead to many alarming health-related injuries and illnesses.

According to the World Health Organization:
- The harmful use of alcohol is a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions and 3.3 million deaths each year.
- On average every person in the world aged 15 years or older drinks 6.2 litres of pure alcohol per year.

C. The Church’s Response:

In line with Paul’s concerns, the focus of the church must be on protecting the vulnerable, promoting wisdom among those who are less vulnerable, and advocacy to identify and counter the predatory behavior of the powerful.

Abstinence

The vulnerable must be protected. We affirm our long-standing conviction and recommendation that abstinence from alcoholic beverages is a faithful witness to God’s liberating and redeeming love. Abstinence has saved many from harm, while hurting no one. The United Methodist Church bases its recommendation of abstinence on critical appraisal of the personal and societal costs in the use of alcohol. The church recognizes the freedom of the Christian to make responsible decisions and calls upon each member to consider seriously and prayerfully the witness of abstinence as part of his or her Christian commitment.

Persons who practice abstinence should avoid attitudes of self-righteousness that express moral superiority and condemnatory attitudes toward those who do not choose to abstain. Because Christian love in human relationships is primary, abstinence is an instrument of love and sacrifice and always subject to the requirements of love.

Judicious Use

The less vulnerable must act with wisdom. While the United Methodist Social Principles emphasize abstinence as “a faithful witness,” the same Social Principles allow for persons to exercise reasonable discernment regarding “judicious use with deliberate and intentional restraint, with Scripture as a guide.” We recognize that sole concentration on prohibition or abstinence may invite judgmental attitudes, driving troubled people even deeper into despair and secretive behavior, discriminating against people who need healing, inviting hypocrisy while closing off opportunities to witness to God’s love and grace. Conversely, judicious use awakens concern and fear among advocates for abstinence that the church is encouraging and even inviting abuse or addiction to alcohol, especially among young people. The gap between these two approaches often prevents meaningful dialogue and education and creates divisions among faithful Christians.

Prevention

The Social Principles encourage us to assist dependent people “in finding freedom through Jesus Christ and in finding good opportunities for treatment, for ongoing counseling, and for reintegration into society.” Resources dedicated to prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation exist that can lend considerable support to creating and fostering understanding, education, and dialogue on effective prevention and recovery methods and toward being a faithful witness as it relates to abstinence and prevention.

Global Alcohol Policy

The legacy of the Temperance Movement of an earlier century has been transformed by new social forces and scientific findings into a vigorous public health movement, with emphasis on alcohol policies and education that place individual responsibility in the context of social norms and practices, and environmental factors that encourage or foster casual behavior and attitudes about alcohol.

We acknowledge that an effective global health policy on alcohol has not yet been achieved and that there are many countries in which alcohol policy is not fully developed, is inadequate, and is underfunded. Levels of low-risk, acceptable consumption and guidelines for responsible use have been issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These can be used as guidelines for enacting a global policy on alcohol. These policies call for limiting consumption to one standard drink per day for women and two standard drinks per day for men, but abstinence for (a) persons under the legal drinking age, (b) persons who are in recovery from alcohol dependence or alcoholism, (c) persons whose parents or other family members have experienced alcohol-related problems, (d) women who are trying to conceive or are pregnant, (e) persons who plan to drive or engage in activities that require attention or skill, and persons using prescription or over-the-counter medications; (f) persons who may put self or others at risk in other ways as a result of consumption.

Alcohol Industry

The powerful must be constrained. The alcohol industry comprises for-profit corporations that inevitably expe-
rience their obligation to produce a profit to shareholders most powerfully. Community and government entities have the duty of setting boundaries to protect the public. When community and government fail, the health, safety and welfare of the people suffer and corporations focus on expanding their customer base to ensure their economic viability. When problems arise, it is their customers who are blamed for alcohol-related problems. Most frequently the alcohol industry seeks greater sales without adequately defining what “responsible drinking” means, to the point that even their “responsibility” messages serve their own self-interests, attempting thereby to absolve themselves of corporate responsibility.

Recent research has shown that underage drinkers account for almost 20 percent of all alcohol consumed, and adults who drink excessively are responsible for more than 30 percent of the alcohol consumed in the U.S., and industry profits are derived from those consumers. Marketing research has shown that youths are 60 times more likely to see alcoholic beverage commercials than “responsibility ads” created by the industry, and that for every drinking and driving prevention ad, alcohol companies aired 172 product promotion ads.

Funding for prevention and for treatment of addicted people continues to be woefully inadequate, considering the magnitude of the problem. Millions are left without needed services, and the social costs of alcohol-related problems continue to rob economies of resources needed to deal with poverty and disease. At the same time, the alcohol industry opposes every effort to offset these costs by increases in alcohol excise taxes.

Communities, states, and nations that allow a product with high potential for misuse and abuse to be produced, promoted, distributed and valued for routine consumption are ethically obligated to care about those who succumb to the risks and adverse consequences. This is especially so when those risks and consequences are incompletely understood by the consumer. When oversight is lacking, those who profit from the production, distribution, promotion, and sale of alcoholic beverages have been allowed to assume a privileged position in the formation of public policy and legislation at key governmental levels across the globe, at local through national and international levels. This is a degree of power and influence that has succeeded in dissuading the public, including the faith community, from taking appropriate action as citizens.

Our love for our neighbor obligates us to seek healing, justice, and the alleviation of the social conditions that create and perpetuate alcohol abuse.

Faith community leadership on this issue is required: leadership that transcends special economic interests and considers the public interest; leadership that pursues action rather than continued pronouncements; able leadership that recognizes the critical need to challenge industry practices, even in the face of the industry’s outsized influence on public health in matters of social policy, public health and the common good.

D. A Call to Action

We call our whole church to action through our agencies, our leadership and our members.

1. We call on Discipleship Ministries and The United Methodist Publishing House to incorporate educational material on alcohol and other drug problems, including the material on prevention, intervention, treatment, and the value of abstinence throughout its graded literature. This material should incorporate comprehensive theological and biblical analysis. The material should promote an ethic that is consistent with personal, spiritual and societal concern for health, safety and well-being of all people, an ethic that (a) accepts abstinence; (b) accepts judicious consumption, with deliberate and intentional restraint, in low-risk situations; (c) actively discourages consumption for those under the legal drinking age; (d) actively discourages consumption in high-risk situations; and (e) actively discourages heavy consumption in all situations.

2. We call on the General Board of Church and Society to advocate on behalf of the vulnerable through:

- support for public policy proposals that would increase regulation of alcohol production, availability and use across the globe. This includes strong world health policy and advocacy for strong alcohol regulation in underregulated countries, supporting appropriate fees and excise taxes paid by the industry in the U.S. to the various states for the privilege of selling beer, wine, and spirits, with proceeds earmarked for the development of prevention, treatment and other measures to reduce alcohol-related problems.

- actions to reduce the domination of industry agenda on government and public health policy at all levels and encourage our leaders and legislators to place the health and safety concerns ahead of profitability.

- promotion of prevention research that strongly recommends a comprehensive community-wide approach that acknowledges individual behavior is powerfully shaped by one’s environment, the rules and regulations of social institutions, community norms, mass media messages, and accessibility of alcohol.

- encouragement of sound empirical research on the social effects of alcohol.

- promotion of guidelines for moderate consumption, as issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S. Dietary Guidelines) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services be encouraged in educational efforts, and
used as a tool to persuade the World Health Organization to adopt a global alcohol policy that is effective and active throughout the world.

- promotion of laws to eliminate all advertising and promoting of alcoholic beverages. We urge the General Board of Church and Society and local churches to increase efforts to remove all advertising of alcoholic beverages from the media. We urge special attention to curbing promotions of alcoholic beverages on college campuses as well as racial minority communities.

- advocacy for legislation and regulations that discourage the use of alcohol by youths and young adults and the use of alcohol advertising to market to youths and young adults.

- development by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and agencies of other governments globally of better health hazard warning statements concerning the use of alcohol.

- improvement of interagency coordination of drug and alcohol abuse efforts by the United States and other governments so there are uniform policies and regulations, and we urge the cooperation of all governments in these areas.

- provision of resources and materials to foster action, education, understanding, and dialogue regarding abstinence, judicious use, and addiction: to provide guidance to annual conferences; to work toward wholeness, compassion, reconciliation and healing, community, alternatives to incarceration, and restorative justice; to give help and hope to those who feel helpless and hopeless; and to advise congregations on ways in which members can advocate for pro-health alcohol policies in public health policy at all levels in our society.

3. We call on United Methodist-related hospitals and other health-care institutions to

- treat the alcoholic person with the attention and consideration all patients deserve. We urge the worldwide health-care delivery system to follow this example.

- to focus on and implement measures to help meet the special needs of those disproportionately affected by alcohol use.

4. We call on United Methodist-related colleges and universities to

- use the United Methodist Social Principle on Alcohol and Drugs (¶ 162L), its companion resolution on “Alcohol and Other Drugs” (#3042, 2008 Book of Resolutions), and the latest research and proven strategies on alcohol prevention to guide the alcohol and drug policies of their institutions.

- provide counseling, programming, and social events on college campuses that foster an amenable environment for an abstinence-only campus.

- provide an environment suitable for pursuing a higher education in a Christian atmosphere. Within this environment, United Methodist colleges and universities establish policies to address alcohol use and abuse on their campuses.

5. We call on United Methodist annual conferences around the world to

- develop leadership training opportunities and resources for local church pastors and laity to help with counseling individuals and families who have alcohol-related problems; counseling those bereaved by alcohol-related deaths and violence; and teaching stress management to church workers in communities with high alcohol abuse.

- encourage the removal of alcohol-promoting advertisements from campuses and campus sports events.

- work for a minimum legal-drinking-age in their respective states/nations.

- oppose the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages within the confines of United Methodist church facilities and recommend that it be prohibited.

6. We call on individual United Methodist congregations around the world to

- include the problems of alcohol and the value of abstinence as a part of Christian education.

- demonstrate active concern for alcohol abusers and their families and to support the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of problem drinkers.

- uphold abstinence from drinking alcohol as a viable and faith-based option.

7. We call on all members of The United Methodist Church to take a firm stand focused on reducing alcohol-related problems, not only as a personal matter, but as a concern for congregations, communities, regions, states, and nations, and to communicate that The United Methodist Church stands actively and effectively through action and organizing, to change the social norms of the world regarding alcohol uses and abuse.

Rationale:

This petition replaces Resolution #3041 “Alcohol Beverage Advertising at Sporting Events” and Resolution #3043 “Keep Children and Youth Free from Alcohol and Other Drugs” by focusing on the ethical basis for responding to alcohol marketing, use and abuse from a global perspective.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20600-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
Church and Society Committee 2

**Church to Be in Ministry with Persons of All Sexual Orientations**

New Resolution:

We affirm our belief in the infinite value and sacred worth of each individual, divinely created and loved by God. Baptism is God’s gift of unmerited grace through the Holy Spirit and marks the entrance of persons into the church and its ministries of love, justice, and service (¶ 305, Book of Discipline). We affirm that through baptism God has made us members of one body of Christ so that all who follow Jesus have spiritual gifts to share for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-27).

Too often, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) persons have been separated from the body of Christ. Rejected and marginalized by their families and communities, LGBTQ persons have a greater vulnerability to isolation, violence, and suicide. Tragically, many faith communities have perpetuated this harm. Through words, actions and inaction, churches have contributed to the suffering of LGBTQ persons and impeded rather than nurtured their personal relationship with Christ.

Jesus demonstrated radical inclusion of those rejected by mainstream society. As followers of Christ, we are called to welcome all persons into the life and ministry of the church and to celebrate the spiritual gifts of all those who have been baptized into the body of Jesus Christ.

The United Methodist Church therefore dedicates itself to: welcoming LGBTQ persons, friends, and families into our churches; lamenting the harm that has been done by our church and in Christ’s name; listening with open hearts and minds to the stories, struggles, and dreams of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters; advocating for policies that protect the human rights of LGBTQ persons; and providing support in their discernment of God’s call to ministry.

Through these and other acts, our church commits itself to a ministry with all and serves as an instrument of Christ’s healing presence in the world.

We recognize that terminology regarding sexual identity is both fluid and highly culturally contextual. The choice to use the initialism LGBTQ in this resolution does not preclude translators or, indeed, individuals from applying timely and culturally relevant substitutes for this particular formulation.

**Rationale:**

This petition explicitly affirms the church’s commitment to ministry with all people. It specifically reaffirms this commitment to LGBTQ persons and names particular ways in which the church will welcome and actively communicate this commitment to LGBTQ persons.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20601-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Eradicating Abusive Child Labor**

New Resolution (based on resolution 3083, which expired without action at GC2016):

“They called a little child over to sit among the disciples, and said, ‘I assure you that if you don’t turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who humble themselves like this little child will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven’” (Matthew 18:2-4 CEB).

In the Gospels, the disciples’ attitude toward children and their ability to “become as a little child” is a measure of their attitude toward God. Protecting and nurturing children is one of our most sacred human responsibilities. The United Methodist Social Principles call us to advocate for the safety, well-being, and development of all children and to protect them from exploitation and harm. Children have the right to adequate nutrition, health services, housing, education, recreation, and protection against all forms of discrimination, cruelty, and neglect.

Childhood is under assault throughout the world. Children are forced to cope with warfare, forced migration, famine, and disease. Many children are also forced into labor under abusive and destructive conditions. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 152 million children around the world are coerced, forced, bonded, enslaved, or working for unfair wages. Many of these jobs put children at risk of injury or death, impede their educational, moral, and social development, and can lead to lifelong physical and psychological damage.

Although present in every economy, the social and economic forces that give rise to forced child labor are particularly acute in the world’s poorest economies. Global demand for low-cost materials and products continues to fuel growth in the employment of children in export industries including agriculture, mining, and garment production. Child labor and trafficking are also prevalent in the retail, manufacturing, and service industries.

Both the United Nations (UN) and ILO have established principles to protect children from forced labor. These include the UN International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Convention No. 138 for Minimum Age for Admission to Work. The only two
countries that have not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are the United States and Somalia; Somalia is unable to proceed with ratification due to a lack of recognized government. Since 1973, 171 countries have ratified Convention No. 138 for the Minimum Age for Admission to Work which entered into force in 1976. Australia, Bangladesh, Cook Islands, Islamic Republic of Iran, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, New Zealand, Palau, Saint Lucia, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, and Vanuatu have yet to ratify the convention.

We therefore call on United Methodists to:

1. Support public policies that include the ratification and enforcement of international labor conventions regarding child labor;
2. Work to eradicate forced child labor and address the underlying social and economic forces that give rise to it. Individuals and organizations can connect with the Child Labor Coalition, a broad-based coalition of medical, welfare, faith, consumer, labor, and human-rights organizations in the United States;
3. Join the education campaign of the Global March Against Child Labor—a movement to mobilize worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the rights to receive a free, meaningful education and to be free from economic exploitation;
4. Support consumer initiatives that market goods made without exploited child labor;
5. Exercise our rights as individual and institutional shareholders to influence corporate practices;
6. Contact decision-makers and urge them to support legislative and administrative measures to enforce bans against the international trafficking in goods made by child labor;
7. Support unilateral and multilateral aid and development policies that address root causes of child labor including: a lack of basic education; gender, religion, ethnic and caste prejudice; insufficient family income and unbalanced development schemes that disadvantage certain populations; and
8. Work toward the reform of local, regional, and national labor laws to provide stronger protection of farm workers’ rights and to bring child labor restrictions into conformity with international standards.

Rationale:

This petition reaffirms The United Methodist Church’s long-standing opposition to abusive child labor. The underlying resolution expired in 2016. This petition updates the information and call to action for United Methodists.

Petition Number: 20602-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Organ and Tissue Donation

New Resolution:

The life-giving donation of organs and tissue from one person to another can take many forms. One can donate blood and one’s second kidney without threatening one’s life. When one has died but blood and oxygen can be kept nourishing the organs, one can donate multiple organs for the use by others. In death, one can give life to as many as fifty different persons.

Transplantation of organs and tissues is scientifically proven to save the lives of persons with terminal diseases and improve the quality of life for the blind, the deaf, and persons with life-threatening illnesses.

Organ donation may provide a positive outcome of a seemingly senseless death and is thereby comforting to the family of the deceased and is conducted with respect, and with the highest consideration for maintaining the dignity of the deceased and his or her family. Moral leaders around the world recognize organ and tissue donation as an expression of humanitarian ideals in giving life to another.

Christians naturally base their support for organ and tissue donation on the Great Commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). Selfless consideration for the health and welfare of all persons is at the heart of the Christian ethic. The reluctance of some Christians who believe that they must approach the general resurrection with intact physical bodies is clearly countered by Paul, who assures us that we die with physical bodies but are raised with spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-49). Our physical bodies return to the dust, so the refusal to employ them to give life to others is an act of selfishness that denies life to others while conferring no benefit on ourselves. Organ donation can be viewed in the context of Paul’s command to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, and that doing so is a spiritual service (Romans 12:1).

Depending on the country, one can become an organ donor by signing and carrying cards, driver’s licenses, or other forms of identification, attesting to one’s commitment of such organs upon their death to those in need. But the intentions of many donors are thwarted when they fail to talk to their loved ones about their wishes; once death has occurred, the decisions of loved ones often take precedence over the deceased’s commitments.
Because the need for life-saving organs is great, a traffic has arisen in the buying, selling, and trafficking of human organs. We oppose the commercial harvesting and sale of organs, and we oppose health systems that prioritize recipients of organs according to their financial or social status.

The United Methodist Church recognizes the life-giving benefits of organ and tissue donation and therefore:

1. encourages all United Methodist members and others to become organ and tissue donors by the mechanisms that exist in their own country, as a part of their ministry to others in the name of Christ, who gave his life that we might have life in its fullness;

2. encourages advocacy to promote the donation of organs, to promote medical research to increase the usefulness and success of organ transplantation and to discourage commercial harvesting and traffic in human organs, and

3. encourages its congregations to join in the ecumenical and interfaith observances such as National Donor Sabbath in the United States, in the interest of urging United Methodist members and others to consider becoming future organ and tissue donors. Usually held two weekends before Thanksgiving, this event is an expression of our Christian gratitude for the gift of life. Congregations may choose a variety of ways to educate persons about organ and tissue donation. Examples of ways churches currently participate include developing special liturgies, bulletin inserts, sermons on the subject, and church-school discussions.

Rationale:
This petition replaces Resolution #2008, which expired in 2016. It strengthens both the ethical and theological foundations for organ donation, and advocates against marketing in organ trade.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20604-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Rights of All Persons

New Resolution:
The Constitution of The United Methodist Church declares that all persons are of sacred worth and the Social Principles have long affirmed the human and civil rights of all people regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Throughout the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons face persecution, threats of violence, and denial of the basic rights to housing, employment and health care. Too often faith communities, including The United Methodist Church, have perpetuated rather than challenged this injustice.

As a church that affirms all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God and strives to follow the way of Christ in seeking justice for all, The United Methodist Church commits to:

• listening to the voices of LGBTQ persons in our churches and communities;
• advocating for policies that uphold the human and civil rights of LGBTQ persons;
• advocating for the decriminalization of sexual orientation and gender identity;
• speaking out against words and actions that harm and diminish the dignity of LGBTQ persons;
• educating our faith communities about the complex history of Methodist involvement in struggles to secure civil and human rights.

Rationale:
This petition affirms that all people are of sacred worth. All persons have basic human rights that must be protected in society. This petition states the church’s commitment to work for the protection of these rights.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20604-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Opposition to Sexual Prejudice, Homophobia, and Heterosexism

New Resolution

As United Methodists, we believe Scripture affirms that “all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God” (1 ¶161G, Human Sexuality, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016). In addition, we affirm that “certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons,” and as a church we are “committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation” (1 ¶162J, Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016). In affirmation of the full humanity of all persons, we will work toward the eradication of:

• Sexual prejudice (1 ¶161G, Human Sexuality, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016)
an attitude of negativity toward persons due to their sexual orientation, sexual identity, or gender expression;

- Homophobia (1 ¶161G, Human Sexuality, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016) holding and maintaining prejudicial and fearful attitudes toward individuals perceived to be non-heterosexual, regardless of the individual’s actual sexual orientation or sexual identity; or gender expression;

- Heterosexism (1 ¶161F, Human Sexuality, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016) a self-justifying system of attitudes and behavior based on sexual prejudice that (1) perpetuates stereotypical categories of what is essentially “masculine” and what is essentially “feminine”; (2) provides a privileged status for people who identify as culturally defined heterosexuals; and (3) discriminates against individuals who, regardless of their sexual orientation, sexual identity or gender expression do not appear to fit within the particular category defined as appropriate for their gender.

Sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism are manifestations of sexism in general because they foster stereotypes based on arbitrary distinctions of gender categories. Actions rooted in sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism, including violence, threats, ridicule, humiliation, discrimination, isolation, rejection, and legislation, break down the body of Christ and are damaging to persons of all sexual orientations and identities.

The United Methodist Church is a worldwide faith community that has the unique opportunity to speak to sexism globally, and we call upon all members of The United Methodist Church to strengthen our global advocacy of the eradication of sexual prejudice, homophobia, and heterosexism by opposing all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity and expression, or sexual orientation.

We specifically call on the General Board of Church and Society to provide resources and materials aimed at educating members of our local churches about the reality, issues, and effects of sexual prejudice, homophobia and heterosexism and the need for a worldwide Christian witness against these facets of marginalization and rejection.

Rationale:

This petition replaces Resolution #2042, which expired in 2016, and Resolution #2042 from the 2012 Book of Resolutions. The petition clearly defines heterosexism and homophobia from a global perspective.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20605-CB-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Suicide: A Pastoral Response

New Resolution:

The apostle Paul, rooted in his experience of the resurrected Christ, affirms the power of Christ to overcome the brokenness of human life, including the devastating experience of suicide:

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39 NRSV).

As United Methodists, we affirm that the church’s response to those who have contemplated suicide in the past and those who may be contemplating it in the present must be grounded in compassion and love. Similarly, we believe that local congregations, grounded in an affirmation of God’s ultimate power over brokenness, suffering, and death must be prepared to accompany grieving families and loved ones on the difficult journey to spiritual, mental, and physical health.

A Global Challenge

Suicide poses a complex, global challenge that negatively impacts individuals, families, congregations, and entire societies. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that every year nearly 800,000 people take their own lives, which roughly corresponds to one person dying every forty seconds. Additionally, for every person who completes a suicide, another ten to twenty more make unsuccessful attempts to end their lives (World Health Organization, Mental Health: June Suicide Prevention: [http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide-prevention/en]. Accessed February 7, 2019).

Though suicidal behavior is present in all social groups, suicide rates are particularly high among young people, minority populations, and people living in poverty. In some countries, suicide is among the top three causes of death for those aged 15 to 44 and the second highest cause of death for those aged 10 to 24. These numbers do not include attempted suicides by young people, estimated to be three times the number of reported deaths (World Health Organization, Mental Health: Suicide Prevention: [http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicideprevent/en]. Accessed February 7, 2019). Rates of suicide are above average in the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual/Allies) community and among military veterans.
Around the world, minority populations are at increasing risk of suicide. Recent studies for example have reported high rates of suicide among the aboriginal peoples of Australia and New Zealand, Native Americans and Asian-American women in the United States, and Caribbean and East Indian immigrants in the United Kingdom and other parts of the globe (Michael Crawford, “Suicide in Ethnic Minority Groups,” in BJPsych: The British Journal of Psychiatry: http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/183/2/100.short. Accessed 15, 2014).

Other studies have corroborated a long-suspected link between suicide, mental illness, and poverty. Not only are alcoholism, depression, and other forms of mental illness more prevalent within impoverished communities, the accompanying social stresses of malnutrition, poor education, lack of income, and displacement all lead to higher risks of suicide among the world’s poor. (See, for example, Vijaya Murali and Femi Oyebode, “Poverty, Social Inequality, and Mental Health,” in Advances in Psychiatric Treatment 2004, 10, 216-224: http://aptp.rcpsych.org/content/10/3/216.full. Accessed online August 3, 2014. Published online January 2, 2018.)

Changing Theological Perspectives

While the biblical witness, particularly the teachings of Jesus, offers no explicit guidance on the issue of suicide, Christian tradition has generally regarded suicide as a continuing sign of human brokenness and woundedness in a world desperately in need of God’s restorative love. Furthermore, while some theologians of the past have harshly condemned those who have taken their lives, theological perspectives from the late nineteenth century onward have stressed the need for a more pastoral and caring response.

Additionally, while some faith communities have stressed the finality of suicide and described it as “an unforgivable sin,” such an attitude roundly contradicts the central Protestant emphasis on the ultimate power of God’s justifying and sanctifying grace. Indeed, over the past seventy-five years a more nuanced theological understanding of suicide has developed as mental health experts have uncovered the complex psychological, social, and economic factors that contribute to suicidal behaviors.

As early as the 1970s, United Methodist scholars, including the late Dr. James T. Clemons, sounded the call for pastors and congregations to refrain from condemnation and to commit themselves to compassionate and caring ministry to those affected by suicide inside local churches and in the community at large. Adding to this, Henri Nouwen, another leading theological voice, emphasized the importance of grounding our responses in the humble recognition of own experiences of woundedness and vulnerability.

The Church’s Response

Grounded both in the collective recognition of the ongoing brokenness of the human community and the affirmation of God’s transformative power over suffering, grief, and death, we the General Conference of The United Methodist Church urge United Methodists at every level of the denomination to recommit ourselves to the task of providing life-giving prevention and care to those considering suicide as well as the families and communities that have been affected by it.

In urging that suicide education, prevention, and care remain a priority, the General Conference affirms that because of its past history of condemning those who attempted suicide and their families, the church has a special role to play, particularly in building networks of compassion and support in social environments where condemnatory and punitive religious and social attitudes still hold sway.

With one accord, the General Conference supports the creation and deployment of major public and private initiatives aimed at educating the general public about the prevalence and complex causes of suicide, following guidelines and recommendations issued by the World Health Organization, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and similar governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Within the structures of The United Methodist Church, we urge general boards and agencies to continue making issues related to suicide education, prevention, and care a top priority.

We call upon

1) the General Board of Church and Society to continue to support international and national public policies that: (a) promote access to mental-health services for all persons regardless of age, (b) remove the stigma associated with mental illness, and (c) encourage “help-seeking” behavior;

2) Discipleship Ministries to develop curriculum for biblical and theological study of suicide as well as related mental and social problems, and to promote programs and strategies recommended by the World Health Organization, the American Association of Pastoral Counseling, and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations, such as the National Council of Suicide Prevention in the United States;

3) the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to develop materials for United Methodist-related seminaries to train church professionals to recognize treatable mental illness associated with suicide, e.g., depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and to realize when and how to refer persons for treatment; to ensure that all pastoral counseling programs include such training and strategies for ministry to survivors of suicide loss and suicide...
attempts; and to seek attention to suicide in courses in Bi-
ble, Christian Ethics, Preaching and Religious Education,
as well as Pastoral Care.

As a General Conference, we also affirm that local
churches have perhaps the greatest role to play in pro-
moting suicide prevention and care. We urge pastors and
congregations to avoid the harsh and punitive measures
imposed on the families of suicide victims in the past and
to create instead new educational and outreach ministries
that provide increased support and work to reconnect
those who attempt suicide and/or their loved ones to the
community of faith.

We specifically urge local congregations to:
1) affirm through worship and other means the saving
power of God’s redeeming love, particularly in instances
of suicide, suffering, and death;
2) embrace all persons affected by suicide, including
young children, in loving community through support
groups and responsive ministries and programs;
3) call upon the media and other social institutions to
emphasize the importance of human life and dignity and
to avoid the glamorization of suicide, particularly among
teens;
4) advocate for social and economic policies that
promote mental, spiritual, and physical well-being and
increased health and wellness;
5) denounce policies and practices that devalue hu-
man life and lead to increased risk of suicide among high
risk groups, e.g., growing economic disparities, outbreaks
of war and conflict, and the persistence of institutional
racism.

6) support United Methodist institutions that provide
suicide prevention and care services for emotionally trou-
bled children, youths and adults, as well as retirement
homes that provide care and support for older adults.

7) strengthen outreach and ministry to local youths,
helping young people to experience concretely the saving
grace of Jesus Christ in the context of caring and support-
ive church community.

Rationale:

This petition affirms pastoral support for persons
affected by suicide. It updates data and the psycholog-
ical and social stressors that may lead to suicide. This
petition addresses families and communities around the
world.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20606-CB-R9999; Alvaran, Israel -
San Francisco, CA, USA.

The United Methodist Church
Is a Sanctuary Church

Throughout human history, immigrants and ref-
ugees have traveled across the world, crossing borders
to escape slavery, abject poverty, hunger, economic op-
pression, the ravages of war, and human rights violations.
They seek safe sanctuary for themselves and their fami-
lies. Publicly declaring our denomination as a sanctuary
church means that we are committed to support immi-
grants and refugees in various ways and in different con-
texts around the world.

Sacred Scriptures invite people of faith to provide
radical hospitality and sanctuary to immigrants and refugees:

• “When a foreigner resides among you in your land,
do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you
must be treated as your native-born. Love them as your-
self, for you were foreigners in Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33,
34 NIV).

• “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not
reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings
of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second
time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them
for the poor and the foreigner” (Leviticus 19:9, 10 NIV).

• “[God] defends the cause of the fatherless and the
widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giv-
ing them food and clothing. And you are to love those
who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in
Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:18, 19 NIV).

• “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to
testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against
those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress
the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners
among you of justice, but do not fear me,’ says the LORD
Almighty” (Malachi 3:5).

• “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for
by doing that some have entertained angels without know-
ing it” (Hebrews 13:2 NRSV).

• “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all
its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we
were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—
whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all
given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not
made up of one part but of many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-
14 NIV).

• “For I was hungry and you gave me something to
eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I
was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and
you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me. I was
in prison and you came to visit me” (Matthew 25:25-36
NRSV).
Our Social Principles and Book of Resolutions affirm the sacred worth of all persons and upholds the human rights of immigrants and refugees, and those who engage in nonviolent civil disobedience against unjust laws:

- “We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We affirm the right of all persons to equal opportunities for employment, access to housing, health care, education, and freedom from social discrimination. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families” (¶ 162H, Social Principles).

- “We recognize the right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraints of conscience and, after having exhausted all legal recourse, to resist or disobey laws that they deem to be unjust or that are discriminatorily enforced. . . . We assert the duty of churches to support those who suffer because of their stands of conscience represented by nonviolent beliefs or acts” (¶ 164F, Social Principles).

- “Raids of workplaces, homes, and other social places have often violated the civil liberties of migrants. Migrants should be given due process and access to adequate legal representation. Due to these raids and the ensuing detentions and deportations that follow them, families have been ripped apart and the migrant community has been forced to live in a constant state of fear. To refuse to welcome migrants . . . and to stand by in silence while families are separated, individual freedoms are ignored . . . is complicity to sin” (Resolution #3281, Book of Resolutions, adopted in 2008, and continued in 2012 and 2016).

- “We call upon all United Methodist churches to . . . support those churches that prayerfully choose to offer sanctuary to undocumented migrants facing deportation . . .” (Resolution #3281, Book of Resolutions, adopted in 2008, and continued in 2012 and 2016).

Recommendations:

In light of the admonition of our sacred writings and the affirmation of our social teachings that we are a church in solidarity with immigrants and refugees, this petition asks General Conference to declare that The United Methodist Church is a sanctuary church. Claiming this public designation as a sanctuary church is a prophetic witness to the world that simply highlights our commitment to support immigrants and refugees already enacted in our Social Principles and relevant calls to action in our Book of Resolutions.

This designation by no means forces local congregations and affiliated organizations to adopt the designation as sanctuary congregations or organizations. It encourages our local churches to be in ministry with immigrants and refugees and affirms the stance of the general church that as a denomination, The United Methodist Church is on the side of justice and radical hospitality for immigrants and refugees. This designation mandates the General Board of Church and Society, in partnership with relevant immigrant rights organizations and coalitions, to provide existing educational materials and training to our local churches on how they could be in ministry with immigrants and refugees as local sanctuary congregations.

**Rationale:**

The UMC upholds the human rights of immigrants and refugees. We “affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God” (¶ 162H, Social Principles). Our faith compels us to declare our denomination as a sanctuary church committed to their defense, safety, and

**R9999.**


**Rights of the Child**

**Rights of the Child**

In the Social Principles §162 we read “[... ] children are [...] full human beings in their own right, but beings to whom adults and society in general have special obligations.”

The United Nations sees the child as entitled to special care and assistance and has therefore made the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As war, poverty, natural disasters, opportunities for work, the pursuit of a better life, and other factors moves families across great distances, children are often put in situations where their parents' life-choices profoundly affect them. These children are especially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and (harm), and needs special protection, regardless of their parents economic, social or residence status.

Therefore, the worldwide United Methodist Church encourages and expects all countries to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, all countries should make policy that enforces the content of the convention.
R9999.

Petition Number: 20608-CB-R9999-G; Prusha, Connor - Chardon, OH, USA for United Methodist Young People's Convocation.

All of Sacred Worth: A Declaration on Sexism

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church confesses faith in One, True God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the World. We also confess our need for forgiveness because we diverged against the will of God, that is, to be loving and just. No one is exempt from the need to be restored into the image and likeness of God. Thankfully, no one is beyond God’s reach;

WHEREAS, grounded in this confession, we affirm that every person is of sacred worth. Regardless of what the person has done or is doing, every person is beloved by God. However, we acknowledge that each person can always choose to accept or to reject God’s love. Accepting God’s love enables us to live a just and meaningful life.

WHEREAS, we believe that the presence of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination is not in accordance with the love of God (For an understanding of gender in The United Methodist Church please see Book of Discipline ¶ 161 sections F-J);

WHEREAS, we mourn with shame before God over the presence of sexism in our homes, schools, churches, and in workplaces. Some of its forms include treatment of women as second-class leaders, pay gap between women and men, lack of freedom in choosing one’s spouse, and pressure for single people to get married. We also acknowledge the fact that The United Methodist Church has been lenient in dealing with sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination and in caring for the victims;

Therefore be it resolved, as we acknowledge that injustices are rooted in the rejection of God’s love, and we commit to proclaim the good news of salvation found in Jesus Christ alone. We will continue to struggle in upholding the authentic, selfless love of Jesus in all of our dealings with one another, in public and in private spheres. We will uphold all leaders in the church in prayers and respect. In our workplaces and businesses, we will work to ensure that people of the same qualifications enjoy equal pay for equal work. We will advocate for restorative justice especially in cases involving sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination;

Further, we call upon the governments to ensure that their respective policies and regulations be grounded in an understanding that every person is of worth and dignity.

Rationale:

We believe that one of the manifestations of the rejection of love of God is the presence of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. We call on United Methodists to work against this.

Concerning Immigration

WHEREAS, the Scriptures proclaim that “The Lord your God . . . loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NRSV) and Jesus taught his disciples that when they took care of “the least of these,” including welcoming strangers, they were welcoming him (Matthew 25:31-40);

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles state, “The mistreatment or torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs,” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 164A, p. 138;

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles also state, “We commit ourselves as a Church to the achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community,” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 165, p. 143;

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles also state, “We reaffirm our historic concern for the world as our parish and seek for all persons and peoples full and equal membership in a truly world community,” The Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 165D, p. 144;

WHEREAS, the United Methodist Social Principles also state, “We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. . . . We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants and to advocate for justice for all,
We oppose the immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.” *The Book of Discipline,* 2016, ¶ 162H, pp. 122-123:

WHEREAS, Justice for Our Neighbors is a nationwide United Methodist organization offering legal assistance to immigrants in the United States. As Arizona Justice for Our Neighbors, in the Desert Southwest Conference, we welcome our immigrant brothers and sisters as fellow children of God, and neighbors in our conference; and

WHEREAS, Arizona Justice for Our Neighbors opposes the incarceration of incoming migrants. We believe all of God’s children, regardless of national origin are entitled to due process rights, including the ability to post bond, the opportunity to seek counsel, and await the resolution/determination of their case out of detention;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church request the General Board of Church and Society contact the appropriate United States governmental agencies, and demand the following:

All children who have been separated from their families in the United States be reunited with their families as soon as possible;

United States government agencies cease detaining individuals and families seeking asylum, and that those currently detained and those seeking to enter the United States as asylees be provided with due process as soon as possible;

The facilities where immigrants are being detained be open for inspection, with a priority on those where immigrants are holding hunger protests; and

Legislation for comprehensive immigration reform, that reflects the principles and priorities noted above, be passed as soon as possible.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20610-CB-R9999; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

**Aging in the United States:**

**The Church's Response**

I. The Situation

Older adult membership in The United Methodist Church is growing rapidly. In the past, the role of older people in congregations was limited, either by choice or circumstance. Congregations often viewed older adults as a liability rather than emphasizing the potential for a re-newed or visionary ministry. Many of the myths and stereotypes of aging and older persons are changing.

According to the U.S. Social Security Administration, the number of persons 65 years of age and older has grown from 3.1 million in 1900 (4 percent of the total population) to 47.8 million in 2015 (14.9 percent). By 2040, there will be about 82.3 million older persons, over twice their number in 2000 (35 million). This increase is due both to an increased life expectancy and to the aging of the baby boom generation (persons born between 1946 and 1964). In 1935 persons reaching age 65 had an average life expectancy of an additional 12.5 years; while in 2015 the life expectancy of persons reaching age 65 is an additional 19.4 years (20.6 years for females and 18 years for males).

Between 1980 and 2015, the centenarian population experienced a larger percentage increase than did the total U.S. population. There were 76,974 persons aged 100 or more in 2015 (0.2 percent of the total 65+ population). This is more than double the 1980 figure of 32,194.

The U.S. Census Bureau also indicates that the racial and ethnic minority populations have increased from 6.7 million in 2005 (18 percent of the older adult population) to 10.6 million in 2015 (22 percent of older adults) and are projected to increase to 21.1 million in 2030 (28 percent of older adults).

As a result of medical advances, better health care, nutrition, and job safety, many more Americans are living into older adulthood. However, the constantly rising cost of health care in the U.S. puts a considerable strain on the budgets of the older population. In 2015 older adults averaged out-of-pocket health care expenditures of $5,756, an increase of 37 percent since 2005 ($4,193). In contrast, the total population spent considerably less, averaging $4,342 in out-of-pocket costs. Older Americans spent 12.9 percent of their total expenditures on health, as compared with 7.8 percent among all Americans. Health costs incurred on average by older adults in 2015 consisted of $3,893 (68 percent) for insurance, $967 (17 percent) medical services, $672 (12 percent) for drugs and medication, and $224 (4 percent) for medical supplies.

Medicare is a health insurance program primarily for persons over the age of 65. Medicaid provides a supplement to Medicare primarily for low-income persons. However, with cuts in federal and state funding, older adults are experiencing a growing hardship in the cost of health care. Older adults who have need for specialized residences, or their families, often have no choice but to opt for a nursing home that is covered by Medicaid. This is costly and often not the choice of the parties involved.

Although most older persons live in urban places, they also comprise a large proportion of rural populations.
where facilities and resources for them are extremely limited. Health care availability, transportation, and job opportunities are often lacking in rural areas. This condition is complicated further by a disproportionately low allocation of federal funds to meet the needs of the rural older adults.

Race and ethnicity are important determinants of the residential patterns of older adults. While about one third of all older persons live in central cities, one half of all African Americans and Hispanics over 65 is heavily concentrated in urban areas. The demographic shifts in housing patterns brought about by urban renewal and gentrification (higher-income persons buying property in formerly poor neighborhoods), the lack of low-cost housing, and the resultant increase in homeowner taxes have a major impact on older adults, especially minorities. Houses that have been paid for are lost because of the tax increases, or low rents rise astronomically.

We need to dispel the common misunderstanding that aging is synonymous with senility and dementia, and that older persons are unable or unmotivated to learn, grow, and achieve. Opportunities for continuing education and growth have long been unmet by a system geared to the needs of the young. Hearing and vision loss and other physical or biological changes may impede or change the way an older adult learns; however, old age can be a time of continual learning.

Like society, faith communities are “praying” but at an even faster rate. It isn’t unusual to find many local churches having an older adult membership that represents over 60 percent of their total membership, with some even much higher! This is due in part to younger and middle-aged adults choosing not to participate in congregations.

Some problems that beset older persons are the result of the social and physical process of aging. These include changes in work, family, and community roles; the reduction of energy; and the increase in chronic illness and impairments. These conditions can lead to increased dependence on others for life’s necessities. Other problems faced by older adults are the result of subtle and overt discrimination by social and political institutions. Being old today is not easy, in either the church or society. If the situation of older persons is to be improved, the church must act.

II. A Theological Response

Aging is a process involving the whole life span from birth to death. The response of the church begins with a theological understanding of aging concerned with the whole life process rather than with only its final stages. The meaning of life, rather than death, is the central point from which to theologize about aging. In The United Methodist Church, there are many legitimate theological understandings of the meaning of life in its progression from birth to death. The position presented here is one attempt to express this meaning.

1. All of creation is God’s work (Genesis 1). Human beings are only a small part of the totality of life forms. The aging process is universal in all life forms. Birth, aging, and death are all part of divine providence and are to be regarded and taught as positive values.

2. As Christians, the mystery of God’s involvement in the person of Jesus Christ provides us with a unique source of divine help (grace) in our passage through life’s successive stages. This is especially significant in the later stages, when spiritual maturation and well-being can be experienced even in times of physical decline. The power of the cross is a special revelation of how suffering can be reconciling and redemptive. Faith in the Resurrection provides us with an assurance of the abiding presence of the risen Lord (Matthew 28:20) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-19; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Romans 8:9-11), and the permanence of our relationship with God beyond the mystery of death. In this spiritual presence we also find the source of the potential of all persons for self-transcendence. God’s act in Christ was for life abundant (John 10:10) in all stages of life. Christ also gives us our traditional Wesleyan vision of the goal of ultimate perfection (Matthew 5:48). The grace of God in Christ is therefore important throughout life, including its last stages.

3. In response to this saving grace, we believe in the inevitable need to walk in the ways of obedience that God has enabled (Ephesians 2:8-10). These ways are defined by love for God and neighbor (Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-9). It is therefore the privilege of Christians to serve all persons in love, including older persons with their special needs. Furthermore, since God’s grace is not conditioned by any human standards of worthiness or usefulness (2 Corinthians 5:19), all persons are valuable to God (Matthew 6:25-30). In the larger pattern of human needs and rights, those of older adults must be consciously and intentionally included. 

4. Older persons are not simply to be served but are also to serve; they are of special importance in the total mission of the church. Since the Christian vocation has no retirement age, the special contributions of older adults need conscious recognition and employment. The experience of all older persons, and the wisdom of many, is a special resource for the whole church.
to God. This especially includes those institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults and to keep them fully incorporated into the body of Christ. The church also is charged with an abiding concern for justice for all. It should work tirelessly for the freedom of all persons to meet their own fullest potential and to liberate those who are captive to discrimination, neglect, exploitation, abuse, or poverty.

III. Calls to Action

A. By society at all levels

United Methodists are called to advocate for the elimination of age discrimination in personal attitudes and institutional structures. We should pursue this advocacy vigorously and in cooperation with appropriate private and public groups, including all levels of government. Our efforts should be based on the following:

1. Religious institutions make a unique and significant contribution to human life. Living involves ethical issues and value decisions. Therefore, a religious presence is important to the quality of total community life.

2. Governments should play a critical role in ensuring that all appropriate benefits are available to all older adults to improve their quality of life. Christians should support governmental policies that promote sharing with those who are less fortunate. This does not absolve either the institutional church or individual Christians from responsibility for persons in need.

3. A standard of basic survival support systems should be accepted and established in our society and made available to all persons. These systems should include: health care, transportation, housing, livable communities, and income maintenance at a minimum. Christians need to identify and promote those facilities and services that ensure opportunities for prolonged well-being. These services need to be provided within the financial means of older adults, with appropriate public subsidy when necessary. They include the following:
   a. universal comprehensive health insurance program;
   b. elimination of an “age tax” for older adults related to their health insurance (if adopted by Congress);
   c. health-resources systems special to the needs of older adults that are comprehensive, accessible, and feasible within available resources (these include long-term care, hospice care, home health care, and health maintenance organizations);
   d. health-education systems that emphasize proper nutrition, proper drug use, preventive health care, and immunization as well as information about the availability of health resources within the community;
   e. training for medical and social service personnel concerning the special cultural, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects and needs of older adults;
   f. livable communities with adequate housing that is both affordable, safe, and secure, with protections that massive tax and rental increases will not create displacement, and transportation systems that meet the special needs of older adults;
   g. national legislation correcting the disparity in Medicare’s failure to cover either assisted living residences or dementia-specific housing, or home nursing care;
   h. a basic governmental income-maintenance system adequate to sustain an adequate standard of living affording personal dignity;
   i. basic pension systems benefit levels adequate to meet economic needs at least equal to the defined poverty level, supplementation by benefits from public funds;
   j. continuing educational and counseling opportunities for older adults in pre-retirement planning, in work-related training, in interpersonal retirement relationships, and in personal enrichment;
   k. formal and informal community associations such as public and private centers that foster social, recreational, artistic, intellectual, and spiritual activities to help persons overcome loneliness and social isolation;
   l. continuing employment opportunities for those who desire them in flexible, appropriate work settings related to varying lifestyles; and,
   m. opportunities for volunteer work and paid employment that best utilize the skills and experiences of older adults.

4. Finally, our society is called upon to respond to a basic human right of older adults: the right to faithful care in dying and to have personal wishes respected concerning the number and type of life-sustaining measures that should be used to prolong life. Living wills, requesting no heroic measures be used, and other such efforts to die with faithful care should be supported.

B. By the church at all levels

1. All levels of the church are called to:
   a. practice nondiscrimination in the church on the basis of age in hiring, deployment, and promotion of older workers, including the appointment of clergy;
   b. include ministries by, with and for older adults as an essential and intentional component of the church and its mission;
   c. promote flexible retirement and eliminate mandatory retirement for clergy and church-employed lay persons based solely on age;
   d. develop theological statements on death and dying recognizing the basic human right to faithful care of the dying;
   e. address the questions raised by the declining quality of life; stimulate research to connect the improvement
of the quality of life with longevity of life, raised by increased longevity;

f. develop ethical guidelines for dealing with difficult medical decisions that involve the use of limited resources for health and life insurance;

g. authorize appropriate research, including a demographic study of members of The United Methodist Church, to provide greatly needed information on the psychosocial and spiritual aspects of aging; and,

h. establish a properly funded pension system with an adequate minimum standard for all clergy and church-employed lay persons and their spouses, including the divorced spouse.

2. Each local church is called to:

a. become aware of the needs and interests of older people in the congregation and in the community, including the places in which they reside, and to express Christian love through person-to-person understanding and caring;

b. intentionally sponsor ministries in institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults, such as nursing homes, assisted living residences, and dementia-specific housing as well as the homes of older adults living alone, as we keep these older persons fully incorporated in the body of Christ;

c. affirm the cultural and historical contributions and gifts of ethnic older adults;

d. acknowledge that ministry by, with, and for older adults is needed in congregations of all sizes;

e. support, equip, and train lay volunteers with a dedication for this important ministry;

f. develop a barrier-free environment in which older adults can function in spite of impairments;

g. develop an intentional ministry with older adults that:

• ensures life maintenance for each person related to adequate food, health service, mobility, personal security, income, and other personal services;

• offers opportunities for life enrichment including intellectual stimulation, social involvement, spiritual cultivation, and artistic pursuits;

• encourages life reconstruction when necessary, including motivation and guidance in making new friends, serving new roles in the community that help people cope with loss, and providing support systems for older adults experiencing losses;

• affirms life transcendence, including celebration of the meaning and purpose of life through worship, Bible study, personal reflection, and small-group life;

• recognizes that older persons represent a creative resource bank available to the church and to involve them in service to the community as persons of insight and wisdom (this could include not only ministry to one another, but also to the larger mission of the church for redemption of the world, including reaching the unchurched);

• relates to secular retirement communities within its boundaries;

• fosters intergenerational experiences in the congregation and community including educating all age groups about how to grow old with dignity and satisfaction;

• ensures that the frail are not separated from the life of the congregation but retain access to the sacraments and are given assistance as needed by the caring community;

• provides support and information for adults caring for aging parents;

• cooperates with other churches and community agencies for more comprehensive and effective ministries with older persons;

• accepts responsibility for an advocacy role in behalf of older adults; and

3. Each annual conference is called to:

a. provide leadership and support for an intentional ministry to older persons in its local churches, with special attention to the needs of women and minorities;

b. develop a conference committee, council or team with representation from each conference district with the responsibility for overseeing intentional older adult ministry within the conference;

c. develop a program of job counseling and retirement planning for clergy and lay employees;

d. share creative models of ministry and a data bank of resources and “best practices” with the local churches and other agencies;

e. define the relationship between the annual conference and United Methodist-related residential and nonresidential facilities for older adults, so that the relationships can be clearly understood and mutually supportive;

f. recruit persons for professional leadership in working with older adults;

g. serve as both a partner and critic to local church and public programs with older adults, promoting ecumenical linkages where possible;

h. support financially, if needed, retired clergy and lay church workers and their spouses who reside in United Methodist long-term care settings;

i. promote Golden Cross Sunday and other special offerings for ministries by, with, and for older adults; and,

j. recognize that older persons within the conference, both lay and clergy, represent a significant and experienced resource that should be utilized in both the organization and mission of the conference.

4. General boards and agencies are called to:

a. examine the pension policies of the general church and their impact related to the needs of those who are
Church and Society Committee 2

single (retired, divorced, or surviving dependents of pensioners);

b. create specific resource materials for ministry by, with, and for older adults;

c. prepare intergenerational and age-specific materials for church school and for other special studies in the local church;

d. promote advocacy on behalf of all older adults, but especially those who do not have access to needed services because of isolation, low income, or disability (this might include advocacy for health care, income maintenance, and other social legislation);

e. assist institutions for older adults to maintain quality care and to develop resource centers for ministry with and by older adults;

f. create a variety of nonresidential ministries for older adults;

g. coordinate general church training in ministry with older adults;

h. assign specific staff and/or board members to participate as members on the Committee on Older Adult Ministries and to provide for formal coordination on aging issues;

i. advocate the special concerns and needs of older women and minorities; and

j. utilize older persons as a creative resource bank in the design and implementation of these objectives.

5. Retirement and long-term care facilities related to the church are called to:

a. develop a covenant relationship with the church to reinforce a sense of joint mission in services with older adults;

b. encourage the provision of charitable support and provide a channel for the assistance of the whole church;

c. serve as a resource for older adult needs within the community at large; and

d. encourage both residential and nonresidential institutional settings that emphasize the spiritual, personal, physical, and social needs of older adults.

6. Finally, seminaries and colleges are called to:

a. provide seminarians with instruction on aging and experiences with older persons in the curriculum;

b. provide classes and continuing education courses on intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults;

c. prepare persons for careers in the field of aging;

d. develop special professorships to teach gerontology, and to provide continuing education for those who work with older adults;

e. engage in basic and applied research related to aging, and communicate the findings;

f. develop a system for sharing research results with the church;

g. enable older adults to enroll in courses and degree programs and to participate generally in the life of educational institutions; and

h. develop and offer lay courses in locations accessible to older persons.

IV. Summary

Concern for older persons in the church is theologically grounded in the doctrine of Creation, in the meaning of God’s work in Christ, in the response to grace that leads us into service, in the continuing value of older persons in the larger mission, and in the nature of the church as an agent of redemption and defender of justice for all.

Older adults deserve respect, dignity, and equal opportunity. The United Methodist Church is called to be an advocate for older adults, for their sense of personal identity and dignity, for utilization of experience, wisdom, and skills, for health maintenance, adequate income, educational opportunities, and vocational and avocational experiences in cooperation with the public and private sectors of society.

The aging process is part of God’s plan for life, with the good news of Christ’s redemption giving hope and purpose. United Methodists are called to live this message through words and deeds in the church and in society.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20611-CB-R9999-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

Confronting Twenty-First-Century Anti-Semitism

Add a new resolution to the Book of Resolutions as follows:

Confronting Twenty-First-Century Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism—the targeting persons of Jewish faith and/or heritage for hatred, violence, or mistreatment—is a continuing social evil that has been called one of the oldest forms of group hatred.

The United Methodist Church strongly opposes anti-Semitism and any other form of racism. We have long sought good relations with our Jewish friends and neighbors. Through Resolution #3125, our General Conference has since 2000 encouraged our churches to observe Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah). However, the global plague of anti-Semitism is not limited to the past. Upsetting developments in recent years make it important for The United Methodist Church to again speak out at this time.
The United Methodist Church emphatically rejects anti-Semitism and racism. At the basis of this stance is the truth that all women and men are lovingly created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and that all people share a common, God-given ancestry and humanity (Acts 17:26). As Christians, we recognize the inescapable Jewish foundations of our faith, and affirm the continuing importance of the Hebrew Scriptures for our church.

We also recognize with profound sadness the tragic history over the centuries of Christian violence, hatred, and mistreatment directed against Jewish people, and our ongoing collective responsibility to rebuild bridges of mutual trust, peace, and understanding with members of the Jewish community today.

Disturbing Developments

The United Methodist Church acknowledges and views with alarm outrageous incidents and disturbing trends of anti-Semitism in recent years.

In a September 2018 address, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres observed that anti-Semitism “is on the rise in all parts of the world where Jewish communities live” but that it is also “present in countries where there are no Jews at all” (“Anti-Semitism Rising Even in Countries with No Jews at All, Secretary-General Tells Event on Power of Education to Counter Racism, Discrimination.” United Nations, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19252.doc.htm>, accessed 9/18/19).


The above represents a far from comprehensive overview of the hatred, violence, and marginalization directed against Jewish persons around the world today.
Relation to Middle East Conflict

It is important to be careful in how we talk about the relationship of anti-Semitism to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In seeking to understand root causes of any hatred or violence, we must take care to avoid blaming the victim or rationalizing the wrong decisions of perpetrators. We also reject oversimplifying rhetoric that calls all criticisms of actions of the Israeli government anti-Semitic. The Israeli government, like any other government in the world, is led by fallible human beings who need prophetic challenge at times. But it would also be morally irresponsible and intellectually dishonest to ignore anti-Semitism when it is expressed in criticism of the world’s only Jewish state.

We believe it is helpful to consider the following as actions and rhetoric that cross the line from criticisms of Israeli government actions that are within the realm of legitimate disagreement to morally unacceptable anti-Semitism:

• Careless echoing of historic anti-Semitic rhetoric, stereotypes, or conspiracy theories in criticisms of Israelis;
• Singling out Israel, the world’s lone Jewish state, for demonization, isolation, punishment, or de-legitimization, according to a harsher standard than is used with other nations;
• Rationalizing, excusing, approving, or participating in indiscriminate violence against Jews and/or Israelis;
• Callous dismissal of Israeli concerns about the violence that claims and threatens Jewish lives; or
• Any sort of “collective punishment” or collective blame against all Jews or all Israelis.

The United Methodist Church’s Response

In the face of such threats and attacks against our Jewish friends and neighbors, The United Methodist Church must not be silent. We call on our members to:

1. Express our sincere, deep solidarity with our Jewish friends and neighbors. The United Methodist Church must not be silent. We call on our members to:

2. Find and support the efforts of others in combating anti-Semitism in and beyond our local communities;

3. Share copies of this resolution with members of our local churches.

We further call on the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the Office of Christian Unity and Inter-Religious Relationships to seek out appropriate opportunities to:

1. Support efforts of others who are actively fighting anti-Semitism around the world;

2. Promote education about the Holocaust (including encouraging visits to Holocaust museums), about Christianity’s sad history of mistreating Jewish people, and about the ongoing problem of anti-Semitism today.

3. Share copies of this resolution with leading, representative Jewish organizations, and invite their advice for how The United Methodist Church can be a better ally against anti-Semitism.

Finally, we call on governments around the world to be proactive in working against anti-Semitism, and particularly to protect people from any threat of hateful violence.

Rationale:

In Resolution 3126, we have appropriately denounced bigotry against Muslims and Arabs. But we currently have no parallel resolution focused solely on broadly denouncing global anti-Semitism. At a time when much of the Jewish community feels under attack, let us leave no doubt that we stand with them.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20629-CB-R9999; Gentzler, Richard - Gallatin, TN, USA.

Aging in the United States: The Church’s Response

I. The Situation

As more people live longer, healthier lives, The United Methodist Church faces a powerful opportunity to re-imagine the future of our church. So many of us continue to have much to offer as we age—wisdom, ingenuity, creativity, knowledge, and faith experience—but many of our current policies, structures, and cultural assumptions do not adequately address the new realities of our growing aging membership.

Thanks to dramatic advances in medicine, health care, technology, and lifestyle choices, demographic trends show us that by 2035 the 65+ population in the United States will grow and outnumber the under-18 population. This will be the first time in USA history that the older adult population 65+ will outnumber young people under 18.

The demographic shift toward longer lives affects all our churches. Older adult membership in The United Methodist Church is growing rapidly. One of the greatest impacts of this change church leaders of today will face is the aging of their congregations. In the past, the role of older people in congregations was limited, either by choice or circumstance. Congregations often viewed older adults as a liability rather than emphasizing the potential for a renewed or visionary ministry. Many of the myths and stereotypes of aging and older persons are changing.
Congregational leaders are being challenged to reframe aging and to reimagine congregational vitality with an increasing aging population.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population age 65 and over in the United States numbered 50.9 million in 2017 (the most recent year for which data are available). They represented 15.6 percent of the population, more than one in every seven Americans. The number of older Americans increased by 13 million or 34 percent since 2007, compared to an increase of 4 percent for the under-65 population. In 1935, persons reaching age 65 had an average life expectancy of an additional 12.5 years; while in 2017 the life expectancy of persons reaching age 65 is an additional 19.5 years (20.6 years for females and 18.1 years for males). By 2035, 78 million people will be 65+ and the under-18-years-of-age population will be 76.4 million. Lower birth rates and increased longevity have led to this rapid growth in aging population in the United States.

The 85 and over population is projected to more than double from 6.5 million in 2017 to 14.4 million in 2040 (a 123 percent increase). Between 1980 and 2017, the centenarian population experienced a larger percentage increase than did the total population. There were 86,248 persons age 100 and over in 2017 (0.2 percent of the total age-65-and-over population). This is more than double the 1980 figure of 32,194.

The U.S. Census Bureau also indicates that the racial and ethnic minority populations have increased from 7.2 million in 2007 (19 percent of the older adult population) to 11.8 million in 2017 (23 percent of older adults) and are projected to increase to 27.7 million in 2040 (34 percent of older adults).

More people are living longer than ever before. New medical knowledge, life-sustaining technologies, and a great awareness of, and desire for a healthy lifestyle have helped lengthen the lives of those who reach old age. However, the constantly rising cost of health care in the U.S. puts a considerable strain on the budgets of the older population. In 2017, older adults averaged out-of-pocket health care expenditures of $6,620, an increase of 43 percent since 2007 ($4,631). In contrast, the total population spent considerably less, averaging $4,928 in out-of-pocket costs. Older Americans spent 13.4 percent of their total expenditures on health, as compared with 8.2 percent among all Americans. Health costs incurred on average by older adults in 2017 consisted of $4,712 (71 percent) for insurance, $911 (14 percent) medical services, $783 (12 percent) for drugs and medication, and $214 (3 percent) for medical supplies.

Medicare is a health insurance program primarily for persons over the age of 65. Medicaid provides a supplement to Medicare primarily for low-income persons. However, with cuts in federal and state funding, older adults are experiencing a growing hardship in the cost of health care. Older adults who have need for specialized residences, or their families, often have no choice but to opt for a nursing home that is covered by Medicaid. This is costly and often not the choice of the parties involved.

Although most older persons live in urban places, they also comprise a large proportion of rural populations where facilities and resources for them are extremely limited. Health care availability, transportation, and job opportunities are often lacking in rural areas. This condition is complicated further by a disproportionately low allocation of federal funds to meet the needs of the rural older adults.

Race and ethnicity are important determinants of the residential patterns of older adults. While about one third of all older persons live in central cities, one half of all African Americans and Hispanics over 65 is heavily concentrated in urban areas. The demographic shifts in housing patterns brought about by urban renewal and gentrification (higher-income persons buying property in formerly poor neighborhoods), the lack of low-cost housing, and the resultant increase in homeowner taxes have a major impact on older adults, especially minorities. Houses that have been paid for are lost because of the tax increases, or low rents rise astronomically.

The fact that more people are reaching their senior years and that communities are experiencing an explosion in the aging population should not be cause for alarm. We need to dispel the common misunderstanding that aging is synonymous with senility and dementia, and that older persons are unable or unmotivated to learn, grow, and achieve. Opportunities for continuing education and growth have long been unmet by a system geared to the needs of the young. Hearing and vision loss and other physical or biological changes may impede or change the way an older adult learns; however, old age can be a time of continual learning.

Like society, faith communities are “graying,” but at an even faster rate. It isn’t unusual to find many local churches having an older adult membership that represents over 60 percent of their total membership, with some even much higher! This is due in part to younger and middle-aged adults choosing not to participate in congregations.

Some problems that beset older persons are the result of the social and physical process of aging. These include changes in work, family, and community roles; the reduction of energy; and the increase in chronic illness and impairments. These conditions can lead to increased dependence on others for life’s necessities. Other problems...
faced by older adults are the result of subtle and overt discrimination by social and political institutions. Being old today is not easy, in either the church or society. If the situation of older persons is to be improved, the church must act.

II. A Theological Response

Aging is a process involving the whole life span from birth to death. The response of the church begins with a theological understanding of aging concerned with the whole life process rather than with only its final stages. The meaning of life, rather than death, is the central point from which to theologize about aging. In The United Methodist Church, there are many legitimate theological understandings of the meaning of life in its progression from birth to death. The position presented here is one attempt to express this meaning.

1. All of creation is God’s work (Genesis 1). Human beings are only a small part of the totality of life forms. The aging process is universal in all life forms. Birth, aging, and death are all part of divine providence and are to be regarded and taught as positive values.

2. As Christians, the mystery of God’s involvement in the person of Jesus Christ provides us with a unique source of divine help (grace) in our passage through life’s successive stages. This is especially significant in the later stages, when spiritual maturation and well-being can be experienced even in times of physical decline. The power of the cross is a special revelation of how suffering can be reconciling and redemptive. Faith in the Resurrection provides us with an assurance of the abiding presence of the risen Lord (Matthew 28:20) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-19; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Romans 8:9-11), and the permanence of our relationship with God beyond the mystery of death. In this spiritual presence we also find the source of the potential of all persons for self-transcendence. God’s act in Christ was for life abundant (John 10:10) in all stages of life. Christ also gives us our traditional Wesleyan vision of the goal of ultimate perfection (Matthew 5:48). The grace of God in Christ is therefore important throughout life, including its last stages.

3. In response to this saving grace, we believe in the inevitable need to walk in the ways of obedience that God has enabled (Ephesians 2:8-10). These ways are defined by love for God and neighbor (Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:8-9). It is therefore the privilege of Christians to serve all persons in love, including older persons with their special needs. Furthermore, since God’s grace is not conditioned by any human standards of worthiness or usefulness (2 Corinthians 5:19), all persons are valuable to God (Matthew 6:25-30). In the larger pattern of human needs and rights, those of older adults must be consciously and intentionally included.

4. Older persons are not simply to be served but are also to serve; they are of special importance in the total mission of the church. Since the Christian vocation has no retirement age, the special contributions of older adults need conscious recognition and employment. The experience of all older persons, and the wisdom of many, is a special resource for the whole church.

5. The church as the body of Christ in the world today (1 Corinthians 12:27) is God’s method for realizing the reconciliation accomplished by Christ (Colossians 1:16-20). As such, it intentionally sponsors institutional forums that help reconcile persons of all ages to one another and to God. This especially includes those institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults and to keep them fully incorporated into the body of Christ. The church also is charged with an abiding concern for justice for all. It should work tirelessly for the freedom of all persons to meet their own fullest potential and to liberate those who are captive to discrimination, neglect, exploitation, abuse, or poverty.

III. Calls to Action

A. By society at all levels

Ageism is an evil and destructive force that, unlike racism and sexism, is something that if we live long enough, we will all experience. United Methodists are called to advocate for the elimination of ageism and age discrimination in personal attitudes and institutional structures. We should pursue this advocacy vigorously and in cooperation with appropriate private and public groups, including all levels of government. Our efforts should be based on the following:

1. Religious institutions make a unique and significant contribution to human life. Living involves ethical issues and value decisions. Therefore, a religious presence is important to the quality of total community life.

2. Governments should play a critical role in ensuring that all appropriate benefits are available to all older adults to improve their quality of life. Christians should support governmental policies that promote sharing with those who are less fortunate. This does not absolve either the institutional church or individual Christians from responsibility for persons in need.

3. A standard of basic survival support systems should be accepted and established in our society and made available to all persons. These systems should include: health care, transportation, housing, livable communities, and income maintenance at a minimum. Christians need to identify and promote those facilities and services that ensure opportunities for prolonged well-being. These services need to be provided within the financial means of older adults, with appropriate public subsidy when necessary. They include the following:

4. Older persons are not simply to be served but are also to serve; they are of special importance in the total mission of the church. Since the Christian vocation has no retirement age, the special contributions of older adults need conscious recognition and employment. The experience of all older persons, and the wisdom of many, is a special resource for the whole church.
a. universal comprehensive health insurance program;
b. health-resources systems special to the needs of older adults that are comprehensive, accessible, and feasible within available resources (these include long-term care, hospice care, home health care, and health maintenance organizations);
c. health-education systems that emphasize proper nutrition, proper drug use, preventive health care, and immunization as well as information about the availability of health resources within the community;
d. training for medical and social service personnel concerning the special cultural, physical, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects and needs of older adults;
e. livable communities with adequate housing that is both affordable, safe, and secure, with protections that massive tax and rental increases will not create displacement, and transportation systems that meet the special needs of older adults;
f. national legislation correcting the disparity in Medicare’s failure to cover either assisted living residences or dementia-specific housing, or home nursing care;
g. a basic governmental income-maintenance system adequate to sustain an adequate standard of living affording personal dignity;
h. basic pension systems benefit levels adequate to meet economic needs at least equal to the defined poverty level, supplementation by benefits from public funds;
i. continuing educational and counseling opportunities for older adults in pre-retirement planning, in work-related training, in interpersonal retirement relationships, and in personal enrichment;
j. formal and informal community associations such as public and private centers that foster social, recreational, artistic, intellectual, and spiritual activities to help persons overcome loneliness and social isolation;
k. continuing employment opportunities for those who desire them in flexible, appropriate work settings related to varying lifestyles; and,
l. opportunities for volunteer work and paid employment that best utilize the skills and experiences of older adults.

4. Finally, our society is called upon to respond to a basic human right of older adults: the right to faithful care in dying and to have personal wishes respected concerning the number and type of life-sustaining measures that should be used to prolong life. Living wills, requesting no heroic measures be used, and other such efforts to die with faithful care should be supported.

B. By the church at all levels

1. All levels of the church are called to:
   a. reframe aging as an opportunity and reimagine congregational vitality with an aging population
   b. practice nondiscrimination in the church on the basis of age in hiring, deployment, and promotion of older workers, including the appointment of clergy;
   c. include ministries by, with, and for older adults as an essential and intentional component of the church and its mission;
   d. promote flexible retirement and eliminate mandatory retirement for clergy and church-employed lay persons based solely on age;
   e. develop theological statements on death and dying recognizing the basic human right to faithful care of the dying;
   f. address the questions raised by the declining quality of life; stimulate research to connect the improvement of the quality of life with longevity of life, raised by increased longevity;
   g. develop ethical guidelines for dealing with difficult medical decisions that involve the use of limited resources for health and life insurance;
   h. authorize appropriate research, including a demographic study of members of The United Methodist Church, to provide greatly needed information on the psychosocial and spiritual aspects of aging; and,
   i. establish a properly funded pension system with an adequate minimum standard for all clergy and church-employed laypersons and their spouses, including the divorced spouse.

2. Each local church is called to:
   a. become aware of the needs and interests of older people in the congregation and in the community, including the places in which they reside, and to express Christian love through person-to-person understanding and caring;
   b. intentionally sponsor ministries in institutions designed to meet the needs of older adults, such as nursing homes, assisted living residences, and dementia-specific housing as well as the homes of older adults living alone, as we keep these older persons fully incorporated in the body of Christ;
   c. affirm the cultural and historical contributions and gifts of ethnic older adults;
   d. acknowledge that ministry by, with, and for older adults is needed in congregations of all sizes;
   e. support, equip, and train lay volunteers with a dedication for this important ministry;
   f. develop a barrier-free environment in which older adults can function in spite of impairments;
   g. develop an intentional older adult ministry that:
      • ensures life maintenance for each person related to adequate food, health service, mobility, personal security, income, and other personal services;
• offers opportunities for life enrichment including intellectual stimulation, social involvement, spiritual cultivation, and artistic pursuits;

• encourages life reconstruction when necessary, including motivation and guidance in making new friends, serving new roles in the community that help people cope with loss, and providing support systems for older adults experiencing losses;

• affirms life transcendence, including celebration of the meaning and purpose of life through worship, Bible study, personal reflection, and small-group life;

• recognizes that older persons represent a creative resource bank available to the church and to involve them in service to the community as persons of insight and wisdom (this could include not only ministry to one another, but also to the larger mission of the church for redemption of the world, including reaching the unchurched);

• relates to secular retirement communities within its boundaries;

• fosters intergenerational experiences in the congregation and community including educating all age groups about how to grow old with dignity and satisfaction;

• ensures that the frail are not separated from the life of the congregation but retain access to the sacraments and are given assistance as needed by the caring community;

• provides support and information for adults caring for aging parents;

• cooperates with other churches and community agencies for more comprehensive and effective ministries with older persons;

• accepts responsibility for an advocacy role in behalf of older adults; and

3. Each annual conference is called to:

a. provide leadership and support for an intentional ministry to older persons in its local churches, with special attention to the needs of women and minorities;

b. develop a conference committee, council, or team with representation from each conference district with the responsibility for overseeing intentional older adult ministry within the conference;

c. develop a program of job counseling and retirement planning for clergy and lay employees;

d. share creative models of ministry and a data bank of resources and “best practices” with the local churches and other agencies;

e. define the relationship between the annual conference and United Methodist-related residential and nonresidential facilities for older adults, so that the relationships can be clearly understood and mutually supportive;

f. recruit persons for professional leadership in working with older adults;

g. serve as both a partner and critic to local church and public programs with older adults, promoting ecumenical linkages where possible;

h. support financially, if needed, retired clergy and lay church workers and their spouses who reside in United Methodist long-term care settings;

i. promote Golden Cross Sunday and other special offerings for ministries by, with, and for older adults; and,

j. recognize that older persons within the conference, both lay and clergy, represent a significant and experienced resource that should be utilized in both the organization and mission of the conference.

4. General boards and agencies are called to:

a. examine the pension policies of the general church and their impact related to the needs of those who are single (retired, divorced, or surviving dependents of pensioners);

b. create specific resource materials for ministry by, with, and for older adults;

c. prepare intergenerational and age-specific materials for church school and for other special studies in the local church;

d. promote advocacy on behalf of all older adults, but especially those who do not have access to needed services because of isolation, low income, or disability (this might include advocacy for health care, income maintenance, and other social legislation);

e. assist institutions for older adults to maintain quality care and to develop resource centers for ministry with and by older adults;

f. create a variety of nonresidential ministries for older adults;

g. coordinate general church training in ministry with older adults;

h. assign specific staff and/or board members to participate as members on the Committee on Older Adult Ministries and to provide for formal coordination on aging issues;

i. advocate the special concerns and needs of older women and minorities; and,

j. utilize older persons as a creative resource bank in the design and implementation of these objectives.

5. Retirement and long-term care facilities related to the church are called to:

a. develop a covenant relationship with the church to reinforce a sense of joint mission in services with older adults;

b. encourage the provision of charitable support and provide a channel for the assistance of the whole church;

c. serve as a resource for older adult needs within the community at large; and,
d. encourage both residential and nonresidential institutional settings that emphasize the spiritual, personal, physical, and social needs of older adults.

6. Finally, seminaries and colleges are called to:
   a. provide seminarians with instruction on aging and experiences with older persons in the curriculum;
   b. provide classes and continuing education courses on intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults;
   c. prepare persons for careers in the field of aging;
   d. develop special professorships to teach gerontology, and to provide continuing education for those who work with older adults;
   e. engage in basic and applied research related to aging, and communicate the findings;
   f. develop a system for sharing research results with the church;
   g. enable older adults to enroll in courses and degree programs and to participate generally in the life of educational institutions; and,
   h. develop and offer lay courses in locations accessible to older persons.

IV. Summary

Concern for older persons in the church is theologically grounded in the doctrine of creation, in the meaning of God’s work in Christ, in the response to grace that leads us into service, in the continuing value of older persons in the larger mission, and in the nature of the church as an agent of redemption and defender of justice for all.

Older adults deserve respect, dignity, and equal opportunity. The United Methodist Church is called to be an advocate for older adults, for their sense of personal identity and dignity, for utilization of experience, wisdom, and skills, for health maintenance, adequate income, educational opportunities, and vocational and avocational experiences in cooperation with the public and private sectors of society.

The aging process is part of God’s plan for life, with the good news of Christ’s redemption giving hope and purpose. United Methodists are called to live this message through words and deeds in the church and in society.

WHEREAS, 15.7 percent of people 60 years and older are subjected to abuse globally; and
WHEREAS, 8.5 percent of people worldwide are age 65 and older, with that number to double by the year 2050; and
WHEREAS, elder abuse and neglect take many forms, such as beatings, sexual abuse, improper use of restraints, improper use of medications, verbal abuse, isolation abuse, stealing possessions, misuse or waste of assets, and a failure to provide food/fluids, medication, medical care, shelter, and clothing.

Therefore, be it resolved, that we call on The United Methodist Church to break the silence and to address this social ill through education and awareness, information, counselling and referral services, support systems, and reports to the proper authorities when abuse is suspected.

Be it further resolved, that the Committee on Older Adult Ministries and the appropriate general agencies provide resources and materials to address the issue.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20742-CB-R9999; Allen, Fred - Hendersonville, TN, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Jubilee Freedom Today

The concept of Jubilee is drawn from the Book of Leviticus, in which a year of Jubilee is celebrated every fifty years. “This fiftieth year is sacred—it is a time of freedom and of celebration when everyone will receive back their original property, and slaves will return home to their families.” (Leviticus 25:10 CEV). During the Jubilee year: social inequalities are rectified, slaves are freed, land is returned to its original owners, debts are canceled, and forgiveness and reconciliation prevail.

Jubilee is freedom that frees one from tears of disgrace! One is: Free to claim forgiveness and redemption! Free to embrace other cultures and races! And free from fear of touching and connecting with other persons who are divinely different but beautifully created in the sovereign image of God.

The last millennium witnessed an emerging world community dominated first by Europe, then by Europe’s offspring in North America. In the wake of this domination came colonization and the enslavement of African peoples. But what we know about the Black church and Black preaching in The United Methodist Church and in the United States is that from its earliest practice there was a central focus: Freedom. But these exhortations on freedom had a three-pronged emphasis: freedom from sin, freedom from slavery, and freedom from systemic racism.
against all racial/ethnic peoples. Only in the last two centuries of the last millennium have the shackles been broken off; and only in the twentieth century have colonized nations won the rights of self-government. We need some fresh answers to: Why do white privilege, racism, shackles, and colonization live on in attitudes and values and remain embedded in our practices, even when outlawed? Why and how did the category of race become so absolutely defining and confining even in our beloved United Methodist Church? Our theological concept is rich in hope, born out of our grief, pain, and suffering, and our belief in the eternal hope of God. It is a transformative hope, which takes its historical context from our desire for change. So let’s embrace and live out the Jubilee, which comes from the Hebrew word yobel, meaning “to be jubilant” or to “exult” (NAS Exhaustive Concordance).

Jubilee may be a painfully slow journey. However, as the church makes its way on such a jubilee pilgrimage, it will move every wall of separation and undertake this journey, beseeching and welcoming siblings of all races, cultures and ethnicities. The church will share the message of salvation as it seeks the kingdom in the midst of a world filled with chaos and pain. As we journey together, we will make discovery after joyful discovery, many of which are beyond our imagination.

As a church, as a people, the whole polity, the whole family, the whole of humanity, we will remember to the profit of ourselves and our common future, that Jubilee is a universal mandate for a civil world, a civil church and a civil society. Despite neglect, disdain, and irreverence, Jubilee will not be denied. And, with our wholehearted participation, it will be a Jubilee of justice, peace, security, and the kingdom of character.

Since The United Methodist Church has just recently celebrated its Jubilee Year (2018), it is most befitting that we focus on this concept as we approach the 2020 General Conference.

As we explore its practices, we will discover that Jubilee is the guarantor of the good society, with its provisions for self-adjudication of every kind of injustice and hostility that builds up in individuals, families, and societies. Skeptics say that Jubilee cannot work. But it can also be said that whether or not Jubilee can work, we will not know until we have put its principles into practice.

Our great United Methodist Church is struggling with a number of models, and/or structural changes to save itself. As people of freedom, though not the majority culture or color, our voice and vote must count in 2020. Before we are seduced by various factions, we need to remember what our priorities are, and how can we achieve them.

It was George Santayana, the historian/philosopher who once said, “those who do not learn the lessons of history, are doomed to repeat its mistakes.” With that in mind, we are urged to recall that John Wesley abhorred the practice of slavery and no doubt would detest the impact of systemic racism, white supremacy, and privilege over racial/ethnic groups and others. Yet the insidious acts of slavery, racism, and discrimination against other persons, particularly members of the African Diaspora, shaped and influenced Methodism’s development across its history in the United States.

Finally, whatever our conclusions and/or strategies, let Black people and other people of color not run from the struggle, or stay on the sidelines. We’ve come too far to turn back now.

While navigating through a myriad of critical social injustices and issues, whether Traditionalist, Centrist, or Progressive, let us together build up the body of Christ for serving in a hurting world, thus making The UMC become a more relevant church in times such as this.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church take action to maintain and enhance our identity as The United Methodist Church by embracing a full and diverse membership that empowers all constituents (lay and clergy), especially racial/ethnic groups seeking to establish and strengthen congregational life, endeavoring to engage in multicultural ministry, better integrating diverse congregations and multicultural staff; and to create an equitable formula for clergy appointments, including cross-racial lead pastor appointments and extension ministries appointments. This resolution will hold the church accountable to its global social principles and biblical mandates regarding people of color and ministry to the poor, as it goes through its transformation to become the beloved community of God, incorporating the rich legacy, heritage, and contributions of the Black church.

Be it further resolved, that regardless of what churches that choose to disaffiliate may do, they do so under the principles of biblical Jubilee without penalty, retribution, or harm.

In the event that Black churches and other racial/ethnic UM churches feel led to disaffiliate with The UMC, certain conditions encompassing the principle of Jubilee should be in force:

1. The church’s property deeds be released from The UMC to be legally owned by the congregation under its property deeds as an act of repentance and reparation.

2. All UMC National Plans, Africa University be fully funded for the next twelve (12) years, no matter what new reconfiguration or shape the church may take to guarantee the survival and growth of remaining, existing, and emerging congregations, to ensure the National Plans
can continue their missions and have full representation and voice in the policy-making decisions of the church. Also, the church will continue to recognize and support the five racial/ethnic caucus groups as official entities of the church.

3. Biblical Jubilee will become the normal practice of freedom and of celebration when every member (lay and clergy) will experience just and equal opportunities in all units and program areas of the church including parity in clergy appointments and lay staffing assignments.

4. Debts of arrears in apportionments and benefits are canceled for small rural and urban churches that are experiencing severe financial crises due to such current realities as gentrification, unemployment, aging demographics, etc.

5. More intentional and consistent programs of recruitment, training, and empowerment of more youth and younger adults to commit to follow their call of ordained and lay servanthood ministry should be established.

6. To grow into being a global church, in polity, organization, and spirituality: when conferencing and allocating funds, the church consider our unique cultural and political differences that affect decision-making at General Conference and fund ways to improve communications, cultural competences, global travel, clergy and lay training, as well as program development.

Be it further resolved, that biblical Jubilee will become the normal practice of freedom and of celebration when every member (lay and clergy) will experience just and equal opportunities in all units and program areas of the church including parity in clergy appointments and lay staffing assignments.

Rationale:

The 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church take action to maintain our identity as The United Methodist Church and embracing a full and diverse membership that empowers all constituents (lay and clergy), especially racial/ethnic groups seeking to establish and strengthen their churches, multicultural ministry, better integrating diverse congregations
Church and Society Committee 3
Proposed Amendments to the Book of Discipline

¶165.
Petition Number: 20054-CC-¶165-G; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

The World Community Social Principles

Delete ¶ 165 (The World Community of the Social Principles) to incorporate material in other sections of the Revised Social Principles.

¶165.
Petition Number: 20732-CC-¶165-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Revised Social Principles-164 and 165

Replace ¶ 164 and ¶ 165 with:

The Political Community

Preface

“Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment.” Very excellent things are spoken of love; it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one. “Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable,” or honorable; “if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,” they are all comprised in this one word,— love. (John Wesley, “The Circumcision of the Heart”).

Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good. We acknowledge that such political engagement demands humility and mindfulness of our own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It also necessitates compassion, prayer, and a willingness to discern God’s guidance.

We believe in the inherent worth of all people, which is established through God’s gracious act of Creation and most fully revealed in the power of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection. The understanding that people are created in the image of God is a central theme in John Wesley’s teachings.

We further believe that God calls all members of the human family to recognize and protect the dignity and worth of all people and to work for the well-being of all God’s creation. We, therefore, support structures in the church and in civil society that honor the basic freedoms and rights of all human beings and protect God’s creation. In particular, we affirm the important work of the United Nations in promoting peace and security, championing human dignity and human rights, and advocating for sustainable development.

Government Responsibilities

A. Church and Governments

We affirm that both church and state have vital and distinct roles to play in relation to the larger society. Though the formal relationships between religious communities and governments vary from country to country, we generally affirm the independence and integrity of both institutions, and we advocate for a relationship of mutual respect in which neither institution seeks to dominate or unduly influence the other.

We affirm that every form of government stands under God’s judgment and must therefore be held accountable for protecting the innocent, guaranteeing basic freedoms and liberties, protecting the natural world, and establishing just, equitable, and sustainable economies.

We urge those elected or appointed to public posts or holding other positions in government to act as responsible leaders and stewards of the authority and resources entrusted to them. We call on all government officials to aspire to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, and integrity. Furthermore, we urge all governments to adopt policies and practices that guarantee accountability and transparency in fostering and maintaining the trust of the public.

We reject governmental use of threats, extortion, unlawful detentions, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of coercion to silence political opponents and those objecting to unlawful or immoral government policies and practices. In keeping with international laws and ordinances, we vehemently protest the use of torture, slavery, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression by any government and call for the strictest international sanctions to be imposed in such cases.

While we do not believe churches should affiliate with particular political parties, we do encourage churches to speak out boldly on social issues from a gospel perspective. We further believe churches have a right and a
responsibility to educate and equip their members to be effective advocates for justice in the wider world.

B. Civil Disobedience

We support those who, acting under the constraints of moral conscience or religious conviction and having exhausted all other legal avenues, feel compelled to disobey or protest unjust or immoral laws. We urge those who engage in civil disobedience to do so nonviolently and with respect for the dignity and worth of all concerned. We also appeal to all governmental bodies, especially the police and any other institutions charged with protecting public safety, to provide appropriate training and to act with restraint and in a manner that protects basic rights and prevents emotional or bodily harm to those engaged in civil disobedience.

C. Restorative Justice

The Gospels place a premium on the restoration of right relationships (Matthew 18:15-20). When relationships are violated or broken through crime or wrongdoing, such restoration is critically important. We, therefore, urge governments to develop systems that emphasize restorative justice, which requires people who have committed crimes to make amends for their offenses, and allows victims, if they elect to do so, to share with offenders how they have been harmed. Restorative justice seeks to prioritize the victim and the victim’s family. It also seeks to repair damages, right wrongs, and bring healing to the victim, the offender, families, and the community.

We urge congregations, governments, and businesses to support diversion programs that allow those who have committed offenses to receive counseling, education, skills training, community service, and other assistance to help them become fully contributing members of society. We encourage citizens to partner with law enforcement personnel in local communities to create alternatives to practices that emphasize retribution rather than restoration.

D. The Death Penalty

Our commitment to the inherent dignity and worth of every person and our historic stance as United Methodists compels us to oppose capital punishment and the imposition of the death penalty. The death penalty is a sentence of execution imposed upon a legally convicted individual.

Tragically, the death penalty compounds the loss of human life with the deliberate taking of another life. Additionally, the administration of the death penalty disproportionately impacts people who live in poverty, those who are uneducated, people who live in marginalized racial and ethnic communities, and people with mental impairments. Further, modern advances in technology have shown that a significant number of people are wrongly convicted of the crimes with which they have been charged. Such injustices call us to question the fair application of the death penalty and its congruence with the fundamental right to fair and equal treatment under the law.

We, therefore, call for the abolition of the death penalty and urge individuals and congregations to educate themselves about the historical stance of The United Methodist Church and its predecessors, especially The Evangelical United Brethren Church. Further, we ask pastors and congregations to commit themselves to minister to those who have lost loved ones to violent crimes and to support families without judgment as they navigate the competing demands of justice, compassion, and healing.

E. Criminal Justice

John Wesley campaigned tirelessly for improved conditions for prisoners. Once, in a period of nine months, he preached at least sixty-seven times in various jails. He moaned the deplorable conditions under which most prisoners in his day lived. Claiming this heritage, we affirm the rule of law, the guarantee of civil liberties and rights, and equal access to justice for all people. We condemn discriminatory enforcement or any abuse of power for reasons of tribe, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or citizenship status. We encourage systemic monitoring for prejudice and bias in all criminal justice systems. We further support access to competent legal representation for people who are accused and/or convicted of criminal acts.

We believe that offenders must be held accountable for criminal actions, particularly those that result in a loss of life or livelihood, so we support measures that prevent, deter, or eliminate crimes, and set apart dangerous offenders. While insisting on accountability, we are also committed to fair and proportional sentencing and to the humane treatment of those who are imprisoned. We strongly support programs in prisons designed to promote rehabilitation and restoration of inmates. We do not believe that prisons should be for-profit enterprises.

In our communities, we support measures designed to address the root causes of crime, including poverty and the lack of educational opportunities, recreational activities, substance abuse treatment and counseling, mental health services, and job training. We endorse initiatives designed to promote positive interactions between law enforcement and members of local communities. Further, we encourage efforts to reintegrate people who have been released from prison back into the community, including the provision of employment opportunities, the restoration of voting rights, and, where appropriate, the sealing of criminal records.

We encourage churches to be in ministry with those who are incarcerated, advocating for these people and for
criminal justice reform as well. As forgiven people, Christians must combat the stigma often attached to people who have been in prison. We applaud the involvement of many United Methodists in prison ministries centering on worship, education, and rehabilitation.

F. War and Military Service

The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.

We reject the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy and insist that every peaceful and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before the start of armed conflicts. Similarly, we oppose the increasing reliance on preemptive strikes unless they can be clearly demonstrated to be proportionate in response, delimited in human casualties, and undertaken in response to clear and immediate threats to human lives. We grieve that in a world where so many live in poverty, governments continue to dedicate enormous resources to preparing for and conducting wars. We are especially distressed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and call not only for an end to their production, but for their complete elimination.

Christians have struggled with the issue of war since the time of Jesus. Some Christians have argued historically that war and other acts of violence are never acceptable, while other believers have asserted that it is sometimes necessary to take up arms in self-defense or to defend the innocent and prevent unchecked aggression, tyranny and genocide.

We urge all United Methodists to examine their own consciences and earnestly seek God’s guidance when it comes to matters of military service. We honor and offer support to those who choose military service as a result of personal conviction and urge that they perform their duties in harmony with the tenets of the Christian faith and in accordance with the laws of the Geneva Conventions.

We also honor and support the witness of pacifists whose consciences and religious convictions prevent them from serving in the military or limit them to taking noncombatant roles. The roots of such pacifist convictions are well established in the historic stances of The United Methodist church and its predecessor bodies. We oppose compulsory military service and urge governments to abolish this practice and, instead, allow those who choose not to serve in the military to complete terms of community service or to contribute in other creative ways.

As a church, we commit ourselves to support all people as they discern how best to model the nonviolent example of Jesus. The church supports and guides those who serve in the military; those who are conscientious objectors; veterans living with physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral injury; and families of people affected by military service. We urge the church to care and work for systemic justice for all people affected by war, and to advocate for peacemaking and nonviolent conflict transformation in global and local conflicts.

Basic Rights and Freedoms

We declare that all individuals, no matter their circumstances or social standing, are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms. These rights are grounded in God’s gracious act in creation (Genesis 1:27), and they are revealed fully in Jesus’ incarnation of divine love. As a church, we will work to protect these rights and freedoms within the church and to reform the structures of society to ensure that every human being can thrive.

As set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other important international treaties, basic rights and freedoms include the right to life, liberty, and security as well as to equal treatment before the law and freedom from unlawful detention. Additional liberties include the rights to fair trial, privacy, public assembly, free expression, democracy, food, and shelter. Further, workers have rights to engage in collective bargaining, receive just compensation, and work in safe, healthy environments.

Rights call forth responsibilities. We urge individuals, congregations, and other church bodies to advocate vigorously not only for their own rights, but also for the rights of those who are voiceless or whose voices are unheard in society. Governments must be held responsible for guaranteeing human rights and liberties; such responsibilities include ensuring that all people have access to affordable, high-quality education, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, or any other divisive marker.

We condemn all attempts to deny individuals their basic rights or freedoms or to strip human beings of their inherent dignity and worth. We, therefore, reject within the church and wider society any act of discrimination, hatred, or violence directed against individuals or groups based on national origin, tribal affiliation, ethnicity, age, gender identity, disability status, economic condition, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or other any factors. Additionally, in the face of historic wrongs perpetrated against indigenous peoples, enslaved African peoples, and other marginalized groups, we call for forthright confession and repentance as well as concrete acts of reparation to redress past and present forms of social injustice.

A. Health Care

We affirm health care as a basic human right and vow to work toward expanded access to all forms of medical treatment, including preventative, therapeutic, and palliative care. Half the world’s population lack access to health care, and a growing number of people who do have access face increased medical expenses for themselves or
their loved ones, pushing them toward poverty. To confront these painful realities, we urge United Methodists to join efforts aimed at creating systems that provide comprehensive health protections for all. Additionally, we believe that everyone has a right to decent living conditions, including adequate food and water, safe housing, and a healthy environment.

Health care as a human right also means that clinics, hospitals, and medical services and treatments must be accessible, affordable, and of good quality. They must also be available when and where they are needed and be provided on an equitable basis. We call on governments, businesses, churches, and civil society institutions to work cooperatively to ensure that every human being has access to medical services and treatment.

Additionally, we call on national governments and international health organizations and medical groups to work cooperatively and expeditiously to address global pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as outbreaks of contagious diseases that threaten the health and well-being of entire countries and regions. As a church, we support other measures and initiatives to improve human health, including investments in preventative care, good nutrition, continuing research in infectious disease prevention and treatment, pre- and postnatal health, and substance abuse treatment on demand. We commend churches that are involved in community-based health-care ministries.

B. Children and Young People

We call on church and society to support and advocate for the well-being of all children and young people and for their safety, nurture, agency, education, and participation in church and community life. We condemn destructive practices of neglect, abuse, abduction, exploitation, human trafficking, use of children in armed conflict, and imprisonment. We recognize that perpetrators of abuse or endangerment are usually in positions of power. We hold them accountable for their actions, whether they are parents and family, teachers, clergy, or congregational or public leaders.

We call on the church to stand firmly against the detention of children, and we challenge policies that deny basic rights to the young or discriminate against them based on gender identity, ethnicity, abilities, economic status, sexual orientation, migratory status, religion, or national origin. Further, we urge people in positions of authority and power to support and include young people in making decisions and contributing their gifts at all levels of church and society.

C. Elders and the Aging

Elders have many gifts to give. We call upon the church, governments, and civic bodies to provide continuing opportunities for them to participate in the human family and contribute to God’s work in the world. Elders also have the right to support and protection against the vulnerabilities of aging, expressed in economic disparities, unjust inheritance practices, inadequate public health care, and systemic neglect based on gender, ethnicity, abilities, and economic conditions.

We urge the church, governments, and civil society to develop and enact social policies and programs that provide for the needs and rights of people as they age. We support social policies that integrate elders into community life and guarantee resources for their well-being, including nondiscriminatory employment opportunities, educational and service opportunities, accessible medical care and housing, protection from economic or psychological exploitation, and high-quality, publicly assisted elder care. We affirm the self-determination of elders whether living independently or in families or institutions, and we condemn violations of their quality of life through unnecessary medication or restrictions on their social participation and agency.

D. Women and Girls

We affirm that the gifts of women and girls are vital to God’s creation and make important contributions to both church and society. We support equal opportunities and rights for all women and girls, regardless of national origin, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, or other characteristics.

To ensure these rights, we implore the church, governments, and civic institutions to develop more equitable structures and policies and to recognize women’s value, wisdom, and concerns. All women have a right to equal educational opportunities, protection of their bodies, reproductive justice, parental rights and responsibilities, employment, and equitable compensation and promotion.

We affirm the dignity and worth of all women and girls and we urge the church, governments, and civic bodies to nurture their leadership potential and enhance their opportunities to provide leadership in all aspects of church and social life. We ask the same bodies to ensure their rights to live free from gendered expectations that limit their full development as human beings and from harassment, discrimination, violence, domestic or workplace abuse, human trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence in all times and places. In the strongest sense possible, we urge the church and all political and civic bodies to enact policies that promote and protect the status and role of women and girls in all facets of life so they can thrive and contribute their gifts to the well-being of society.

E. Men and Boys

We affirm that men and boys make important contributions to both church and society. We support equal
opportunities for all men and boys regardless of national origin, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, or other characteristics.

To ensure these rights, opportunities, and protections, we urge the church, governments, and civic institutions to develop equitable structures and policies to make certain that the dignity and worth of all men and boys are recognized and affirmed. We further call for the rights of men and boys to be safeguarded in education, employment, compensation and promotion, and parental rights and responsibilities.

We affirm the rights of men and boys to live free from harassment, violence, discrimination, domestic or workplace abuse, human trafficking, and gendered expectations that limit their full development as human beings. We encourage the creation of opportunities for their leadership potential to be nurtured, in order that they might thrive and contribute their gifts to the well-being of society.

F. Indigenous, Native, and Aboriginal Communities

We support the rights of indigenous, native, and aboriginal communities and affirm that like all people they must be afforded the basic rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We condemn acts of genocide against indigenous peoples and call for government treaties and contracts with native and aboriginal peoples to be honored and enforced.

We join with indigenous peoples and tribes to demand that their rights to exercise national sovereignty be upheld by governments and courts. We support the efforts of indigenous people to revitalize their languages and cultures in the face of concerted efforts to assimilate them into mainstream societies. We acknowledge that indigenous, native, and aboriginal peoples are entitled to control their land, water, and other resources, and we deplore any attempts to forcibly seize these resources or to forcibly remove indigenous people from their territories.

G. Migrants, Immigrants, and Refugees

We affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. In doing so, we acknowledge that the world today is facing an unprecedented crisis related to the displacement of vast numbers of people due to such factors as ongoing wars and other hostilities, foreign interventions, widespread famine and hunger, global warming and climate change, and the failure of nation-states to adequately protect and care for their people.

We recognize that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence, and abuse. We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment, and other kinds of support.

We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees. Additionally, we deplore attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions. We challenge policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children, and we oppose the existence of for-profit detention centers for such purposes.

H. People with Disabilities

We affirm the full humanity and acknowledge the gifts of people living with disabilities. We call for the elimination of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in the life of local congregations and the broader society. Though no one term has gained universal acceptance throughout our global connection, “people with disabilities” refers to a broad group of people living with distinctive cognitive, physical, developmental, sensory, neurological, intellectual, and psychological conditions or challenges.

We lament that the church has often stigmatized and discriminated against people with disabilities by imposing labels with negative connotations, by failing to make space in church life for the full range of God’s people, and by interpreting words such as “blind,” “lame,” and “deaf” in pejorative ways. Because of this, people with disabilities are frequently dismissed or undervalued, both in the church and in civil society. In response, we call the church to acts of repentance, to earnest listening, and to a collaborative ministry with people with disabilities so they can contribute their wisdom and gifts to the mission and ministry of local congregations and other church bodies.

We likewise call on civil society, business, and government leaders to work toward the removal of all barriers and to provide opportunities for those with disabilities to make their unique contributions to the entire society. We call for the protection of the rights of all people with disabilities, including the rights to health care, employment, education, housing and transportation, and to freedom from discrimination.

I. Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties, and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We see clear issues of equality and justice in protecting the rightful claims of those with shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual pow-
ers of attorney, and other lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.

J. Religious Minorities

We affirm the rights of religious minorities to worship in peace and to exercise their faith free from fear of discrimination or persecution. We condemn actions by any individual, group, or organization that denigrate or demean those belonging to another faith. As Christians, we consider such attitudes and actions to be antithetical to Jesus’ command to love one’s neighbor.

We urge governments, businesses, churches, and other institutions in civil society to take concerted action to preserve and protect the rights of all religious people. We object to any form of discrimination and intolerance toward religious minorities, including laws that ban religious clothing and symbols, and statements from public officials that incite intolerance, hatred, and violence. We call for responsible media coverage of religions and condemn the dissemination of stereotypes and untruths about religious minorities.

We endorse the rights of all religious people to practice their faith, free from unjustified and unnecessary legal, political, and financial restraints. We also support the right of individuals to choose their own faith, and we reject attempts to impose beliefs on people or to coerce or manipulate them into joining or remaining a part of a religious tradition when they have decided to disaffiliate. Individual religious belief must not be used to deny basic human rights.

Rationale:

This petition replaces ¶ 164 and removes ¶ 165 The World Community, the essence of which has been incorporated throughout the revision. The petition emphasizes their global relevance and theological grounding. For the complete revision proposal and background on the process see “Social Principles Revision Report and Addendum” located in
Proposed Resolutions

R6111.

Petition Number: 20554-CC-R6111-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land

Amend 4th sentence in 2nd paragraph:
Moving We oppose governments moving their embassies to Jerusalem is as a hindrance to just and lasting peace.

Amend 5th paragraph:
Whereas, the continuing confiscation of Palestinian land for construction of settlements and the building of a separation wall on Palestinian lands violates human rights, subverts the peace process, destroys the hope of both Israelis and Palestinians who are working for and longing for peace, and fosters a sense of desperation that can only lead to further violence; and

Amend 10th paragraph:
Whereas human rights organizations have documented that private foreign donors, including Jewish and Christian individuals and nonprofit organizations, have provided financial support for illegal settlements and that some of these donations are tax-deductible; and

Amend 11th paragraph:
Whereas, the church continues to work with ecumenical and interfaith bodies to advocate for Palestinian self-determination and an end to Israeli occupation; to affirm Israel’s right to exist within secure borders; to affirm the right of return for Palestinian refugees under international law; to call for region-wide disarmament; to urge Israelis and Palestinians to stop human rights violations and attacks on civilians, such as targeted assassinations and suicide bombings; and to urge all governments to initiate an arms embargo on the entire Middle East region;

Amend 12th paragraph:
Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and also the Syrian Golan Heights, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued blockade of Gaza where over half the residents are children, the military detention of Palestinian children—often without trial—the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a “Greater Israel” that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings.

Amend 14th paragraph:
Be it further resolved, that we urge all governments to end all military aid, arms transfers and arms sales to the region, and second to end all arms purchases from companies in the Middle East, and to redistribute the large amount of military aid now given to Israel and Egypt to fund humanitarian health and educational work such as that of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to support economic development efforts of nongovernmental organizations throughout the region, including religious institutions, human rights groups, labor unions, and professional groups within Palestinian communities.

Amend 16th paragraph:
We also urge the Palestinian Authority and all Palestinian religious and political leaders to continue to publicly condemn violence against Israeli civilians and to use nonviolent acts of disobedience to resist the occupation and the illegal settlements.

Amend 18th paragraph:
We ask all companies that profit from and/or support settlements through their business activities to examine these and stop any business that contributes to serious violations of international law, promotes systemic discrimination or otherwise supports ongoing military occupation or attempted annexation.

Amend 19th paragraph:
The United Methodist Church does not support a boycott of products made in Israel. Our opposition is to products made by Israeli companies operating in occupied Palestinian territories.

Rationale:
This petition updates expiring Resolution #6111 that affirms our nonviolent approach to equal rights and just peace for all in Israel/Palestine. It calls for ending arms transfers to the Middle East, advocating for Palestinian children’s rights, and ending the blockade of two million Gazans, half of whom are children.

R6112.

Petition Number: 20553-CC-R6112-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
United Nations Resolutions on the Israel-Palestine Conflict

WHEREAS, negotiations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority still have not achieved a just and lasting peace for both peoples; and

Revise paragraph 3:
WHEREAS, The UMC in the Social Principles recognizes and affirms the role of the United Nations in the just and lasting resolution of this conflict, “Believing that international justice requires the participation of all peoples, we endorse the United Nations and its related bodies and the International Court of Justice as the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law.” (¶ 165D), and

Revise paragraph 6:
WHEREAS, for more than 40-50 years the government of Israel has continued its military occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and the seizing of more and more Palestinian land for illegal settlements in direct violation of U.N. resolutions as well as United Methodist General Conference resolutions, and

Revise paragraph 9:
WHEREAS, May 2012-2020 marks over 70 years since the establishment of the State of Israel as well as the dispossession of over 750,000-900,000 Palestinians who are still seeking their full human rights, and

Revise paragraph 14:
Be it further resolved, that the United Methodist Church call upon the United States, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to accept the authority of Security Council resolutions, to refrain from vetting resolutions, and abide by Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and 2334 as well as all other relevant UN resolutions and International Court of Justice rulings, that provide a framework for bringing this conflict to a just and permanent end.

Rationale:
This petition updates expiring Resolution #6112 relying on the core principles of international law and U.N. resolutions as the basis for equality and just peace for all in Israel/Palestine.

End Impunity in the Philippines

Delete Resolution #6117, End Impunity in the Philippines.

Rationale:
This petition proposes to delete Resolution #6117 “End Impunity in the Philippines” because its main points were incorporated in the proposed revision of Resolution #6118 “Philippines: Democratic Governance, Human Rights, and the Peace Process.”

R6118.
Petition Number: 20551-CC-R6118-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Philippines: Democratic Governance, Human Rights, and the Peace Process

Rewrite:
Justice is pushed aside; / righteousness far off, / because truth has stumbled in the public square, / and honesty can’t enter. / Truth is missing; / anyone turning from evil is plundered. / The Lord looked and was upset at the absence of justice. / Seeing that there was no one, / and astonished that no one would intervene... (Isaiah 59:14-16)

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you. How often I wanted to gather your people together just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that.” (Matthew 23:37)

“An injustice does not only affect the people against whom the injustice is committed, but threatens everyone one of us and the life we share together as an ordered society. It is a Christian imperative that we are vigilant in defending the rights of every person at all times. Long before human rights were formulated in law, they were inscribed in the being of every person, for it is in the very image of God that we are created. For human rights to have meaning they need to be vigilantly defended, where possible the dignity of those denied their rights needs to be restored, and those who are responsible for violations, be they states or individuals need to be made accountable. In our Philippine society we have seen the institutionalization of a culture of impunity, where those who violate the human rights of others, are able to escape investigation and prosecution” (Rev. Fr. Rex R. B. Reyes, co-chairperson, Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform, and former General Secretary, National Council of Churches in the Philippines).

R6117.
Petition Number: 20552-CC-R6117-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.
Our Concern: Intensifying Impunity Amidst Increasing Militarization in the Philippines

The United Methodist Church is increasingly alarmed by and concerned about the intensifying violations of human rights in the Philippines. Such violations that take place within the perpetual framework of U.S. counterinsurgency and military doctrine, and the revival of a “war on drugs” rhetoric, take the form of rampant extrajudicial killings, summary executions, abductions, torture, arbitrary and prolonged political detentions, and enforced disappearances.

The Philippines has ratified all the core U.N. international human rights treaties currently in force, save only the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is enshrined in its Constitution. Sadly, the protections that these treaties and declaration afford to every human being are being wantonly denied, and with impunity, in the Philippines.

Since the beginning of Rodrigo Roa Duterte’s term as president, victims of human rights violation have reached an outrageous total of over 20,000 extrajudicial killings under his administration’s war on drugs. 216 politically motivated extrajudicial killings, 100 victims of torture, 2,000 illegally arrested, 540 political prisoners, and 447,000 displaced by military operations and bombings (Commission on Human Rights, Dec. 2018; Karapatan Report, November 2018).

These examples make the Philippines notorious as the country with one of the highest levels of impunity, according to the 2017 global impunity indices released by Universidad De Las Americas Pueblas in Mexico and the Committee to Protect Journalists. According to the 2018 Annual Report of U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), more civilians were killed in the Philippines during that year than in Iraq, Somalia or the Democratic Republic of Congo. The report highlighted the “lethality of President Rodrigo Duterte’s ‘War on Drugs’-cum-state terror campaign” (<https://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ACLED_2018-The-Year-in-Review_Final_Pub-1.pdf> accessed on 7 March 2019).

The number of deaths in the government’s “war on drugs” both at the hands of the police and by unknown individuals is alarming. There are varying reports with regards to the number of casualties that were killed without due process—from more than 5,000 to around 23,000. Whatever the actual tally is, one life killed is one too many. Moreover, the killings have not been adequately investigated nor the assailants identified, charged and apprehended.

In his report in December 2018, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst, underscored that the Philippine government’s deadly campaign on illegal drugs “has created a climate of insecurity and impunity for extrajudicial killings that affects human rights defenders.” Citing figures and reports from various human rights groups, he especially noted that those who face higher risks are those who defend farmers’ rights, land and environmental rights, peasant rights, indigenous rights and labor rights. Forst also stated that activists, politicians aligned with the left, journalists, and lawyers are also subject to higher levels of attacks and threats.

Forst called on the government to develop “protection mechanisms” to ensure the safety of human rights defenders and urged the government to “cease immediately the public stigmatization of human rights defenders, which can incite perpetrators to act against them, and instead to publicly recognize the legitimacy and importance of their work.” He also called on the government to “review and desist from employing counter-insurgency measures that result in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and human rights violations.

Forst also asked the government to “…reaffirm its commitment to the rule of law and ensure that human rights violations are properly investigated, including those allegedly committed by state actors, to make the perpetrators accountable and mitigate the culture of impunity” (<https://www.protecting-defenders.org/sites/protecting-defenders.org/files/UNSR%-20HRDs-%20World%20report%202018.pdf>. Accessed January 27, 2019).

Global Witness reported that 48 environmental defenders, the highest in Asia, were killed in the country in 2017, almost half of which were linked to struggles against agribusiness. They particularly cited the massacre of eight indigenous persons in Lake Sebu in South Cotabato, in the island of Mindanao. The community was resisting the encroachment of a coffee plantation. The report further underscored that President Rodrigo Duterte’s aggressively anti-human-rights stance and a renewed military presence in resource-rich regions are fuelling the violence (<https://www.globalwitness.org/en-gb/campaigns/environmental-activists/defenders-annual-report/> _Accessed January 21, 2019_).

The Global Analysis 2018 of Front Line Defenders also stated that 39 rights advocates who were working for defenders of land, indigenous peoples’ and environmental rights were killed last year. They noted that most of the killings were linked to struggles against mining and other extractive industries (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/global-analysis-2018 Accessed January 21 <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org>
The U.S. State Department 2017 Human Rights Report states that the most significant human rights issues in the Philippines included: “killings by security forces, vigilantes and others allegedly connected to the government, and by insurgents; torture and abuse of prisoners and detainees by security forces; often harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; warrantless arrests by security forces and cases of apparent government disregard for legal rights and due process; political prisoners; killings of and threats against journalists; official corruption and abuse of power; threats of violence against human rights activists; violence against women; and forced labor.”

The Philippines persists in officially collaborating with the United States-sanctioned war on terror, willingly subordinating itself to interests of U.S. militarism. Under President Duterte, the Philippines has reaffirmed its adherence to the U.S. Counterinsurgency Program of 2009 as its continuing blueprint for counterinsurgency, a methodology demonstrably dismissive of human rights and repudiated by United Nations Special Rapporteurs and international human rights organizations. Criticisms directed at the Armed Forces of the Philippines about its dismal human rights record since 2007 have been defended by the defense establishment as falling within the frame of counterinsurgency. Such frame is inherently flawed and fundamentally at odds with the genuine pursuit of peace and the protection of human rights.

Still, the Philippine government continues its collaboration within this framework, allowing yet another U.S. counter-terror operation to be implemented on Philippine territory: Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines. This was launched in September 2017 by the U.S. Department of Defense as an Overseas Contingency Operation – a status that makes the operation eligible for exemptions from fiscal spending limits – alongside Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria as part of the never-ending war on terror campaign.

Very disturbing is the increasingly militarized approach of both the Philippine and U.S. governments to the economic development of and humanitarian crises in the Philippines and its neighboring nations in Asia and the Pacific. This approach intensified following the 2012 announcement of plans by the U.S. Department of Defense to “pivot to Asia” (see <http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf>). The Asia pivot heralded the Pentagon’s strategy to shift at least 60 percent of its military forces to the Asia Pacific, including the Philippines. It is a U.S. bid to protect and expand the United States’ market and military interests in the region, at the cost of environmental preservation, labor protections, and national sovereignty of free nations. By the end of 2018, the U.S. signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act that enshrines a policy framework to enhance U.S. economic and security presence in the Indo-Pacific. This military, defense, and foreign policy focus on Asia benefits the advancement of free-trade partnerships and agreements in Asia. This partnership agreement is modeled after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that has devastated the economies of Mexico and Central America, triggering an exponential increase in the migration of people fleeing poverty and violence. The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump is pursuing a bilateral agreement with the Philippines in the same vein. This neoliberal economic strategy seeks to further open markets in the Philippines and throughout Asia, ultimately making the fragile economies of the region even more vulnerable to intrusion and domination by foreign multinational corporations.

The Backdrop of United Methodist and Ecumenical Witness in the Philippines

There is expressed opposition of the ecumenical community in the Philippines to the TPP as one example of neo-liberal agreements. In a statement dated August 24, 2014, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) stated: “The President’s attempt to reopen the issue of Charter change is related to influence being exerted by the U.S. government, large corporations and some developed countries in the region to pave the way for the entry of the Philippines into a massive ‘free-trade’ agreement referred to as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP negotiations that were a central discussion point during the recent visit of U.S. President [Barack] Obama have been shrouded in secrecy.

Intimidation and violence have met the opposition by Filipino peoples to the economic impositions by foreign powers such as the TPP, and China’s new “Belt and Road” initiative, and the violation of their human rights, especially the human rights of indigenous peoples, farm workers, and land tillers in rural areas. Philippine military, paramilitary forces, private armies and vigilante groups of warlords, and big landlords and multinational corporations have been documented to be in collusion (http://www.hrw.org/asia/-philippines). <file:///C:Users\Wayne\Desktop\Unedited%20Petitions\http:www.hrw.org\asia\philippines>.

Under the terms of the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the U.S. and the Philippines, since 2006 more than 600 American special-operations forces, as well as an estimated 200 to 300 military and intelligence advisers have been on “permanent rotation” in

Joint training exercises involving several thousands of U.S. and Philippine military personnel are conducted dozens of times every year on Philippine air, land and water. Such exercises serve as a not-so-subtle reminder of the military muscle backing up both the Philippine military and U.S. business interests in the region.

When Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest typhoon in recorded history to hit land, struck the Philippines in 2013, the enormity of destruction to human lives, infrastructure, and property was staggering. More than 6,000 people were confirmed dead, nearly four million people were displaced, and 1,600 were declared missing. The immediate response of the U.S. government was to send military support to the Philippines. The U.S. “pivot to Asia Pacific” meant sending ships, weapons, and soldiers, in stark contrast to other countries that provided medical professionals, engineers, aid workers, and food.

This militarized and securitized approach to humanitarian aid was cemented in a new agreement called Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which was signed by the U.S. and the Philippines a mere five months after Typhoon Haiyan. As the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and numerous Status of Forces and Mutual Logistics Support Agreements before it, forged between the U.S. and other states after, the EDCA is also an access agreement. It grants the U.S. the ability and flexibility to station its war materiel, Special Operations Forces, and forces to handle “housekeeping” matters, such as logistics support, administration, and military justice. The aim is to wage asymmetrical warfare against anyone: governments, “rogue states,” but also activists. The activists who are opposed to the economic and security interests of the U.S. are casually branded as terrorists.

EDCA also protects the interests of the oil, mining, agribusiness, banking and technology corporations that depend on the U.S. military to protect U.S. investments and operations on foreign soil. Such protection extends to the water and airways that serve as the shipping lanes for global commodities, even when such protections have contributed to the destruction in the Philippines of livelihoods and properties of over 13,000 people and the displacement of nearly 50,000 people during Benigno Aquino III’s presidency.

This same pattern has extended and been enhanced under the new administration of Rodrigo Duterte. During the first two years of his presidency, 2016-2018, renovation of existing and construction of new Philippine military installations began in five EDCA-designated sites throughout the country, to be utilized and occupied by the U.S. military in an underhanded circumvention of the constitutional prohibition of foreign bases on Philippine territory. U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles, drones and military intelligence personnel were witnessed by media and civilians during the Philippine military’s bombing campaign of Marawi City in Mindanao and nearby communities of indigenous people in 2017. U.S. support was used to provide intelligence to the Philippine military’s operation to eradicate a handful of purported terrorists in the region, but resulted in the destruction of Marawi City to rubble and the displacement of over 400,000 people.

Under the guise of containing and controlling terrorism in Marawi, the entire island of Mindanao has been under martial law since May 2017.

Retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, Hon. Reynato Puno, who was the first Filipino United Methodist to hold this high position, said in a university commencement speech: “One visible result of the scramble to end terrorism is to take legal shortcuts and legal shortcuts always shrink the scope of human rights. . . . These shortcuts have scarred the landscape of rights in the Philippines. . . . The escalation of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines has attracted the harsh eye of advocates of human rights. . . . Their initial findings do not complement our Constitutional commitment to protect human rights. . . . If there is any lesson that we can derive from the history of human rights, it is none other than these rights cannot be obliterated by bombs but neither can they be preserved by bullets alone. Terrorism is a military/police problem but its ultimate solution lies beyond the guns of our armed forces. . . . The apathy of those who can make a difference is the reason why violations of human rights continue to prosper. The worst enemy of human rights is not its nonbelievers but the fence sitters who will not lift a finger despite their violations.”

Patronage politics, an economy controlled by oligarchies, and a tightening space for democratic speech and organizing to air grievances against powerful political and economic forces characterize the Philippine situation today. This situation has led to prophetic and forthright witness by churches and ecumenical groups, including United Methodist leaders and members in the country, asserting it as a moral response.

On January 25, 2019, various church groups including bishops, members of the clergy and religious formations of the Roman Catholic Church, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and its member churches like The United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), organized the “One Faith, One Nation, One Voice” interfaith event in Manila calling for truth, justice and peace. The College of Bishops of the Philippines Central Conference of The United Methodist Church released a statement for the occasion. It states: “As believers and servants of a God who sets
people free, we join in solidarity with our people who are dwelling and sitting in darkness, and yet are seeing a bright light.

“As ONE people living and walking in this LAND covered by the dark shadow of death, with death casting its shadow on us now living in this land—what with the widespread and wanton killings of the poor and the attacks on the defenders of human rights, attacks on labor unions, on lawyers, on teachers, on peasants, on media, and on the religious and clergy—light has dawned (John 1:1-5). . . . We deepen our commitment in asserting the truth of God’s promise of abundant life as ONE VOICE.

“Our faith imbues us with the courage to hope for the future, to speak the truth in love, to do justice, and to build a lasting peace in our nation. Our FAITH moves us to defend human dignity and promote respect for our God-given LIFE, to join, unite and always be in solidarity to defend human dignity and promote respect for our to build a lasting peace in our nation. Our FAITH moves us to defend human dignity and promote respect for our God-given LIFE, to join, unite and always be in solidarity with the people, so that with ONE VOICE we may proclaim God’s intention of making justice roll down like a never-ending stream (Amos 5:24), and so that lasting peace may be known throughout the land. So that as ONE NATION, we can begin to witness to what is true, honest, just, and good (Philippians 4:8), rebuking those who steal from the public coffers, who kill the poor and their servants” (Solidarity Statement: One Faith. One Nation. One Voice. The College of Bishops of the Philippines Central Conference, The United Methodist Church, 21 January 2019).

Speaking to the accountability of Philippine government officials in the way they disburse and use funds from the public coffers, United Methodist bishops of the Philippines and the leaders of the Philippines Central Conference Board of Church and Society asserted:

“[O]ur country has been governed by an oligarchy of big business people and big landlords who effectively influence all the branches of government and have succeeded in preserving their selfish interest at the expense of the greater interest of the people. The amassing of immoral wealth dog[s] the heels of the ancient shepherds/rulers who disregarded their flock. . . .

“The present outcry against PDAF [Priority Development Assistance Fund] and DAP [Disbursement Acceleration Program] is all about misappropriating the people’s money while shrugging off any responsibility especially to the poor of the land, and then shifting that burden to those who create those resources. Taxes and other revenues are all managed and manipulated by the unholy alliance of political and economic elites for their own benefit and to the neglect of the hungry sheep who are deprived of those resources” (Statement by Philippines Central Conference. The Filipino People Deserve Servant Leaders and Righteous Governance!).

The Human Rights Situation Is Appalling

Known as “the punisher” while a city mayor for two decades prior to being elected president of the Philippines in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte has gained international notoriety for the extrajudicial killings in the streets that his despotic approach to law and order has imposed on the country. A New York Times editorial in April 2017 stated: “After he was elected president last year, Mr. Duterte took [his] killing campaign nationwide, effectively declaring an open season for police and vigilantes on drug dealers and users.”

Within the first six months of his presidency, over 2,000 people merely accused of being drug users or dealers as well as children caught in the crossfire were killed by police or vigilantes under the cover of the “war on drugs,” with no due process whatsoever. By the end of 2018, the estimated number of people extrajudicially killed in the war on drugs climbed to over 20,000 and possibly as high as 27,000, according to the Philippines Commission on Human Rights.

Many international groups—religious bodies, nongovernmental organizations, foreign governments, and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations—have criticized President Duterte for fostering the culture of impunity in the Philippines and pressed the Philippine government to do more to stop the many disturbing forms of human rights violations in the Philippines country, urging the government to fulfill its constitutional and international law obligations. These human rights violations continue unabated and are escalating with impunity. Calls to stop them are contained in detailed, credible, and substantiated reports from various sources. Such reports were issued by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions; the U.S. State Department, in particular its Country Report on Human Rights Practices, from 2007 to the present; Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; Human Rights First; and the Asian Human Rights Commission.

Cases against President Duterte for gross crimes against humanity have been filed with the International Criminal Court in The Hague and with the International Peoples Tribunal, which in a hearing conducted in September 2018, found President Duterte and the Philippine government guilty of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and violations of law and legal instruments.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), paramilitary units under its control, and the Philippine National Police (PNP) continue to be implicated in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and illegal arrests and detention; the majority of victims were peasant activists, farmers and indigenous peoples. The targeting of these specific populations reveals the victimization
of people actively resisting economic exploitation, land grabbing, and forced displacement. (Many extrajudicial killings were conducted with impunity through the very familiar and visible method involving two men on a motorcycle with hidden or missing license plates, faces covered, driving up and shooting the victim or victims with a handgun, and then speeding off to evade identification and arrest).

Many of the victims of human-rights violations are themselves human-rights defenders, also labor leaders, peasant leaders, environmentalists, journalists, clergy and others fighting against graft and corruption, and for peace and justice. They are frequently vilified as “enemies of the state” by the police and military establishments, tagged as supporters of a 50-year-long armed struggle conducted by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and its armed wing, the New Peoples Army. Their vilification has been used by paramilitary forces under the control of the police and military as some sort of license to arrest, even kill, these ordinary citizens and their community leaders. In 2018, the Department of Justice (DOJ) of the Philippines issued a list of 656 names of people that the Department claims to be known members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army; because the Department seeks to officially declare these organizations as “terrorist and outlawed organizations” under the Human Security Act of 2017, in effect, those persons named on the list are declared to be terrorists and puts them at risk for warrantless arrest, detention, enforced disappearance and even extra-judicial execution. Immediately condemned as a “blacklist” by human rights organizations worldwide, the DOJ list goes so far as to include the names of a United Nations Special Rapporteur, internationally renowned environmental and indigenous rights activists, and many other human rights defenders.

As with previous administrations, Church people were not spared from violence and abuse. Three Roman Catholic priests, a lay preacher of UCCP in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte, a lay worker of the IFI Diocese of Romblon-Mindoro, and a pastor of the Kings Glory Ministry, Mindoro Oriental were killed (see Churches As Human Rights Defenders—A Resource Book on Human Rights, National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 2018, p. 55). There were also cases of black-listing and deportation of foreign missionaries including three Global Mission Fellows of the United Methodist Church. The Rt. Rev. Carlo Morales of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI)-Diocese of Ozamis was arrested based on trumped-up charges; he was later released on bail after ten months. There remain many incidences of intimidation and harassment among members of the clergy and active church laypersons.

Harassment by military and paramilitary forces is rampant among indigenous peoples who are protesting against dislocation from their ancestral lands. Forced dislocations have happened due to increased operation of extractive mining companies that have sprung up in many parts of the country, but mostly in indigenous peoples’ lands. A hearing on the killing of four members of the B’laan tribe in Mindanao, who protested against the large Tampakan copper-gold mine being proposed and developed by Sagittarius Mines Inc., disclosed that the mining company has paramilitary-armed men on its payroll who are under the nominal command of the AFP.

In the case of Manobo tribes of Southern Mindanao, armed paramilitary units operate in their indigenous communities and are pitted against their own tribes who are opposed to large-scale logging, mining and other foreign-funded projects like hydroelectric power plants that encroach into their ancestral lands.

Hamletting, food blockades, food rationing, and establishing curfew hours are just some of the harassment committed to force these indigenous peoples into submission.

Those who dare resist are threatened and many of them eventually become victims of extrajudicial killings. In situations where entire communities protest the encroachment, massive military operations have been undertaken, causing dislocations of entire villages, such as the evacuation of 118 families of the Talaingod-Manobos in 2014. The schooling of indigenous children is compromised, even stopped, under these situations. A campaign to spare schools from combat and to declare the schools as zones of peace is of paramount importance. (This area of Mindanao where the Manobos have their ancestral lands has been visited five times between 2010 and 2014 by a group organized under the auspices of the Philippines Task Force of the California-Pacific Annual Conference and leads hosting in the Philippines by Panalipdan-Southern Mindanao, a broad alliance of environmentalists and people’s organizations with a strong human-rights advocacy, and the Davao Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church.)

**Persistence in Peace Negotiations**

The past 50 years have been marked by two armed conflicts waged separately against the Government of the Philippines (GPH) by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Through the process of peace negotiations, the GPH and the MILF forged an agreement to end formally their armed hostilities. The two parties signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2014. The peace talks between GPH and NDFP (https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publica
Before the unilateral cancelation of peace talks by President Duterte, unprecedented progress was achieved in the negotiations from 2016-2017, with the two parties beginning to negotiate the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER), a substantive agreement that is considered the “meat” of the talks as it addresses the social and economic inequities at the roots of the conflict.

There are palpable challenges to the peace process. Thousands of grievances have been filed against the AFP and PNP for violating the JASIG and CARHRIHL. The peace talks are derailed by the cold-blooded murder of NDFP peace-negotiation consultants and the imprisonment of registered NDFP peace-negotiation consultants on false charges. There are the EJKs, disappearances, and illegal arrest and torture of people tagged as NPA sympathizers. These governmental acts undermine the peace process and must be stopped at all costs.

The Filipino People Deserve Our Solidarity and Action

We welcome the release of “Let the Stones Cry Out: An Ecumenical Report on Human Rights in the Philippines and a Call to Action” released by the ecumenical and nongovernmental community in the Philippines, led by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, whose production and distribution was led and supported by a couple of general agencies of The United Methodist Church.

We share with the ecumenical community in the Philippines the perspective posed and the burden of the question raised in the ecumenical report’s preface: “Something is wrong when members of the clergy and lay missionaries are being silenced when they are deeply engaged in missions that address the concerns of their constituencies—and the Philippine society as a whole. Something is wrong when members of the Church and faith institutions are killed, go missing or are arrested while pursuing their calling to bring about justice closer to the poor, to fight for their rights, and advocate peace in a society that is torn asunder by armed conflicts fueled by structural problems. Of greater alarm is that the gross and systematic attacks on these pilgrims of peace and servants of God are forcing their institutions to an inevitable clash with the State.”

We issue this statement not only to support the ecumenical report from the Philippines and the direction in which its call to action points. We issue this statement because the struggle for human rights in the Philippines is at a point when our solidarity and accompaniment, as we have expressed in many ways and many times in the past, are crucial and needed even more so today.
We Commit to Action with Resolve and Dispatch

Filipino faith communities and citizens continue to address the situation in the Philippines. General boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church have addressed the human rights situation in the Philippines in a variety of ways and venues, including providing to the Philippine Working Group (PWG) of the Asia Pacific Forum of U.S. and Canadian church and ecumenical staff executives, which helped produce the ecumenical human rights report and supported the itineration in Canada, U.S., and Europe, of a Philippine ecumenical delegation called \"Ecumenical Voice for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines.\" This ecumenical voice has briefed U.S. House of Representatives members and testified at a US Senate hearing on March 14, 2007. This ecumenical voice has submitted numerous reports to, and addressed the sessions of, the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva, engaging this global-human rights body in its Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines. This ecumenical voice has since expanded its membership, and its voice is ever more heard and its perspective ever more sought, in the Philippines and abroad.

Our denomination also helped secure meetings with the U.S. State Department and key congressional offices to raise concerns about the Philippine human rights situation. Our denomination, through a number of its boards and agencies, also accompanied the ecumenical delegation in submitting the ecumenical report to a variety of United Nations-related offices in Geneva, Switzerland, especially the U.N. Human Rights Council, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the U.N. Special Rapporteurs on Indigenous Peoples, and on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

Other annual conferences in the United States, such as California-Nevada, Pacific Northwest, Desert Southwest, California-Pacific, and Northern Illinois, have also addressed these issues, including conducting fact-finding, solidarity, and mission trips to the Philippines. In all these visits, Philippine Church leaders and Church workers showed them the appalling human rights situation and in turn the visitors voiced their concern with government and military officials, and expressed their solidarity with church and community leaders.

We Commit to Work on the Following Actions

We will submit this statement to concerned governmental and intergovernmental offices to convey our call to the Philippine government to stop immediately illegal arrests and prolonged detention; stop the killings, disappearances, torture, forced displacement; and stop all the other forms of human-rights violations.

We also call on the Philippine government to take effective measures to bring to justice members of its security forces and their agents for whom there is credible evidence of human rights violations, to comply with its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian laws, to rescind national security policies that make no distinction between combatants and non-combatants, to hold free and fair elections, and to investigate any allegations of electoral fraud.

We call on the Philippine government to stop the practice of listing peace and human rights advocates in its watch lists of individuals banned from entering or leaving the Philippines and to expunge such record of names already listed.

We call on other governments, but especially the governments of the United States of America, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and significant development aid and trading partners like Japan, to look into these human rights violations and pressure the Philippine government to stop them. To this end, we also support moves within the U.S. Congress calling for a review of official development aid, and trade and economic arrangements to examine whether these do or do not further exacerbate human rights violations.

We support the call to require the Department of Defense of the United States to file Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports, including social impacts, with every U.S. military or resource deployment in the Philippines, to prevent environmental damages, as well as remediation of environmental damages caused U.S. military activities.

We especially call for any military appropriations and official development assistance to the Philippine government to be withheld unless the Philippine government demonstrates strict adherence to international laws and standards of human rights and good governance, and thereby supports the development and use of benchmarks that will guide and measure the Philippine government’s adherence to the same.

Since human rights thrive under democratic, just, and peaceful conditions we therefore call for the resumption and full engagement of peace talks by the government, without preconditions, with all of the Philippine rebel groups. With the successful completion of negotiations the civil, political, social, economic, and cultural problems that beset the Philippines may yet result in just and durable peace.

We call on the United Nations and its agencies to continue investigating human rights violations in the Philippines, and to offer help to the Philippine government in meeting its international obligations, including non-interference, empowerment, and capacity-building of non-
governmental organizations in their work of monitoring Philippine government compliance and promotion of human rights.

We call for the termination of military agreements between the U.S. and the Philippines that prioritize profits over people and foster conditions that abet the culture of impunity in the Philippines. Lastly, we call on our general boards, agencies, annual conferences, and local churches in the U.S. and throughout the global connection, including the National Association of Filipino American United Methodists, to work with Philippine annual conferences, ecumenical bodies, and nongovernmental organizations in joint undertakings to address the peace and human rights situation in the Philippines.

We must keep our eyes on the prize even as we struggle for the recognition of each one’s human dignity and fight for each one’s human rights.

“These are the things you should do: Speak the truth to each other; make truthful, just, and peaceable decisions within your gates. Don’t plan evil for each other. Don’t adore swearing falsely, for all of these are things that I hate, says the LORD” (Zechariah 8:16-17 CEB).

Rationale:

This petition updates a 20-year-old resolution. It incorporates key points from Resolutions #6117 “End Impunity in the Philippines” and #6138 “Pursue Formal Peace Talks in Philippines,” both proposed for deletion. The Board of Church and Society of the Philippines Central Conference participated in rewriting.

R6135.

Petition Number: 20550-CC-R6135-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

Korea Peace, Justice, and Reunification

Revise:

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us (Ephesians 2:14 NRSV).

At the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Busan, South Korea, in late 2013, the delegates declared in a statement the following, which could also serve as a faith statement of our commitment to peace and reconciliation:

“As a global body of believers in Jesus Christ, we confess our sins in having given in to the powers and principalities of the world in their wars and military conflicts full of hate and enmity, armed with nuclear arsenals and weapons of mass destruction targeting humanity and the whole of God’s creation. Also we lament our failure to adequately acknowledge the Korean people’s long suffering, caused by external powers fighting for colonial expansion and military hegemony. We hereby join the Christians in Korea in their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, who came to this world as our Peace (Ephesians 2:13-19); who suffered, died upon the Cross, was buried, and rose again to reconcile humanity to God, to overcome divisions and conflicts, and to liberate all people and make them one (Acts 10:36-40); who, as our Messiah, will bring about a new Heaven and new Earth (Revelation 21-22). With this confession, we join in firm commitment with the Christians of Korea, both North and South, especially in Korean churches’ faithful actions to work towards peace, healing, reconciliation and reunification of their people and their land” (WCC Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula).

This statement remains to be true. In pursuit of these biblical foundations, the greater Wesleyan family reinforced such understanding at a roundtable hosted by the General Board of Global Ministries, on behalf of The United Methodist Church, World Methodist Council, the Korean Methodist Church, with the support of the World Council of Churches and the group it coordinates, called the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula.

The roundtable held in Atlanta on 11 November 2018, provides an update to the context where we act out our advocacy for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula. The statement, says, in part, “During this year of the 65th anniversary of the Korean War armistice, great progress has been made in opening a new dialogue for peace between North Korea and South Korea, as well as between North Korea and the United States of America. An explosive escalation of tensions between North Korea and the United States last year caused a dangerous crisis, threatening to precipitate another war on the Korean peninsula that would have had catastrophic impacts on the North-East Asian region and the whole world. . . . In this emergency situation, we realized anew that the Cold War system of division on the Korean Peninsula is a serious threat to peace and life globally.

Fortunately, during this same period, people’s yearning for justice, peace, and democracy, exemplified by the Candlelight Civil Revolution, rose to political prominence in the Republic of Korea. Emerging from this revolution, President Moon Jae-in’s government initiated a new dialogue with North Korea. The PyeongChang Winter Olympics served to increase the momentum. From the April 27 Panmunjom Inter-Korean summit, to the June 12 Singapore U.S. & North Korea summit, to the September 19...
Pyongyang Joint Declaration, North Korea and South Korea and the U.S. have been moving toward declaring the end of the Korean War and resolving hostile relations among them, as well as denuclearization, and fostering a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

The Atlanta Statement included declarations, which in part said:

We confess that we, the followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace, have failed to seek Christ’s peace for the divided and suffering people of the two Koreas. We have often demonized our enemies whom Christ calls us to forgive and love. We have been more skeptical than hope-filled toward peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. We have often embodied the spirit of hostility rather than the spirit of hospitality. We repent and seek God’s transformative forgiveness that turns our failures into opportunities for grace and reconciliation.

We believe that the grace of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, traversing the boundaries of ideologies and religions, leads all the unrighteous and ungodly from the wrath of God to the restorative justice of God (Romans 1:18; 3:20/uni201021). . . . Notwithstanding this year’s progress toward peace on the Korean Peninsula, we are still standing on the crossroads between choosing the God of life or choosing the nuclear idol of death.

The Tragedy of Division and the Urgency of Peace

Christians in Korea have spoken about the urgency of the reunification of their nation. The Atlanta consultation characterized the tragedy of division and the urgency of peace in this manner:

“For the last 70 years, North Korea and South Korea have been separated by a hostile wall of division and have not overcome the tragedy of antagonistic symbiosis. One seems unable to exist without the other’s animosity. North Korea has been cited as an imminent threat to justify an authoritarian grip on power, while North Korea cited potential U.S. aggression as a pretext for keeping its people on a war footing and for building nuclear arsenals. Yet, God who reigns in history is capable of ending the captivity of the Korean nation. As the people of God press their hands together to pray for the Kingdom of God and its righteousness on the Korean Peninsula, God will start to ‘disarm the rulers and authorities’ (Colossians 2:15). . . .

“We pledge to work for peace, indeed the peace of Christ, which makes ‘both groups into one’ (Ephesians 2:14 [NRSV]). The time to enact this pledge is upon us. The system of division on the Korean Peninsula is now shaking. The stakes are high, and the moment is urgent. At the same time, the geopolitical world orders emerging during the last century, especially as then promulgated by the U.S., are taking new directions and shapes in some regions. Motivated by new ambitions, these changes are arguably affecting and even threatening peace. These changes may affect progress in Northeast Asia, including in Korea.”

Celebrating one hundred years of Korean Methodism in 1985, the Korean Methodist Church, in its Centennial Statement, said:

“Faced as we are with the forty years’ tragic division of the Korean Peninsula, we express our longing for unification of the nation in any form possible through peaceful means in the earliest possible time. This must be done through establishing a democratic political structure based upon freedom and human rights, and must be fulfilled by working toward the establishment of a just society built for the sake of the people. Therefore, we reject any form whatever of dictatorship. Deploiring the long history of our nation in which the reality has been the sacrifice of our country’s political life, and now with a definite sense of national self-determination which rejects any domination by the superpowers, we disavow any form of war or the taking of life, and commit the whole strength of the Korean Methodist Church to the peaceful reunification of our country.”

For the nation of Korea, divided for more than sixty years, justice, peace, and reconciliation are tragically overdue. In 1945, just before the end of World War II, the United States proposed and the Soviet Union agreed to the division of Korea, which resulted in the Korean War with more than 3 million lives lost and millions of families separated. The tragedy of the Korean people continued because the Korean War did not end with a Peace Treaty. Instead, the Armistice Treaty was signed in 1953 leaving the Korean Peninsula under a state of war and tension for more than sixty years. This resulted in the separation of families, many of whom never saw each other again.

The enmity between the superpowers has been played out in the Korean tragedy of war and death, dictatorship and militarization, separation of one people into two hostile camps and divided families with no contact at all. All members of the body of Christ have a responsibility to support the Korean people in their attempts to build democracy, reduce tension, create trust on the Korean Peninsula, heal the divisions, and reunite their country. The threat to peace remains critical with the world’s fifth and sixth largest armies facing each other across the Demilitarized Zone.

A Renewed Momentum for Diplomacy and the Korean Peoples’ Resolve for Peace

A growing momentum for peace in the Korean Peninsula and the Northeast Asia region is palpable. Both governments of South Korea and North Korea are in direct contact with each other in ways never seen before. Through
inter-Korea talks, they are seeking ways to achieve peace and reconcile; in what manner, only time will tell. That the diplomatic contact is at the highest levels, between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, if any, is indicative of their determination to end the division of the peninsula, declare an end to the de facto Korean War, enter into a peace treaty, and forge an agreement of a denuclearized peninsula and region. The direct engagement of President Donald Trump of the United States with Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un initially in the Singapore Summit, proved as well the importance of diplomatic engagement and person-to-person dialogue in addressing difficult peace and security concerns between and among countries. Every such summit helps both or all sides to learn more of each other that is crucial in decision making. The engagement of other countries of consequence to the peace process in the Korean Peninsula, especially China, Russia, and Japan, must be encouraged.

The momentum for peace is not only pushed by governmental and diplomatic initiatives. The role of women in peacebuilding is gaining solid recognition. The successful crossing by women led by Women Cross DMZ of the two-mile wide Demilitarized Zone on 24 May 2018, International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament, demonstrated how seemingly impregnable divisions can be overcome. Since that historic and symbolic crossing, Women Cross DMZ has continued to mobilize women globally for peace in Korea (see https://www.womencrossdmz.org/).

The role of sports in fostering peace was again demonstrated at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Capitalizing on the Olympic spirit “to build a peaceful and better world,” the PyeongChang Olympics in South Korea in 2018 became the venue for the world to see the Korean peoples’ desire for peace. Meetings and conferences at the grassroots, national, regional, and international levels have since been held around this Olympic spirit. At the first anniversary commemoration of the PyeongChang Olympics, more than 500 people from 50 countries and 200 nongovernmental organizations around the world, supported by the national, provincial, and city governments and citizens where the Olympics were held, met Feb. 9-11, 2019, to focus the anniversary celebrations on the search for peace in the peninsula and in the world.

The PyeongChang Declaration for Peace that the conference produced said the following in part:

“The astonishing peace process ushered in by the Candlelight Revolution and manifested at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and Paralympics became a great inspiration for people around the world. Breaking through thick historical and political barriers erected during the previous century, the new process presents a ground-breaking model for peacebuilding efforts.

“By participating in sporting events, cultural and art exhibits collectively, we consolidate efforts for lasting peace. These steps are necessary to build trust and show there is a commonality for peace talks and processes. . . . We note with special attention that democracy and a galvanized civil society are constitutive of all peacebuilding efforts. . . . We the participants solemnly declare:

1. We fully support the peace process in the Korean peninsula and call to put an end to the Korean War. We enjoin all countries in the region to craft a peace and cooperation regime to undergird this peace process. Peace in the Korean Peninsula leads to peace in the world.”


“We appeal to all parties to take concrete steps for regional and global denuclearization. All concerned nations in the region should establish Northeast Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, which will greatly contribute to confidence-building and security for the region. . . . Ending the war and signing a peace treaty will unleash the momentum for the Korean people to participate fully in the international community and multilateral institutions, including the U.N. The peace process will enable the peoples of the Korean peninsula to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Comprehensive regional cooperation by both governments and citizens should be pursued in the fields of humanitarian, economic, and social development, based on the universally recognized norms and principles of human rights, democracy, human security, and gender equality. . . .

“The Korea peace process must extend to the region, focusing on the rivalry between superpowers and the en-
suing dangerous arms race. All nations in the region must immediately end politics of might and at the same time, start disarmament negotiations in all three areas of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and new weapon technology, in accordance with the U.N. Charter, international law and norms. We also call for the implementation of confidence-building measures including lifting of sanctions and the continued freeze of military exercises.

“Along with the Korea peace process, efforts should be made to establish regional cooperation mechanisms for peace in Northeast Asia, to reduce and resolve the escalating military tensions and conflicts in the region. We also call for the effective use of existing international mechanisms, including those within the United Nations. . . . All nations in the region must guarantee transparency and civic-democratic control in security and military sectors, immediately stop all efforts to use force or threats to resolve territorial disputes, and replace national rivalry with regional cooperation, prioritizing human security.”

North-South Reconciliation Efforts

In many ways, the Korean people, north and south, have expressed their strong desire for reunification. Since 1984, there have been official contacts and conversations on economic and humanitarian issues between the Republic of Korea (ROK, also known as South Korea) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North Korea). Emergency assistance by the DPRK and ROK following devastating floods in the south and floods and drought in the north was offered and accepted by each other.

The first government-sponsored exchange of visits between divided family members occurred in 1985. Thousands of overseas Koreans were able to visit their family members in the DPRK. Christians from north and south met in 1986 in Glion, Switzerland, as part of an ecumenical process on peace and the reunification of Korea led by the World Council of Churches. In 1987, both sides offered proposals to lower military tensions on the peninsula.

In June 2000, an unprecedented historic summit between North and South Korean leaders took place in Pyongyang, DPRK. ROK President Kim Dae Jung and DPRK Chairman Kim Jong Il pledged themselves to work toward Korean reunification. Since the summit, both Koreas have had numerous exchanges such as reunions of separated families, ministerial-level talks, and other economic, social, cultural, and sports exchanges including reconnection of railways and roads through the Demilitarized Zone.

The two Koreas marched together in the opening ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, carrying the Korean unification flag. In 2007, the late President Roh Moo Hyun urged U.S. President George W. Bush to resolve the Korean War by signing a peace treaty with North Korea. At the second summit between leaders of North and South Korea, President Roh and Chairman Kim Jong Il committed to resolving disputes in the West Sea surrounding the Northern Limit Line.

The relationship between the United States and the DPRK, however, has deteriorated due to the issues related to the DPRK’s withdrawal from the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, its violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework, and threats by the United States of preemptive strikes on North Korea.

In 1991, the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Cooperation was adopted by the Republic of Korea and DPRK; and in 1992, both countries signed a joint declaration on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In 1994, the United States and DPRK signed the Agreed Framework whose objective “was the freezing and replacement of North Korea’s indigenous nuclear power plant program . . . and the step-by-step normalization of relations between the U.S. and the DPRK” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreed_Framework, accessed Feb. 1, 2015). The agreement stipulated that funds would be provided to the DPRK from the United States, Japan, and ROK for the construction of two light-water electric power reactors. In addition, the U.S. agreed to provide 500,000 tons of heavy oil annually to the DPRK. In return, the DPRK agreed to forego any further accumulation of fuel rods that could be used to produce atomic bombs.

Over time, the mandates of the Agreement were violated by both sides. It is most desirable that the United States and the DPRK, through direct negotiations, redraft or update the 1994 Agreement encompassing all vital matters of interest to both sides, including DPRK’s nuclear-proliferation issues, and U.S. recognition of the sovereignty and security of the DPRK.

The Agreed Framework remains an important stabilizing element in U.S.-DPRK relations. It is one of the key tools of engagement by which DPRK uses incentives rather than threats to build inter-Korean and regional cooperation.

Historic Role of the Ecumenical Community for Peace in the Korean Peninsula

In 1986, as a result of consultations in Korea, North and South, with Christians and government representatives, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) adopted an important policy statement on “Peace and the Reunification of Korea.” United Methodist representatives participated fully in the development of this statement, in consultations on peace and
reunification, and in an official ecumenical delegation to North and South Korea in the summer of 1987.

The WCC Assembly of 2013, adopted the “Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” urging churches to “call upon all stakeholders in the region to participate in a creative process for building peace on the Korean Peninsula by halting all military exercises on the peninsula, by ceasing foreign intervention, withdrawing foreign troops and reducing military expenditures.” The statement called on ecumenical partners to be peacemakers and bridge builders for the two Koreas and the world; and to embark upon a universal campaign for a Peace Treaty to replace the Armistice of 1953, bringing an end to the state of war and paving the path toward reconciliation and peace.

“Since the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) held in Busan in 2013, the WCC and the international ecumenical movement have renewed their 30-year commitment to the search for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula. This has been done in accord with the WCC’s 1984 Tozanso Consultation. The WCC and the international ecumenical movement have intensified their commitment to accompanying the peace efforts of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the National Council of Churches in the Republic of Korea (NCCK). They have continued their advocacy for an end to the Korean War through the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty.

An important instrument for this ecumenical engagement has been and continues to be the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification, and Development Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK). The EFK was formed in 2006 with wide participation from international church bodies, including the WCC, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), and The United Methodist Church (UMC). The EFK has the dual purposes of strengthening ecumenical participation in the efforts for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula and North-East Asia, and of promoting effective ecumenical development cooperation in North Korea (cf. Atlanta Statement, 2018).

In an international ecumenical consultation held in May of 2013, United Methodist groups, including the United Methodist Korean American National Association Committee on Korean Reunification & Reconciliation and the National Council of Churches in Korea, issued the “Call for Peace and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula,” stating in part: “For too long, the Korean people have been divided and suffered from political brinkmanship, the wall of ideology, and the scourge of militarism. The Armistice Agreement of 1953 only temporarily halted the war that claimed 4 million lives and divided 10 million families. This lingering state of war on the Korean Peninsula is a major contributor to tension and instability, both regionally and globally, and contravenes the spirit of United Nations Resolution 39/11 that recognizes a people’s right to peace.

“We Christians of different communions, gathered together in the common cause of peace, are deeply concerned about the growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula over recent nuclear testing in North Korea and U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises. We join with the Korean people, both in North and South Korea, in yearning for reconciliation, reunification and sustainable peace. Replacing the Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty is and should be the first step in establishing a lasting and sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

Current Plan and Actions Taken by Agencies and Caucuses of the UMC

The Peace Committee of the Korean Association of the UMC, in close collaboration with other United Methodist churches, agencies and the ecumenical community, has initiated a four year Korea Peace Movement project in 2013 in response to “A Call for Peace March,” a petition adopted by General Conference of 2012 (Book of Resolutions #6130):

To promote the awareness for peace and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula;

To build an ecumenical advocacy movement to replace the Armistice of 1953 with a peace treaty;

To build a coalition of peace workers among U.S. churches as well as churches in the Korean Peninsula; and

To prepare Christian leaders and churches for the work of reconciliation and peace in the Korean Peninsula and the world.

For these purposes, the Committee and its coalition developed a four-year plan:

A petition campaign for a peace treaty in the Korean Peninsula, to officially end the Korean War, an ecumenical effort from May 2013 to May 2016.

The Korea Peace Conference: In May 2013, this event was attended by more than 120 participants from U.S and South Korea, including representatives from NCC Kore.

The Korea Peace March and Advocacy: July of 2014 in Washington, D.C., attended by 300 participants from across the U.S.

Peace visits to the Korean Peninsula, both North and South Korea, in the summer and fall of 2015.

A Conference for Peace and Reconciliation for youths and young adult Christians in 2015.

Recommendations for Action

In support of the Korean people and in cooperation with partner Christian groups, it is recommended that The United Methodist Church, its members, local churches,
annual conferences, and agencies undertake the following actions through intercession, education, public advocacy, and support of programs furthering justice, peace, and reconciliation:

1. Engage in prayer of penitence and petition with the Korean people and with Christians in the north and south, scarred and pained by the division of their nation and yearning for reunion, and establish working, collaborative and supportive relationships with the Korean Methodist Church, the National Council of Churches in Korea (ROK), and the Korean Christian Federation (DPRK) to seek peace and reconciliation.

2. Commend for study and action, the “Statement on Peace and the Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” adopted by the 10th WCC Assembly which called on churches to commit to, among others, the following:
   a) Work with our governments to mandate the U.N. Security Council to initiate new efforts for peacebuilding across the Korean Peninsula and to lift the existing economic and financial sanctions imposed on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea;
   b) Embark upon a universal campaign for a peace treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953, bringing an end to the state of war;
   c) Call upon all foreign powers in the region to participate in a creative process for building peace on the Korean Peninsula by halting all military exercises on the Korean Peninsula, by ceasing their interventions and reducing military expenditures;
   d) Ensure the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons and power plants in northeast Asia, by taking steps to establish a Nuclear-free World and simultaneously joining the emerging international consensus for a humanitarian ban on nuclear weapons in all regions of the world, so that life is no longer threatened by nuclear dangers anywhere on earth;
   e) Urge the governments in both North and South Korea to restore human community with justice and human dignity by overcoming injustice and confrontation, and to heal human community by urgently addressing the humanitarian issue of separated families, by establishing a sustainable process allowing confirmation of the whereabouts of family members and free exchanges of letters and visits, and by offering the support of international agencies where necessary; and

4. Urge all governments that have relations with the ROK or the DPRK, or both, to exercise their influence to further mediation, interchange, peace, and reunification.
5. Urge all governments involved to forthright commitment to the following policy directions in support of Korean efforts for peace and reunification:
   a. The peaceful reunification of Korea should be a formal U.S. policy goal.
   b. A peace treaty should be signed among the nations involved to eliminate the threat of war, establish an enduring peace, and minimize tension in the Korean Peninsula. The peace treaty, replacing the existing armistice treaty, should be based on the conditions of a non-aggression pact between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, with the full participation of the United States and the People’s Republic of China, as well as other related countries.
   c. ROK and DPRK contacts should be encouraged;
   d. Bilateral diplomatic and human contacts between the United States and the DPRK should be enhanced.
   e. The U.S. should negotiate to end the war and to seek a comprehensive peace settlement in Korea.
6. Encourage continued humanitarian aid to the DPRK through agencies like the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). This aid is directed to those persons most at risk and is monitored carefully. The WFP has developed productive working relationships with its DPRK counterparts and continues to push for more open access to the food distribution process.
7. Increase communication, dialogue and exchange of delegations, with church and ecumenical representatives, with ROK and DPRK. Political, economic, social, and religious delegations are a high priority with DPRK leaders. They provide Korean middle management with experience outside their country and a greater perspective regarding the situation between the Korean Peninsula and outside it. Delegations from DPRK can also be matched with exchange delegations to DPRK, which allows people from around the world to see and understand the country, share ideas, and have personal contact with Korean peoples.
8. Advocate for removal of economic sanctions against DPRK. Sanctions limit the engagement of DPRK in the regional and global economy. Removing sanctions will also facilitate foreign investment in improving the DPRK production infrastructure. Because of economic and legal obstacles, development of foreign investment will be a difficult and long-term process, even without sanctions. Removing sanctions is a high priority with DPRK leaders.
9. Continue to redraft or update policies to comply with the Agreed Framework, of which the most positive element is U.S.-DPRK relations, by supplying heavy fuel oil and supporting ROK and Japanese financing for the Korea Peninsula Energy Development Office (KEDO) light-water reactors.

10. Encourage a consistent, bipartisan, and long-range policy formulation regarding both North and South Korea by governments around the world, but especially the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and the European Union. Policies that engage the ROK and DPRK governments effectively and promote change and moderation will stand a greater chance of resolving the current crisis and bringing every party, including the DPRK, to relate according to agreed international norms and mechanisms.

11. Urge the United Nations to look into the North Korean refugee situation arising from political and economic needs, as thousands of North Koreans are crossing the border seeking asylum in neighboring countries. The United Nations should declare them refugees, assist them as they seek asylum, and provide humanitarian assistance.

12. Urge continued humanitarian assistance to North Korea, at the same time calling on the North Korean government to work with the United Nations to abide by all internationally agreed principles of human rights and humanitarian law, principles that must guide all parties addressing the resolution of the crisis in the Korean Peninsula.

When these approaches can be taken, and most of them depend on U.S. government policy decisions, there are still no guarantees that the crisis can be resolved. But it is quite clear that a U.S. policy of isolation, sanctions and military buildup directed against DPRK will stimulate North Korea to rely more on its military, even at the expense of the lives of its population, and may lead to another catastrophic war on the Korean Peninsula. Continued engagement, steadfast negotiation, and careful cultivation of cooperative relationships with appropriate DPRK organizations provide the only real opportunity for a positive resolution of the Korean stalemate.

We renew the above recommended actions as we also issue these new calls to action from the 2018 Atlanta Consultation:

1. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to pray and work for the formal end of the Korean War and to replace the Korean War Armistice Agreement with a Peace Treaty, and we urge the international community to expedite negotiations for such a Peace Treaty.

2. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to embark on prayerful advocacy for the lifting of international sanctions through letter writing and petition efforts.

3. We call on U.S.-based partners to embark on prayerful advocacy for the lifting of the U.S. travel ban through letter writing and other petition efforts.

4. We call on U.S.-based partners to set a goal of contacting all senators and representatives to advocate for the calls above before the next anniversary of the Korean War, which began on June 25.

5. We call all Methodist and ecumenical partners to join the World Council of Churches in observing each year the Sunday closest to August 15, the day of Korean Liberation, as a day of prayer for peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

6. We call on all Methodist and ecumenical partners to engage in relationship-building efforts with the people of both North Korea and South Korea.

R6135.

Petition Number: 20637-CC-R6135-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

Human Rights in North Korea

Amend Resolution #6135, Korea: Peace, Justice, and Reunification, by ADDING a new section, immediately after the current section entitled “The Tragedy of Division and the Urgency of Peace” and immediately before “North-South Reconciliation Efforts” as follows:

Human Rights in North Korea

Under the leadership of Chairman Kim Jong Un, the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North Korea) routinely denies its residents basic freedoms widely taken for granted in much of the rest of the world.
Basic freedom of speech is severely restricted in North Korea, especially in voicing any dissent from the government. The government vigorously imposes indoctrination upon its people. All domestic media is government-controlled. Even private communications are extensively monitored by the government’s domestic surveillance and network of informants.

North Koreans are denied enjoy freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, and freedom to engage in organized labor activities.

The nation’s justice system does not respect due process, but instead features torture, starvation rations, forced labor, forced abortions, and execution for political offenses. Estimates of those currently languishing in North Korean detention camps as political prisoners range from 80,000 to 120,000.

Despite some efforts by the government to present a different picture to the rest of the world, the reality is that North Koreans also suffer from a severe, fundamental denial of religious freedom. North Koreans caught practicing religion can be subject to severe punishments, including being sent to forced labor camps. In 2019, Open Doors USA, a ministry promoting prayer and advocacy for the persecuted church, reported that North Korea was the world’s worst state persecutor of Christians, for the 18th year in a row. Nevertheless, it is reported that there are a number of Christians in North Korea who practice their faith in secret.

We deeply mourn the suffering of the North Korean people under such conditions. Our church prayerfully yearns for the restoration of basic respect for human rights and human dignity in North Korea.


Rationale:

In over 3,000 words on problems in the Korean Peninsula, this resolution has no clear, explicit acknowledgment of the horrible suffering imposed by the North Korean regime on its own people. We owe it to the oppressed, especially persecuted Christians, and our church’s own credibility, to break our silence.

Pursue Formal Peace Talks in Philippines

Delete Resolution #6138, Pursue Formal Peace Talks in Philippines.

Rationale:

This petition deletes Resolution #6138, “Pursue Formal Peace Talks in the Philippines,” because its main points were incorporated in the proposed revision of Resolution #6118 “Philippines: Democratic Governance, Human Rights, and the Peace Process.”

Addressing Israeli Detention of Children

WHEREAS, the Nobel Prize-winning nonprofit organization Human Rights Watch reported that thousands of Palestinian children, some as young as 12 years old, have been taken from homes and villages in their own land since 2000; and

WHEREAS, it has been independently documented that many of the children have been abused by the Israeli military or by settlers; and

WHEREAS, the children who are removed from their homes are taken to settlements or to interrogation sites, and sometimes into Israel, which is a war crime according to the Fourth Geneva Convention; and

WHEREAS, UNICEF has documented that the children are often held for an extended time with no lawyer and without the presence or even knowledge of their parents; and

WHEREAS, the social principles of The United Methodist Church explicitly affirm the rights of children (¶ 162 Book of Discipline, 2016); and

WHEREAS, United Methodist Women have made the issues of incarceration of racial minorities and the well-being of children and young people as two of their priorities for the 2016-2020 quadrennium, and

WHEREAS, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by every member of the United Nations except the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the previous quadrennium legislation has been introduced and reintroduced in the United States Congress that seeks to prevent the United States from fi-
nancing Israel’s military detention, interrogation, abuse, and ill-treatment of Palestinian children; and

WHEREA, the United Methodist baptismal covenant binds us to accept the freedom and power God gives us to “resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves”:

Therefore, be it resolved, that the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church charges the General Board of Church and Society, in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women, to formulate a plan that addresses:

a. how best to educate and inform United Methodists around the issue of Palestinian child incarceration;

b. how best to interact with lawmakers and leaders around the world but particularly in the United States on the issue of Palestinian child incarceration; and

c. possible actions United Methodists can take to avoid contributing to the suffering, abuse, and imprisonment of Palestinian children.

Be it further resolved, that recommendations produced by the aforementioned consultation be brought to the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church for review and/or action.

Rationale:

The detention and harsh treatment of Palestinian children by Israeli settlers and soldiers has been documented over decades by world-respected organizations such as UNICEF and Human Rights Watch. The church affirms the rights of all children, but the church must do more.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20623-CC-R9999-G; Prusha, Connor - Chardon, OH, USA for United Methodist Young People’s Convocation.

Social Principles as a Guide to Combating Extreme Nationalism

Social Principles as a Guide to Combating Extreme Nationalism

As Christians we are called by our baptism into the priesthood of all believers. This leads us to abide in the Holy Bible. These Scriptures are the bedrock for the United Methodist Social Principles, which encourage us to grow into loving communion with each other and the world.

In our current global climate, there has been a recent increase of extreme and prejudicial nationalism. Extreme nationalism is defined as identification with one’s own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations. This type of nationalism is acting as a harmful and divisive force. We believe that the church should have a strong ethical voice in politics and act as a moral compass to its members both lay and clergy, while providing a positive witness to the world.

We challenge the church to speak truth into the world and call all United Methodists to be led by its Social Principles instead of personal, national, political, or cultural alliances.

All preaching and teaching concerning social issues should be based faithfully in the Social Principles and Scripture on which they are based.

Therefore, we ask the church to denounce policies and practices that violate the Social Principles. We call the church to uphold policies that are in line with the Social Principles in all contexts.

Rationale:

In our current global climate, there is an increase of extreme and prejudicial nationalism. This type of nationalism is acting as a harmful and divisive force. The church should have a strong ethical voice in politics and act as a moral compass to its members both lay and clergy.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20624-CC-R9999-G; Peacock, Richard - Sterling Heights, MI, USA.

Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

Since the height of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have dismantled more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, but 15,000 of these weapons still exist and pose an intolerable risk to all of God’s creation on planet earth. Ninety-five percent of these weapons are in the hands of the United States and Russia; the rest are held by the United Kingdom, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

The explosion of even a tiny fraction of these weapons would cause disasters throughout God’s creation. As few as 100 Hiroshima-sized bombs, which are small by modern standards, would cause climate disruption across the planet, cut food production, and put two billion people at risk of starvation.

Furthermore, the danger of nuclear war is growing as global warming puts increased stress on communities around the world increasing the likelihood of migration, food insecurity, starvation, and conflict.

Therefore, the United Methodist Council of Bishops’ 1986 pastoral letter, “In Defense of Creation—The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace,” is still relevant.
“We write in defense of creation. We do so because the creation itself is under attack. Air and water, trees and fruits and flowers, birds and fish and cattle, all children and youth, women and men live under the darkening shadows of a threatened nuclear winter. We call The United Methodist Church to more faithful witness and action in the face of this worsening crisis. . . .

“Therefore, we say a clear and unconditioned No to nuclear war and to any use of nuclear weapons. We conclude that nuclear deterrence is a position that cannot receive the church’s blessing.”

Now is the time for United Methodists of every nation to call upon their leaders to work to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. This ministry of seeking the abolition of nuclear weapons can also help unify our global church.

We call upon each congregation of The United Methodist Church to reflect on the dangers of nuclear weapons, the call of the Prince of Peace to be peacemakers, and to pray and advocate annually for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

We call upon every United Methodist to advocate for their nation to adopt The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt; www.ican.org) Adopted on July 7, 2017, by 122 nations, this treaty categorically bans nuclear weapons, including their use, development, testing, production, manufacture, acquisition, possession, transfer, and threat to use them. It also bans assistance with nuclear weapons-related activities, such as engaging in military preparations and permitting their transit through terrestrial waters and airspace.

This treaty outlines a path for nuclear-armed countries to join the treaty by requiring nations to remove nuclear weapons from operational status and destroy them and their programs. The treaty creates verifications and safeguards that require the verifiable, time-bound, transparent, and irreversible destruction of nuclear weapons and programs for signatories.

Every nation and all of God’s creation will be safer and more secure under The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As long as inspectors can verify that no one is violating the treaty, it is in our interest as followers of Jesus Christ to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons and the chance that they can be used.

May the witness of United Methodists for the abolition of nuclear weapons be one of the things that makes for Shalom/Salaam/Shanti/Peace.

**Rationale:**

Nuclear weapons are doomsday armaments—in moral, ecocidal, and suicidal. Nuclear weapons undermine a nation’s security and divert resources away from meeting human needs. St. Basil the Great wrote: “Nothing is more characteristic of a Christian than peacemaking; for that, the Lord promised the greatest reward.”

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20625-CC-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

**Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide, War Crimes**

“As the time approached when Jesus was to be taken up into heaven, he determined to go to Jerusalem. He sent messengers on ahead of him. Along the way, they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival, but the Samaritan villagers refused to welcome him because he was determined to go to Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to consume them?' But Jesus turned and spoke sternly to them’ (Luke 9:51-56 CEB).

“We confess that as Christians we too have responded to religious and ethnic differences out of fear, ignorance and even hatred. We have too quickly resorted to violence as a means of resolving conflicts.

“The rising tide of violence in the world threatens to engulf communities, nations, and world civilizations. It is time for the church to become proactive in resolving conflict nonviolently and developing alternatives to violence” (“The Church’s Response to Ethnic and Religious Conflict,” Resolution #81, BOR 2004).

Seeking nonviolent conflict resolution and alternatives to violence, the Council of Bishops, in June 2004, offered a discussion guide “In Search of Security” that reminded United Methodists that “our Christian ethic tells us: ‘If you want peace, work for justice.’ This is the course we should pursue in search for security. . . . Security in the perspective of faith ‘is a state of being that follows from the inclusion of all in the bounty of the earth. Security is meant for all and results from a concern of each one for the other. Security results from a concern for the common good and the promotion of solidarity between nations and peoples. Security stems from a recognition and defense of basic human rights.’”

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church (¶ 165C, “War and Peace”) states: “We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of
Christ . . . [and] insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to . . . resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them.” In the same paragraph, The United Methodist Church also states, “We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy.”

How and who will determine when “the last resort” has been reached and war becomes the only way to stop “such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights, and unprovoked international aggression”? The international community has been wrestling with that concern. The International Responsibility to Protect states that it is the “clear and unambiguous acceptance by all governments of the collective international responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Willingness to take timely and decisive collective action for this purpose, through the Security Council, when peaceful means prove inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to do it.”

In 2006, the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) assembled in Porto Alegre, Brazil, noted that Responsibility to Protect has “shifted the debate from the viewpoint of the interveners to that of the people in need of assistance, thus defining sovereignty as a duty-bearer status. . . . States can no longer hide behind the pretext of sovereignty to perpetrate human rights violations against their citizens and live in total impunity. . . . [T]he responsibility to protect and serve the welfare of its people is central to a state’s sovereignty. When there is failure to carry out that responsibility, whether by neglect, lack of capacity, or direct assaults on the population, the international community has the duty to assist peoples and states, and in extreme situations, to intervene in the internal affairs of the state in the interests and safety of the people.”

In the twenty-first century, as in the twentieth, the atrocities during war and peacetime have been and continue to be directed against civilians. The participants of the WCC assembly cited previously called attention to the “cries arising daily in their home countries and regions due to disasters, violent conflicts and conditions of oppression and suffering,” and committed themselves and called on the ecumenical movement “to bear witness to transformation in personal lives, churches, societies and the world as a whole.” In other words, “if you want peace, work for justice.” “Don’t be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good” (Romans 12:21 CEB).

It becomes imperative that the international community find peaceful means to exercise its responsibility to protect and never as a “last resort” have to go to war or even intervene militarily. But, “ending violence and wars, and checking impunity and disregard for international human rights and humanitarian laws” will require more than political will and moral courage.

Concrete mechanisms are needed to realize the total- ity of human rights—civil, political, social, economic, and cultural. One of those mechanisms is the new International Criminal Court, which has been set up through an inter-governmental process to bring to justice individuals who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression.

What are these international crimes so that we as United Methodists might understand existing means for pursuing the perpetrators and caring for the victims?

War Crimes, according to Article 8, paragraph 2, subparagraph (a) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, are defined as “Grave breaches of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention:

"(i) Willful killing;

"(ii) Torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments;

"(iii) Willfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;

"(iv) Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;

"(v) Compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power;

"(vi) Willfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial;

"(vii) Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;

"(viii) Taking of hostages.”

Subparagraph b) in the same Article 8, paragraph 2, adds, “Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts: i) Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities . . . .”

Crimes against humanity are, namely: “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against civilian populations, before or during war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated. . . .” This definition was established by the Allies and the U.S. and was contained in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) sitting in Nuremberg in 1945. While no specialized convention was
ever developed on crimes against humanity, such a category of crimes has been included in the International Tribunals for both the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda as well as in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as any act “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

Ethnic cleansing is a “purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas . . . This purpose appears to be the occupation of territory to the exclusion of the purged group or groups.” Many resolutions of the United Nations Security Council declare ethnic cleansing to be a violation of international humanitarian law and demand that perpetrators be brought to justice.

The crime of aggression is defined by the Statute of the International Criminal Court as “the planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

In 2005 the World Council of Churches affirmed the establishment of the ICC as “the most important step forward in International Law . . . The Court provides the international community with an instrument to defend human rights and pursue justice for specified crimes that otherwise would be committed with impunity . . .” United Methodists first expressed their support for the Court in the 2000 General Conference. In that resolution, The United Methodist Church was called to search for ways to be a “witness to transformation in personal lives, churches, societies and the world as a whole” and pursue the elimination of violence, war, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide in each of our societies and throughout the world.

Therefore, the General Conference urges United Methodists to pray and to gather in study groups to learn about the degrading effects that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide inflict on victims and perpetrators and those who silently stand by in the communities they live. United Methodists must initiate actions against impunity associated with violations of international humanitarian law by, among others, campaigning in all nations to ratify the Rome Statute especially in those countries where there are United Methodists.

The United Methodist Church calls on the Council of Bishops, all agencies, commissions, local churches, districts, annual and central conferences to witness to the urgent need to stop the destruction of human lives, properties, and communities through means already sanctioned by national and international laws, especially through war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression. The church must seek, develop, and share resources in as many languages as possible and through the varied means available to enable its members to:

a) remain informed and work toward the prevention of conflicts, atrocities, violence, and suffering;

b) support and participate in the World Council of Churches’ Pilgrimage for Peace, mobilize our churches to advocate for peace with justice;

c) assure the presence and participation of the church in those places where people need protection and humanitarian aid;

d) employ judiciously the moral authority of religious leaders for mediation between and among stakeholders and differently powerful actors;

e) remain informed on the work of the International Criminal Court; and

f) support organizations working for human rights, including especially the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

Rationale:

This petition is an updated version of the eight-year-old Resolution #6150 “Crimes Against Humanity, Genocide, and War Crimes.” Time limitations at the 2016 General Conference did not allow the legislative committee to act on it, resulting in its expiration.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20626-CC-R9999-G; Henry-Crowe, Susan - Washington, DC, USA for General Board of Church and Society.

The United Nations and Multilateralism

Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 ESV)
He will judge between the nations, 
and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares, 
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation, 
nor will they train for war anymore. (Isaiah 2:4 NIV)

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9 NIV)

Reasoning Together to Secure Peace and Justice

The world is the responsibility of each of our communities where the securing of peace and justice for one individual, one community, and one nation contributes to the securing of peace and justice for all globally. This is a theological posture that is also at the core of multilateralism.

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1 KJV). God’s people are graciously blessed to joyfully partake of the fruits of God’s good creation. To work for justice and peace for all is to affirm God’s promise of abundant and full life for everyone on earth.

To work for justice and peace is to lay claim to our common humanity and shared cosmos, whose destiny and survival lie in the flourishing of true security and just peace, of human rights founded on human dignity, of human progress and well-being built on sustainable practices, of human health and the planet’s health, and of mutual interdependence and diplomacy governing the relations of peoples and nations.

These are what truly constitute multilateralism: evolving and living into a truly just, peaceable, participatory, and sustainable international community. Multilateralism is diplomacy that engages collaboration and cooperation. Multilateralism is at its best when peoples and nations reason together with words and agreed texts arising from respectful dialogue and recognition of the common good.

The United Nations (U.N.) organization embodies this ideal of multilateralism. In the words of the president of the 73rd Session of the U.N. General Assembly (2018-2019), María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, “It is abundantly clear that peace is more than the absence of war. To be sustainable, peace must be nurtured, before, during and after conflict. Peace, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We must work across this continuum—at the General Assembly and beyond—if we are to address the many challenges we face. And we must embrace multilateralism if we are to foster a lasting peace for the world.”

United Methodist engagement in international affairs dates back to 1934 with the establishment of the Commission on World Peace. But the creation of the United Nations provided the impetus for greater and direct engagement with this multilateral organization. A few months after its October 24, 1948, founding, the inaugural meeting of the U.N. General Assembly was held at the Methodist Central Hall Westminster, in London, between January 10 and February 14, 1946. A little over a decade since the U.N. Headquarters was built in New York, visionary Methodists built across from the United Nations building the Church Center for the United Nations as a witness to “the things that make for peace” (Luke 19:42 NRSV).

The United Nations and related international agencies collaborate multilaterally on many issues and concerns. These concerns could be lingering or emerging, including breaches of the peace, wars and conflicts, or epidemic outbreaks, including pandemics, for which the U.N. has the greater, if not enormous, capacity and mandate to mobilize human and material resources. The world is made better when collective will is mustered and global resources are harnessed to address these global challenges. The U.N. has a charter obligation to do just these. For example, the U.N. is working hard to prevent pandemics by developing treatments for HIV/AIDS, viruses like Ebola, bird and swine influenzas, and pernicious diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.

The U.N. has a charter mandate to stop wars and prevent conflicts. It approaches this mandate with a deep diplomatic tool kit in the fields of conflict transformation and management. Its peacekeeping operations are in the difficult locations with lingering conflicts and violent flashpoints. Its disarmament work is geared toward the prevention of nuclear proliferation and putting to halt the development and use of biological and other weapons of mass destruction. It is also about curbing the production, proliferation, and use of small arms. To this end, we lend support to the Disarmament Agenda of the U.N. Secretary General (24 May 2018).

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. In its more than seven decades of existence, the U.N. has evolved to reflect our changing understanding of peace and security, which is at the core of the U.N. mandate. Multilateral dialogues and the recognition of the common destiny of humanity and the cosmos have led to the understanding of security that is beyond the assured existence of sovereign nation states. Human security flourishes with the recognition of human dignity and human rights for all peoples. The more than seven decades of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and subsequent human rights treaties and mechanisms, are a
testament to not only the human yearning for dignity but for the earnest protection of human rights.

Human security includes, for example, food and water security, and the security that decent jobs and living wages provide. Human security promotes gender equality, especially the empowerment of women and girls. Human security recognizes the humanity of indigenous peoples and the need to secure their indigenous knowledge bases and resources.

The U.N. is also about peace and security that result from the elimination of hunger and the eradication of poverty. The key to achieving the U.N. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development lies in focusing on the measurable goals and targets that are part of the agenda. Sustainable development underscores the primacy of human dignity and human rights. The social transformation it aims to achieve lies in addressing historic inequalities, exploitation, and oppression, especially those brought about by colonialism, slavery, genocide, the Holocaust, and the scourge of two world wars for which reasons more than 70 years ago the architects of what is now the United Nations, were compelled to recognize and to never let the world and its peoples experience them again. Such compelling recognition inspired the drafting of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

The U.N., all-too-human an institution, remains called to these mandates and more. The major positive strides for global peace, security, and sustainable development shadow the shortcomings of this global institution. Former U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld described the U.N. as a human institution, saying, “The U.N. was not created to take mankind (sic) to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.”

Multilateralism must prosper norm-based policy coherence. If the pursuit by the international community for sustainable development goals (SDGs) was to result in the transformation of people’s lives and communities, it must pursue not only the eradication of hunger and poverty, but also address the inequalities and injustices that hitherto economic and social development models have spawned. Such pursuit must be based on solidarity, justice, cooperation, mutual accountability, common but differentiated responsibilities, and the participation of all stakeholders: governments, nongovernmental organizations, and peoples and their communities.

Our Common Humanity in Christ

Our claim to common humanity in Christ, and our assertion that all peoples and nations reverence God’s good earth, and recognize every person’s sacred worth and inherent dignity define our support for the United Nations. This support lays claim to this human institution whose lofty objectives contained in its Charter are but human imaginings of governance of the relations of nations and the well-being of peoples. Still, we assert in our Social Principles that the United Nations and its related bodies are “the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law” (2016 Social Principles, ¶165D).

The Christian faith and community are rooted in theological understanding that is at once local and global. The foundation for the church’s involvement in the quest for peace and justice everywhere can be found in the following biblically based beliefs:

1. The transcending sovereignty and love of God for all creation and the expression of that love in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, whose mission was to reveal understanding about that divine presence, to proclaim a message of love and salvation, and to bring justice and peace;

2. The unity of creation and the equality of all races and peoples;

3. The dignity and sacred worth of each person as a child of God; and

4. The church, the body of believers, whose global mission and public witness to building peace, seeking justice, and reconciling peoples and communities testifies to God’s action in history.

The Pillars of Peace for the 21st Century

The world is the responsibility of each of our communities where the securing of justice for one individual, one community, and one nation contributes to the securing of justice and peace for all. To work for justice and peace for all is to affirm God’s promise of the fullness of life: “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1 KJV); “I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest” (John 10:10b CEB).

The United Methodist Church, therefore, reaffirms its support for the United Nations and calls upon all governments to fully support it fulfilling its Charter and its highest calling to work for peace and justice for all. Furthermore, The United Methodist Church affirms the following principles as Pillars of Peace for the 21st Century:

1. Political Accountability. Peace rooted in justice requires increased political collaboration and accountability within the United Nations system, and among regional bodies, governments, local authorities, peoples’ organizations, and global economic structures to seek the common good and equality for all.

2. Economic Accountability. Peace rooted in justice requires increased moral, ethical, and legal accountability at all levels from governments, financial institutions, multilateral organizations, transnational corporations, and all other economic actors to seek a just, participatory, and sustainable economic order for the welfare and well-being of all people and all creation.
3. Legal Accountability. Peace rooted in justice requires a comprehensive international legal system, capable of change as conditions require, in order to prevent and resolve conflicts, to protect rights, to hold accountable those who disturb peace and violate international law, and to provide fair and effective review and enforcement mechanisms.

4. Liberation and Empowerment. Peace rooted in justice requires the participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups seeking to promote justice and peace in those mechanisms capable of redressing the causes and consequences of injustice and oppression.

5. Peace and Conflict Resolution. Peace rooted in justice requires the nurturing of a culture of peace in homes, communities, religious institutions, nations, and across the world; the use of nonviolent means of resolving conflict; appropriate systems of common security; and the end of the unrestrained production, sale, and use of weapons worldwide.

6. Human Dignity and Rights. Peace rooted in justice requires respect for the inherent dignity of all persons and the recognition, protection, and implementation of the principles of the International Bill of Human Rights so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible, and inalienable rights.


International Justice and Inclusive Human Community

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.” (Romans 14:19 ESV).

International justice requires the participation and determination of all peoples. We are called to look beyond the “limited and competing boundaries of nation-states to the larger and more inclusive community of humanity” (United Methodist Council of Bishops’ “Call for Peace and the Self-Development of Peoples”).

Unprecedented international cooperation has occurred through the United Nations and its specialized agencies as they and member-states collaborated to solve global problems of health, education, and the welfare of people, especially children and mothers. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has been successful in this area, especially in achieving universal primary education and reducing child mortality. UNICEF’s advocacy on behalf of the rights and welfare of children in situations of armed conflict, including the condition of children recruited and used as soldiers, is highly commendable. The work of this institution in prioritizing migrant and refugee children is of utmost importance.

Commendable achievements have been reached through multilateral cooperation, especially in the areas of sustainable development, universal human rights, religious freedom and tolerance, peacebuilding and security. Most laudable are the advancements in gender equality and women’s empowerment, especially the creation of the U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (U.N. Women) and U.N. Security Council Resolution #1325 on the role of women in peacebuilding and security. The year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the “Women, Peace, and Security Agenda” arising out of U.N. Security Council Resolution #1325. It is a banner year to rededicate ourselves to “ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child, as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Beijing Declaration) and the importance of the involvement of women in peace and security issues in achieving long-lasting stability (Resolution #1325).

In other areas, however, political considerations have diminished the support needed for the United Nations to achieve its goals. Many nations, including the most powerful, participate in some programs only when such action does not interfere with their avowed national interests and advantage.

At a time when global peace and security concerns have increasingly become transnational, the work of the United Nations, through the International Atomic Energy Agency, needs greater support by all governments so that it can efficiently and effectively perform functions dealing with nuclear security, especially in improving international coordination, monitoring, reporting, sharing of information and best practices among states and the private sector. In this regard, the agency commits itself to promoting the early entry-into-force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a treaty that codifies the illegality of nuclear weapons in a comprehensive manner, including prohibiting the development, possession, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, with the goal of leading to their total elimination. This agency further reafirms the vital importance of the positive obligations set forth in the TPNW, which provide for environmental remediation and for victim assistance to those who are affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons. The agency’s commitment to this historic treaty is in line with the calls to abolish nuclear weapons enunciated in “God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action,” a pastoral letter by the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church (2009).
Global warming and climate change are urgent issues that need utmost attention by all peoples and communities, and in all levels of governance. We support a fair, ambitious, and binding agreement to address climate change built on the common but differentiated responsibilities of each nation to reduce emissions and provide resources for adaptation and resilience. The U.N. is positioned to lead in addressing climate change through the mechanisms set up by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. Responses to climate change must be rooted in global solidarity and justice. Such responses must reflect people’s demands that are focused on a global energy transformation, defense of food sovereignty, and recognition of human rights so that any global temperature goal minimizes harms and impacts on peoples and the planet. Upon developed countries are placed legal and moral responsibilities to provide financing needed for adaptation and international mitigation, and upon all the recognition of common but differentiated responsibilities. These and other ways to bring nations into common cause to undertake ambitious but necessary efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects are what the Paris Accords of 2015 are about. With support of the accord, peoples and nations of the world can then collaboratively tackle the threat of climate change.

Peace, World Order, and the Rule of Law

Peace and world order require the development of an effective, enforceable framework of international law that provides for peaceful settlement of conflicts between and among nations, and the protection of human rights and guarantees of justice for all people. The role of religious institutions in peace building is well established and recognized, including that of the World Council of Churches and Religions for Peace International. It is a role that supports, works alongside with, and undergirds multilateral peace building efforts at the U.N. and other regional bodies such as Africa Union.

While wars continue and many conflicts remain intractable, the work of the Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations is crucial and deserves continued support. Professionalization of peacekeepers, including the adherence to discipline and human-rights principles, forms part of this support. We must be ready to admonish the United Nations and its peacekeeping forces when there is proven and clear violation of their sworn duty in the countries they are deployed to be a force of peace, goodwill, and exemplar of the values embodied in the U.N. Charter, but most especially in the protection of human rights.

While the International Court of Justice is fully in place to adjudicate conflicts between and among states, we call on all nations to ratify the International Criminal Court so that it becomes an effective and responsible body to adjudicate on war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and crimes of aggression. Nations should remove any restrictions they have adopted that impair the effective functioning of both courts.

The industrialized world must not dominate development agencies. We support efforts to make controlling bodies of such agencies more representative. We support the development and strengthening of international agencies designed to help nations or peoples escape from domination by other nations or transnational enterprises. In this instance, support is crucial for the sustainable development and governance of the least developed, land-locked, and small island developing countries of the world. Without such support, these countries risk making little progress in any of the key indicators of achieving eradication of hunger and poverty within the framework of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, including the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We must support a better and more effective and just protection of the human rights and welfare of people on the move, regardless of their migratory status. Toward this direction, we support the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, otherwise called the Marrakesh Compact on Migration (2018, <https://bit.ly/2HvOgmd>) and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018, <https://bit.ly/2DURzXY>) and call on U.N. member-states to sign on to them.

As asserted by Churches Witnessing With Migrants (CWWM, 2017, <https://bit.ly/20Yrep9>): “Freedom of movement is a human right that allows peoples to forge human relations and found sustainable communities. Forced migration is a climate change, violation of human rights. Violent situations, environmental degradation, militarization, wars, lingering conflicts and political persecution in countries have resulted in internal displacement and forced and external movement of peoples that have produced asylum seekers and massive numbers of refugees. Under such conditions, people have fled their communities and sought refuge elsewhere, including in other countries. In situations like these, indigenous peoples, women, children, and peoples with disabilities who are migrants or are family members of migrants are especially more at risk and vulnerable. A meaningful dialogue on migration must address these, including refugees and asylum-seekers.”

We must “urge governments to ratify and implement relevant United Nations and International Labour Organization (ILO) treaties and conventions, and amend their national laws to be consistent with such treaties and conventions, especially the U.N. Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Migrant Workers.”
of Their Families and ILO Convention 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers.”

Economic and political considerations greatly affect issues of food, energy, raw materials, and other commodities. We support efforts in the United Nations to achieve new levels of justice in the world economic order and work for the realization of internationally agreed development goals through the United Nations and other multilateral organizations such as African Union, especially the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (See United Methodist Resolution #6025, “Globalization and Its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights”). Critical to the realization of sustainable development is support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We support the concept of collective action against threats to peace. This collective action is possible and meaningful when pursued within a multilateral framework. Reform of the United Nations, including and especially the Security Council, is crucial in this regard. Such reform must include organizational and programmatic coherence aimed at transforming the U.N. to be a relevant, useful, responsible, and accountable body in dealing with today’s global challenges. It must be a United Nations that takes seriously the participation of peoples in keeping with its Charter. Reform must include making the Security Council more democratically representative, transparent, accountable in its structure and decision-making.

Wars fought, be it for causes to seek justice, or other causes through acts of terrorism might well be averted, diminished, or stopped altogether, if the nations of the world would work vigorously in concert to seek changes in oppressive political conditions and exploitative economic systems. This cooperation should use human rights as foundational principles of national, international, and human relations, including the promotion of rapprochement among cultures and religions. Just, equitable, and sustainable sharing of the world’s resources will greatly address the economic despair, political anguish, and war-weariness of many peoples and communities of the world.

Supporting a Robust Multilateralism by Collaborating in the Connection

The United Methodist Church and its global connectional system of Christian public witness and social action is strategically positioned to join in this mission. We recommend that Christians, and all people of goodwill, work to support, strengthen, and improve the United Nations system and its agencies, and commit to the following in their respective countries and locations:

- Educate about and promote among our members the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a standard of achievement for all peoples and nations. We must recognize and promote human dignity and protect it with human rights, ensuring that people are rights-bearers and nations are duty-bearers. We must advocate in legislative halls around the world for the universal ratification of international agreements, covenants, and conventions, including protocols arising from these conventions.

- In light of our church’s call to an act of repentance for our institutional participation in the violation of the dignity and rights of indigenous peoples, including the pillage and plunder of their communities, indigenous knowledge, and resources, we must call for the global ratification of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, approved in 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly. We must help realize the human rights of indigenous peoples and their full participation in society through our support of the work of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

- United Methodists throughout the connection must advocate for adequate funding of the United Nations system by advocating for their governments to pay their U.N. dues and increase, rather than shrink the U.N.’s regular budget. As global challenges are growing enormously and overwhelming the capacities of multilateral bodies to address them, commensurate funds and resources must be earnestly pursued and allocated so that solutions are found for these challenges.

Rationale:

This petition updates the original 24-year-old Resolution #6134 “In Support of the United Nations” and incorporates key points of Resolution #6133 “In Defense of International Law and Cooperation: Cornerstone of Multilateralism,” which expired in 2012. Time limitations did not allow the 2016 General Conference to act on the petition.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20628-CC-R9999; Hu Kinney, Ophelia - Scarborough, ME, USA.

Resolution Toward an Anti-Colonial Church

WHEREAS, “colonialism” is the practice of acquiring political control over another entity and exploiting it economically; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has benefitted as an institution from colonialist practices; and

WHEREAS, the intersectional, compounding, and structural sin of colonialism gives rise to different and contextual evils, including homophobia, transphobia, racism, misogyny, ableism, and classism; and
WHEREAS, the political landscape of The United Methodist Church has since its inception been shaped as much by power, privilege, and money as it has been by the gospel of Jesus Christ;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the people, congregations, and governing structures of The United Methodist Church are called to condemn the tools and ideologies of oppression used to subjugate marginalized persons in the church and in society; and

Be it further resolved, that the people, congregations, and governing structures of The United Methodist Church seek release from the colonialisit narrative that the well-beings of persons of color and LGBTQ persons must be in theological opposition to one another; and

Be it further resolved, that the people, congregations, and governing structures of The United Methodist Church adopt a posture of humility as the church continually learns to better dismantle these tools and ideologies of oppression for the sake of the kin-dom of God.
I. Executive Summary

The 2016 General Conference authorized a Jurisdictional Study Committee (JSC) comprising members of each of the five jurisdictions within the United States to review legislation related to jurisdictional boundaries and the number of bishops within jurisdictions in order to make a recommendation to the 2020 General Conference. The JSC represents the diversity of the five jurisdictions.

The JSC members reviewed legislation and the present Book of Discipline (BOD) and held conversations with jurisdictional leaders, the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), and bishops. We concluded that continuing with five jurisdictions and the current boundaries is appropriate. We further concluded that the membership formula to determine the number of bishops within the U.S. is no longer an accurate reflection of the leadership needs and mission within a jurisdiction. We are recommending that jurisdictions are in a better position to assess missionally the number of bishops to better reflect the missional, cultural, and contextual needs of the church today.

We are proposing legislation to eliminate the mathematical formula for calculating the number of active bishops in each jurisdiction, establish a minimum number of active bishops for each jurisdiction, and establish a process by which jurisdictions may request additional bishops (above the minimum number) based on the missional needs of the jurisdiction and the financial ability of the jurisdiction to support such additional bishops. The proposed process involves review of such requests by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy and approval by General Conference. The salary and expenses of such additional bishops except for travel will be paid by the annual conferences within the affected jurisdiction rather than by general apportionment to all annual conferences.

II. Missional Rationale

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (BOD § 120).

The annual conference is the fundamental body of The UMC (¶ 11) that organizes leaders, congregations, and ministries for the mission of the church. Annual conferences serve the mission by equipping local churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (¶ 601).

Bishops lead the mission, supervising the clergy and congregations of an episcopal area that is made up of one or more annual conferences. Bishops cast a vision and offer clarity to influence, inspire, and mobilize the church to accomplish the mission.

The number of bishops assigned in a U.S. jurisdiction is currently determined by a membership formula (¶ 404.2). Jurisdictional conferences currently have the authority to determine the number, names, and boundaries of episcopal areas (¶ 40). Each jurisdictional College of Bishops has the authority to arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories (¶ 48).

A membership formula does not capture the missional and leadership needs within a jurisdiction and imposes limits on the ability of jurisdictions and jurisdictional colleges of bishops to fulfill their constitutional mandate. Issues related to how bishops lead, and the number of bishops, are best understood within the context of a given region. A formula cannot ascertain and address:

1. Unique geographies, demographics, and urbanization in each jurisdiction;
2. Complex differences among episcopal areas because of demographics and urbanization;
3. Capacity for the ministry and work of the bishop to lead episcopal areas toward growth, mission, and vitality;
4. Leadership needs;
5. Number of congregations and clergy under supervision (including number of superintendents, clergy members, and lay supply pastors);
6. Number of annual conferences over which a bishop presides.
Therefore, the number, assignment, focus, and support of U.S. bishops is best identified by those closest to the mission, including the leadership of the jurisdiction where people better understand the missional strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

We affirm the current language in the Book of Discipline, which maintains a minimum of five bishops in each jurisdiction. Maintaining a minimum of five bishops allows U.S. jurisdictions to live into the new system of determining the number of bishops at the jurisdictional level, minimizing the level of change and disruption.

We also affirm that retaining the minimum number of U.S. episcopal leaders that currently exists (BOD ¶ 404(2) (a)) maintains the connectional model, while shifting a portion of costs directly to the jurisdiction that incurs those costs.

To help offset the cost shifts associated with the proposed method for calculating apportionments, we are recommending that office expenses of episcopal areas in the U.S. be handled directly by each annual conference rather than being apportioned through the Episcopal Fund. Currently, annual conferences pay an apportionment to the Episcopal Fund only to receive funding back from the Episcopal Fund to reimburse for office costs. It is simpler and more efficient for the conferences to pay the costs of the bishop’s office directly. There would be no change for support of office expenses in the central conference episcopal areas.

III. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations to the 2020 General Conference:

1. Continue the present number and boundaries of episcopal areas in the jurisdictions through 2024 when a new method of determining the number of episcopal areas will begin.
2. Continue the present method for setting episcopal area boundaries.
3. Continue the minimum number of five bishops within each jurisdiction.
4. Discontinue a membership-based formula for determining the number of bishops in a jurisdiction and replace it with a process whereby each jurisdiction determines the number of bishops it needs and can financially support.
5. Discontinue the apportionment for episcopal office support in 2021 and institute a plan for the office to be paid for by the episcopal area.

To implement recommendation #4, we further recommend:

6. The Episcopal Fund will be apportioned across the connection for the costs of five bishops within each jurisdiction (the minimum number of bishops) for a total of twenty-five bishops across the connection.
7. The number of bishops over the minimum of five within a jurisdiction will be paid for by the annual conferences in that jurisdiction through an apportionment to those conferences beginning with 2021 apportionments. (Details of the financing are below.)
8. All travel and Council of Bishops’ meetings will be apportioned across the connection.
9. Jurisdictional Committees on Episcopacy, in consultation with their Colleges of Bishops, will report to the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy their conclusion on the number of episcopal areas necessary to further the mission and ministry in their area and that they have the capacity to support.
10. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will report to the General Conference the number of bishops to be funded through the Episcopal Fund for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. The costs of episcopal areas approved by General Conference in addition to the minimum will be paid for by the annual conferences of that jurisdiction.
11. All bishops, whether funded by a connection-wide apportionment or apportioning the specific conferences within a jurisdiction, shall be employed by GCFA, which sets the salary, benefits, travel, and office expenses for all bishops.
12. No changes are recommended to:
   • episcopal areas outside the United States;
   • apportionments in support of central conference bishops or their office expenses, the Council of Bishops, or interfaith work;
   • the number or geographic makeup of jurisdictions as specified in ¶ 37; or
   • the boundaries of episcopal areas within jurisdictions, which is under the authority of jurisdictions (¶ 27.4).

Further we strongly encourage the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, who has the authority to recommend the number of bishops in each jurisdiction, to understand the missional necessity of maintaining the current number of bishops until jurisdictions consider the missional need in number of episcopal areas in 2024.
IV. Implementation

1. Per the Book of Discipline and current practice, the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will recommend to the 2020 General Conference the number of bishops to be allocated to each U.S. jurisdiction. Jurisdictions will be allocated the number of bishops approved by the 2020 General Conference for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.

   - To facilitate transition to the new process for determining the number of U.S. bishops, we recommend that the General Conference maintain the current number of bishops in each jurisdiction in recognition that the current formula creates an arbitrary and outdated threshold.

2. Proposals to change the apportionment methodology for the Episcopal Fund would commence with the 2021 apportionment year.

3. As soon as possible after the 2020 General Conference, each Jurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy and College of Bishops will work together to develop a recommendation on the number of bishops needed within the jurisdiction to meet missional and capacity needs. GCFA will assist with financial estimates of general and jurisdictional apportionments under various scenarios. This recommendation should include the following:
   - A plan for episcopal area realignment only if there is a change (decrease or increase) in the number of bishops.
   - A detailed description of recommended boundary changes.
   - Estimates of changes to apportionments for annual conferences within the jurisdiction.
   - A timeline for implementation.
   - Provision for an implementation task force with lay and clergy representation from each affected annual conference.

   The realignment plan should be shared with key leadership from each annual conference, including 2024 delegations once elected, with opportunities for feedback.

4. Per ¶ 404 and ¶ 512, each jurisdiction will share with the executive committee of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy the jurisdiction’s recommendation for the number of bishops needed for missional and capacity reasons and a statement of the annual conferences’ ability to financially support that number of bishops (and the associated realignment plan, if applicable).

5. The executive committee of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will evaluate the recommendations, secure additional information if necessary, and make a recommendation to the full committee no later than the fifth day of the General Conference according to ¶ 512.

6. The executive committee of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will work with GCFA to determine if the conferences within a jurisdiction have paid 100 percent of their apportioned amount for their bishops. Any jurisdictions in which conferences have not paid 100 percent will be reduced by the number of bishops of the total apportioned amount for a bishop or any portion of unpaid episcopal area apportioned support.

7. Recommendations from the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy for any bishops more than the minimum per jurisdiction will be submitted to the General Conference, with an explanation of how the number of bishops in each jurisdiction differs from the previous quadrennium and a reminder that the financial burden of supporting bishops beyond the minimum number falls to the conferences within a jurisdiction and is not apportioned to annual conferences outside that jurisdiction. Through this report, the General Conference will then determine the number of bishops to be allocated to each U.S. jurisdiction for the following quadrennium by a majority vote of the General Conference.

8. After the number of episcopal areas has been established through action of the General Conference based on the recommendation from the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, GCFA shall prepare a recommended apportionment total of the Episcopal Fund for the ensuing quadrennium. The recommendation shall state the amounts apportioned (above the minimum) to specific jurisdictions for the costs of bishops. The proposed apportionments to the Episcopal Fund will be considered and approved by the 2024 General Conference.

   - If there is no change in the number of episcopal areas, the jurisdictional conference elects the appropriate number of bishops to fill current vacancies.
   - If there is a reduction or increase in the number of episcopal areas, the jurisdictional conference will approve the proposed realignment
plan, amending the plan as needed. They will then proceed to elect the requisite number of bishops according to the approved plan.

V. Cost Estimates

The JSC carefully evaluated the proposal’s financial impact upon the jurisdictions. Using actual financial results in 2018, we calculated the apportionment amounts requested from each U.S. jurisdiction under the current system and compared it to the amount that would be assessed under the proposed formula. (There would be no changes to the amounts apportioned to central conferences and no changes to the support from the Episcopal Fund to the bishops in the central conferences.)

Episcopal Fund apportionments under the proposed formula would be the sum of three calculations. The first calculation is similar to the current apportionment calculation but excludes the cost of bishops beyond the minimum number and excludes episcopal office expenses in the U.S. The second calculation covers the expenses for bishops over the minimum within each jurisdiction. The third calculation accounts for the shift in episcopal office expenses being removed from the apportionment formula and covered directly by each U.S. annual conference. Each of these calculations is described in more detail below.

The first calculation includes the following:

- the expenses for the minimum number of bishops in each jurisdiction including salary, housing, and benefits;
- area travel for all bishops;
- central conference bishops’ salaries, housing, and benefits;
- central conference episcopal office support;
- Council of Bishops meeting expenses (including travel);
- Council of Bishops staff and office expenses;
- the costs of all retired bishops (whether jurisdictional or central conference);
- the costs of other episcopal groups and ecumenical presence;
- moving expenses;
- administrative charges (costs of GCFA to collect, disburse, and audit uses of the Episcopal Fund);
- a contingency (a reserve fund to manage unplanned expenses and emergencies);
- non-collectible apportionment allowance.

In 2018, these items used $17.3 million in Episcopal Fund resources (using funds from apportionments and expected reserves from the Episcopal Fund). The amounts apportioned to annual conferences in each jurisdiction and central conference in 2018 for this piece of the Episcopal Fund apportionment in 2018 would have been:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>First Calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>2,638,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>2,172,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>3,273,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>5,213,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>922,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Central Conferences</td>
<td>664,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Central Conferences</td>
<td>149,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines Central Conferences</td>
<td>65,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,101,162</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Added to those amounts would be a second calculation that includes the costs of the bishops a jurisdiction requests to meet the missional needs of the area. The salary, housing, and benefit costs of the 6th, 7th, or any number of bishops in addition to the minimum, will be added to the Episcopal Fund apportionment to the annual conferences in that jurisdiction. GCFA will work with jurisdictions in their planning for episcopal areas so the costs of bishops in addition to the minimum are known. For the sake of comparison, we calculated the additional costs in
2018 for each jurisdiction for the number of bishops they had in that year. The Episcopal Fund apportionment to the annual conference would be the sum of the amount listed in the first calculation above plus this amount, under the second calculation as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Second Calculation (added apportionment for more than 5 bishops)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Central (9 bishops)</td>
<td>955,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast (9 bishops)</td>
<td>955,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central (10 bishops)</td>
<td>1,194,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast (13 bishops)</td>
<td>1,911,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West (5 bishops)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,018,417</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Episcopal Fund apportionment to the annual conferences would add together these two calculations. The amount apportioned to the annual conferences in the jurisdictions under the proposal would be 17.5 percent lower, from $23.2 million to $19.2 million annually.

Finally, we propose that the Episcopal Fund no longer apportion and pay episcopal office support in the jurisdictions. Annual conferences pay an apportionment to the Episcopal Fund only to receive money back from the Episcopal Fund to reimburse for office costs. Under the new proposal, annual conferences in the U.S. will pay the costs of the bishop’s office directly\(^1\) rather than sending the money to GCFA and have GCFA send it right back. We recognize this change shifts the costs from the Episcopal Fund to the annual conferences. In 2018, we calculate the impact of this cost shift to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Proposed Episcopal Office Expenses Paid Directly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>776,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>776,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>862,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>1,121,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>431,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,967,592</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The financial impact on the annual conferences in jurisdictions is the sum of all three of these factors:

1. Support of the minimum number of jurisdictional bishops, central conference bishops, retired bishops, Council of Bishops, and other general costs itemized in the first calculation, PLUS
2. the salary, housing, and benefit costs of bishops in addition to the minimum number in the jurisdiction, PLUS
3. the costs of office expenses the conferences will pay directly rather than through the Episcopal Fund apportionment.

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1. Office expenses for episcopal areas in the central conferences would continue to be paid through the Episcopal Fund.
Taking these factors into consideration, the 2018 apportionment for annual conferences in each jurisdiction plus the additional costs of office expenses paid directly, compared to the current formula, would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Actual 2018 Apportionment</th>
<th>Estimated Apportionments plus episcopal office costs paid directly as proposed</th>
<th>Change from current formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>4,352,382</td>
<td>4,370,536</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>3,758,908</td>
<td>3,904,796</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>5,399,978</td>
<td>5,330,805</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>8,600,805</td>
<td>8,246,793</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>1,522,398</td>
<td>1,354,126</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,634,472</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,207,056</strong></td>
<td><strong>-2%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VI. Proposed Legislation**

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church establishes an interconnected set of authorities leading to the determination of the number of bishops authorized for election and assignment in the jurisdictional conferences. The Judicial Council has observed that “[t]he system balances and constrains the power exercised by each of the authorities individually and by all connectionally” (Decision 1312). Colleges of Bishops have authority to arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories (¶ 48).

Jurisdictional conferences have authority to determine the number, names, and boundaries of the annual conferences and episcopal areas (¶ 40). Colleges of Bishops have authority to arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories (¶ 48). General Conference has authority to fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences (¶ 16.10) and to determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the church (¶ 16.9); the Judicial Council has reasoned that this dual authority granted to General Conference determines how many bishops there will be in each jurisdiction (Decision 1312). Our legislative proposals attempt to take into account the tension created by these competing constitutional provisions in an effort to create a new process that allows the determination of the number of bishops in the jurisdictions to be based on missional needs rather than a strict mathematical formula, while shifting the financial responsibility for support of bishops beyond the minimum number directly to the jurisdiction.

In an effort to advance the recommendations outlined in this report, the JSC has drafted several petitions for submission to the Secretary of the General Conference. These petitions are summarized as follows:

1. **JSC Petition #1** proposes amendments to ¶ 404 (Provisions for episcopal areas) that will eliminate the mathematical formula for calculating the number of active bishops in each jurisdiction, establish a minimum number of active bishops for each jurisdiction, and establish a process by which jurisdictions may request additional bishops (above the minimum number) based on the missional needs of the jurisdiction and the financial ability of the jurisdiction to support such additional bishops. The proposed process involves review of such requests by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy and approval by General Conference. The salary and expenses of such additional bishops will be paid by annual conferences within the affected jurisdiction rather than by general apportionment to all annual conferences (Petition 20291, ADCA p. 971).

2. **JSC Petition #2** proposes amendments to ¶ 512 (Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy) to authorize that committee to receive and act on requests from jurisdictions for additional bishops authorized by the proposed amendment of ¶ 404 (Petition 20087, ADCA p. 329).
3. **JSC Petition #3** proposes amendments to ¶ 524 (Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy) to include the responsibility for making the request for additional bishops authorized by the proposed amendment of ¶ 404 (Petition 20089, *ADCA* p. 330).

4. **JSC Petition #4** proposes amendments to ¶ 818 (Episcopal Fund) to remove episcopal office expenses of jurisdictional bishops from the Episcopal Fund apportionment but retain the current practice of generally apportioning the office expenses of the central conference bishops (Petition 20211, *ADCA* p. 514).

5. **JSC Petition #5** is a non-disciplinary petition that 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 in the assessment of missional needs and financial capacity of the jurisdiction, which will be part of the determination of the number of active bishops in the jurisdictions authorized by General Conference 2024 and to facilitate smooth transition in any jurisdiction anticipating a change in the number of its bishops based on that assessment (Petition 20642, *ADCA* p. 997).
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶100.

Petition Number: 20662-CO-¶00-C-G; Ritter, Chris - Geneseo, IL, USA.

**A Constitution for a United Methodist Communion**

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE**

The church is a community of all true believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is the redeemed and redeeming 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 seeks to provide for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

The church also exists to multiply the transforming presence of Christ in all the world. As heirs to The United Methodist Church and its predecessors, our unity in found in our doctrinal standards, our emphasis on the manifold grace of God, and our shared history of mission. Our prayer and intentions are to foster renewed expressions of our corporate life that allow a fresh flowering of the gospel amidst the brokenness of our church and world.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church adopts and amends the following Constitution to become The United Methodist Communion of Churches as herein described.

This Constitution replaces the Constitution of The United Methodist Church upon its ratification.

**DIVISION ONE—GENERAL**

¶ 1. Article I. **Name**—The name shall be The United Methodist Communion of Churches. The name of the communion may be translated freely into languages other than English.

¶ 2. Article II. **Description**—The United Methodist Communion of Churches is a voluntary association of autonomous denominations in United Methodist and related traditions that seeks to advance our shared mission in the unity of the Spirit granted to the entire church by the grace of Jesus Christ.

¶ 3. Article III. **Doctrinal Standards**—The United Methodist Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith shall be the doctrinal standards for The United Methodist Communion. Other standards include the General Rules of Our United Societies and the Standard Sermons of John Wesley.

**DIVISION TWO—BASIC ORGANIZATION**

¶ 4. Article I.—There shall be a United Methodist Governing Council for the entire communion with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 5. Article II.—There shall be agencies of The United Methodist Communion as hereinafter set forth.

¶ 6. Article III.—There shall be member churches of The United Methodist Communion initially composed of the annual conferences and congregations of The United Methodist Church.

¶ 7. Article IV.—There shall be a Fellowship of Bishops of The United Methodist Communion as herein described.

**DIVISION THREE—THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

¶ 8. Article I.—There shall be a United Methodist Governing Council to coordinate the work of The United Methodist Communion of Churches.

¶ 9. Article II. **Composition**—The Governing Council shall be composed of not less than 60 nor more than 100 members, selected from among the member churches in equal numbers of lay and clergy members. Bishops who are members of the Governing Council shall be considered clergy members of the council. The Governing Council shall become the successor organization to the General Conference and General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church.

2. Members of the Governing Council shall be selected in a fair and open process by the member churches, who may elect lay and clergy reserves as deemed appropriate.

4. Members of the Governing Council shall serve a four-year term and may serve a maximum of eight years.

5. The Governing Council shall meet annually at such time and place determined by its duly authorized committees. Special sessions may be called at the discretion of its officers.

6. If not otherwise elected, the chairpersons and general secretaries of the general agencies shall attend meetings of the Governing Council with voice and without vote. These members shall not contribute to the 100-member maximum for the council. In no case shall persons drawing a salary from an agency of The United Methodist Communion exercise voting privileges on the council.

¶ 10. Article III. **Representation**—The Governing Council shall fix the representation allocated to each member church based on the percentage of total professing membership the church represents within the communion, provided that each member body with at least 250,000 professing members shall be entitled to one lay and one
clergy seat. Member churches of less than 250,000 may be granted a single representative and/or representation on a rotating basis as determined by the council. Ten additional members may be elected by the Governing Council to provide needed skills, continuity, and expertise. In all cases equal numbers of clergy and laity shall be retained. No member shall be seated without a two-thirds consent of the council.

¶11. Article IV.—The Governing Council shall exercise the following powers and responsibilities:

1. To facilitate the cooperative work of the member churches of The United Methodist Communion.

2. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and institutions of The United Methodist Communion regardless of race, gender, or nationality.

3. To provide oversight to the agencies of the communion.

4. To develop and approve a general budget for the communion.

5. To assess member churches a minimum share of the financial support necessary for the work of the Governing Council, pension support for retired bishops of The United Methodist Church, Archives & History, and United Methodist Communications. This assessment may be based partially or entirely upon measures of financial capacity.

6. To ensure that the proceeds from the Publishing House be used in support of pensions of clergy of the former The United Methodist Church who serve in conferences in the developing world.

7. To develop as far as possible agreed-upon United Methodist policies in the world mission of the church and to encourage member churches to engage together in developing and implementing such policies by sharing their resources to the best advantage of all.

8. To provide for the support of the retired bishops of The United Methodist Church as needed to maintain pension promises made to them.

9. To establish, authorize, sponsor, or otherwise endorse such commissions, networks, or similar bodies as shall advance the council’s mission.

10. To share information throughout the communion and serve as an instrument of common action.

11. To administer the name and trademarks of The United Methodist Communion of Churches and The United Methodist Church.

12. To establish such policies and procedures for the general agencies and other subsidiary bodies as may be helpful to accomplish its mission and to provide for good governance.

13. To foster healthy relationships between the member churches and, through the work of its committees, mediate disputes among the member churches.

14. To recognize, receive, suspend, or expel member churches of The United Methodist Communion by two-thirds vote. No member church shall be suspended or expelled without a period of not less than one year being granted in which the member church may make response to the Governing Council before a final decision is made.

15. To establish, name, organize, govern, merge, and/or dissolve the general agencies of The United Methodist Communion as needed to best serve the interests of the communion, provided that there shall be a United Methodist Board of Global Ministries or its equivalent. Assets from dissolved general agencies shall be redirected to other agencies or returned to the member churches in an amount proportional to that given over the previous ten years.

16. To establish and maintain standards and methods for statistical reporting among the member churches.

17. To provide for effective continuation of the Black College Fund, the Central Conference Theological Education Fund, and the Africa University Fund of The United Methodist Church.

18. While ecumenical relationships shall be determined by the member churches, the Governing Council shall work to foster Christian unity and shall work closely with The World Methodist Council for greater alignment among Methodists in mission, witness, and evangelism.

¶12. Article V. Restrictions.—The Governing Council may not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion or Confession of Faith. It may not establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our established doctrinal standards. It may not infringe upon the autonomy of the member churches. The Governing Council may not speak for the member churches except by agreement.

¶13. Article VI. Organization.—The president of the council shall be elected from among its membership by a two-thirds vote and shall be an ex officio member of all its committees. The presidential term shall be four years with a maximum of two terms. The council shall also elect a secretary, treasurer, vice-president, and other officers prescribed by its own governing documents. The council shall organize such committees as necessary to accomplish its work. The election of membership to committees, task forces, working groups, and commissions shall be administered in keeping with the policies and procedures of the Governing Council.

DIVISION FOUR—THE AGENCIES

¶14. Article I. General.—There shall be agencies of The United Methodist Communion of Churches initially comprised of the general agencies of The United Methodist Church. These agencies shall be governed by policies...
and procedures set forth by the Governing Council of The United Methodist Communion of Churches.

¶15. Article II. Structure—There shall be a board chairperson elected by the board and confirmed by the Governing Council. There shall be a general secretary as the chief staff officer of the agency who shall serve as chief administrative officer. The selection of the general secretary shall be made by the agency board and confirmed by the Governing Council. Each agency may provide for officers, committees, and other structures in keeping with the policies established by their boards. All policies and structures of the board must comply with the policies and procedures established by the United Methodist Governing Council.

¶16. Article III. Board of Global Ministries—There shall be a United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, or its equivalent, that shall be legal successor to the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

1. The board members shall be elected by the Governing Council as nominated by the member churches. The election of board members shall be proportional to the professing membership of the member churches as outlined in the policies and procedures established by the Governing Council. The board may also select other members for the purpose of expertise, provided that these board members represent no more than 10 percent of the total board membership.

2. The board shall seek covenant agreements with all member churches of The United Methodist Communion of Churches for support and partnership in shared mission. A base level of financial support may be negotiated in addition to a set of elective projects in which individual member churches agree to participate. The board may also approve covenants to administer mission programs initiated by the member church.

3. The board shall assist with episcopal salaries, benefits, and pensions from former United Methodist central conferences adversely affected by the discontinuation of the Episcopal Fund, as coordinated with the Governing Council. This support shall be in the form of grants and not a direct salary.

4. United Methodist missionaries aligning with one of the member churches of The United Methodist Communion may seek cooperative relationships beyond that member body.

5. The United Methodist Committee on Relief shall coordinate the relief efforts of The United Methodist Communion.

¶17. Article IV. Board of Pension and Health Benefits—There shall be a United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath), that is successor to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church. The board members shall be elected in accordance with its own policies from among the member churches of The United Methodist Communion of Churches. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall manage pension obligations pursuant to policies and procedures set forth by the Governing Council pertaining to pension matters. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall negotiate with annual conferences to sponsor retirement and other plans offered by the Board of Pension and Health Benefits designed to fit their polity and capacity.

¶18. Article V. United Methodist Communications—United Methodist Communications shall continue as successor to United Methodist Communications of The United Methodist Church. Base funding for this agency shall be provided by the United Methodist Governing Council and additional revenue may come through contractual arrangements with member churches.

¶19. Article VI. The Institute on United Methodist Archives and History—There shall be the Institute on United Methodist Archives and History that is successor to the General Commission on Archives and History. The Governing Council shall elect the board for the institute and provide financial support for its basic operations.

¶20. Article VII. United Methodist Publishing House. There shall be a United Methodist Publishing House that is successor to the publishing house of The United Methodist Church. The adjusted net income of The United Methodist Publishing House shall be appropriated by the board and distributed annually on the basis of a just plan provided by the Board of Pension and Health Benefits for the benefit of clergy serving member churches in developing nations.

¶21. Article VIII. Additional Agencies—The Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the Board of Discipleship, the Board of Church and Society, the Commission on Religion and Race, the Commission in the Status and Role of Women, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Men may continue to provide services to the entire communion similar to those they provided to The United Methodist Church. These agencies shall develop covenant agreements with the member churches of the communion for financial support and services. To be considered an agency of The United Methodist Communion of Churches these agencies must secure covenant agreements with member churches representing at least 75 percent of the total membership of the communion. Those failing to achieve this goal in the time frame allowed by the Governing Council shall negotiate with the Governing Council for independent status or dissolution. In these
cases a fair reallocation of agency assets shall be approved by the Governing Council.

DIVISION FIVE—THE FELLOWSHIP OF BISHOPS

¶22. Article I. There shall be a Fellowship of Bishops of The United Methodist Communion of Churches tasked with fostering best practices among the member churches in the areas of theology, leadership, evangelism, and the practice of Christian ministry.

¶23. Article II. Composition—The fellowship shall be comprised of all active bishops serving in a member church of The United Methodist Communion of Churches. Those member churches with non-episcopal forms of government may select supervising clergy to represent them in the fellowship. The expense for participation in the fellowship shall be borne by the member churches.

¶24. Article III. Organization—The fellowship may elect its own conveners who shall have authority to develop the agenda for the meetings. The conveners shall maintain a roster of all members of the fellowship and encourage participation.

¶25. Article IV. Meetings—The fellowship shall meet once every four years and as called into special session by the conveners.

DIVISION SIX—AMENDMENTS

¶ 26. Article I.—Amendments to the Constitution shall be made upon a two-thirds majority of the Governing Council present and voting and two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several member churches. The vote, after being completed, shall be canvassed by the Governing Council, and the amendment voted upon shall become effective upon their announcement of its having received the required majority.

¶ 27. Article II.—Amendments to the Constitution may originate in either the Governing Council or the General Conferences (or equivalent) of the member churches.

DIVISION SEVEN—TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

¶ 28. Article I.—The following transitional provisions shall be in effect upon ratification of this Constitution and shall govern the processes associated with The United Methodist Church becoming The United Methodist Communion of Churches. This constitutional Division Seven shall expire on December 31, 2028, and shall be omitted from the Constitution after that date. The provisions of this section shall be deemed generally compatible with any plan or plans of denominational separation approved at General Conference 2020. When there is conflict between provisions passed at 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church the provisions herein stated shall prevail.

¶ 29. Article II. Organization of Denominational Bodies—Convening conferences for new denominational bodies may be assembled based on the organizational work of drafting teams. Each drafting team shall develop 1,000-word vision statements signed by their members. These statements shall be shared through United Methodist Communications with the opportunity for public endorsement. Each drafting team shall also develop a date, location, and basis for representation for a convening conference for the new denomination. Annual conferences, bishops, clergy, and congregations may send representatives to a convening conference based on the parameters for representation developed by the drafting team. The denomination shall begin on the date established by the convening conference.

¶ 30. Article III. Annual Conferences—Annual conferences may by simple majority vote of those members present and voting at a regular or called session choose to form or align with a denomination formed under these transitional provisions. The basis for this decision shall be the vision statements provided by the various drafting teams. The annual conference shall consider this decision upon motion from the floor or may do so through its normal processes. The annual conference may also call a special session upon motion from the floor. When an annual conference considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the annual conference shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority. If the annual conference does not align with a denomination by a deadline established by the General Council on Finance and Administration, it shall be considered an autonomous denominational body by The United Methodist Communion of Churches, unless the conference is part of a central conference who selected or formed a denomination under the provisions of ¶ 31.

¶ 31. Article IV. Central Conferences—Central conferences may by simple majority vote of those members present and voting at a regular or called session choose to align with any denomination formed under these transitional provisions. The central conference shall consider this decision upon motion from the floor or may do so through its normal processes. The central conference may also call a special session upon motion from the floor. When a central conference considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the central conference shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority. If the central conference does not vote on alignment by the date established by the General Council on Finance and Administration, it shall be considered an autonomous church body by The United
Methodist Communion of Churches. Central conferences may choose a different alignment until at least December 31, 2028, under these transitional provisions. The annual conferences of a central conference shall align by default with the denomination body chosen by their central conference. The annual conference shall, however, have right to vote by simple majority to align with a different denominational body or to become a denominational body. Local churches of the central conferences shall have the right to align with a separate denominational body than their annual conference under these transitional provisions.

¶ 32. Article V. Local Churches—Local churches in the U.S. that disagree with their annual conference’s alignment may by simple majority vote of those professing members present and voting at a regular or called charge or church conference choose to align with a denomination not selected by their annual conference or join with fifty or more other local churches in forming another denomination. Churches not taking a vote shall by default remain in their annual conference under whatever alignment the conference has chosen. Local congregations may reaffiliate with another denominational body formed under these transitional provisions at least through December 31, 2028. This vote shall be by simple majority vote of a charge or church conference, or its practical equivalent. Notice shall be provided to the General Council on Finance and Administration or the Governing Council by the receiving denominational body. When a local church considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the church shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority. Local churches withdrawing to become independent shall at minimum provide prepayment of its share of unfunded pension liabilities calculated by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

¶ 33. Article VI. Interim Governance—Any annual conference or local church taking a vote on alignment shall specify as part of that action the date on which it will become effective. These dates shall be shared with the supervisory structures of The United Methodist Church. Any denomination forming under these transitional provisions may freely edit The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church as a basis for its own polity. The convening groups shall have authority to approve interim policies and procedures until their own governing body shall convene.

¶ 34. Article VII. Name and Insignia—Each new denomination forming under these transitional provisions shall be permitted, but not be required, to continue to use the name “United Methodist Church” with an appropriate modifier to distinguish itself from other denominations formed hereunder, and to protect the intellectual property of The United Methodist Church and its successors. Each denomination forming under these transitional provisions shall be permitted, but not be required, to use the cross and flame insignia with modifications to distinguish itself from other denominations formed hereunder and from the United Methodist Communion at large. To effectuate this intent, prevent confusion, and protect the intellectual property, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall work to ensure that the names chosen by the new denominations do not conflict with another denomination’s name and that insignia modifications are sufficient to distinguish each insignia from another. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall have the continued responsibility to administer the name “The United Methodist Church” and the trademarks of The United Methodist Church until the Governing Council of The United Methodist Communion of Churches forms and assumes this responsibility.

¶ 35. Article VIII. The United Methodist Trust Clause—All denominational bodies formed under these transitional provisions shall be deemed legal successors of The United Methodist Church. The restrictions of the trust clause (¶ 2501 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church) shall carry forth to each new denominational body that may alter or amend it as deemed consistent with their polity. The local church shall retain all its property, assets, and liabilities (other than pension liability) in the polity parameters of the denomination with which it aligns, whether by choice or default.

¶ 36. Article IX. Clergy Alignment—Clergy shall by default align with the denomination chosen by their annual conference. Clergy who wish to align with a denomination other than that chosen by their annual conference shall notify their bishop and the leadership of the denomination with which they desire to align. If the clergyperson’s current local church appointment aligns with the same denomination as the clergyperson, it is recommended that stability of that appointment be maintained where possible. If the clergyperson’s current local church appointment does not align with the same denomination as the clergyperson, the clergyperson’s current bishop and the designated leadership of the denominations involved shall consult regarding the status of that appointment. It is recommended that all denominational bodies formed under these transitional provisions maintain generous policies allowing for cross-denominational appointments among churches of The United Methodist Communion. When a clergyperson serves an appointment outside his or her chosen denomination, the clergyperson shall be required to abide by and satisfy the standards and requirements of the denomination in which he or she is appointed to serve.
¶ 37. Article X. Bishops—Bishops of The United Methodist Church shall select a denominational body with which to join by the date and manner established by The General Council on Finance and Administration. Service as active bishops in each of the new denominations shall depend upon the provisions adopted by that denomination. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall provide for continuation of episcopal salaries and support to those member churches in developing nations dependent upon the Episcopal Fund of The United Methodist Church. This support shall be continued at comparable 2020 levels through at least 2028 as provided by the Governing Council of The United Methodist Communion of Churches.

¶ 38. Article XI. The General Council on Finance and Administration, Special Authorities—Upon certification of the ratification of this Constitution, the General Council on Finance and Administration, as constituted by the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, shall have the following authorities and responsibilities:

1. To amend The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2020), making such changes as necessary to complete the orderly sorting of the congregations, clergy, bishops, and conferences of The United Methodist Church into autonomous denominational bodies and to provide interim governance to the general agencies of The United Methodist Church. The amended Book of Discipline shall be published electronically and shall be in force for all those congregations and annual conferences not yet aligned with a new denominational body.

2. To access and transfer assets and/or financial reserves held by the general agencies in keeping with all pertinent legal restrictions.

3. To amend the budget of The United Methodist Church. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall ensure that the global ministries of The United Methodist Church receive comparable levels of financial support during the transitional period.

4. To establish a recommended time line for the formation of new denominational bodies and the selection of representatives to the Governing Council of The United Methodist Communion. This date is not to exceed December 31, 2024.

¶ 39. Article XII. Formation of the Governing Council—The Governing Council of The United Methodist Communion may convene when member churches representing three-fourths of the 2020 membership of The United Methodist Church shall have elected their representatives to the Governing Council. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall certify these elections and set a date for the first session of the Governing Council. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall draft a set of recommended policies and procedures to aid to work Governing Council in its formation, including a program for staggering the terms of the council members to provide a gradual rotation of membership. The work of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall be fully subsumed into the Governing Council at a date determined by the Governing Council in its policies and procedures.

¶ 40. Article XIII. Central Conference Funding—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall maintain the goal of funding central conference operations and ministry through the 2021-24 quadrennium, funded by all denominations forming under these transitional provisions. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall compile a list of apportionment funding for central conference operations and ministry under the 2017-20 budget and shall apportion that amount to the various denominations annually throughout the quadrennium, adjusting for fluctuations in membership as the alignment process continues. These central conference apportionments shall be listed separately, so that each local church may determine how much of its apportionment is going to this central conference apportionment. Apportionment support for central conference bishops shall also be listed separately, even if this funding passes through the Episcopal Fund. General Council on Finance and Administration shall administer the funds received and distribute them pro-rata or in such other manner as has been the historical pattern. In addition, all denominations are encouraged to continue supporting Advance Specials and other mission projects in the central conferences.

¶ 41. Article XIV. Pension Matters—The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits will reassign pension liabilities related to realigning local churches, and clergy who have served in them, pursuant to administrative processes by which the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is able to reassign liabilities and assets based on local church and clergy transfers among continuing plan sponsors. Annual conferences shall continue to be responsible for pension liabilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program, which is reflected in ¶ 1504.1 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, as plan sponsors. If the annual conference agrees to continue to be legally responsible for such obligations, it shall not be required to make any payment of unfunded liabilities prior to alignment with a new denominational body. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall calculate and manage these pension obligations. For future clergy benefits, annual conferences (or their equivalent) of new denominational bodies may sponsor retirement plans offered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits designed to fit their polity and capacity.
§ 42. Article XV. Communion Membership—All denominational bodies comprised by the congregations and annual conferences of The United Methodist Church at the time of the 2020 General Conference shall be entitled to initial membership in The United Methodist Communion and may do so by default as the governing documents of that church allow.

§ 43. Article XVI. Institutional Affiliation—Institutions or property owned by, controlled by, associated with, or affiliated with an annual conference shall continue to be so owned, controlled by, or associated or affiliated with that annual conference in the denomination chosen by it, unless the institution is authorized to and changes its affiliation or acts to become independent according to its own bylaws. Institutions of The United Methodist Church may seek relationship with one or more of the member churches of The United Methodist Communion of Churches, and with the communion generally.

§ 44. Article XVII. Candidates for Ministry—It is recommended that candidates who are in process toward licensing, commissioning, or ordination be grandfathered into that point in the process in whichever denomination they want to align with, so that they would not have to repeat requirements for licensing or ordination. Boards of ordained ministry shall promptly forward the paperwork and files of candidates to the proper body in the new denomination when requested in writing by the candidate.

§ 45. Article XVIII. Jurisdictional and Central Conference Properties—Institutions or property owned or controlled by or associated or affiliated with a jurisdiction or central conference shall belong to the denomination chosen by a majority of the membership of the annual conferences in that jurisdiction or central conference, unless the institution is authorized to and changes its affiliation or acts to become independent according to its own bylaws.

Rationale:

This legislation reconstitutes The United Methodist Church as The United Methodist Communion of Churches. It replaces our current Constitution and provides for an orderly sorting of annual conferences and congregations into new denominational bodies. It retains connectionalism, our agencies, and vital mission support in the U.S. and central conferences.

§ 9.

Petition Number: 20056-CO-¶9-C; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Two U.S. Jurisdictions

Amend ¶ 9 (Article II) as follows:

There shall be two jurisdictional conferences for the Church in the United States of America, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth, provided that in The United Methodist Church there shall be no jurisdictional or central conference based on any ground other than geographical and regional division.

Rationale:

Provisions already exist for annual conferences to overlap geographically and for churches to transfer between them. Given the presence of cultural variations between jurisdictional conferences, churches who align culturally with a different jurisdictional conference could now transfer into a new annual conference formed by that jurisdictional conference.

¶ 9.

Petition Number: 20055-CO-¶9-C; Williams, Jonathan - Flat Rock, OH, USA.

USA Church as Central Conference- Constitution

Amend ¶¶ 10, 28, 30, and 31 as indicated following:

¶ 10. Article III.—There shall be central conferences for the church outside the United States of America as determined by the General Conference and, if necessary, provisional central conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 28. Article I.—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 central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.

¶ 30. Article III.—The central conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by the preceding respective central conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the General Conference. The date and place of the first meeting succeeding the Uniting Conference shall be fixed by the bishops of the respective central conferences, or in such manner as shall be determined by the General Conference.

¶ 31. Article IV.—The central conferences outside the United States shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:

NEW PARAGRAPH. The central conference that includes the United States shall have the power and duty to make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within its boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the central conference may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

Rationale:
Creating a central conference for The UMC within the United States provides a forum for discussion of issues peculiar to the U.S. and resolution of conflicts that would best be settled in such a setting. It need not be accompanied by the creation of additional structure or bureaucracy.

¶ 10.
Petition Number: 20684-CO-¶10-C-G; DeLarme, Shirley - Port Orchard, WA, USA for Pacific Northwest Annual Conference.

Establish Central Conference of North America

¶ 10. Article III.—There shall be central conferences for the church outside the United States of America as determined by the General Conference and, if necessary, provisional central conferences, all with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

¶ 28. Article I.—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 central conferences. The central conferences shall have the duties, powers, and privileges hereinafter set forth.

¶ 30. Article III.—The central conferences shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such times and places as shall have been determined by the preceding respective central conferences or by commissions appointed by them or by the General Conference. The date and place of the first meeting succeeding the Uniting Conference shall be fixed by the bishops of the respective central conferences, or in such manner as shall be determined by the General Conference.

¶ 31. Article IV.—The central conferences outside North America shall have the following powers and duties and such others as may be conferred by the General Conference:

NEW PARAGRAPH. The central conference that includes North America shall have the power and duty to make such rules and regulations for the administration of the work within its boundaries including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the central conference may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

Immediately prior to ¶ 540, change Section III title to read as follows:

Section III. Central Conferences Outside North America

Following existing ¶ 567, insert a new Section as follows:

SECTION NEW TITLE. Central Conference of North America

NEW ¶ 1. There shall be a central conference whose boundaries shall include all the jurisdictional conferences
in North America, and it shall be called the North American Central Conference (NACC).

NEW ¶ 2. The active bishops in the jurisdictions, in consultation with the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, shall appoint an interim Committee on Organization (ICO) that shall be charged with the following duties:

NEW ¶ 2.1. The ICO shall choose the time and place for the convening of the initial gathering of the NACC, and it is recommended that it gather immediately prior to and at the site of the General Conference of 2024.

NEW ¶ 2.2. The ICO shall recommend to the NACC for action at its first gathering what committees and officers are required to ensure the functionality of the NACC. The ICO shall work with the business manager of the General Conference in planning for the first gathering of the NACC.

NEW ¶ 2.3. Delegates and reserve delegates to the NACC shall be the most recently elected delegates and reserve delegates to the General Conference from any annual conference within the jurisdictions and shall represent those same annual conferences.

Rationale:

According to Article IV, Section 5 of the United Methodist Constitution, a central conference can “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.” The

¶11.

Petition Number: 20725-CO-¶11-C-G; Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha - Chicago, IL, USA for The Connectional Table.

Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference

[Add new ¶ 11. Article IV. and renumber subsequent paragraphs and articles]

¶ 11. Article IV.—There shall be a regional conference for the church in the United States of America, with such duties, powers, privileges, and limitations as are hereinafter set forth.

Section II. General Conference

[Deletion from ¶ 16.4]

¶ 16.4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church outside the United State of America.

[Insert new Section VI., ¶¶ 32-35 and renumber successive sections and paragraphs]

¶32. Article I.—There shall be a regional conference for the work of the church in the United States of America with such duties, powers, privileges, and limitations as are hereinafter set forth. The regional conference shall initially include all areas that comprise the jurisdictional conferences as defined in Section VII., ¶ 37. Subsequently, the General Conference shall have authority to make changes in the number and boundaries of regional conferences.

¶ 33. Article II.—The regional conference shall be composed of as many delegates as determined by the General Conference. The delegates shall be clergy and lay in equal numbers.

¶ 34. Article III.—The regional conference shall meet in accordance with provisions determined by the General Conference.

¶ 35. Article IV.—The regional conference shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To make such rules and regulations for the administration of the church’s work within its boundaries, including such changes and adaptations of the General Book of Discipline as the conditions in the regional conference may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

2. To appoint a judicial court to determine legal questions arising on the rules, regulations, and such revised, adapted, or new sections of the regional conference Discipline enacted by the regional conference.

3. Such other duties and powers as may be conferred by the General Conference, provided that the regional conference has no authority over duties assigned to the jurisdictional conferences in ¶¶ 23-27.

[Amend existing ¶ 39 as follows]

¶ 39. Article III.—Changes in the number, names, and boundaries of the jurisdictional conferences may be effected by the General Conference upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences of each of the jurisdictional conferences involved.

Rationale:

A United States Regional Conference can provide a forum for discussion and action and unburden the full General Conference from legal, administrative, and financial matters pertaining only to the church in the United States. A regional conference also can provide the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the U.S. church.

¶13.

Petition Number: 20057-CO-¶13-C-G; Pacis-Alarine, Irambona - Bujumbura, Burundi.
Size of General Conference

Amend ¶ 13, Article I.—1. The General Conference shall be composed of not less than **600-800** nor more than **1,000** delegates, . . .

Rationale:
Dropping to as few as 600 delegates would especially hurt mid-sized conferences, making most 4-delegate and even some 6-delegate conferences drop to 2 delegates. It would also make General Conference less responsive to where the church is growing. This would unfairly make our denomination less representative and hurt delegate diversity.

¶14.

Petition Number: 20058-CO-¶14-C; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

General Conference Delegate Reform A

¶ 14. Article II.—The General Conference shall meet once in four years at such a time and in such a place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees. The change in the preceding sentence shall become effective at the close of General Conference in 2016.

A special session of the General Conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the powers of the General Conference, may be called by the Council of Bishops, or in such other manner as the General Conference may from time to time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference, regardless of change in a delegate’s lay/clergy status, 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. 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 purpose stated in such call unless the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

¶16.

Petition Number: 20002-CO-¶16-C-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 16, Article IV.1:

1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, ethnicity, economic condition, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or status.

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

¶16.

Petition Number: 20059-CO-¶16-C-G; Holland, Mark - Olathe, KS, USA.

Legislative Equality for Central and Jurisdictional Conferences

Amend ¶ 16 of the Constitution of the United Methodist Book of Discipline to read as follows:

¶ 16. Article IV.—The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctive-ly connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows: in Parts I, II, III, and IV of the General Discipline. Jurisdictional and central conferences shall have full legislative power over the remaining parts of the General Discipline with the following exceptions reserved for the General Conference:

1. To define and fix the conditions, privileges, and duties of Church membership, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender, or status.

2. To define and fix the powers and duties of elders, deacons, supply preachers, local preachers, exhorters, deaconesses, and home missioners.

3. To define and fix the powers and duties of annual conferences, provisional annual conferences, missionary conferences and missions, and of central conferences, district conferences, charge conferences, and congregational meetings.

4. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the church outside the United States of America.

5. To define and fix the powers, duties, and privileges of the episcopacy, to adopt a plan for the support of the bishops, to provide a uniform rule for their retirement, and to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.

6. To provide and revise the hymnal and ritual of the Church and to regulate all matters relating to the form and
mode of worship, subject to the limitations of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

7. To provide a judicial system and a method of judicial procedure for the Church, except as herein otherwise prescribed.

8. To initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the Church and to provide boards for their promotion and administration.

9. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the work of the Church.

10. To fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the jurisdictional conferences and to determine the number of bishops that may be elected by central conferences.

11. To select its presiding officers from the bishops, through a committee, provided that the bishops shall select from their own number the presiding officer of the opening session.

12. To change the number and the boundaries of jurisdictional conferences upon the consent of a majority of the annual conferences in each jurisdictional conference involved.

13. To establish such commissions for the general work of the Church as may be deemed advisable.

14. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, program, and institutions in The United Methodist Church regardless of race, gender, or status.

15. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other mandated structures notwithstanding:

16. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and restrictions of the Constitution of the Church.

Rationale:
The stated goals of the Connectional Table and the Colleges of Bishops in the Philippines and Africa. Keeps the global UMC intact and decentralizes our colonial era structure by granting equal and broad legislative authority to jurisdictions and central conferences. This amendment eliminates the global discussion around human sexuality.

16. Article IV.—The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, and in the exercise of this power oversight shall have authority as follows:

Petition Number: 20654-CO-16-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Oversight Authority of General Conference

Amend ¶16 and 47 as indicated following:

16. Article IV.—The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows:

8. To initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the Church, and to provide boards subordinate entities for their promotion and administration, and to delegate to such entities specified and limited authority for oversight and execution of particular ministries. This is not a limitation of the general oversight responsibility and authority of the bishops prescribed elsewhere in this Constitution.

47. Article III.—There shall be a Council of Bishops composed of all the 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 responsibility of the Council of Bishops to plan for the general oversight and promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire church shall not be understood to preempt or supersede the authority of the General Conference to have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, including authority to delegate oversight of particular functions or ministries in carrying out its responsibility to initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the church and to provide entities for their promotion and administration.

Rationale:
The draconian interpretation the Judicial Council has given the oversight authority of the Council of Bishops inappropriately limits the ability of the General Conference to establish agencies with oversight authority over particular areas of ministry in the connectional life of the church.
¶16.

Petition Number: 20655-CO-¶16-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Limitation of Judicial Council
Doctrinal Activism

Amend ¶ 16 by adding a new ¶ 16.16 indicated herein following:

NEW ¶ 16.16. To make decisions for the church in matters of theology and doctrine in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution. In the exercise of this power the General Conference, alone, shall provide definitions of language and terms as it deems necessary and shall decide in a manner prescribed by the General Conference what statements of theology and doctrine are consistent with the present existing and established standards of doctrine.

Amend ¶ 56 as indicated herein following:

¶ 56. Article II.—The Judicial Council shall have authority:

1. To determine the constitutionality of any act of the General Conference upon an appeal of a majority of the Council of Bishops or one-fifth of the members of the General Conference and to determine the constitutionality of any act of a jurisdictional or central conference upon an appeal of a majority of the bishops of that jurisdictional or central conference or upon the appeal of one-fifth of the members of that jurisdictional or central conference. However, the Judicial Council shall have no authority to consider or tender decisions on matters of doctrine or theology that shall be solely within the power of the General Conference, as provided in ¶ 16.16. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, definition of theological and doctrinal language and terms.

Rationale:

The General Conference, not the Judicial Council, is and must remain the arbiter of the church in matters of theology and doctrine. The Judicial Council has stated that it has no jurisdiction in such matters, and this needs to be encoded in the Constitution to preclude judicial activism.

¶27.

Petition Number: 20061-CO-¶27-C-G; Harper, Trey - Canton, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference.

Require Global Ratification of Bishops

Book of Discipline ¶ 27 (2016). Article V. of The Constitution of The United Methodist Church...

2. To elect bishops—subject, however, to the ratification of the next ensuing regular, special, or called General Conference, failing which the election of any bishop whose election is not ratified by a majority of such General Conference present and voting shall forthwith be vacated and held for naught—and to cooperate in carrying out such plans for their support as may be determined by the General Conference.

¶27.

Petition Number: 20687-CO-¶27-C-G; Ingram, Kimberly Tyree - Huntersville, NC, USA for Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

The Jurisdictional Conference Plan

Amend ¶¶ 27, 101, and 525 by addition.

**(Note: Insert new # 2, #3, and #4 to ¶ 525 as follows, which represent the same language used in ¶¶ 543.7, 543.12, and 543.14 to enumerate the powers of central conferences:)

Part I: The Constitution
Division Two—Organization: § IV. Jurisdictional Conferences

¶ 27, Article V. The jurisdictional conferences shall have the following powers and duties and privileges, and such others as may be conferred by the General Conferences:

1. To promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary, and benevolent interests of the church and to provide for interests and institutions within their boundaries. . . .

5. To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the church within the jurisdiction, including such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in their respective areas may require, subject to such powers as have been or shall be vested in the General Conference.

Part II: General Book of Discipline

¶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 jurisdictional and 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 Confer-
The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, in consultation with the Committee on Faith and Order, will bring legislation to the 2020 General Conference to change the structure of the General Book of Discipline to include a Part IV, General Organization and Administration not subject to change or adaptation by central and jurisdictional conferences, and a Part VII, Additional Organization and Administration, adaptable by central and jurisdictional conferences according to ¶ 31.5. The content of Part VI of the 2016 Book of Discipline will be included in either part VI or Part VII of the General Book of Discipline. For the work on Part VI, Chapter 2 (The Ministry of theOrdained) and Chapter 3 (The Superintendency) of the 2016 Book of Discipline, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters will work in consultation with the Commission for the Study of Ministry, and for Part VI, Chapter 5 (Administrative Order) of the 2016 Book of Discipline, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters will work in consultation with the Connectional Table.

Part VI: Organization and Administration
Chapter Four – The Conferences: § II. The Jurisdictional Conference
¶ 525. Powers and Duties of Jurisdictional Conference—1. The jurisdictional conference shall have powers and duties as described in the Constitution. It shall also have such other powers and duties as may be conferred by the General Conference. It shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination based upon race.

* * *

2. A jurisdictional conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline as the special conditions and mission of the church in the area require, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and general church. Subject to this restriction, a jurisdictional 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 the request of such annual conference.

3. A jurisdictional 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 the ordained ministers 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.

4. A jurisdictional conference shall have the power to conform the detailed rules, rites, and ceremonies for the solemnization of marriage to the statute laws of the country or countries within its jurisdiction.

Rationale:
Our disunity arises in part from an outdated, uneven, U.S.-centered global polity that grants central conferences the authority to adapt the Discipline but denies this same right to jurisdictional conferences. This proposal offers a way forward by simply applying the same language to jurisdictional conferences as to central conferences.

¶27.5.

Petition Number: 20062-CO-¶27.5-C-G; Williams, Jonathan - Flat Rock, OH, USA.

Jurisdictional and Central Conference Equivalency

Petition: Amend ¶ 27.5 (Constitution, Division 2, Section IV, Article 5.5) by addition:

To make rules and regulations for the administration of the work of the church within the jurisdiction 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. [Added text borrowed verbatim from language in ¶ 31.5]

Additionally (change of related paragraphs as allowed under ¶ 507.2) add a new sub-paragraph after ¶ 525:

A jurisdictional conference shall have the power to make such changes and adaptations to the Book of Discipline 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 Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that
the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church.” [text adapted from similar language in ¶ 543.7]

Rationale:
Central conferences have the authority to adapt the Discipline to their cultural contexts. No American body has this power, requiring all America-specific adaptations to be made by a global body. This petition gives jurisdictional conferences that same authority to adapt the Discipline to address missional realities in their

¶32.

Petition Number: 20063-CO-¶32-C-G; Reaves, Susan - Fort Defiance, VA, USA for Virginia Annual Conference.

Balancing Lay and Clergy Members of Annual Conference

AMEND ¶ 32, Article I: If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members in attendance of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize, as far as possible, lay and clergy membership in attendance of the annual conference.

And the identical sentence found in ¶ 602.4: If the lay membership should number less than the clergy members in attendance of the annual conference, the annual conference shall, by its own formula, provide for the election of additional lay members to equalize, as far as possible, lay and clergy membership in attendance of the annual conference.

Rationale:
The intent of ¶ 32, Article I. of the Constitution of the Book of Discipline, and of ¶ 602.4, is to ensure equal representation of laity and clergy at sessions of the annual conference. With the current wording, this is not being achieved in actual practice as well

¶32.

Petition Number: 20064-CO-¶32-C-G; Bryan, James - Graham, NC, USA for North Carolina Annual Conference.

Clarifying the Age of Youth in the United Methodist Church

Desired Action: Amend ¶ 32 to read:

¶ 32. Article I.—The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members. The lay membership shall consist of deacons and elders in full connection, provisional members, associate members, and local pastors under appointment. The lay membership shall consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, the diaconal ministers, the active deaconesses, and home missioners under episcopal appointment within the bounds of the annual conference, the conference president of United Methodist Women, the conference president of United Methodist Men, the conference lay leader, district lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Servant Ministries, conference secretary of Global Ministries (if lay), the president or equivalent officer of the conference youth organization, the chair of the annual conference college student organization, and one young person aged approximately twelve (12) through eighteen (18) in the United States and up to twenty-four (24) in the central conferences between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference.

Rationale:
Submitted at the direction of the North Carolina Annual Conference from a resolution submitted by youth Charlie Hatch, clarifying the definition in ¶ 256.3. Allows the inclusion in conference leadership of youth still in middle or high school but outside of the existing age

¶32.

Petition Number: 20065-CO-¶32-C-G; Evans, Emily - Marion, SC, USA.
Harmonize the Age for Young Adults at 35

Amend ¶ 32 and 602.4 as follows:

¶ 32. Article I.—The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and lay members. . . . The lay membership shall consist of professing lay members elected by each charge, . . . and one young person between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) and one young person between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty (30) thirty-five (35) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference. In the annual conferences of the central conferences, the four-year participation and the two year membership requirements may be waived by the annual conference for young persons under thirty (30) thirty-five (35) years of age. . . .

Amend ¶ 602.4 as follows:

¶ 602. Composition and Character—. . . .

4. The lay membership of the annual conference shall consist of a professing member elected by each charge, . . . one youth between the ages of twelve (12) and seventeen (17) eighteen and one young adult between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty thirty-five (35) from each district to be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the annual conference (in the case of central conferences, the youth member shall be not younger than twelve (12) and no older than twenty-five (25) and the young adult member shall be not younger than eighteen and not older than thirty-five), . . .

Include the following provision in the adoption of the proposed changes:

The changes in ¶ 602.4 shall be effective if and when the proposed changes in ¶ 32 have been certified by the Council of Bishops.

Rationale:

This change provides for greater participation at the annual conference level by young adults and harmonizes the age level for young adults between jurisdictional and central conferences (which may currently elect young adults up to the age of thirty-five) and harmonizes the Constitution and accompanying BOD paragraph.

¶ 35.

Petition Number: 20067-CO-¶ 35-C; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 1 Similar Petition

Amend 35

Amend ¶ 35 as follows:

¶ 35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be and elected by the all current clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference, including who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members, who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election licensed local pastors, student pastors (in their home conference), retired clergy, as well as other clergy under appointment at the time of the election.

¶ 35.

Petition Number: 20068-CO-¶ 35-C; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA for North Alabama Annual Conference.

Clergy Delegate Election-Voting Rights

Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 35. Article IV—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all
of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. are enrolled in or have completed Course of Study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

Rationale:
This petition is in recognition of the growing ratio of local pastors to elders in churches of all sizes throughout the global church who are fulfilling the *Book of Discipline* educational requirements by expanding their voting privileges for the election of clergy delegates to the General, jurisdictional, or

¶35.
Petition Number: 20069-CO-¶35-C-G; Huff-Cook, Becky - Indianapolis, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference.

**Granting Representation to all Clergy (Local Pastors)**

Delete who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

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

¶35.
Petition Number: 20070-CO-¶35-C-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

**Educational Requirements for Voting Privileges**

¶ 35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference . . . and local pastors who have completed Course of Study or an M. Div. Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference and have served . . .

Rationale:
Consistent with the worldwide nature of the church, the educational requirements inserted here ensure that those voting for clergy delegates have completed the denominational-standard expectations for theological education.

¶35.
Petition Number: 20071-CO-¶35-C-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

**Associate Members Eligible to Serve as GC JC Delegates**

Amend ¶ 35 and ¶ 321.2 for consistency as follows:

¶ 35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection; and associate members, and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

¶ 321.2. 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 jurisdictional or central conferences.

Rationale:
The reality is that a significant number of licensed clergy have no voice or vote at General Conference. This change would expand the pool of those clergy members eligible to serve. Associate members have been examined and approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and the annual conference.

Note: This

¶35.
Petition Number: 20072-CO-¶35-C; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA.
Local Pastor Voting Rights

Amend ¶ 35. Article IV - The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. Provisional members, and local pastors under full-time and part-time appointments in the annual conference having 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. degree, and are in good standing with the conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Rationale:
In recognition of the upward trend in the ratio of local pastors in churches of all sizes, local pastors being called to serve and lead in various positions within districts and conferences, and the right of equal representation for all congregations on all matters impacting the local and global church.

¶35.
Petition Number: 20664-CO-¶35-C-G; Speer, Lloyd - Fairless Hills, PA, USA for Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

Constitutional Amendment: Local Pastor Voting Rights

AMEND ¶ 35 of the 2016 Book of Discipline, The Constitution. Section VI. Annual Conferences. Article IV to read: “The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from all current clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference, including elders in full connection, deacons in full connection, associate members, provisional elders and deacons, licensed local pastors, student pastors (in their home conference), retired clergy, as well as all other clergy under appointment at the time of elections.”

¶35.
Petition Number: 20667-CO-¶35-C-G; Wilcox, Lynn - Hop Bottom, PA, USA.

Voting Rights of Licensed Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 35 Article IV:
The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. 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.

¶35.
Petition Number: 20682-CO-¶35-C-G; Masters, Scott - Chesterfield, NH, USA.

Equilization of Voting Rights Among Clergy

¶35. Article IV.—The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members, who have completed all of their educational requirements, and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.
Conferences

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.

§35.
Petition Number: 20686-CO-§35-C-G; Page, John - Cave Spring, GA, USA.

Increase Voting Rights for Local Pastors

The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from all the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements, and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

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 100 in worship;
WHEREAS, the majority of those small membership churches are pastored by local pastors;
WHEREAS, more than 55 percent of

§36.
Petition Number: 20073-CO-§36-C-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Contextuality Based Missionary Conferences-Constitution

Add a new paragraph following existing §36 as follows:

NEW.1. General Conference may create within any jurisdiction a missionary conference without regard to existing boundaries of annual conferences within the jurisdiction. The missionary conference so created may have boundaries that cause it to overlap or coincide with those of existing annual conferences.

2. Missionary conferences created under this provision shall have authority 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.

Rationale:
We are in a terrible bind as a church; this is one possible way forward, allowing us to focus again on mission. The General Conference should have authority to create a new kind of conference where United Methodists could establish policies that differ from those that predominate in the jurisdiction.

§36.
Petition Number: 20074-CO-§36-C-G; Lassiat, Meg - Nashville, TN, USA.

Residency Requirement for Lay Delegate Eligibility

Amend §36:

§36. Article V.—The lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two years next preceding their election, and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election, and are members thereof within the annual conference electing them at the time of holding the General and jurisdictional or central conferences. Lay members vow to be active participants in the local church in which membership is held through their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. In order to be eligible for election as a lay delegate to General and jurisdictional or central conferences, a layperson must be resident in a location close enough to the local church where membership is held within the electing annual conference to enable regular and consistent participation in that local church. Exceptions to the residency requirement shall be made for students and for remotely deployed members of the armed services.

Rationale:
Maintaining local church membership where one cannot regularly participate, in order to ensure eligibili-
ty for election to general church positions undermines a proper understanding of church membership. This practice prohibits upholding the membership vow of presence and allows conferences to elect laity who are inactive in the conference’s worshiping community.

¶37.

Petition Number: 20075-CO-¶37-C; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

The Jurisdictional Realignment

Amend Section VII, ¶ 37, Article I of the Constitution as follows:

The United Methodist Church shall have jurisdictional conferences made up as follows:

Northeastern—Bermuda, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Virgin Islands, West Virginia
Southeastern—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia
North Central—Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
South Central—Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

The United Methodist Church in the United States shall consist of two jurisdictional conferences, reflecting the theological diversity of the church, each of which shall have the power to make such changes and adaptations of the General Discipline as the conditions in the respective conferences may require, subject to the powers that have been or shall be vested in the General Conference. Annual conferences within the United States shall determine by majority vote which jurisdictional body with which to align, provided that individual congregations within those conferences may similarly elect by majority vote to align with a different jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction shall be responsible for providing for the salary and expenses of the episcopal leaders elected by that jurisdiction.

¶41.

Petition Number: 20076-CO-¶41-C; Ritter, Chris - Geneseo, IL, USA.

Constitutional Transfers

¶ 41. Article V. Transfers of Local Churches—1. Other provisions notwithstanding, a local church may be transferred from one annual conference to another in which it is geographically located upon approval by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in each of the following:

a) the charge conference;

b) the congregational meeting of the local church;

c) each of the two annual conferences involved.

The vote shall be certified by the secretaries of the specified conferences or meetings to the bishops having supervision of the annual conferences involved, and upon their announcement of the required majorities the transfer shall immediately be effective.

2. The vote on approval of transfer shall be taken by each annual conference at its first session after the matter is submitted to it.

3. Transfers under the provisions of this article shall not be governed or restricted by other provisions of this Constitution related to changes of boundaries of conferences—transfer to any annual conference from which it attains a letter of the bishop certifying the cabinet is willing and able to include them in the ministry of the annual conference. The transfer shall be approved by a majority vote of a charge or church conference. The motion for vote shall include an effective date, which shall be shared with the bishop of the annual conference from which the congregation is transferring. Once a vote on transfer is made, the local church may not vote again on transfer for a period of thirty-six (36) months. Any share of unfunded pension liability, as calculated by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, would transfer with the congregation to their new annual conference.

2. Other provisions notwithstanding, an annual conference may transfer to another jurisdictional or central conference by majority vote of the plenary body. The motion shall include an effective date no earlier than six months from the time of the vote and notice shall be given to the colleges of bishops involved by the secretary of the annual conference. Ideally such decisions would be timed to coincide with the end of episcopal terms. When an annual conference transfers, the jurisdictional or central conferences involved may meet to adjust the plan of episcopal supervision. Once a vote on transfer is made the annual conference may not vote again on transfer for a period of thirty-six (36) months.

3. Geographic boundaries of the Constitution notwithstanding, annual conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and central conferences may do ministry anywhere they believe they may be effective. Annual conferences,
jurisdictional conferences, and central conferences may exceed their normal borders as they so choose, and geographic borders may overlap throughout the connection.

Rationale:
Rigid geographic borders have contributed to conflict in our annual conferences and denomination. This constitutional change would make local church and annual conference transfers much simpler. The new reality will either help us live together as a church or ease the transition if we need to ultimately divide.

¶100.
Petition Number: 20743-CO-¶100-!-G; Williams, Jay - Boston, MA, USA.

New Expressions Worldwide Plan-Birthing New Methodist Denominations

[NEW ¶¶] Section—The Churches in the 21st Century

1. Faithfulness in Serving the Present Age—In order to faithfully carry out the church’s mission in a global context, The United Methodist Church will give birth to four new denominations as fresh expressions of the Wesleyan legacy. These new expressions will share a common heritage, grounded in the Wesleyan view of grace and holiness, commitment to mission, and connectionalism. However, each denomination will have a different understanding of how this heritage faithfully “serves the present age.”

The present conflict over “homosexuality” is rooted in deep disagreement over Christology (understanding of the person and ministry of the resurrected Christ Jesus of Nazareth), biblical interpretation (understanding of the role of Holy Scripture), ecclesiology (understanding of how church is organized), and social ethics (understanding of the church’s role in society). Rather than continuing the conflict, which does significant harm to the vitality of the denomination and local congregations, The United Methodist Church lays itself aside. True to the covenant prayer of the Wesleys, we yield our allegiance to a single denomination for the sake of faithful employment to the gospel of Jesus Christ and reimagine our future ministries and missions. Inspired by the early church, particularly the Council of Jerusalem, we choose to part ways, commending each other’s ministry to the grace of God (Acts 15).

2. New Global Methodist Denominations—The United Methodist Church creates four new global denominations, each responsible for developing its own Plan of Organization. These new denominations are: Traditionalist Methodist Church, Moderate Methodist Church, Progressive Methodist Church, and Liberation Methodist Church (names are temporary placeholders until the new denominations organize and self-determine). These denominations may be in full communion with each other and part of a global convention or worldwide Wesleyan Communion.

3. Plan of Separation—A Plan of Separation shall be presented to a special General Conference, occurring before 2024, that dissolves The United Methodist Church and attends to all practical, legal, and financial considerations related to this dissolution.

4. Transitional Council—There shall be a Transitional Council that develops the above-named Plan of Separation according to the values of self-determination, equitable distribution of general church assets, restorative justice, and reparations.

5. Moratorium—There shall be an immediate moratorium on charges, complaints, and church trials related to ¶ 161, ¶ 304.3, ¶ 310.2, ¶ 341.6, ¶ 613.19, ¶ 806.9, and ¶ 2702.1(b).

6. Precedence and Effective Date—All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect upon the adjournment of General Conference 2020. All provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over any conflicting provisions or paragraphs in the Book of Discipline not in the Constitution.

7. Severability—If one provision of this paragraph is found unconstitutional, any other provisions not dependent upon that provision shall be severable and implemented as passed by the General Conference.

¶500.
Petition Number: 20723-CO-¶500-!-G; Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha - Chicago, IL, USA for The Connectional Table.

Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference

Add a new paragraph between existing ¶¶ 506 and 507 and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

[NEW ¶1] There shall be a U.S. Regional Committee (“the Committee”) composed of all General Conference delegates representing annual conferences in the United States that shall have legislative function. In addition, one layperson and one clergyperson from each of the central conferences shall be elected by the central conferences or their leadership bodies and shall serve with voice and vote. This Committee shall be assigned all petitions pertaining to the operation, governance, witness, and minis-
try of The United Methodist Church in the United States and which are adaptable by central conferences according to ¶ 101 and per ¶ 543.7 (referred to hereafter as U.S. Region-Adaptable). The Committee shall operate in accordance with provisions enacted by the General Conference and the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference, as amended, to provide for the work of this Committee.

2. The provisions pertaining to the Committee shall be in effect until a United States Regional Conference has been created and is functional, at which time the Committee and these provisions will expire.

3. The Committee shall convene and process the legislation assigned to it immediately prior to the opening of the General Conference.

4. Actions of the Committee will be reported to the General Conference for vote of the General Conference, in accordance with procedures for legislation coming from the Committee.

Rationale:

A United States regional conference can provide a forum for discussion and action and unburden the full General Conference from legal, administrative, and financial matters pertaining only to the church in the United States. A regional conference also can provide the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the U.S. church.

¶500.

Petition Number: 20726-CO-¶500-!-G; Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha - Chicago, IL, USA for The Connectional Table.

Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference

[Add new Section V. United States Regional Conference, ¶¶ 550 – 555; renumber successive sections accordingly]

Section V. United States Regional Conference

¶ 550. Authorization—There shall be a regional conference whose boundaries shall include all the jurisdictional conferences, and it shall be called the United States Regional Conference, notwithstanding that it may include territory not included within the United States.

¶ 551. Composition—The United States Regional Conference shall be composed of all General Conference delegates from annual conferences in the U.S. jurisdictions elected to the General Conference immediately prior to the regional conference meeting, and shall represent those same annual conferences. Reserve delegates elected from the annual conferences in the U.S. jurisdictions to the General Conference shall also serve as reserve delegates to the United States Regional Conference. In addition, one layperson and one clergyperson from each central conference shall be elected by the central conferences or their leadership bodies and shall serve with voice but not vote.

¶ 552. Organization—1. The United States Regional Conference shall meet within the year succeeding the meeting of the General Conference at such time and place as determined by the preceding regional conference. The date and place of the first regional conference meeting shall be fixed in such manner as determined by the General Conference.

2. The regional conference has the right to hold such adjourned sessions as it may determine. The sessions of said conference shall be presided over by the bishops of the jurisdictional conferences. The bishops shall have the authority to call an extra session of the regional conference to be held at the time and place designated by them.

3. The presiding officer of the regional conference shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the regional conference, and shall decide questions of law, subject to an appeal to the Judicial Council, but questions relating to the interpretation of the rules and regulations made by the regional conference for the governing of its own session shall be decided by the regional conference.

4. The regional conference shall have the power to organize and incorporate one or more executive committees, executive boards, or councils of cooperation, with such membership and such powers as may have been granted by the regional conference for the purpose of representing it in its property and legal interests and for transacting any necessary business that may arise in the interval between the sessions of the regional conference or that may be committed to said boards or committees by the regional conference, provided these actions do not modify or supersede the powers and duties of the jurisdictional conferences.

¶ 553. Powers and Duties—1. The United States Regional Conference shall receive and act on missionary, educational, evangelistic, industrial, publishing, medical, and other connectional interests of its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and jurisdictions and such other matters as may be referred to it by these bodies or by the General Conference. It shall provide suitable organizations for such work and elect the necessary officers for the same.

2. The regional conference shall have power to make such changes and adaptations of the Book of Discipline, excluding any portions of the Discipline that a General Conference may designate as non-adaptable, as the spe-
cial conditions and the mission of the church in the area require, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, annual conference, and jurisdictional levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. Subject to this restriction, the regional conference may delegate to a jurisdiction or 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 the request of such jurisdiction or annual conference.

3. The regional conference shall have power to make changes and adaptations in procedure pertaining to the annual, district, and charge conferences within its territory and to add to the business of the annual conference supplementary questions considered desirable or necessary to meet its own needs.

4. The regional conference shall have authority to examine and acknowledge the journals of the jurisdictional conferences, annual conferences, and missionary conferences within its bounds and to make recommendations for the drawing up of the journals as may seem necessary.

5. The regional conference shall have authority to edit and publish a regional conference Discipline, which shall contain in addition to the Constitution of the church such sections from the general Discipline of The United Methodist Church as may be pertinent to the entire church and also such revised, adapted, or new sections as shall have been enacted by the regional conference concerned under the powers given by the General Conference.

¶ 554. Records and Archives—1. The journal of the proceedings of the regional conference, duly signed by the president and secretary, shall be sent for examination to the General Conference. Two paper copies shall be sent without charge to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration, and one copy of a digital version shall be sent along with the paper copies.

2. The regional conference shall submit a copy of every adaptation of the general Discipline or portion thereof in use in the regional conference to the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

¶ 555. Regional Conference Agencies—1. The regional conference, shall establish a judicial court, which in addition to other duties that the regional conference may assign to it shall hear and determine the legality of any action of the regional conference taken under the adapted portions of the Discipline or of a decision of law by a presiding bishop of the regional conference pertaining to the adapted portions of the Discipline, upon appeal by the presiding bishop or by one-fifth of the members of the regional conference. Further, the judicial court shall hear and determine the legality of any action of an annual conference taken under the adapted portions of the Discipline or of a decision of law by the presiding bishop of the annual conference pertaining to the adapted portion of the Discipline, upon appeal of the presiding bishop or of such percentage of the members of the annual conference as may be determined by the regional conference.

2. The regional conference shall establish such other agencies, commissions, or committees as it may determine are important to the work and witness of the church in the United States.

Rationale:

A United States Regional Conference can provide a forum for discussion and action and unburden the full General Conference from legal, administrative, and financial matters pertaining only to the church in the United States. A regional conference also can provide the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the U.S. church.

¶ 501.

Petition Number: 20077-CO-¶501-!-G; Bergjord, Hege - Stavanger, Norway.

General Conference Adopts Two Small Administrative Powers

¶ 501. Definition of Powers—The General Conference has full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional (see ¶ 16, Division Two, Section II, Article IV, The Constitution). It has no executive but some administrative power. When the General Conference brings a complaint against a bishop, jurisdiction, annual conference or other United Methodist entity, it will also specify a venue for seeking a just resolution in a neutral annual conference within the central conferences. The expense of the process shall be borne by the General Conference though the process expense may be reduced by using instant communications like video conferencing.

Rationale:

General Conference may question whether UM entities have violated the Discipline. Assigning a neutral setting to determine what action, if any, needs to be taken allows a just resolution whether judicial or administrative. Since we in the United States are divided, perhaps we need help from central conference.
Petition Number: 20078-CO-¶502.3-G; Williams, Alice - Orlando, FL, USA.

Delegate Election Limits to General Conferences

Amend the Book of Discipline ¶ 502.3 as follows:

. . . the number of delegates to be elected by that annual conference. 3 In order to encourage a more consistent flow of new delegates to General Conference, no delegate shall be elected to more than three (3) consecutive General Conferences. In addition, annual conferences and central conferences are reminded and encouraged to seek diversity among their delegates to ensure a broad representation of the churches and mission fields in which they serve.

Rationale:

To everything there is a season! A time to plant, a time to reap. A time to be a delegate, and a time to refrain from being a delegate and let others experience, firsthand, the amazing power and wonder of God at work in The UMC. #weneednewfaces

Petition Number: 20079-CO-¶507-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Submitting Petition(s) to General Conference Amendment

Amend ¶ 507 as follows:

¶ 507. Petitions to General Conference—Any church, charge, annual, central or jurisdictional conference, or any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference in the following manner:

. . .

3. Each petition must be signed by the person an official representative submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, including church, charge, annual, central or jurisdictional conference, or organization of The United Methodist Church, local church, or United Methodist Board or agency relationship. Each petition submitted by fax or electronic mail must identify the individual official representative submitting it, accompanied by identification as above and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.

4. All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church, and local church groups, churches or charge conferences 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.

7. Petitions adopted and properly submitted by church or charge, annual, central, and jurisdictional and central conferences, or any organization of The United Methodist Church, 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.

Rationale:

As a connectional church which values Christian conferencing, petitions submitted should at least find a positive vote in a conference structure or organization of The United Methodist Church (see ¶¶ 701-703) before it is officially submitted, not just from an individual member of the church.

Petition Number: 20080-CO-¶510.2a-G; Paige, Peggy - Ingalls, MI, USA for United Methodist Rural Advocates.

Extend Life of Resolutions from 8 to 12 Years

Amend ¶ 510.2 a) as follows:

¶ 510.2 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 twelve 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.
Rationale:

Many of the resolutions in the Book of Resolutions have been readopted multiple times because they are not time sensitive but rather of unending concern. This change would cut down on the work of General Conference by increasing the time between necessary re-adoption from 8 to 12 years.

¶511.


Respect the Formula

Amend ¶ 511.5e by adding a new sentence as follows: e) This formula is designated to comply with the Constitution, Division Two, Section II, Article I (¶ 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. If such an adjustment becomes necessary because of the above formula yielding a total number of delegates greater than the constitutionally prescribed maximum of 1,000 delegates, the adjustment may not result in a total number of delegates fewer than 850.

Rationale:

One commission should not have broad power to unseat as many as 400 delegates, drastically reducing representation from some areas but not others. If we need to shift representation, we should let General Conference change the formula. Smaller delegations cannot include as much gender, race, tribal, or age diversity.

¶511.

Petition Number: 20085-CO-¶511-$-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Service Per Diem for General Conference Lay Delegates

Amend ¶ 511.4.e:

4. e) The commission shall recommend to the General Conference the per diem allowance to be paid to the elected delegates for housing and meals. Additionally, the commission shall recommend to the General Conference a daily per diem allowance to lay delegates for their service to the church.

Rationale:

In an effort to seek inclusiveness (¶ 4Article IV), a daily per diem to be paid to lay delegates elected to the General Conference for their service, modeled after programs like juror pay in many countries. Lay delegates are not guaranteed to receive wages, unlike clergy delegates.

¶511.1a.

Petition Number: 20084-CO-¶511.1a-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Commission on General Conference Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 511.1a as follows:

¶ 511.1a Commission on the General Conference—There shall be a Commission on General the Conference, hereinafter called the commission.

1. Membership— a) The voting members of the commission shall be elected quadrennially by the General Conference and shall consist of twenty-five members as follows: one person from each U.S. jurisdiction, one person from each of the seven central conferences, 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 membership based upon combined clergy and lay membership of the church.

Rationale:

The amendment adjusts membership based on the addition of a central conference in Africa. One central conference member is added, and the number of additional members is reduced by one. It is dependent upon the creation of an additional central conference in Africa.

¶511.4a.

Petition Number: 20082-CO-¶511.4a-G; Oskvig, Bryant - Potomac, MD, USA.

Caring for General Conference Delegates

Amend ¶ 511.4.a by addition

¶ 511.4 Responsibilities— a) 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. It shall ensure the full legal protections in the location of General Conference for all delegates on the basis of race, age, ability, sexuality, marital status, and gender identity.

**Rationale:**
All of the rightfully chosen General Conference delegates need to be able to gather and meet without fear. The ensuring of full legal protections for the delegates safety is a minimum hospitality that should be expected from any location that would host General Conference.

**¶511.5e.**

Petition Number: 20083-CO-¶511.5e-$-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

**Determining Number of General Conference Delegates**

Amend ¶ 511.5.e) as indicated following:

¶ 511.5.e) This formula is designated to comply with the Constitution, Division Two, Section II, Article I (¶ 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 provided that the adjustment must be the minimum required to bring the total number of delegates within the constitutional limits.

**Rationale:**
Setting the number of delegates at a figure different from the figure achieved by minimum adjustment establishes policy. It is being established by the Commission on the General Conference and the secretary of the GC, both of which are administrative, not policy, bodies. Policy is set by the GC.

**¶512.**

Petition Number: 20086-CO-¶512-G; Sichel, Matthew - Manchester, MD, USA. 4 Similar Petitions

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**Global Accountability for Bishops**

ADD a New ¶ 512 after current ¶ 511 as follows and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

¶ 512. **Provision for discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.** General Conference may also act on petitions to remove a particular elder from the office of bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability (¶ 16.5). This option is to be regarded as an expedient of last resort. The General Conference voting to adopt such a petition shall be considered a legislative action and not part of any complaint, administrative, or judicial process. Such petitions shall be non-disciplinary petitions and must follow the requirements of ¶ 507, except that this category of petitions may only be submitted by an annual conference, five or more congregations (as represented by their church councils or charge conferences), or at least fifty (50) lay and/or clergy members of The United Methodist Church. The following process shall be used for such petitions:

1. Petitions to discontinue a bishop for reasons of inefficiency or unacceptability shall accurately identify the name and assignment of the bishop in question.

2. Any allegation forming the basis of such a petition for the removal of a bishop from office shall have previously been raised in an appropriate manner at the jurisdictional or central conference level.

3. Such petitions shall, in no more than one thousand (1,000) words, succinctly and accurately identify the specific concerns about the bishop's actions or performance that form the basis of the submitter's judgment that it is unacceptable to continue this individual in the office of bishop and why recourses available at the jurisdictional or central conference level have proven insufficient. Such petitions shall be based on allegations of bishops failing to fulfill the duties and expectations of the office of bishop (¶¶ 403, 414-416, 2702.1, and/or other applicable standards of the Discipline and church law). Such petitions shall include substantiating information for any allegations made.

4. The secretary of the General Conference shall notify any bishop named in such a validly submitted petition in an appropriate manner within twenty (20) days of receipt of the petition.

5. The bishop in question shall be provided an opportunity to submit a written statement, of no more than fifteen hundred (1,500) words, responding to the petition calling for his or her removal from office. The secretary of the General Conference shall give the bishop a minimum of thirty (30) days in which to submit such a statement, and shall publish the bishop's statement in the Advance Edition of the *Daily Christian Advocate* immediately fol-
lowing the original petition, translated into the official languages of the General Conference.

6. Such petitions shall be initially reviewed by the same legislative committee that ordinarily reviews most petitions related to judicial administration. The petition shall not be considered by a subcommittee but only by the legislative committee as a whole. Before any committee votes on such a petition, both a spokesperson for the petition’s submitters and the named bishop shall have a right to make an opening statement to the committee, to answer questions, and to make a closing statement.

7. Before the plenary session of the General Conference votes on such a petition, both a spokesperson for the petition’s submitters and the named bishop in question shall each be given opportunity to make a ten-minute statement to the assembled delegates.

8. In order to be adopted, a General Conference petition to remove a bishop from office must receive an affirmative vote of at least 60 percent of delegates present and voting in plenary session.

9. Any elder removed from the office of bishop through this process shall remain an elder in good standing, unless and until this status is otherwise changed. Such elders shall revert to being 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).

10. Any elder removed from the office of bishop through this process shall be ineligible to be elected again as bishop for a minimum of eight years.

Rationale:

In extreme cases when regional accountability mechanisms fail to address bishops not doing their jobs faithfully and effectively, there must be a last-resort way for the General Church to have oversight, especially considering that bishops are “general superintendents.” This provides an orderly and fair process, protecting the rights of all.

¶512.

Petition Number: 20087-CO-¶512; Holley, Del - Knoxville, TN, USA.

Jurisdictional Study Commission Petition #2—Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy Responsibilities

Amend ¶ 512 by the following additions and deletions:

¶ 512. Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy
1. There shall be an Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy elected by the General Conference consisting of the persons nominated by their annual conference delegations to serve on the several jurisdictional committees on episcopacy. The committee shall meet not later than the fifth day of the conference session and at the time and place set for their convening by the president of the Council of Bishops and shall elect from their number a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The function of this joint committee shall be to discuss the possibility of transfers of bishops across jurisdictional lines at the forthcoming jurisdictional conferences for residential and presidential responsibilities in the ensuing quadrennium; and to review on the basis of missional needs an application a request from a jurisdiction which, by number of its church members for additional bishops as provided in ¶ 404 would experience a reduction in the number of its bishops, and recommend the number of bishops to which that jurisdiction should be entitled to the General Conference for determination by the General Conference. This provision regarding missional needs is enabling, and it is not constraining on the power of General Conference to act in the absence of a recommendation from the committee.

It shall elect an executive committee consisting of the officers named above and two clergy and two laity persons from the nominees to each jurisdictional committee, elected by that committee to conduct consultations with bishops and others interested in possible episcopal transfers. One of the persons elected from each jurisdiction shall be the chairperson, or the chairperson’s designee, of the jurisdictional committee. The executive committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson, and it shall have plenary power for the full committee between full committee sessions. It shall be responsible to the interjurisdictional committee, and in fulfillment of that responsibility and in the interest of continuity of the work of the committee, the outgoing chairperson, or the chairperson’s designee, shall present a report to the newly seated committee on the previous quadrennium’s work as well as recommendations on what the coming quadrennium’s work might include.

A record of the proceedings of the committee shall be kept by the Office of Episcopal Services of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

2. A bishop may be transferred across jurisdictional lines only when that bishop has consented to such transfer and has served at least one quadrennium in or under assignment by the jurisdiction in which the bishop was elected. Such a transfer shall be concluded when the committee on episcopacy of each jurisdiction involved has approved the transfer(s) by a majority vote of those present and voting, insofar as the transfer(s) affects those jurisdictions. (See ¶ 49, Article V.)
3. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy shall be recognized as the official body through which cross-jurisdictional transfers shall be arranged. Should a bishop request transfer, the bishop has the option to identify the receiving jurisdiction. A jurisdiction may request that a specific bishop be transferred or may indicate a willingness to accept a bishop transferring from another jurisdiction. Request for transfer from either a bishop or jurisdictional committees on episcopacy shall be received by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy by April 1 of the year preceding the year of jurisdictional conferences. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will arrange consultation between bishop(s) requesting transfer and the appropriate jurisdictional committee(s) on episcopacy by January 1 of the year of jurisdictional conferences. Once the jurisdictional committee(s) on episcopacy has taken action, jurisdictional conference secretaries shall inform the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy not later than August 1 following jurisdictional conferences.

4. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will report to each General Conference the action taking during the previous quadrennium.

Rationale:

See Jurisdictional Study Committee report for full rationale—This petition proposes amendments to ¶ 512 to authorize the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy to receive and act on requests from jurisdictions for additional bishops authorized by the proposed amendment of ¶ 404 (JSC Petition #1). This petition is part of a legislative

¶524.

Petition Number: 20089-CO-¶524; Holley, Del - Knoxville, TN, USA.

Jurisdictional Study Commission Petition #3—Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy Responsibilities

Amend ¶ 524 by the following addition:

¶ 524. Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy

1. There shall be a jurisdictional committee on episcopacy consisting of one clergy and one lay delegate to the jurisdictional conference from each annual conference elected by the jurisdictional conference upon nomination of their respective annual conference delegations.

The committee shall be convened by the president of the College of Bishops at the close of the jurisdictional conference to which the delegates have been elected. It shall serve through the succeeding jurisdictional conference.

The committee shall elect from its members a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary. It shall meet at least annually.

Should there be a vacancy in an annual conference’s elected representation on the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy by death, resignation, election to the episcopacy, cessation of membership in the annual conference from which one is elected, or for other reasons that the annual conference delegation may determine, the annual conference delegation shall nominate another person to fill the vacancy. That person may begin to serve on the committee as a nominee until the jurisdictional conference can elect.

2. The jurisdictional conference shall provide funding for the expenses of the jurisdictional committee on episcopacy.

3. The jurisdictional committee on episcopacy shall:

   a) Review and evaluate annually the work of the bishops, pass on their character and official administration, and report such evaluation and other findings to the jurisdictional conference for such action as the conference may deem appropriate within its constitutional warrant of power. The evaluation shall include those areas of responsibility outlined in ¶ 414, ¶ 415, and ¶ 416 as well as the bishop’s leadership in the promotion and support of the full payment of apportionments. The committee may, in its sole discretion, also forward its report to the president of the College of Bishops, who shall then share the report with the Council of Bishops in executive session.

   b) Recommend boundaries of the episcopal areas and the assignments of the bishops.

   c) Be available to the council and College of Bishops for consultation on matters of mutual concern.

   d) Determine the number of effective bishops eligible for assignment, and, in consultation with the College of Bishops, make such request of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (pursuant to ¶ 404.2.b) as may be necessary to ensure that the General Conference has approved an appropriate number of bishops to serve the missional needs of the jurisdiction.

   e) Receive and act upon requests for possible voluntary and involuntary retirement of bishops; however, as provided in ¶ 408.3a), the committee may initiate on its own motion the process of involuntary retirement when it is seen to be in the best interest of the church.

   f) Initiate or receive and act upon a request for transfer of one or more of the members of its jurisdiction’s College of Bishops to another jurisdiction’s College of Bishops or upon a request for transfer of a member of another jurisdiction’s College of Bishops to its jurisdiction’s College
of Bishops. As provided in ¶ 512.2, no such transfer may be completed without the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the committee present and voting.

g) Consult with the conference committees on episcopacy with respect to the needs for episcopal leadership and how best they can be fulfilled.

h) Establish a consultation process with each bishop regarding his or her episcopal assignment.

i) Prepare a report of its decisions, activities, and recommendations to be transmitted to its successor through the office of the secretary of the jurisdictional conference. The report shall be made available to delegates of the jurisdictional conference prior to the jurisdictional conference.

Rationale:

See Jurisdictional Study Committee report for full rationale – This petition proposes amendments to ¶ 524 to include among the responsibilities of the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy the responsibility for making the request for additional bishops authorized by the proposed amendment of ¶ 404 (JSC Petition #1). This petition is

¶525.

Petition Number: 20090-CO-¶525; Brown, Curtis - Springfield, IL, USA.

Empowering Jurisdictional Conferences for Contextual Adaptation

Amend ¶ 525, effective as of at the close of the General Conference 2020 as follows:

¶ 525. Powers and Duties of Jurisdictional Conference—The jurisdictional conference shall have powers and duties as described in the Constitution. It shall also have such other powers and duties as may be conferred by the General Conference. It shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination based upon race.

1. A jurisdictional 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, especially concerning the organization and administration of the work on local church, district, and annual conference levels, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided that the spirit of connectional relationship is kept between the local and the general church. Subject to this restriction, a jurisdictional 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 the request of such annual conference.

2. A jurisdictional conference shall have power to make changes and adaptations in procedure pertaining to the annual, district, and charge conferences within its territory and to add to the business of the annual conference supplementary questions considered desirable or necessary to meet its own needs.

3. A jurisdictional 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 the ordained ministers 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.

4. A jurisdictional conference shall have authority to edit and publish a jurisdictional conference Discipline, which shall contain in addition to the Constitution of the church such sections from the General Discipline of The United Methodist Church as may be pertinent to the entire church and also such revised, adapted, or new sections as shall have been enacted by the jurisdictional conference concerned under the powers given by the General Conference.

Rationale:

This would grant to jurisdictional conferences the identical contextual adaptation powers granted to central conferences in ¶ 543. This would allow the General Conference to focus on global church matters and the central and jurisdictional conferences to focus on regional matters.

¶567.

Petition Number: 20672-CO-¶567-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

USA Church as Central Conference—Implementation

Immediately prior to ¶ 540, change Section III title to read as follows:

Section III. Central Conferences Outside the United States
Following existing ¶ 567, insert a new Section as follows:

Section NEW. Central Conference of the United States

Following the new Section title insert new paragraphs as follows:

NEW 1. There shall be a central conference whose boundaries shall include all the jurisdictional conferences, and it shall be called the Central Conference of the United States (CCUS), notwithstanding that it may include territory not included within the United States.

NEW 2. The active bishops in the jurisdictions, in consultation with the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, shall appoint an Interim Committee on Organization (ICO) that shall be charged with the following duties:

NEW 2.1. The ICO shall choose the time and place for the convening of the initial gathering of the CCUS, and it is recommended that it gather immediately prior to and at the site of the General Conference of 2024.

NEW 2.2. The ICO shall recommend to the CCUS for action at its first gathering what committees and officers are required to ensure the functionality of the CCUS. The ICO shall work with the business manager of the General Conference in planning for the first gathering of the CCUS.

NEW 2.3. Delegates and reserve delegates to the CCUS shall be the most recently elected delegates and reserve delegates to the General Conference from any annual conference within the jurisdictions and shall represent those same annual conferences.

Rationale:

Creating a central conference for The UMC within the United States provides a forum for discussion of issues peculiar to the U.S. and resolution of conflicts that would best be settled in such a setting. It need not be accompanied by the creation of additional structure or bureaucracy. The creation of a provisional annual conference is part of a missional development, which should lead to an annual conference within twelve years.

Rationale:

"Provisional" was intended to be a transitional status in a missional development towards an annual conference, but it has often become a permanent status. To remain provisional permanently would require specific reasons. Standing Committee petitions on ¶¶ 580-583 are interrelated to help create greater self-sustainability.

¶ 580.

Petition Number: 20093-CO-¶580-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Membership of Provisional Annual Conferences Amendment

Delete current ¶ 582 and replace with:

¶ 582. Membership—A provisional annual conference shall be organized with the same provisions for membership as an annual conference.

Rationale:

New ¶ 582 is a statement on membership that was missing in BOD 2016. The current ¶ 582 is being deleted and integrated as appropriate into amended ¶ 581.3 and ¶ 583.1., .2, and .3. Standing Committee petitions ¶¶ 580-583 are interrelated.

¶ 582.

Petition Number: 20094-CO-¶583-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Provisional Annual Conference—Conference Session

Delete current ¶ 583 and insert current ¶ 582 language and new ¶ 583 as follows:

¶ 583. Conference Session—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.

1. The bishop in charge may appoint a superintendent to whom may be committed specific responsibility as liaison to the General Board of Global Ministries.

2. 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.

3. A provisional annual conference shall elect an elder or deacon in full connection and one layperson as delegates to the General Conference. Delegates to central conferences shall be elected in accordance with ¶ 541.1.

Rationale:
New ¶ 583 is a statement on conference session. It reflects present realities and includes the aim of increased self-support. The current ¶ 583 is entirely deleted because it is no longer needed. Amendments to ¶¶ 580-583 are interrelated.

¶585.
Petition Number: 20670-CO-¶585-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

**Contextuality Based Missionary Conferences—Implementation**

The following provisions will become effective only upon the certification of the enabling amendment to the Constitution in the accompanying petition by the addition of paragraph NEW.

Amend ¶ 585 as follows:

¶ 585. **Definition**—A conference is a missionary conference because of its particular mission opportunities, its limited membership and resources, its unique leadership requirements, its strategic regional or language considerations, its contextual situation, and ministerial needs. The General Board of Global Ministries shall provide administrative guidance and major financial assistance, including attention to the distinctive property matters.

Amend ¶ 586 as follows:

¶ 586.1. The College of Bishops shall provide episcopal supervision for any missionary conference(s) within its jurisdictional boundaries as are organized. The bishop thus placed in charge and having episcopal supervision within the respective episcopal area in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries shall appoint a conference superintendent and/or district superintendents. Such conference . . .

Delete ¶ 586.2 in its entirety.

Amend ¶ 588 as follows:

¶ 588. Rights and Privileges—Missionary conferences, other than those created pursuant to the authority conveyed in ¶ NEW, shall have the same rights as those given to the central conferences in ¶ 543.7, .8 to make such changes and adaptations regarding the ministry and ordination of ordained ministers as the effective use of indigenous leadership in the missionary conference may require, provided that no action shall be taken that is contrary to the Constitution and the General Rules of The United Methodist Church, and provided further that a missionary conference that does not have a board of ordained ministry must use the process prescribed in ¶ 586.4.g) for approval of candidates for ordination. Missionary conferences created pursuant to the authority conveyed to the General Conference in ¶ NEW shall have authority 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.

Rationale:
We are in a terrible bind as a church; this is one possible way forward, allowing us to focus again on mission. The General Conference should have authority to create a new kind of conference where United Methodists could establish policies that differ from those that predominate in the jurisdiction.

¶587.
Petition Number: 20101-CO-¶587; Brown, Curtis - Springfield, IL, USA.

**Empowering Jurisdictional Conferences to Create Missionary Conferences**

Amend ¶ 587, effective as of at the close of the General Conference 2020 as follows:

Only the General Conference or a jurisdictional conference can create a missionary conference or change a missionary conference to a provisional annual conference or an annual conference. For a missionary conference created by General Conference a petition to the General Conference for change in status from a missionary conference shall set forth details of the history and status of the conference and shall be accompanied by a report and recommendation of the General Board of Global Ministries. The General Board of Global Ministries shall not be required to provide administrative guidance and financial assistance to a missionary conference created by a jurisdictional conference, but instead that missionary conference shall be directly amenable to the jurisdictional conference that created it. That jurisdictional conference shall provide provision for the administration guidance and fi-
financial assistance ascribed to the General Board of Global Ministries in ¶¶ 586 and 587.

Rationale:
This would give to jurisdiction conferences the power to create missionary conferences for contextual adaptations in their regions but would not encumber the General Board of Global Ministries with the requirement to provide funding for those missionary conferences.

¶601.
Petition Number: 20102-CO-¶601-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Purpose of the Annual Conference
Amend by addition to ¶ 601:
 ¶ 601. The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples..., all to the glory of God. In all its actions and activities, from treatment of one another during plenary through church trials, the annual conference shall seek to go on to perfection in love, as our heavenly Father is perfect.

Rationale:
Our clergy promise at our ordination to go on to perfection and expect to achieve it in this life. We must constantly seek that perfection in love as a conference and not just as individuals. Our corporate actions will also speak louder than our words.

¶602.1.
Petition Number: 20108-CO-¶602.1; Wharff, Mark - Modesto, CA, USA for California-Nevada Annual Conference. 2 Similar Petitions

Amend 602.1
Amend ¶ 602.1 as follows:
  a) Clergy members 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 jurisdictional or central conferences and shall have sole responsibility for all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
  b) Provisional clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶602.1b.
Petition Number: 20105-CO-¶602.1b; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA for North Alabama Annual Conference.

Provisional Clergy Member—Voting Rights
Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 602.1b:
  b) Provisional clergy members, who have completed all of their educational requirements may vote to elect clergy delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.
and jurisdictional or central conferences. Matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy, shall be excluded.

**Rationale:**

This petition is to recognize the provisional clergy member and the ministries to which they have been appointed in carrying out the church’s mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" by expanded voting privileges so that God will be glorified.

**¶602.1b.**

Petition Number: 20737-CO-¶602.1b; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA.

**Local Pastor Voting Rights**

Delete ¶ 602.1.b and substitute the following: Provisional clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

**¶602.1c.**

Petition Number: 20103-CO-¶602.1c; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA for North Alabama Annual Conference.

**Associate and Affiliate Clergy—Voting Rights**

Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 602.1.c:

c) Associate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1). Affiliate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the constitutional amendments, election of clergy delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences, and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

**Rationale:**

The change recognizes the years of service and experience of associate clergy members and the right of all congregations to be equally represented on matters that affect the local church and the church at large.

**¶602.1c.**

Petition Number: 20736-CO-¶602.1c; Wilder, Michael - Guntersville, AL, USA.

**Local Pastor Voting Rights**

Delete ¶ 602.1.c and substitute the following: Associate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy. When associate members are members of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, they have the right to vote at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.
session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1). Affiliate clergy members shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy.

¶602.1d.

Petition Number: 20104-CO-¶602.1d; Morgan, Darrell - Fort Payne, AL, USA for North Alabama Annual Conference.

**Full-Time and Part-time Local Pastor—Voting Rights**

Amend by addition and deletion ¶ 602.1d:

d) Full-time and part-time local pastors shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments; election of delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy; having 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 education 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 at clergy session on matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1). 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 on constitutional amendments, and to elect delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences.

Rationale:
The change recognizes the years of service and experience of local pastors and the right of all congregations to be equally represented on matters that affect the local church and the church at large.

¶602.1d.

Petition Number: 20109-CO-¶602.1d-G; Beard, Janet - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference.

**Value and Empower Licensed Local Pastors**

Action: Amend ¶ 602.1.d of the *Book of Discipline* as follows:

d) Full-time and part-time local pastors shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except constitutional amendments; election of delegates to the General and 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:
This petition is in recognition of the growing ratio of local pastors to elders in churches of all sizes throughout the global church being called to serve and lead in various positions with some conference now having over 50 percent more local pastors serving congregations than elders.

¶602.1d.

Petition Number: 20107-CO-¶602.1d; Olm, Donald - Gallatin, TN, USA.
2. They have invested in education and service as clergy.
3. They offer experience and perspective that is valuable to the general church.

¶602.1d.

Petition Number: 20669-CO-¶602.1d-G; Wilcox, Lynn - Hop Bottom, PA, USA.

Voting Rights of Licensed Local Pastors

Amend ¶ 602.1(d):

Full-time and part-time local pastors, who have completed two years of consecutive appointment and simultaneous or consecutive completion of four classes in the Course of Study track or two semesters towards an M. Div. degree shall have the right to vote in the annual conference on jurisdictional and General Conference delegates, constitutional amendments, on all matters relating to the character and conference relations of its clergy and, except constitutional amendments; election of delegates to General and jurisdictional or central conferences and matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1). 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:

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.

¶604.

Petition Number: 20111-CO-¶604; Gallardo, Maximo - Baguio City Philippines for The Baguio Episcopal Area Joint Cabinet.

Annual Conference Power to Recognize Educational Institutions for Clergy and Deaconesses

Add new ¶ 604.14. Every annual conference asserts its power to recognize seminaries and other educational institutions for the education of clergy persons and deaconesses.

¶604.

Petition Number: 20112-CO-¶604-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Constitution Amendments in Annual Conference

Add a new ¶ 604.14 as follows:

¶ 604.14. Proposed Constitutional Amendments in Annual Conferences—As provided in ¶ 59 of the Constitution it is the duty of each annual conference to provide an opportunity for its members to vote on amendments to the United Methodist Constitution as proposed by the General Conference. In each annual conference at the conclusion of such a vote it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to announce the result of the vote in that conference, including votes in favor, in opposition, and in abstention.

Rationale:

Processes in The United Methodist Church ought to be as open as possible, and nothing in existing UM law precludes the announcement in each annual conference of the result of its members’ vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution.
Petition Number: 20113-CO-¶604; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA.

New Form of Unity #1

Add a new sub-paragraph 14 to ¶ 604

¶ 604.14 U.S. annual conferences becoming self-governing Methodist churches.

a. Any annual conference in the United States may become a self-governing church or join an existing one when that annual conference votes by simple majority to seek this status under the terms of this paragraph. The annual conference shall notify the president of its College of Bishops of its decision at least thirty (30) days before a regular or specially called session of its jurisdictional or central conference. 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. It shall be the new self-governing church’s own responsibility to develop its Book of Discipline and establish itself as a legal entity. The existence of the self-governing church shall be effective upon the adjournment of the jurisdictional or central conference or upon the effective date established by the annual conference in its decision, whichever is later. Approval from the jurisdictional conference is not required.

An annual conference shall not consider a switch in its affiliation within less than four years from a previous annual conference vote on the question.

b. If a U.S. annual conference ceases to be a part of The United Methodist Church through becoming a self-governing Methodist church, or otherwise, it should contribute to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits any amount necessary to fully fund its obligations under the Clergy Retirement Security Program and all other denominational pension plans. The former annual conference’s sponsorship of and legal responsibilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program will continue as a self-governing Methodist church. However, accruals and benefit improvements under the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall cease. The sponsorship and administration of the Clergy Retirement Security Program for the self-governing Methodist church will be sequestered and treated separately from all other annual conferences that remain part of The United Methodist Church.

For purposes of administering the Clergy Retirement Security Program in this manner, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and empowered to:

1. Identify which of the self-governing Methodist church’s (former annual conference’s) plan participants have chosen to remain with The United Methodist Church, and those who are members of the former annual conference (whether the former annual conference becomes a self-governing Methodist church or otherwise disaffiliates) based on records of service and membership of the annual conferences; non-clergy participants, e.g., surviving spouses, contingent annuitants, and alternate payees, will be deemed to remain associated with The United Methodist Church;

2. Calculate and sequester the former annual conference’s share of defined benefit plan assets and liabilities for all participants of the former annual conference using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program; and to the extent and at any time that certain participants, whether active or inactive, become the responsibility of The United Methodist Church, retain for The United Methodist Church from such calculated share an amount necessary to fully fund the liabilities of such participants using factors similar to a commercial annuity provider.

3. Calculate the amount of any plan contributions required to be made by the former annual conference in the future, as part of the self-governing Methodist church’s ongoing sponsorship of its separate frozen part of the Clergy Retirement Security Program;

4. Collaborate with the self-governing Methodist church (former annual conference) to determine how plan design changes may be requested by the self-governing Methodist church, and the scope and administrative reasonableness of amendments that may be made to the separate frozen part of the Clergy Retirement Security Program; and

5. Amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference to conform with this paragraph of the Book of Discipline.

If the self-governing Methodist church (former annual conference) does not satisfy any required ongoing contributions within a reasonable time under this paragraph or the terms of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, or the self-governing Methodist church elects not to, refuses to, or fails to satisfy its legal sponsorship of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall convert all accrued pension benefits of the self-governing Methodist church’s (former annual conference’s) assigned participants to an actuarially equivalent account balance, adjusted, as necessary, to take into account the former annual conference’s funding level of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such account balances, and all other retirement account balances, will be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, The Gener-
al Board of Pension and Health Benefits may also take such actions if the Clergy Retirement Security Program is amended to require an account balance conversion for similar classes of participants, or if continuing administration for the self-governing Methodist church is no longer administratively reasonable.

c. Institutions owned by or affiliated with the annual conference shall continue that relationship unless, under their own bylaws and in conjunction with the annual conference, they establish a change of affiliation.

d. The newly created body shall continue under the supervision of the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction until supervisory leadership is in place under its constitution.

e. Any local church or charge of the annual conference becoming or joining a self-governing church shall have the right to remain in the existing jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church by a simple majority vote of a church conference before or during the first two years of the self-governing church’s existence and shall have the right to hold a church conference to vote on this matter within no more than 120 days of notifying the relevant leadership of the annual conference or of the self-governing church. After the first two years, release of a congregation from a self-governing church shall be according to that church’s governing documents. Supervision of the congregation shall transfer to the bishop of the annual conference assigned to cover their location by the jurisdictional or central conference upon written acknowledgment to the self-governing body by the receiving bishop.

Local churches electing to remain United Methodist by exiting an annual conference that is forming or joining a self-governing Methodist church shall not owe any payment to the annual conference they are departing, except for the local church’s proportional share of the annual conference’s aggregate unfunded pension liability, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share. The local church payment of pension liabilities shall be made prior to the effective date of exit.

f. Clergy members of the departing annual conference shall by default remain members of that annual conference unless they request to remain in The United Methodist Church. They shall communicate such a request before or within 90 days after the annual conference exit effective date to the bishop of the departing annual conference and to the jurisdictional or central College of Bishops, but may, at the discretion of the bishop of the departing annual conference, continue serving the current appointment for up to one year from the date of such request until a suitable appointment is found. The United Methodist jurisdictional or central College of Bishops shall work together to provide an appointment for any clergy member subject to security of appointment (and may do so for clergy members not subject to security of appointment) in the area of his or her former annual conference or in another annual conference in the jurisdiction, unless the clergy member agrees to transfer to an annual conference out of the jurisdiction.

Rationale:

New Form of Unity #1 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. Annual conferences in the U.S. may choose which expression to affiliate with.

¶604.3.

Petition Number: 20110-CO-¶604.3; Gallardo, Maximo - Baguio City, Philippines for The Baguio Episcopal Area Joint Cabinet.

Annual Conference Power to Admit Clergy Membership

Delete ¶ 604.3: The annual conference may admit into clergy membership only those who have met all the disciplinary requirements for membership and only in the manner prescribed in the Discipline:

And substitute the following: Every annual conference asserts its power to make decisions on all matters of clergy admission, membership, and ordination.

¶605.

Petition Number: 20114-CO-¶605-G; Lomperis, John - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

Constitutional Amendments in Annual Conferences

Amend Discipline ¶ 605 by adding a new section #10 as follows:

10. Proposed Constitutional Amendments in Annual Conferences—As provided in ¶ 59 of the Constitution it is the duty of each annual conference to provide an opportunity for its members to vote on amendments to the United
Methodist Constitution as proposed by the General Conference. After being approved by the General Conference, such proposed amendments are not subject to modification in annual conference session, but they are still subject to discussion and debate. In each annual conference, prior to a vote on a constitutional amendment, it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to provide opportunity for at least two speeches in favor of adoption and two speeches in opposition to adoption. In cases in which two or more proposed constitutional amendments are so closely related that the adoption of one cannot function or avoid contradictions within the Constitution without the adoption of the others, then these petitions may be debated as a single motion. In such cases, these linked proposed amendments may also be grouped together for a single vote.

Rationale:
A basic matter of democracy. Votes on constitutional amendments are among the most consequential actions annual conferences take. But some bishops have prevented any open discussion and debate before such votes, which sometimes ensures that perspectives different from one party line are silenced before these important decisions are made.

¶605.9.
Petition Number: 20710-CO-¶605.9-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Local Discernment of Clergy Candidates
Add new subparagraph after ¶ 605.9:
10. The clergy session of an annual conference may receive a motion from the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry that would legitimize the certification, ordination, and appointment of practicing homosexual persons.

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.

¶607.9.
Petition Number: 20115-CO-¶607.9-G; Dailey, Matthew - Tallahassee, FL, USA.

Conference Lay Leader Elections
Amend ¶ 607.9, The Conference Lay Leader as follows:

¶ 607.9. The conference lay leader shall be elected for a term of not less than four years by open election at a session of the annual conference. Such elections shall include open nominations from the floor by the annual conference, and the conference lay leader shall be elected by a simple majority of the ballots cast. The conference board of lay may choose to recommend to the annual conference a minimum of two nominees, as the annual conference may determine. The method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. Associate lay leader(s) . . .

Rationale:

Acknowledging the importance of the position, this amendment ensures a fair and open process for the election of conference lay leader in each annual conference and explicitly guarantees the lay members of annual conference a higher level of participation in the nomination and election processes.

¶607.10.
Petition Number: 20116-CO-¶607.10-G; Dailey, Matthew - Tallahassee, FL, USA.

Conference Co-Lay Leaders
Amend ¶ 607 by adding new sub-paragraph after ¶ 607.10:
¶ 607.11. In order to provide the annual conference flexibility in accomplishing its purpose (¶ 601, ¶ 610.1), the office of conference lay leader may be jointly occupied by two persons. When the office of conference lay leader is occupied in this manner, roles and responsibilities will be shared by the co-leaders in a manner agreed upon by both parties.

Rationale:
In keeping with the structural flexibility provided annual conferences in ¶ 610.1, this amendment codifies an existing practice of many annual conferences and provides a clear path for larger or more complex annual conferences to distribute the job among qualified leaders.

¶610.
Petition Number: 20526-CO-¶610-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church
Amend ¶ 610:
Conferences

¶ 610. The annual conference is responsible for structuring its ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose (¶ 601), with the exception of the mandated provisions of ¶¶ 611, 635, 636, 637, 639, 640, 647, 648. In so doing it shall provide for the connectional relationship of the local church, district, and conference with the general agencies. It will monitor to ensure inclusiveness—racial, gender, age, sexual orientation, economic condition, and people with disabilities—in the annual conference. Every board, standing committee, commission, council, and work area of the annual conference shall designate one of its members as its coordinator of witness ministries. These persons shall help the groups of which they are members to engage in witness ministries and, in particular, to ask, “How are we intentionally reaching new people for Jesus Christ through our ministries?” and “How are we helping new people grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ through our ministries and areas of responsibility?”

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

¶ 610.


Ensuring Role of Commission on Equitable Compensation

Amend ¶ 610:

¶ 610. The annual conference is responsible for structuring its ministries and administrative procedures in order to accomplish its purpose (¶ 601), with the exception of the mandated provisions of ¶¶ 611, 625, 635, 636, 637, 639, 640, 647, 648. In so doing it shall provide for the connectional relationship of the local church, district, and conference with the general agencies. . . .

Rationale:

Protects the role of the Commission on Equitable Compensation in proposing the amount recommended to the annual conference (via the Council on Finance and Administration) for the Equitable Compensation Fund.

¶ 660.

Petition Number: 20117-CO-¶660-G; Dailey, Matthew - Tallahassee, FL, USA.

Young Adults as Associate District Lay Leaders

Amend ¶ 660 by adding new subparagraph after ¶ 660.10:

¶ 660.11. When the district lay leader is not a young adult, care should be taken to ensure selection of a young adult (as defined in ¶ 256.3) as an associate district lay leader.

Rationale:

In keeping with the district lay leader’s responsibilities as outlined in ¶ 660.1, this amendment provides for the training of young lay leaders for the ministries of the local church, providing practical learning opportunities for young adults and a pipeline of future leaders for the annual conference.

¶ 2500.

Petition Number: 20697-CO-¶2500-!-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

Annual Conference Disaffiliation

AMEND by adding this new petition as ¶ 2554 and renumbering subsequent paragraphs:

¶ 2554. Annual conferences disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church.

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, an annual conference shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination based upon the annual conference’s declaration that the conflict with respect to the definition of marriage, ordination standards, and sexual ethics in The United Methodist Church is harming its ministry.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of ¶ 572, any annual conference may disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church on the basis of ¶ 2554.1 when that annual conference votes by a simple majority of those members present and voting to seek this status under the terms of this paragraph. The annual conference shall notify the president of its College of Bishops of its decision at least thirty (30) days before a regular or specially called session of its jurisdictional or central conference. 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. It shall be
the disaffiliating annual conference’s own responsibility to develop its governing documents and establish itself as a legal entity, either by itself or joining with other disaffiliating annual conferences or congregations. The disaffiliation shall be effective upon the adjournment of the jurisdictional or central conference or upon the effective date established by the annual conference in its notification, whichever is later. All property, assets, and liabilities except for those related to pensions (see sub-paragraph 3 below) shall continue to belong to, and be the responsibility of, the departing annual conference, released from the provisions of ¶ 2501. An annual conference shall not consider disaffiliation within less than four years from a previous annual conference vote on the question.

3. If a U.S. annual conference ceases to be a part of The United Methodist Church, it shall retain sole legal liability for all pensions under past or current pension programs sponsored by that annual conference. Annual conferences of The United Methodist Church shall no longer have any legal liability for pensions of an annual conference that disaffiliates. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall handle pension obligations related to annual conferences disaffiliating under this paragraph under the terms of ¶ 2555 or other paragraphs in the Discipline.

4. Disaffiliating Annual Conferences Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans. The United Methodist Church believes that an annual conference disaffiliating under this paragraph shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the annual conference expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, an annual conference disaffiliating under this paragraph shall continue to 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.

5. Institutions owned by or affiliated with the disaffiliating annual conference shall continue that relationship unless, under their own bylaws and in consultation with the annual conference, they establish a change of affiliation.

6. The disaffiliating annual conference shall continue under the supervision of its resident bishop until the effective date of disaffiliation.

7. Any annual conference disaffiliating under this paragraph shall receive from general church funds a one-time grant upon the effective date of disaffiliation to assist with transitional expenses. The amount of the grant shall be calculated based on the number of professing members as of the December 31 just prior to its request for disaffiliation minus the number of professing members in congregations electing to remain within The United Methodist Church. The amount of the grant shall be $7.50 per member, with a minimum grant of $20,000 and a maximum grant of $1.25 million. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall fund this grant from the quadrennial budget of The United Methodist Church.

8. Any local church or charge of a disaffiliating annual conference shall have the right to remain in the existing jurisdiction or central conference of The United Methodist Church by a simple majority vote by the professing members present and voting at a church conference before or during the first two years after the effective date of disaffiliation. Any local church or charge shall have the right to hold a church conference to vote on this matter upon the request of its church council or a petition signed by at least 10 percent of its professing members within no more than one hundred twenty (120) days of notifying the relevant leadership of the annual conference.

Supervision of the congregation shall transfer to the cabinet of the annual conference assigned to cover their location by the jurisdictional or central conference upon written acknowledgment to the disaffiliating annual conference by the receiving cabinet. Local churches electing to remain United Methodist shall not owe any payment to the annual conference they are departing. The pension obligations associated with such local churches shall be handled under the terms of ¶ 2555.

9. Clergy members of the disaffiliating annual conference shall by default remain members of that annual conference unless they request to remain in The United Methodist Church. They shall communicate such a request before or within ninety (90) days after the disaffiliation effective date to the bishop of the departing annual conference and to the president of the jurisdictional or central College of Bishops, but may, at the discretion of the bishop of the disaffiliating annual conference, continue serving the current appointment for up to two years from the date of such request until a suitable appointment is found in The United Methodist Church. The United Methodist jurisdictional or central College of Bishops shall work together to provide an appointment for any clergy member subject to security of appointment (and may do so for clergy members not subject to security of appointment) in the area of his or her former annual conference or in another annual conference in the jurisdiction or central conference, unless the clergy member agrees to transfer to an annual conference out of the jurisdiction or central conference.

10. This paragraph (¶ 2554) shall take precedence over all other provisions of the Discipline not in the constitution.
11. The provisions of this paragraph shall be effective immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

During this time of intense conflict, it is important to allow annual conferences that can no longer abide by the UM Book of Discipline or who find the conflict harmful to ongoing ministry to make an orderly withdrawal. Judicial Council Decision 1366 affirmed the constitutionality of such a provision.

§2500.

Petition Number: 20699-CO-§2500-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #15—New Expressions of Methodism

Amend, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, Chapter Six, Church Property, by adding a new ¶ 2554 as follows:

¶ 2554. New Denominational Expressions of Methodism

1. Purpose—In keeping with The United Methodist Church’s long-standing tradition of striving toward greater Christian unity (¶¶ 6, 434), and because, “as a result of our heritage as a part of a people called Methodist,” The United Methodist Church has long “strive[d] toward closer relationship with other Methodist or Wesleyan churches wherever they may be found” (¶ 433.3). The United Methodist Church desires to facilitate the development of a continuing relationship with local churches that have chosen to end their connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church in order to form or join with one another in Christian ministry and mission in what may effectively become distinct “Methodist or Wesleyan churches.” The United Methodist Church recognizes that, notwithstanding differences over issues of human sexuality, it will continue to share religious bonds and convictions and a common Wesleyan heritage with those local churches and desires to have a continuing relationship with those that wish to forge an ecumenical relationship for shared missional priorities, shared common cause, mutual support and other purposes.

2. Authority—To develop a relationship between The United Methodist Church and a New Denominational Expression of Methodism (as defined in ¶ 2554.3, below) is to forge an ecumenical relationship with another Christian church or denomination within the meaning of ¶ 6 of the Constitution and ¶ 431 et seq. of the Discipline. The General Conference has previously granted to the Council of Bishops “the authority to enter into ecumenical agreements with other Christian bodies” (¶ 431.1(a)). Inasmuch as ecumenical agreements with other Christian bodies have constitutional and denomination-wide significance (¶ 6), the preexisting grant of authority to the Council of Bishops to develop ecumenical agreements falls within the General Conference’s “full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional” (¶ 16), and it extends to forging relationships with other Christian churches (including Methodist or Wesleyan churches) operating within or outside the United States.

3. Definition—As used in this paragraph, the phrase “New Denominational Expression of Methodism” applies to any association of local churches that have (a) voted pursuant to ¶ 2554 to end their connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church in order to form or join together; (b) have, using whatever methods they choose, formed an association comprised primarily of other such former local United Methodist churches; and (c) as a group, may be considered, based on scale, polity, and shared Christian ministry and mission, a new and distinct Methodist or Wesleyan church. A New Denomination of Methodism may include any combination of local churches or other entities, regardless of jurisdiction or geography, inside or outside the United States, that has been formed by United Methodist local churches that have voted pursuant to ¶ 2554 to end their connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church.

Pursuant to the authority described under ¶ 2554.2, the Council of Bishops may determine whether an association of local churches qualifies as a New Denominational Expression of Methodism with which The United Methodist Church wishes to enter into an ecumenical agreement under this ¶ 2554.

4. Agreements—The Council of Bishops may enter into ecumenical agreements with New Denominational Expressions of Methodism under such terms and conditions as the Council of Bishops and those representing the New Denominational Expression of Methodism agree. The Council of Bishops may do so through an agreement similar to those authorized by ¶ 434 or other provisions in the Book of Discipline and are particularly encouraged to do so when a New Denominational Expression of Methodism has joined the World Methodist Council or the Pan-Methodist Commission. The Council of Bishops may choose to establish standard terms for such agreements. Such agreements do not need to be ratified by the General Conference unless the nature or terms of the agreement require ratification under another provision in the Book of Discipline (e.g., any agreement that contemplates
5. Terms of Ecumenical Agreements with New Denominational Expressions of Methodism

a. The Council of Bishops may consider including terms in ecumenical agreements that allow a New Denominational Expression of Methodism to make its own use of the words “United Methodist” or protected United Methodist insignia (including the Cross and Flame), provided care is taken to impose requirements or conditions needed to prevent confusion and that preserve The United Methodist Church’s ability to protect its intellectual property rights. To effectuate this intent, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop rules consistent with this subparagraph, to govern the potential use by any New Denominational Expressions of Methodism of UMC insignia and the “United Methodist” name. At a minimum, any such use of the name and insignia must be accompanied by a secondary moniker that distinguishes the organization. In addition, those rules shall permit the use of both the insignia and “United Methodist Church” by New Denominational Expressions of Methodism located entirely outside the United States.

b. The Council of Bishops may include in an ecumenical agreement provisions that allow a New Denominational Expression of Methodism to make commitments to United Methodist general boards and agencies; or that address their eligibility to receive grants and other services; or other terms relating to United Methodist general boards and agencies.

c. Such agreements may include financial support during a transition period, if budgeted by the General Conference.

d. Such agreements may include such other terms and conditions as the Council of Bishops deem appropriate, except as provided in this ¶ 2554 or as limited by ¶ 431.1.a.

6. Local Churches Changing their Relationship with The United Methodist Church through New Denominational Expressions of Methodism

a. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of ¶ 2554, to end its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church for reasons of conscience around issues of human sexuality as reflected in the Book of Discipline and the Social Principles, application or enforcement of provisions of the Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality issues, the actions or inactions of the 2019 or 2020 General Conference related to human sexuality issues, or the actions or inactions of the annual conference or jurisdictional conference in which the local church is located on those issues following the 2019 or 2020 General Conference. In contrast with the provisions of ¶ 2553, the process set forth in this paragraph is for use by local churches that wish to form or join with a New Denominational Expression of Methodism that has or may enter into an ecumenical agreement with The United Methodist Church and have a continuing relationship under such agreement.

b. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to change its relationship with The United Methodist Church under ¶ 2554 shall be made in sufficient time for the process to be complete prior to December 31, 2025. The provisions of ¶ 2554 expire on December 31, 2025, and shall not be used after that date.

c. Local Church Decision-making Process

(1) If the church council of a local church determines that the church wishes to consider changing its relationship with The United Methodist Church under ¶ 2554, that church council shall submit a request to the district superintendent. The district superintendent shall, within thirty (30) days after receipt of the request, call for a church conference under ¶ 248 for the sole purpose of deciding whether the local church desires to end its relationship with The United Methodist Church in order to form or join with a New Denominational Expression of Methodism.

(2) The decision to change the local church’s relationship with The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present and voting at the church conference.

(3) 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:

a. The church conference shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference.

b. 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.

c. Under the provisions of ¶ 246.7, the purpose of the church conference shall be stated in the call and must include the recommendation(s) of the church council, the provisions and terms of this paragraph, and the standard terms of separation agreements of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference. The congregation shall be informed of any details then known regarding the existing or proposed New Denominational Expression of Methodism and the terms of the standard separation agreement of The United Methodist Church and its annual conference.

7. Provisions in Ecumenical Agreements Regarding Local Churches Forming or Joining with New Denominational Expressions of Methodism

To effectuate the purposes in 2554.1 and to minimize disruption of the work of The United Methodist Church, the following provisions should be used.

a. The process to be followed by local churches who have voted to change their relationship with The United Methodist Church by aligning with a New Denominational Expression of Methodism under ¶ 2554 will be determined by the Council of Bishops, in consultation with the General Board of Finance and Administration, subject to this paragraph; however, matters related to pension obligations, shall be determined by subparagraph 7.e.(5) below.

b. If a New Denominational Expression of Methodism has entered into an ecumenical agreement with The United Methodist Church that includes terms relating to the process for local churches to join, that process will be followed. Where a group of local churches has decided to form a New Denominational Expression of Methodism, a transition period will be provided for them to create that entity and enter into an ecumenical agreement with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph, if desired. If no ecumenical agreement exists between the New Denominational Expression of Methodism and The United Methodist Church, and there is no intent to enter such an agreement, then the local church (assuming it still wishes to end its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church) and the annual conference will follow the procedures in ¶ 2553.

c. An ecumenical agreement with a New Denominational Expression of Methodism may set out terms that facilitate the ability of local churches that so desire to join a New Denominational Expression of Methodism, provided that no such provisions in the ecumenical agreement vitiate the rights of the annual conference regarding local churches ending their connectional relationship and forming or joining New Expressions of Methodism. Such provisions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Allowing the New Denominational Expression of Methodism, or its constituent organizations that are associated with it, to satisfy and/or assume any liabilities of the local church.

2. Simplified processes to be used by local churches following a vote under ¶ 2554.6, such as standard terms, provisional status, common agreements or other processes. If a process affects the rights of the annual conference, then the applicable annual conference must agree to the process.

3. Waiver of, or other provisions regarding, liabilities the local church may owe to United Methodist entities other than an annual conference or annual conference-related entities, provided the consent/agreement of such other entities can be obtained.

d. Paragraph 2554 should be interpreted and applied to effectuate the purposes set out in ¶ 2554.1, subject to the rights of the annual conference.

e. Local Church Agreements and Terms

Subject to any terms and provisions in ¶ 2554 or any ecumenical agreement made under this paragraph, the terms and conditions for a local church to end its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church under this ¶ 2554 in order to form or join a New Denominational Expression of Methodism shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the bishop and cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of the agreement, shall be memorialized in a binding separation agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. The local church agreement with the annual conference must be consistent with the following provisions:

1. Standard Terms of Local Church Agreements—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for local church agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom.

2. Annual Conference Terms—Annual conferences may require that local church agreements include contractual terms not addressed by the form developed by General Council on Finance and Administration, or issues unique to an annual conference, or a particular local church, or applicable laws. Annual conferences may also
develop additional standard terms or conditions for such agreements. Any such additional standard terms, or local church agreements, must be consistent with the standard terms required in this paragraph and by the form developed by General Council on Finance and Administration. In addition, the annual conference must notify congregations of such additional standard terms as early as is practicable, so as to inform the congregation prior to its vote, and not to impede the congregation’s ability to complete the exit process by December 31, 2025.

(3) Apportionments—The local church shall not be required to pay more than twelve (12) months of apportionments.

(4) Property—A local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property for no additional required consideration to the annual conference beyond that described in this paragraph.

If the local church property is going to be transferred to another legal entity, all such transfers shall become effective as of the effective date of separation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the local church.

(5) Pension Withdrawal Liability—The local church shall be responsible for making the withdrawal liability payment in the amount required by ¶ 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 for separating churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

(6) Other Liabilities to Annual Conference Entities—An individual agreement may require that some or all outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities owed by the local church to its annual conference, district or to any annual conference-related entities be satisfied, with the exception that the annual conference may not in any instance require payment of more than twelve (12) months of apportionments.

(7) Local Church Liabilities Owed to Other Parties—Before any local church assets may be transferred to another entity (e.g., the New Expression of Methodism or a newly established entity to continue the ministry of the local church), all outstanding liabilities of the local church owed to third parties, including other United Methodist Church entities, have been satisfied:

i. satisfied in full, with written confirmation of that fact supplied by the third party to whom the liability was owed; or

ii. fully assumed by another entity pursuant to agreements to which the local church’s third party creditors have consented, and which oblige that entity to fully indemnify and defend the local church against any claims relating to those liabilities,

(8) No Other Claims—The local church shall not have a claim to or be entitled to a share of the assets of its annual conference.

(9) Payment Terms—The local church agreement shall specify the terms and conditions of the payment to the annual conference for any sums related to ¶ 2554.7(e) (3), (5) and (7). If the local church and the annual conference agree to a payment plan, the plan shall bear no more than a reasonable rate of interest and the term of payment shall not exceed ten (10) years.

f. Annual Conference Approval—Upon the recommendation of the annual conference board of trustees to approve a local church agreement, the annual conference may permit a local church to change its relationship under the terms of that local church agreement and/or any ecumenical agreement, upon approval by a majority of annual conference members present and voting.

g. Release of Interest—The annual conference’s approval of that agreement, together with the execution of the local church agreement by authorized representatives of the annual conference board of trustees, shall constitute a release and discharge of all local church assets from any trusts in favor of The United Methodist Church that had 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.

h. Members Remaining—The district superintendent shall provide assistance to those members of the local church who wish to remain in The United Methodist Church, and the local church shall not interfere with those efforts.

8. Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans

The United Methodist Church believes that a local church changing its relationship under ¶ 2554 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church changing its relationship under ¶ 2554 shall continue to 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.

9. Limits—New Denominational Expressions of Methodism are not required to participate in any program of The United Methodist Church and do not have a right to participate in any such program, except as provided in ¶ 1504 or other provisions regarding the General Board of
Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) services. Any continuing relationship shall be made by mutual agreement.

10. General Boards and Agencies—General boards and agencies may negotiate directly with New Denominational Expressions of Methodism related to services, missional agreements and other matters.

11. Effective Date—The terms of this paragraph are effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference. If any provision in this paragraph is determined to be invalid or unconstitutional, that decision will not affect the remainder of the provisions.

¶2500.

Petition Number: 20700-CO-¶2500-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #19—Asset Resources Valuation and Asset Distribution Plans

ADD NEW ¶ 2554 to the Discipline as follows:

1. Agency and Institution Asset Resources and Distribution Plan Effective as of December 31, 2028 except for those assets consisting of annual conference property as defined by Section IV of Chapter 6 of the Book of Discipline, district property as defined by Section V of Chapter 6 of the Book of Discipline, and local church property as defined by Section VI of Chapter 6 of the Book of Discipline, all assets held in trust by any agency or institution for The United Methodist Church pursuant to ¶ 2501 shall be identified and assigned a fair market value by one representative of The United Methodist Church and each Full Communion Expression acting as a valuation committee. Any existing lease on an asset shall either be cancelled prior to transfer under a plan of distribution or used as a factor in computing the fair market value of the property. The United Methodist Church and each Full Communion Expression shall be entitled to have one voting member who will have one equal vote on all matters before the valuation committee. The valuation committee may create working groups to assist it in its work. As to any asset whose value cannot be agreed upon by the valuation committee, such asset’s fair market value shall be established by an independent third party unanimously agreed to by the valuation committee. All sums prepaid on behalf of an agency or institution shall be treated as Agency and Institution Asset Resources. The total amount of all such assets shall be defined as the Agency and Institution Asset Resources. The United Methodist Church and each Full Communion Expression shall be entitled to a proportionate share of the Agency and Institution Resources based upon their gross missional share as that phrase is used in ¶ 431F subparagraph 1 as of May 1, 2027. Between January 1, 2029, and no later than December 31, 2030, the valuation committee shall arrive at an Agency and Institution Asset Distribution Plan for all such assets; such plan shall be agreed to unanimously by all members of the valuation committee. The plan may allocate administrative costs associated with the distribution of assets. The plan shall distribute assets in kind and without shared ownership, either equitable or legal. If The United Methodist Church or any Full Communion Expression fails to receive the total proportionate value of the property to which it is entitled, such entity shall be entitled to a cash payment to satisfy the difference between the value received in kind and the total value of all assets. Under the plan, The United Methodist Church or any Full Communion Expression may agree to accept a cash equivalent in lieu of cash on terms acceptable to the entity. To qualify to participate in Agency and Institution Asset Valuation and formulation of the Agency and Institution Asset Distribution Plan, a Full Communion Expression shall have paid at least two thirds of its missional invoice amount for each fiscal year through December 31, 2028; nonetheless, a Full Communion Expression that fails to make such payments shall be allocated its share of Agency and Institution Assets in the Agency and Institution Asset Distribution Plan. Any amounts owing due to a Full Communion Expression’s failure to pay its net missional share shall be treated under the plan as a cash payment made to the Full Communion Expression. If the Agency and Institution Asset Distribution Plan is not agreed to by December 31, 2030, the matter shall be submitted to mediation and arbitration as required by the Dispute Resolution Agreement. This paragraph hereby authorizes all agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church to execute such documents as may be necessary to affect all transfers required under the distribution plan and to take such actions as may be necessary to legally authorize such transfers. Nothing herein shall be construed as prohibiting any agency or institution of The United Methodist Church or a Full Communion Expression from entering into a lease or other agreement with The United Methodist Church or a Full Communion Expression after the distribution plan is finalized. This paragraph shall not expire on December 31, 2028.

2. Annual Conference Gross Missional Share—No later than December 31, 2027, each Full Communion Expression shall submit and certify to the General Council of Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church its total professing membership for each annual conferences as of May 1, 2027. In determining the conference-by-conference professing membership, each Full Communion Expression shall use the geographic boundaries of The United Methodist Church’s annual conferences.
In determining professing membership for a geographic area, only those professing members of a local church located within the annual conference may be included. For each annual conference, the General Council of Finance and Administration shall calculate an annual conference gross missional share by dividing the annual conference’s total professing membership by the sum of The United Methodist Church annual conference’s total professing membership plus all Full Communion Expression annual conferences’ professing membership as of May 1, 2027. The annual conference gross missional share shall be a percentage calculated to four decimal places. To qualify to participate in an annual conference asset valuation and plan formulation, each annual conference must belong to a Full Communion Expression that has paid at least two thirds of its missional invoice amount for each fiscal year through December 31, 2028; nonetheless, a Full Communion Expression annual conference belonging to such a Full Communion Expression shall be allocated its share of Agency and Institution Assets in the plan. An annual conference belonging to a Full Communion Expression that fails to provide its total professing membership for an annual conference by December 31, 2027, shall not be entitled to participate in formulating the annual conference distribution plan nor any share of the assets distributed in the annual conference distribution plan.

3. Annual Conference Asset Resources and Distribution Plan—Effective as of December 31, 2028, all assets consisting of annual conference property as defined by Section IV of Chapter 6 of the Book of Discipline and district property as defined by Section V of Chapter 6 of the Book of Discipline, belonging to an annual conference of The United Methodist Church or Full Communion Expression annual conference shall be identified and assigned a fair market value by one representative for the annual conference of The United Methodist Church and one representative for each Full Communion Expression acting as a valuation committee. Any existing lease on an asset shall either be cancelled prior to transfer under a plan of distribution or used as a factor in computing the fair market value of the property. All sums prepaid on behalf of the annual conference shall be treated as Annual Conference Asset Resources. The United Methodist Church and each Full Communion Expression shall be entitled to have one voting member who will have one equal vote on all matters before the valuation committee. The valuation committee may create working groups to assist it in its work. As to any asset whose value cannot be agreed upon by the valuation committee, such asset’s fair market value shall be established by an independent third party unanimously agreed to by the valuation committee. The total amount of all such assets shall be defined as the Annual Conference Asset Resources. The United Methodist Church annual conference and each Full Communion Expression annual conference shall be entitled to a proportionate share of the Annual Conference Asset Resources based upon their Annual Conference Missional Resource Percentage. Between January 1, 2029, and no later than December 31, 2030, The United Methodist Church’s annual conference and the Full Communion Expressions’ annual conferences shall arrive at an Annual Conference Asset Distribution Plan; such plan shall be agreed to unanimously by all members of the valuation committee. The plan shall distribute assets in kind and without shared ownership, either equitable or legal. If The United Methodist Church or any Full Communion Expression annual conference fails to receive the total proportionate value of the property to which it is entitled, such entity shall be entitled to a cash payment to satisfy the difference between the value received in kind and the total value of all assets. An entity may agree to accept a cash equivalent in lieu of cash on terms acceptable to the entity. For purposes of the plan, property may be released from the trust, transferred free of trust or subordinated to the interests of creditors and other third parties. The annual conference distribution plan shall give preference to maintaining existing ministries either as a ministry of The United Methodist Church or as a ministry of a Full Communion Expression. Property of closed local churches held by an annual conference may be transferred among participants as part of the plan. Any sums owing by Full Communion Expression annual conference to The United Methodist Church based on obligations incurred under ¶ 677.3 or ¶ 1510 may be set off as part of the plan. Recognizing the unique relationships between The United Methodist Church and related health and welfare institutions, where practicable, Full Communion Expression annual conferences shall be included as parties to relationship statements for related health and welfare institutions under ¶ 2517 and such relationships should be encouraged to be ongoing after December 31, 2028. If the Annual Conference Asset Distribution Plan is not agreed to by December 31, 2030, the matter shall be submitted to mediation and arbitration as required by the Dispute Resolution Agreement. This paragraph hereby authorizes all annual conferences of The United Methodist Church to execute such documents as may be necessary to affect all transfers required under the distribution plan and to take such actions as may be necessary to legally authorize such transfers. Nothing herein shall be construed as prohibiting any agency or institution of The United Methodist Church or a Full Communion Expression from entering into a lease or other agreement with The United Methodist Church or a Full Communion
Expression after the distribution plan is finalized. This paragraph shall not expire on December 31, 2028.

**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 provides an equitable

**2500.**

Petition Number: 20703-CO-¶2500-G; Millard, Kent - Dayton, OH, USA.

**New Denominations of United Methodism**

Insert a new ¶ 2556 as follows and renumber any succeeding paragraphs:

**¶ 2556. Pathways to New Denominations of United Methodism**

1. **Preamble**—The 2019 special General Conference of The United Methodist Church highlighted the depth of the irreconcilable differences present in The United Methodist Church. Rather than continuing the quarrel over homosexuality at the 2020 General Conference, a group of Progressives, Centrists, and Traditionalists present these proposals as a possible pathway to amicable separation in The United Methodist Church.

We envision a new future for the people of The United Methodist Church to avoid further harm to one another, to United Methodists around the world, to the church universal, and to those with whom we strive to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We seek to move away from the caustic atmosphere that has often marked conversation in The United Methodist Church into a new season where we bless one another as we send each other into our respective mission fields to multiply our witness for Christ.

We envision an amicable separation in The United Methodist Church that would provide a pathway to new denominations of the United Methodist movement so we can all make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. These new denominations, though separate, will continue the rich heritage of the Methodist movement while being free to share their respective witnesses for Christ unhindered by those with whom they have been in conflict. We will release one another to joyful obedience to Christ’s call on our lives.

2. **New Denominations**—The United Methodist Church hereby creates a pathway for the development of new denominations of United Methodism as set forth below. The United Methodist Church shall continue as a convention or association of churches, as a successor, for the constituent units that realign by choice or default with the Centrist UMC. (Names used in this paragraph are placeholders and descriptive; each new denomination would choose its own name and may use “United Methodist Church” with an appropriate modifier if they so choose.)

   a. The Traditionalist UMC shall be a global denomination that will maintain the current stance of the Discipline regarding the practice of homosexuality. It would emphasize unity around doctrine, mission, and standards, leaner denominational structure, greater local flexibility, and accountable discipleship.

   b. The Centrist UMC shall be a global denomination that will remove from the Discipline the “incompatibility” language and prohibitions against same-sex weddings, ordinations, and appointments. Centrist annual conferences and local congregations would make their own decisions regarding the ordination and appointment of homosexual persons and performing same-sex weddings in their conferences and congregations. It would practice faith with a generous spirit, emphasizing greater local flexibility within a deep commitment to connectionalism, social justice, and missional engagement that transforms the world for Jesus Christ.

   c. A Progressive Denomination may be formed as a separate denomination under 2.d that includes church-wide protection against discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, ability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or economic condition and that practices full itineracy of LGBTQIA+ pastors and same-sex weddings in all their churches.

   d. Other Denominations may be formed by a group of fifty (50) or more local churches or by one or more annual conferences. It shall be the responsibility of the leaders of any group of churches or an annual conference desiring to form another denomination to develop and promote the vision of that denomination.

3. **Name and Logo**—Each denomination forming under this paragraph shall be permitted, but not be required, to continue to use the name “The United Methodist Church” with an appropriate modifier to distinguish itself from other denominations formed hereunder, and to protect the intellectual property of The United Methodist Church and its successors. Each denomination forming under this paragraph shall be permitted, but not be required, to use the cross and flame logo with modifications to distinguish itself from other denominations formed hereunder. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall have the continued responsibility to administer the name “The United Methodist Church” and the trademarks of The United Methodist Church. To
effectuate this intent, prevent confusion, and protect the intellectual property, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall ensure that the names chosen by the new denominations do not conflict with another denomination’s name, and that logo modifications are sufficient to distinguish each logo from another.  

4. Default Alignment—Unless otherwise specified herein, if a central or annual conference does not vote on alignment by the date specified, then that conference shall align by default with the Centrist UMC.  

5. Formation in the United States—The following shall be the process for churches in the U.S. aligning with the new denominations.

a. Annual Conferences—Annual conferences may by simple majority vote of those members present and voting at a regular or called session choose to align with the Traditionalist UMC, the Centrist UMC, or form or align with another denomination formed under this paragraph. The annual conference shall consider this decision upon motion from the floor or may do so through its normal processes. The annual conference may also call a special session upon motion from the floor. When an annual conference considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the annual conference shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority.  

i. If the annual conference does not vote on alignment by January 1, 2021, it shall by default align with the Centrist UMC for the purpose of representation to the inaugural General Conferences of the new denominations. Annual conferences may choose a different alignment until at least December 31, 2028, under the provisions of this paragraph.  

ii. Pension Matters—Generally, annual conferences shall continue to be responsible for pension liabilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program, which is reflected in ¶ 1504.1, as plan sponsors. If the annual conference agrees to continue to be legally responsible for such obligations, it shall not be required to make any payment of unfunded liabilities prior to alignment. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall manage pension obligations pursuant to other paragraphs of the Discipline that address pension matters. In addition, for future clergy benefits, annual conferences aligning with the Centrist UMC shall continue as plan sponsors of the Clergy Retirement Security Program or whatever mandatory retirement plan is approved by the 2020 General Conference. For future clergy benefits, annual conferences that align with the Traditionalist UMC or other denominations formed under this paragraph may sponsor retirement plans offered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits designed to fit their polity and capacity.  

iii. Lay Equalizing Members—For the purposes of this decision, all lay equalizing members shall be elected, as required by ¶ 32, and not appointed. The number of lay equalizing members elected by or from any one church shall not exceed the number of regular lay members elected by that charge. The formula used by the annual conference in the election of lay equalizing members shall be made public prior to the annual conference session at which the decision regarding alignment is made.  

iv. If an annual conference takes a vote on alignment, it shall not take a subsequent vote to consider changing its alignment until at least forty-two (42) months have passed since the previous vote.  

b. Local Churches—Local churches in the U.S. that disagree with their annual conference’s alignment may by simple majority vote of those professing members present and voting at a regular or called charge or church conference choose to align with a denomination not chosen by their annual conference or join with fifty (50) or more other local churches in forming another denomination of United Methodism. Churches not taking a vote shall by default remain in their annual conference under whatever alignment the conference has chosen. Local churches withdrawing to become independent shall use the process established by ¶ 2553, which shall include the prepayment of its share of unfunded pension liabilities determined under ¶ 1504.23.  

i. When a local church considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the church shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority.  

ii. Local churches desiring to make an immediate decision on aligning with a new denomination may do so on or after July 1, 2020. Local churches may also make such a decision after their annual conference makes its decision. In order to be represented at the inaugural General Conferences of the new denominations, local churches must vote prior to July 1, 2021. Churches may choose a different alignment until at least December 31, 2028, under the provisions of this paragraph.  

iii. Regardless of other provisions of the Discipline that are not in the Constitution, the approval of the annual conference shall not be required for any church choosing to withdraw from the annual conference in order to align with a different denomination formed under this paragraph, nor shall the annual conference have the authority to hinder churches desiring to choose such a different denomination, as long as the conditions for withdrawal specified in this paragraph are fulfilled.  

iv. Property—The local church shall retain all its property, assets, and liabilities (other than pension liability) in the denomination with which it aligns, whether by choice
or default. The trust clause (¶ 2501) shall be suspended for purposes of these realignments, but shall continue to apply to local churches aligning by choice or default with the Centrist UMC. Application of any analogous clause to local churches aligning with the Traditionalist UMC or other denomination will depend upon the doctrine and church laws adopted by the denomination with which the church aligns.

v. Pension Liabilities—The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits will reassign pension liabilities related to realigning local churches, and clergy who have served in them, pursuant to the terms of other paragraphs in the Book of Discipline addressing pension obligations for realigning local churches and annual conferences (e.g., ¶ 2555), or through an administrative process by which the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is able to reassign liabilities and assets based on local church and clergy transfers among continuing plan sponsors.

vi. If a local church takes a vote on alignment, it shall not take a subsequent vote to consider changing its alignment until at least thirty-six (36) months have passed since the previous vote.

6. Formation Outside the United States—The following shall be the process for churches in the central conferences aligning with the new denominations.

a. Central Conferences—Notwithstanding the terms of ¶ 572 or other provisions of the Discipline not in the Constitution, central conferences may by simple majority vote of those members present and voting at a regular or called session choose to align with the Traditionalist UMC, the Centrist UMC, or form or align with another denomination formed under this paragraph. The central conference shall consider this decision upon motion from the floor or may do so through its normal processes. The central conference may also call a special session upon motion from the floor. When a central conference considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the central conference shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority.

i. If the annual conference does not vote on alignment by June 30, 2021, it shall by default align with the denomination or option chosen by its central conference for the purpose of representation to the inaugural General Conferences of the new denominations. Annual conferences may choose a different alignment until at least December 31, 2028, under the provisions of this paragraph.

ii. Lay Equalizing Members—For the purposes of this decision, all lay equalizing members shall be elected, as required by ¶ 32, and not appointed. The number of lay equalizing members elected by or from any one charge shall not exceed the number of regular lay members elected by that charge. The formula used by the annual conference in the election of lay equalizing members shall be made public prior to the annual conference session at which the decision regarding alignment is made.

iii. If an annual conference takes a vote on alignment, it shall not take a subsequent vote to consider changing its alignment until at least forty-two (42) months have passed since the previous vote.

iv. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is directed and authorized to amend the Global Episcopal Pension Plan as necessary to account for the changes in alignment of central conferences and central conference bishops.

c. Local Churches—Local churches in the central conferences that disagree with their annual conference’s alignment may by simple majority vote of those professing members present and voting at a regular or called session choose to form or align with a different denomination formed under this paragraph than that chosen by their central conference. The annual conference shall consider this decision upon motion from the floor or may do so through its normal processes. The annual conference may also call a special session upon motion from the floor. When an annual conference considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the annual conference shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority.

i. When a local church considers more than two options, with none receiving the required majority vote, the
church shall hold a run-off vote of the two options receiving the most votes, so that one of them receives a majority.

ii. Regardless of other provisions of the Discipline that are not in the Constitution, the approval of the annual conference shall not be required for any church choosing to withdraw from the annual conference in order to align with a different denomination formed under this paragraph, nor shall the annual conference have the authority to hinder churches desiring to choose such a different denomination, as long as the conditions for withdrawal specified in this paragraph are fulfilled.

iii. Local churches desiring to make an immediate decision on aligning with a new denomination under this paragraph may do so on or after July 1, 2020. Local churches may also make such a decision after their annual conference makes its decision. In order to be represented at the inaugural General Conferences of the new denominations, local churches must vote prior to September 1, 2021. Churches may choose a different alignment until at least December 31, 2028, under the provisions of this paragraph.

iv. Property—The local church shall retain all its property, assets, and liabilities in the denomination with which it aligns, whether by choice or default. The trust clause (¶ 2501) shall be suspended for purposes of these realignments, but shall continue to apply to local churches aligning by choice or default with the Centrist UMC, but only to the extent it applies under the Book of Discipline and local law. Application of any analogous clause to local churches aligning with the Traditionalist UMC or other denomination will depend upon the doctrine and church laws adopted by the denomination with which the local church aligns, and the unique laws of the countries and secular jurisdictions in which the local churches, annual conferences, and central conferences are located.

v. If a local church takes a vote on alignment, it shall not take a subsequent vote to consider changing its alignment until at least thirty-six (36) months have passed since the previous vote.

7. Interim Implementation—Any conference or local church taking a vote on alignment shall specify as part of that action the date on which it will become effective. When central conferences, annual conferences, and local churches vote to align with a denomination, they may begin to function under the requirements and structure of that denomination on or after August 1, 2020, on an interim basis.

a. Annual conferences, local churches, and clergy choosing to align with a denomination other than the Traditionalist UMC shall be exempt during the interim period, following the adjournment of General Conference 2020 to the start of the new denominations, from the provisions in the Discipline prohibiting same-sex weddings and the ordination, appointment, or consecration of self-avowed practicing homosexuals.

b. The interim Traditionalist UMC shall function under the umbrella and authority of the leadership group that develops and promotes its vision.

c. The interim Centrist UMC shall function, as a successor to The United Methodist Church for the constituent units that realign either by choice or default with the Centrist UMC, under the terms of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and its existing structures, except as provided under subparagraph 12, below, and except that it would be explicitly exempt from all restrictions related to self-avowed practicing homosexuals or same-sex weddings. Clergy serving in such churches or in such annual conferences would also be exempt. All complaints, administrative or judicial processes, or disciplinary actions related to these restrictions shall be suspended in the interim Centrist UMC, beginning on the date on which conferences, local churches, or clergy designate their alignment with it until January 1, 2022, the date on which the Centrist UMC becomes fully operational.

d. Any other denomination formed under this paragraph shall function during the interim under the umbrella and authority of the leadership group that develops and promotes its vision (¶ 2556.2).

e. Apportionments shall be paid to the new denominations by congregations and conferences aligning with them in the interim. General church apportionments shall continue to be paid by all denominations through December 31, 2020. The new interim denominations shall assume responsibility for connectional expenses within each denomination as of January 1, 2021.

8. Clergy Alignment—Clergy shall by default align with the denomination chosen by their annual conference. Clergy who wish to align with a different denomination than that chosen by their annual conference shall notify their bishop and the leadership of the denomination with which they desire to align. In order to be represented at the inaugural General Conferences of the new denominations, clergy must make such notification prior to July 1, 2021. Clergy may subsequently change denominations based on the processes adopted by their desired denomination.

a. Appointments—If the clergyperson’s current local church appointment decides to align with the same denomination as the clergyperson, it is recommended that appointment be continued where possible until at least January 1, 2022, the final effective date of the new denominations. Thereafter, the clergyperson’s appointment shall be determined under the process adopted by the new denominations.
If the clergyperson’s current local church appointment does not align with the same denomination as the clergyperson, the clergyperson’s current bishop and the leadership of the denominations involved shall consult regarding a possible appointment. With the approval of the leadership of the church’s chosen denomination and the clergyperson’s chosen denomination, a transitional appointment may be set, either in the current local church or another outside the clergyperson’s chosen denomination. When a clergyperson serves a transitional appointment outside his or her chosen denomination, the clergyperson shall be required to abide by and satisfy the standards and requirements of the denomination in which he or she is appointed to serve. Conversations shall continue among the relevant leaders with the aim of finding an appointment for the clergyperson within their chosen denomination in order to ensure security of appointment where such is required.

b. Pensions—Generally, pension benefits earned by clergypersons in The United Methodist Church for service in the United States shall remain intact through these realignments, reassigned by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to annual conferences, or other organizations, in whatever denomination they affiliate with, subject, however, to the terms of the Clergy Retirement Security Program and other paragraphs of the Book of Discipline under which General Conference has directed and authorized for the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to administer pension matters. In the event annual conferences or episcopal areas in the central conferences that are currently covered by the same pension plan should align with multiple United Methodist denominations, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall assist these conferences or episcopal areas in allocating pension assets and liabilities based on their new alignments.

c. Candidates—It is recommended that candidates who are in process toward licensing, commissioning, or ordination be grandfathered into that point in the process in whichever denomination they want to align with, so that they would not have to repeat requirements for licensing or ordination. Boards of ordained ministry shall promptly forward the paperwork and files of candidates to the proper body in the new denomination when requested in writing by the candidate.

9. Alignment of Bishops—Active and retired bishops shall by default align with the Centrist UMC. Bishops who wish to align with a different denomination shall notify the president of the Council of Bishops and the leadership of the denomination with which they desire to align prior to July 1, 2021. Service as active bishops in each of the new denominations shall depend upon the provisions adopted by that denomination.

10. Election of Bishops in 2020—Mandatory retirement provisions for all current active bishops shall be suspended until September 1, 2022. Bishops desiring to retire may do so, but are not required to do so. Retired bishops shall be assigned by the Council of Bishops in accordance with ¶ 49 to provide residential and presidential leadership for annual conferences in the Centrist UMC where needed on an interim basis.

Jurisdictional conferences may choose not to elect bishops in 2020, reconvening for election of bishops in 2021 or 2022 as part of the Centrist UMC, governed by the provisions established at the inaugural special General Conference for this denomination. This allows a proper match of the number of bishops with the need under the new conditions.

Central conferences may elect bishops in 2020-21 as needed and determined by the central conferences, based on the number of bishops allocated to each central conference by the 2020 General Conference.

Bishops in the other denominations, if those denominations choose to have bishops or an episcopacy, will be elected and assigned according to the provisions of those denominations.

11. Institutional Affiliation—a. Institutions or property owned or controlled by, associated with, or affiliated with an annual conference shall continue to be so owned, controlled by, or associated or affiliated with that annual conference in the denomination chosen by it, unless the institution is authorized to and changes its affiliation or acts to become independent according to its own bylaws.

b. Institutions or property owned or controlled by or associated or affiliated with a jurisdiction or central conference shall belong to the denomination chosen by the majority of annual conferences in that jurisdiction or central conference, unless the institution is authorized to and changes its affiliation or acts to become independent according to its own bylaws.

12. General Church Agencies—a. Notwithstanding other paragraphs in the Book of Discipline, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (¶ 1501 et seq.), the United Methodist Committee on Relief (¶ 1315 et seq.), United Methodist Women, Inc. (¶ 1901 et seq.), the General Commission on United Methodist Men (¶ 2301 et seq.), and The United Methodist Publishing House (¶ 1601 et seq.) shall be authorized to take actions, to the extent necessary, to exist as nonprofit corporations in the state of their domicile, and as tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations with corporate ownership of all their assets and liabilities, notwithstanding ¶ 2501. Each of these organizations shall be authorized and empowered to amend their
b. The General Commission on Archives and History shall be renamed “The Institute on United Methodist Archives and History” and shall be housed in a United Methodist institution (e.g., a seminary) as negotiated by the commission’s board and the institution, with the approval of the Council of Bishops. The commission shall retain all its assets and liabilities and shall receive financial support through modest apportionment funding from all denominations formed under this paragraph, distributed proportionally among them.

c. All other general church boards and agencies shall continue in the Centrist UMC under the current Book of Discipline, subject to further possible reforms and restructuring by that new denomination. They shall be financially supported by, and accountable to, the Centrist UMC, but they may also contract to offer their services to other denominations formed under this paragraph.

d. Allocation of Assets—The General Conference hereby establishes the process for allocating general church assets among the denominations formed under this paragraph to fund the transition to new denominations and to be devoted to the missional purposes of each denomination thereafter. (NOTE: different groups could submit different proposals for how the assets would be allocated, with General Conference making the final decision on the process.)

13. Central Conference Funding—The General Conference hereby establishes the goal of maintaining current levels of funding for central conference operations and ministry through the 2021-24 quadrennium, funded by all denominations formed under this paragraph. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall compile a list of apportionment funding for central conference operations and ministry under the 2017-20 budget and shall apportion that amount to the various denominations annually throughout the quadrennium, adjusting for fluctuations in membership as the alignment process continues. These central conference apportionments shall be listed separately, so that each local church may determine how much of its apportionment is going to this central conference apportionment. Apportionment support for central conference bishops shall also be listed separately, even if it passes through the Episcopal Fund. General Council on Finance and Administration shall administer the funds received and distribute them pro rata or in such other manner as has been the historical pattern. In addition, all denominations are encouraged to continue supporting Advance Special and other mission projects in the central conferences.

14. Continuing Relationship—All the denominations formed under this paragraph may participate as members of the World Methodist Council and the Pan-Methodist Commission. The continuing relationship between and among the various such denominations may be memorialized in a covenantal concordat, or other form of ecumenical agreement negotiated on a bilateral or multilateral basis following the fully effective date of each denomination (January 1, 2022, or later).

15. Inaugural General Conferences—The Centrist UMC shall hold a special General Conference as its inaugural General Conference during the fall of 2021. Other denominations formed under this paragraph are encouraged to hold an inaugural General Conference to be scheduled during the fall of 2021. Denominations that are not ready to form at that time may hold an inaugural General Conference at a later date, with a fully effective date for the denomination set by that General Conference.

a. The Centrist UMC shall hold a special called General Conference to discuss the formal removal of all prohibitions related to LGBTQ persons and further define its stance related to ministry with and inclusion of LGBTQ persons. That special General Conference would also con-
sider restructuring the Centrist denomination in light of the annual conferences and local churches that are no longer part of the Centrist UMC. The annual conferences of the Centrist UMC, including those that may be reformed by the jurisdictions after annual conference realignments, will elect delegates to the special session in 2021, under the terms of the Book of Discipline, particularly to replace delegates who have lost eligibility through no being members of a UMC annual conference or local church as a result of realignments.

b. The Traditionalist UMC and other denominations shall hold their inaugural General Conference to adopt governing documents that would govern the work of those denominations. Representation shall be elected under its and their associational rules or adopted doctrine, for example by those annual conferences choosing to affiliate with the denomination and also by groups of local churches and clergy that form in areas where their annual conference affiliates with another denomination.

c. The fully effective date of the new denominations shall be January 1, 2022, or a later date determined by each denomination.

16. Legal Succession—For the purposes of legal issues such as pensions and assets, all denominations forming under this paragraph shall be considered legal successors of The United Methodist Church as relates to the portions thereof that are associated with the new denominations or organizations that align or associate therewith. The Centrist UMC shall inherit the current Book of Discipline with such modifications as it chooses to make. Other denominations may borrow provisions and language from the Book of Discipline without such borrowing being considered an infringement of copyright. Furthermore, all denominations forming under this paragraph have associational, historical, and ecclesiastical ties with each other and with the historical United Methodist Church and its predecessors.

17. Severability—If one provision of this paragraph is found unconstitutional, any other provisions not dependent upon that provision shall be severable and implemented as passed by General Conference.

18. Precedence and Effective Date—All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect upon the adjournment of General Conference 2020. All provisions of this paragraph shall take precedence over any conflicting provisions in the Book of Discipline not in the Constitution.

§2500.

Petition Number: 20735-CO-§2500-G; Cook, Beth Ann - Logansport, IN, USA.

Disaffiliation Process (Gracious Exit Passed at GC 2019)

If Judicial Council rules ¶ 2553 invalid, create New ¶ as follows:

Section VIII. Disaffiliation of Local Churches Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality

Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow.

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2023. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2023 and shall not be used after that date.

3. Decision-Making Process—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

4. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:
a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

b) Apportionments. The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the twelve (12) months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments.

c) Property. A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) Pension Liabilities. The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share.

e) Other Liabilities. The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) Payment Terms. Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.

g) Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans. The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

Rationale:

The Judicial Council is reviewing ¶ 2553. The number of voting irregularities exceeds the margin to substitute the minority report for 90066 (402-400). I am resubmitting this to GC 2020 to make certain it is available, if needed.

¶2553.

Petition Number: 20150-CO-¶2553-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #14—Local Churches Ending Connectional Relationships with The United Methodist Church

Amend, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, Chapter Six, Church Property, by deleting current Section VIII., Disaffiliation of Local Churches over issues related to human sexuality, and ¶ 2553 in its entirety, and adding a new Section VIII., Local Churches Changing or Ending Their Relationships with The United Methodist Church then by adding a new ¶ 2553 as follows:

¶ 2553. Local Churches Ending Their Connectional Relationships with The United Methodist Church

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of ¶ 2553 to end its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church for reasons of conscience around issues of human sexuality as reflected in the Book of Discipline and Social Principles, the application or enforcement of provisions of the Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality issues, the actions or inactions of the 2019 or 2020 General Conference related to human sexuality issues, or the actions or inactions of the annual conference or jurisdictional conference in which the local church is located on those issues following the 2019 or 2020 General Conference.

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to end its connectional relationship under ¶ 2553 shall be made in sufficient time for the process to be complete prior to December 31, 2025. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2025, and shall not be used after that date.

3. Local Church Decision-Making Process—

a) If the church council of a local church determines that the church wishes to consider ending its relationship...
with The United Methodist Church under ¶ 2553, that church council shall submit a request to the district superintendent. The district superintendent shall, within thirty (30) days after receipt of the request, call for a church conference under ¶ 248 for the sole purpose of deciding whether the local church wishes to end its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church.

b) The decision to end the local church’s connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present and voting at the church conference.

c) 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.

i. The church conference shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference.

ii. 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.

iii. Under the provisions of ¶ 246.7, the purpose of the church conference shall be stated in the call and must include the recommendation(s) of the church council, the provisions and terms of this paragraph, and the standard terms of separation agreements of The United Methodist Church and the annual conference.

4. Process after Local Church Vote—If a local church votes to separate from and end all relationship with The United Methodist Church, the following provisions in this ¶ 2553 shall apply.

5. Separation Agreement and Terms—If a local church votes to separate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that separation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the bishop and cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of separation, shall be memorialized in a binding separation agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. The separation agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

a) Standard Terms of Separation Agreements—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for separation agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom.

b) Annual Conference Terms—Annual conferences may require that separation agreements include contractual terms not addressed by the form developed by General Council on Finance and Administration, or issues unique to an annual conference or a particular local church or applicable laws. Annual conferences may also develop additional standard terms or conditions for separation. Any such additional standard terms or individual separation agreements, however, must be consistent with the standard terms required in this paragraph and the form developed by the General Council on Finance and Administration. In addition, the annual conference must notify congregations of such additional standard terms as early as is practicable, so as to inform the congregation prior to its vote, and not to impede the congregation’s ability to complete the exit process by December 31, 2025.

c) Apportionments—The local church shall not be required to pay more than twelve (12) months of apportionments.

d) Property—A separating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property for no additional required consideration to the annual conference beyond that described in this paragraph. If the local church property is going to be transferred to another legal entity, all such transfers shall become effective as of the effective date of separation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the separating local church.

e) Pension Withdrawal Liability—The local church shall be responsible for making the withdrawal liability payment in the amount required by ¶ 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 for separating churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

f) Other Liabilities to Annual Conference Entities—A separation agreement may require that some or all outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities owed by the local church to its annual conference, district, or to any annual conference-related entities be satisfied, with the exception that the annual conference may not in any instance require payment of more than twelve (12) months of apportionments.

g) Local Church Liabilities Owed to Other Parties—Before any local church property or assets may be transferred to another entity, all outstanding liabilities of the local church owed to third parties, including other United Methodist Church entities, have either been:
i. satisfied in full, with written confirmation of that fact supplied by the third party to whom the liability was owed; or

ii. fully assumed by the other entity pursuant to agreements to which the local church’s third party creditors have consented, and which oblige the other entity to fully indemnify and defend the local church against any claims relating to those liabilities.

h) No Other Claims—The local church shall not have a claim to or be entitled to a share of the assets of its annual conference.

i) Payment Terms—The separation agreement shall specify the terms and conditions of the payment to the annual conference for any sums related to ¶ 2553.5.c, e, and f. If the local church and the annual conference agree to a payment plan, the plan shall bear no more than a reasonable rate of interest and the term of payment shall not exceed ten (10) years.

6. Annual Conference Approval—Upon the recommendation of the annual conference board of trustees to approve a separation agreement, the annual conference may permit a local church to separate under the terms of that separation agreement, upon approval by a majority of annual conference members present and voting.

7. Release of Interest—The annual conference’s approval of the separation agreement, together with the execution of the separation agreement by authorized representatives of the annual conference board of trustees, shall constitute a release and discharge of all local church assets from any trusts in favor of The United Methodist Church that had 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.

8. Members Remaining—The district superintendent shall provide assistance to those members of the local church that wish to remain in The United Methodist Church, and the local church shall not interfere with those efforts.

9. Separating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans—The United Methodist Church believes that a local church ending its connectional relationship under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church ending its connectional relationship under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

10. Effective Date—The terms of this paragraph are effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference. If any provision in this paragraph is determined to be invalid or unconstitutional, that decision will not affect the remainder of the provisions.

Rationale:

Creates a consistent process for local churches who desire to separate from The United Methodist Church and do not wish to maintain a relationship through an ecumenical agreement, to receive their property and continue to participate in pension plans while paying their portion of pension liabilities, and other considerations.

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<th>Paragraph</th>
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<td>¶2553.</td>
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<td>Petition Number: 20152-CO-¶2553-G; Vittorio, Jessica - Dallas, TX, USA.</td>
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### Legal Requirements of Disaffiliation

#### Legal Requirements of Disaffiliation

Amend the existing ¶ 2553 accordingly:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
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<tr>
<td>¶ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—</td>
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1. **Basis**—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow.

2. **Time Limits**—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2023. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2023, and shall not be used after that date.

3. **Decision-Making Process**—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

4. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference chancellor, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

b) Apportionments—The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments due prior to the date of requested disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments. A Disaffiliating Agreement shall only be approved if it requires payment in full of any unpaid apportionments as required above. Unpaid apportionments shall include any deficit between the original full amount of apportionments due from the disaffiliating local church during any given year in which the disaffiliating local church was in operation minus the amount of apportionments actually paid toward that amount. Neither the annual conference, or the General Council on Finance and Administration, shall have the authority to reduce the original full amount of apportionments due by a disaffiliating local church during any given year in which the disaffiliating local church was in operation, or otherwise waive payment in full of any Unpaid Apportionments.

c) Property—A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) Indemnification—A disaffiliating local church shall be required to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless The United Methodist Church, along with its members, employees, agencies, agents, and representatives from (i) all third party claims arising out of or related to the prior ownership of the transferred property, the Disaffiliation Agreement or related transfer of property, (ii) liabilities, claims, causes of action, suits, judgments, damages, losses, costs, and expenses of any nature, to the extent arising out of, resulting from, or incurred as a result of the prior ownership of the transferred property, the Disaffiliation Agreement or related transfer of property. The indemnification shall not be limited because all or any part of any losses are covered by insurance and/or partially attributable to the conduct or alleged negligence of The United Methodist Church. The only exceptions to the requirements of this provision shall be in states, countries, or provinces where the indemnification as provided above is illegal or unenforceable.

Rationale:

Due to the increased liability and related financial implications of disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church, any disaffiliating local church should be required to provide certain legal representations related to the compliance and legal implications of disaffiliation.

¶2553.

Petition Number: 20153-CO-¶2553-G; Horton, David - Houston, TX, USA.

Disaffiliation of Local Churches and Annual Conferences

Add new ¶ 2553 and renumber all succeeding paragraphs:

¶ 2553. Disaffiliation of a United Methodist Annual Conference or Local Church to Affiliate with a New Wesleyan Denomination—

1. Intention—An annual conference or local church shall be able to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church and affiliate with another denomination within the Wesleyan family following the procedures and time frame of this paragraph (“Wesleyan family” defined as any Christian denomination or entity that claims the heritage of John Wesley). The intention is to provide an exit pathway for annual conferences and local churches who cannot in good conscience remain in full connection with The United Methodist Church because of changes to our standards for certification, ordination, and appointment of homosexual persons, and to our approach to marriage
services that would allow clergy to perform and local churches to host same-sex marriage services. We invite all people to join us in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We respect and affirm those persons who do not condone the practice of homosexuality and therefore choose to withdraw from The United Methodist Church and join another Wesleyan denomination.

2. Time Limits—A decision to disaffiliate an annual conference or local church from The United Methodist Church and affiliate with another Wesleyan denomination must be made by December 31, 2021. The process in this paragraph must be complete by December 31, 2022. The provisions of this paragraph expire on December 31, 2022, and shall not be valid after that date.

3. Decisions—Decisions to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church may be made at a session of an annual conference or church conference within the effective time limit.

a) The annual conference decision may be made at a normal or called session of the annual conference. In the event of a called session, the annual conference shall be conducted no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the bishop calls for the annual conference. The decision to disaffiliate must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the delegates who are present at the annual conference. For the decision to be valid, the motion must include an intent to affiliate with another denomination in the Wesleyan family.

b) The local church decision may be made at a called session of the church conference. The church conference shall be conducted no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the district superintendent for the church conference. The decision to disaffiliate must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members who are present at the church conference. For the decision to be valid, the motion must include an intent to affiliate with another denomination in the Wesleyan family.

4. Process—The following process shall be used to assist annual conferences and local churches with disaffiliation.

a) The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall invoke ¶ 2501.2 and recognize its validity for the release and transfer of property. Annual conferences may use this standard form and develop additional terms and conditions that are not inconsistent with the provisions of this paragraph.

b) In the event a local church chooses to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration shall establish terms and conditions for disaffiliation using the standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements, with the advice of the cabinet, annual conference treasurer, annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor where appropriate. The terms and conditions shall be memorialized in a binding agreement between the annual conference and the General Council on Finance and Administration.

c) Property—A disaffiliating annual conference or local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating body.

d) Other Liabilities—All debts, loans, and liabilities shall be borne by the disaffiliating body and be satisfied or transferred to its new entity prior to disaffiliation.

e) Plan Sponsors—

1. Pensions and other benefits earned by clergy and held by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall remain intact and continue, and be reassigned to other annual conferences or organizations where necessary, subject to the paragraphs of the Book of Discipline that direct and authorize the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

2. An annual conference or local church disaffiliating under this paragraph shall continue to 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.

3. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall redistribute pension liabilities to annual conferences and local churches as necessary throughout this process.

f) Other Contributions—An annual conference or local church disaffiliating under this paragraph may choose to sponsor other connectional agencies, ministries, and programs of The United Methodist Church and may cease that relationship at any time.

g) Once the provisions of this paragraph are satisfied and there are no outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church.

h) Dissenting Local Churches—In the event an annual conference chooses to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church under the provisions of this paragraph, and a local church within that annual conference dissents with the decision, the local church shall have the right to remain affiliated with and join another annual conference.
within The United Methodist Church using the following process:

1. Following a decision by an annual conference to disaffiliate, the local church may call sessions of the charge conference and church conference, vote to remain affiliated with The United Methodist Church, and join another annual conference. The new annual conference will be selected by the local church with the counsel of the bishop and district superintendent. The church conference shall be conducted no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. The decision to disaffiliate must be approved by a majority vote of the professing members who are present at the charge conference and church conference. For the decision to be valid, the motion must include an annual conference to join.

2. The new annual conference selected by the local church must choose to accept the local church at a normal or called session of the annual conference. The decision to accept the new local church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the delegates who are present at the annual conference. In the event the new annual conference does not accept the local church, the local church shall be supported through the process of selecting and petitioning another annual conference.

3. The local church shall have all the rights and privileges in its new annual conference as other local churches in the annual conference.

4. The local church shall not have a right to retain the clergy appointed to that local church from the former annual conference.

5. The local church shall carry their outstanding apportionment liability from the current calendar year to the new annual conference.

   i) Dissenting Clergy—In the event an annual conference chooses to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church under the provisions of this paragraph, and a clergyperson within that annual conference dissents with the decision, the clergyperson shall have the right to remain affiliated with and join another annual conference within The United Methodist Church using the following process:

   1. The clergyperson shall inform in writing his or her bishop, district superintendent, and, where applicable, the chairperson of his or her staff parish relations committee, of his or her intention to affiliate with another annual conference. The responsibility lies with the clergyperson to petition the bishop of the desired annual conference to join that annual conference.

   2. Approval of the clergy session of the new annual conference shall be consistent with ¶ 347.1 and the standards of the annual conference.

Rationale:

Creates a pathway for local churches and annual conferences to withdraw from The UMC while retaining their property and liabilities. Protects local churches and clergy who dissent with the decision of their annual conference to withdraw.

¶2553.

Petition Number: 20154-CO-¶2553-G; Starnes, Thomas - Washington, DC, USA.

Revise 2553 If It Is Reaffirmed by Judicial Council

Amend ¶ 2553 (Disaffiliation of a Local Church over Issues Related to Human Sexuality), as reflected in the 2019 Addendum to The Book of Discipline 2016, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, as follows:

¶ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals or to the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow.

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2025. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2025 and shall not be used after that date.

3. Decision-Making Process—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church 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.
4. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

b) Apportionments—The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the twelve (12) months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments.

c) Property—A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. If the local church property is going to be transferred to a newly established entity, all such transfers of property shall become effective as of the effective date of made prior to the disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) Pension Liabilities—The local church shall make the contribute—withdrawal liability payment required by ¶ 1504.23, unless in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share, is excepted from such payment, or the liability is otherwise satisfied, under another paragraph in the Book of Discipline addressing pension obligations for disaffiliating churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

e) Other Liabilities—All outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities owed by the local church to its annual conference or to any other United Methodist shall be satisfied in full prior to disaffiliation. The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities (i.e., obligations owed to third parties unaffiliated with The United Methodist Church), or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) Payment Terms—Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.

g) Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans—The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

Rationale:

If the Judicial Council upholds ¶ 2553 as enacted by the 2019 General Conference, these amendments would eliminate ambiguities, reduce confusion, and promote uniform implementation; extend the time the provision will remain in effect; and allow for alternative approved methods of resolving pension obligations.

2553.

Petition Number: 20155-CO-¶2553-G; Cook, Beth Ann - Logansport, IN, USA.

Revised Disaffiliation Process (Gracious Exit)

Amend ¶ 2553 as follows:

¶ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under
the provisions of this paragraph, to surrender its charter and disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow based upon the local church’s declaration that the conflict with respect to the definition of marriage, ordination standards, and sexual ethics in The United Methodist Church is harming its ministry.

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2023. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2023 and shall not be used after that date.

32. Decision-Making Process—The annual conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church council or at least 10 percent of the professing members request the church conference. The local church shall engage in a period of study and prayer during the interim before the church conference that shall be designed and implemented by the church council. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The motion to disaffiliate shall specify the effective date of disaffiliation. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) simple majority vote of the professing members of the local church present and voting at the church conference.

This paragraph (¶ 2553) shall take precedence over all other provisions of the Discipline not in the Constitution. Pursuant to ¶ 16.3, the annual conference shall not have the power to require other steps to precede the church conference than are enumerated herein or prevent a local church from withdrawing under the terms of this paragraph, so long as the terms have been fulfilled. An annual conference vote to release the congregation shall not be required.

43. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference board of trustees, acting on behalf of the conference, and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with shall contain the following provisions:

a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences shall impose no additional terms or conditions as part of the disaffiliation process. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

b) Apportionments—The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments in full for the twelve (12) months prior to the effective date of disaffiliation, as well as an additional 12 months of apportionments.

c) Property—A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property, subject to all liens and encumbrances duly recorded applicable to such property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to the effective date of disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) Pension Liabilities—The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to 50 percent of its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share; the annual conference will reduce that aggregate funding obligation by its reserve assets that have been restricted or designated for pension purposes or historically used for pensions, if any; and the annual conference will determine the local church’s share of the remainder based upon a formula adopted by the annual conference.

However, if the local church affiliates as of the effective date of disaffiliation hereunder with a denomination composed of or to be composed of other former United Methodist local churches, and such denomination agrees
to be legally responsible for the local church’s pension related obligations, then payment of the pension liability amount in the preceding sentence shall not be required. Instead, pension obligations and assets related to clergy and local churches affiliating with a denomination of former United Methodist local churches shall be handled in accordance with ¶ 2555 (adopted at the 2020 General Conference).

e) Other Liabilities—The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) Payment Terms—Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure of disaffiliation.

g) Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans—The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

4. The provisions of this paragraph shall be effective immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:

Local churches should not be constrained to remain part of The United Methodist Church when their deeply held theological convictions are violated. These revisions streamline the process adopted by GC2019 as ¶ 2553 and clarify pension liabilities of any disaffiliating church.

¶2553.

Petition Number: 20156-CO-¶2553-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

A More Equitable Pay Schedule for Unpaid Apportionments of Disaffiliating Local Churches

Amend ¶ 2553

Disaffiliation of a Local Church— Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—

1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues which follow—

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2023. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2023 and shall not be used after that date.

1. Decision-Making Process—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

2. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:
a) **Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement**—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

b) **Apportionments**—The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the (48) months prior to disaffiliation. The equation to calculate previous years apportionments is 100 percent of the twelve (12) months prior to disaffiliation, 75 percent of any unpaid apportionments for the next 13-24 months prior to disaffiliation, 50 percent of any unpaid apportionments for the next 25-36 months prior to disaffiliation, 25 percent of any unpaid apportionments for the next 37-48 months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments.

c) **Property**—A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) **Pension Liabilities**—The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share.

e) **Other Liabilities**—The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) **Payment Terms**—Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.

g) **Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans**—The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

**¶2553.**

Petition Number: 20414-CO-¶2553-G; Oskvig, Bryant - Potomac, MD, USA.

**Disaffiliation of a Local Congregation**

Delete ¶ 2553 and substitute the following:

¶ 2553 Section VIII. Disaffiliation of a Local Congregation

1. **Basis**—Because of deep conflict within The United Methodist Church, congregations shall have limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate with the denomination and retain full ownership of their property. In the consideration of utilizing this paragraph, congregations are encouraged to consider whether they can remain in full covenant with the other communities of the denomination or have reached such a disagreement that the only appropriate choice is to separate from The United Methodist Church.

2. **Decision Making Initiation**—A charge conference shall be called for the purpose of considering separation of a local congregation from the denomination. By a two-thirds vote of the charge conference, one-year notice will be given to the annual conference of the congregation’s intention to leave the denomination, and the process of separation will begin.

3. **Annual Conference Approval**—A report of the congregations that have indicated an intent to separate from the denomination will be given to the annual conference by the conference trustees and approved by a vote of the annual conference prior to a congregation’s separation.

4. **Restrictions**—Annual conference trustees and annual conference councils of finance and administration may not place additional or unique requirements, beyond those listed in this section, on any local congregation choosing to disaffiliate from the United Methodist denomination.

5. **Financial Obligations**—Prior to separation, a congregation will pay their full mission share/apportionments of the calendar year of their separation. There shall be full
repayment of any outstanding pension and medical arrearages, or debt owed to annual conference, General Conference, district, or other United Methodist entity.

6. Pension Share Payment—The congregation, prior to separation, shall pay its portion of the past pension obligation (remaining as the annual conference obligation) set according to a formula set by the annual conference council of finance and administration and affirmed by annual conference vote.

7. Formal Disaffiliation—Following the full payment of the financial obligations and the conclusion of the one-year time period, a church conference will be called for the purposes of disaffiliation. By a two-thirds vote of all voting congregation members present for the church conference, the congregation will be disaffiliated and no longer part of The United Methodist Church.

8. Property—A disaffiliating local congregation shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made after the final vote for disaffiliation and full payment of the other financial obligations. These expenses will be borne by the congregation. All outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities of the congregation are also transferred to the new entity.

9. Trust Clause—Following the meeting of these obligations, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims it may have under the various paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, commonly called the trust clause.

10. Pension Support—Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans (WesPath)—The United Methodist Church believes that a local congregation disaffiliating shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local congregation expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local congregation disaffiliating shall continue to be eligible to sponsor clergy and lay employee benefit plans through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (WesPath) under ¶ 1504.2, subject to the applicable terms and conditions of the plans.

11. Claim on United Methodist Properties—Disaffiliating congregations individually or as a group shall have no claim on the properties of The United Methodist Church and its assets, including properties and assets of any General Conference board, agency, or division, nor shall they have claim on any properties or assets of the annual conference or its districts.

12. Time Limits—To give sufficient time for congregations to evaluate and decide to disaffiliate and recognizing the importance of covenanted communities remaining together, the provisions of this paragraph shall expire December 31, 2024.

§2553.

Petition Number: 20733-CO-¶2553; Starnes, Thomas - Washington, DC, USA.

Reenact 2553 with Clarifying Revisions if Declared Void by Judicial Council

If Judicial Council rules ¶ 2553 invalid, Desired Action:

Amend, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, Chapter Six, Church Property, by adding a new Section VIII. Disaffiliation of Local Churches Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality, then by adding a new ¶ 2553, as follows:

§ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church over Issues Related to Human Sexuality.

§ 2553. Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—1. Basis—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding the requirements and provisions of The Book of Discipline related to the practice of homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals or to the actions or inactions of its annual conference related to these issues.

2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be complete prior to December 31, 2025. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on December 31, 2025, and shall not be used after that date.

3. Decision-Making Process—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church 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.
4. **Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church**—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference chancellor, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference board of trustees. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

   a) **Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.**
   
   The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

   b) **Apportionments.** The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the twelve (12) months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments.

   c) **Property.** A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. If the local church property is going to be transferred to a newly established entity, all such transfers shall become effective as of the effective date of the disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

   d) **Pension Liabilities.** The local church shall make the withdrawal liability payment required by ¶ 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 for disaffiliating churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

   e) **Other Liabilities.** All outstanding debts, loans, and liabilities owed by the local church to its annual conference or to any other United Methodist entity shall be satisfied in full prior to disaffiliation. The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities (i.e., obligations owed to third parties unaffiliated with The United Methodist Church), or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

   f) **Payment Terms.** Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure, 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 for disaffiliating churches (e.g., ¶ 2555).

   g) **Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans.** The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

   h) **Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

**Rationale:**

If the Judicial Council declares ¶ 2553 (as enacted by the 2019 General Conference) to be void, this potential reenactment would eliminate ambiguities, reduce confusion, and promote uniform implementation; extend the time the provision will remain in effect; and allow for alternative approved methods of resolving pension obligations.

**¶2553.**

Petition Number: 20734-CO-¶2553-G; Cook, Beth Ann - Logansport, IN, USA.

**Create Disaffiliation Process if 2553 Ruled Invalid by Judicial Council**

Create a New Paragraph as Follows:

Special Note: ¶ 2553 is under review by the Judicial Council. If they rule it is not valid, the disaffiliation process would need to be created as a new paragraph. (I have submitted the same content as an amendment of ¶ 2553 in case the Judicial Council rules it is valid.)

**Disaffiliation of a Local Church Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality—**

1. **Basis**—Because of the current deep conflict within The United Methodist Church around issues of human sexuality, a local church shall have a limited right, under the provisions of this paragraph, to surrender its charter
and disaffiliate from the denomination based upon the local church’s declaration that the conflict with respect to the definition of marriage, ordination standards, and sexual ethics in The United Methodist Church is harming its ministry.

2. Decision-Making Process—A church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within one hundred twenty (120) days after the church council or at least 10 percent of the professing members request the church conference. The local church shall engage in a period of study and prayer during the interim before the church conference that shall be designed and implemented by the church council. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The motion to disaffiliate shall specify the effective date of disaffiliation. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a simple majority vote of the professing members of the local church present and voting at the church conference.

This paragraph (¶ 2553) shall take precedence over all other provisions of the Discipline not in the Constitution. Pursuant to ¶ 16.3, the annual conference shall not have the power to require other steps to precede the church conference than enumerated herein or prevent a local church from withdrawing under the terms of this paragraph, so long as the terms have been fulfilled. An annual conference vote to release the congregation shall not be required.

3. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference board of trustees, acting on behalf of the conference, and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement shall contain the following provisions:

a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences shall impose no additional terms or conditions as part of the disaffiliation process.

b) Apportionments. The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments in full for the twelve (12) months prior to the effective date of disaffiliation.

c) Property. A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property, subject to all liens and encumbrances duly recorded applicable to such property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to the effective date of disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.

d) Pension Liabilities. The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to 50 percent of its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider; the annual conference will reduce that aggregate funding obligation by its reserve assets that have been restricted or designated for pension purposes or historically used for pensions, if any; and the annual conference will determine the local church’s share of the remainder based upon a formula adopted by the annual conference.

However, if the local church affiliates as of the effective date of disaffiliation hereunder with a denomination composed of or to be composed of other former United Methodist local churches, and such denomination agrees to be legally responsible for the local church’s pension related obligations, then payment of the pension liability amount in the preceding sentence shall not be required. Instead, pension obligations and assets related to clergy and local churches affiliating with a denomination of former United Methodist local churches shall be handled in accordance with ¶ 2555 (adopted at the 2020 General Conference).

e) Other Liabilities. The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) Payment Terms. Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of disaffiliation.

g) Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans. The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

 h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

 4. The provisions of this paragraph shall be effective immediately upon the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

 Rationale:

 Local churches should not be constrained to remain part of The United Methodist Church if doing so violates their deeply held theological convictions. The Judicial Council is reviewing ¶ 2553. If they rule it is not valid this legislation would need to be submitted as a new paragraph.

 ¶2553.

 Petition Number: 20739-CO-¶2553-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

 Plain Grace Plan #18—Disaffiliation of a Local Church—Gracious Exit

 STRIKE EXISTING ¶ 2553 in its entirety and ADD NEW ¶ 2553 to the Discipline in its place 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-E, 673-680, 725, 1510, and 2553-2555.

 The provisions of this paragraph shall be used in those instances where a local church disaffiliates instead of using the Gracious Affiliation provisions of the Plain Grace Plan.

 2. Time Limits—The choice by a local church to disaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under this paragraph shall be made in sufficient time for the process for exiting the denomination to be completed prior to October 15, 2022. The provisions of ¶ 2553 expire on October 15, 2022, and shall not be used after that date.

 3. Decision-Making Process—The church conference shall be conducted in accordance with ¶ 248 and shall be held within sixty (60) days after the district superintendent calls for the church conference. In addition to the provisions of ¶ 246.8, 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 means necessary, including electronic communication where possible, to communicate. The decision to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

 4. Process Following Decision to Disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church—If the church conference votes to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church, the terms and conditions for that disaffiliation shall be established by the board of trustees of the applicable annual conference, with the advice of the cabinet, the annual conference treasurer, the annual conference benefits officer, the director of connectional ministries, and the annual conference chancellor. The terms and conditions, including the effective date of disaffiliation, shall be memorialized in a binding Disaffiliation Agreement between the annual conference and the trustees of the local church, acting on behalf of the members. That agreement must be consistent with the following provisions:

 a) Standard Terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.

 The General Council on Finance and Administration shall develop a standard form for Disaffiliation Agreements under this paragraph to protect The United Methodist Church as set forth in ¶ 807.9. The agreement shall include a recognition of the validity and applicability of ¶ 2501, notwithstanding the release of property therefrom. Annual conferences may develop additional standard terms that are not inconsistent with the standard form of this paragraph.

 b) Apportionments. The local church shall pay any unpaid apportionments for the twelve (12) months prior to disaffiliation, as well as an additional twelve (12) months of apportionments.

 c) Property. A disaffiliating local church shall have the right to retain its real and personal, tangible and intangible property. All transfers of property shall be made prior to disaffiliation. All costs for transfer of title or other legal work shall be borne by the disaffiliating local church.
d) **Pension Liabilities.** The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share.

e) **Other Liabilities.** The local church shall satisfy all other debts, loans, and liabilities, or assign and transfer them to its new entity, prior to disaffiliation.

f) **Payment Terms.** Payment shall occur prior to the effective date of departure.

g) **Disaffiliating Churches Continuing as Plan Sponsors of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits Plans.** The United Methodist Church believes that a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the local church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a local church disaffiliating under ¶ 2553 shall continue to 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.

h) Once the disaffiliating local church has reimbursed the applicable annual conference for all funds due under the agreement, and provided that there are no other outstanding liabilities or claims against The United Methodist Church as a result of the disaffiliation, in consideration of the provisions of this paragraph, the applicable annual conference shall release any claims that it may have under ¶ 2501 and other paragraphs of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church commonly referred to as the trust clause, or under the agreement.

5. All provisions of this paragraph shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the General Conference for 2020 and shall expire October 15, 2022.

**Rationale:**

This 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 a modified

¶ 2553.4d.

Petition Number: 20151-CO-¶2553.4d!-G; Costello, Robert - Somers Point, NJ, USA.

### Calculations for Disaffiliation

**Amend by substitution** to ¶ 2553.4d:

Delete: d) Pension Liabilities. The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations to the annual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the aggregate funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share.

Substitute: ¶ 2553.4d) Pension Liabilities—The local church shall contribute withdrawal liability to the annual conference in which it is located, in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any unfunded pension obligations of that individual conference. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall determine the individual conference’s funding obligations of the annual conference using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider, from which the annual conference will determine the local church’s share. All such calculations will be based on individual annual conference balances and any overfunding or underfunding or liabilities. There shall be no co-mingling or pooling of multiple annual conference balances or liabilities in making such a calculation.
Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20097.
Petition Number: 20097-CO-NonDis; Brown, Curtis - Springfield, IL, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Create Missionary Conference in the United States of America

In accordance with ¶ 587 Book of Discipline 2016, the 2020 General Conference shall create a new missionary conference whose boundaries would be the national borders of the United States of America and other territories assigned to the jurisdictional conferences. The General Board of Global Ministries may provide administrative guidance but shall not be required to provide financial assistance to this new missionary conference.

Rationale:
In order to create a new, adaptive, innovative expression of United Methodism in the United States, a new missionary conference would allow for the creation of contextually appropriate polity within the United States.

Petition 20098.
Petition Number: 20098-CO-NonDis; McGehee, Diane - Houston, TX, USA.

Creation Contextual Ministry Conference in SCJ

In accordance with ¶ 587 Book of Discipline 2016, the 2020 General Conference shall create a new contextual missionary conference whose boundaries would be the borders of the South Central Jurisdiction. The General Board of Global Ministries may provide administrative guidance but shall not be required to provide financial assistance to this new missionary conference.

Rationale:
The General Conference should have authority to create a new contextual, adaptive, innovative expression of United Methodism in the South Central Jurisdiction. A new missionary conference would allow for the creation of contextually appropriate policies that differ from those that predominate in the jurisdiction, just as with current missionary conferences.

Petition 20099.
Petition Number: 20099-CO-NonDis; McGehee, Diane - Houston, TX, USA.

Creation New Contextual Missionary Conference in Each US Jurisdiction

In accordance with ¶ 587 Book of Discipline 2016, the 2020 General Conference shall create a new contextual missionary conference within the boundaries of each of the five (5) jurisdictional conferences within the national borders of the United States of America: the North Central Jurisdiction, the Northeastern Jurisdiction, the South Central Jurisdiction, the Southeastern Jurisdiction, the Western Jurisdiction. The boundary of each new missionary conference will be the jurisdiction in which it is created. The General Board of Global Ministries may provide administrative guidance but shall not be required to provide financial assistance to any of these new missionary conferences.

Rationale:
To create a new, contextual, adaptive, innovative expression of United Methodism in the United States, the creation of a new missionary conference within the boundaries of each of the jurisdictions within the United States would allow for the creation of contextually appropriate polity within the United States.

Petition 20100.
Petition Number: 20100-CO-NonDis; Brown, Curtis - Springfield, IL, USA.

Create Missionary Conference in the North Central Jurisdiction

In accordance with ¶ 587 Book of Discipline 2016, the 2020 General Conference shall create a new missionary conference whose boundaries would be the borders of the North Central Jurisdiction. The General Board of Global Ministries may provide administrative guidance but shall not be required to provide financial assistance to this new missionary conference.

Rationale:
In order to create a new, adaptive, innovative expression of United Methodism in the North Central Jurisdiction, a new missionary conference would allow for the creation of contextually appropriate polity within the North Central Jurisdiction.

Petition 20641.
Petition Number: 20641-CO-NonDis-G; Ulanday, Jonathan - General Santos City, Philippines.
Oppose Dissolution and Preserve the Unity of The United Methodist Church

This petition asks General Conference to:
1. Suspend all actions furthering any dissolution, disaffiliation, and separation plans in favor of preserving the unity of the church in compliance with our Constitution and the biblically founded values of unity, inclusiveness, and redemptive grace and mission in our Preamble, also the wisdom and practice of contextual central conference authority (¶ 31.5, 31.6, and 543).
2. Authorize the Connectional Table and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to jointly study and submit a report with proposals to the next General Conference session that preserves and strengthens the unity of the church in mission through a restructured polity that affirms and values broad contextual ministry policies and practices, including parity in contextual authority among existing central and jurisdictional conferences and/or any future regional bodies established by General Conference.

Rationale:
Keeping The UMC united against dissolution is affirmed by the Preamble and Articles 4, 5, and 6 of The UMC Constitution. The Connectional Table and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters will study and report on a new contextualized polity that affirms our uniting values over our differences.

After

Petition 20698.

Petition Number: 20698-CO-NonDis-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA.

Next Generation UMC #1—Create a Commission and Call a Special Session

Non-Disciplinary Petition to Call for a Special Session of the General Conference to hear report from a Commission on the 21st Century Church

The General Conference will create a “Commission on the 21st Century Church,” which shall:
• Propose a new constitution that retains the Articles of Religion of The United Methodist Church and draws upon the best principles of our historic Wesleyan theological tradition, Doctrinal Standards, Our Theological Task, and our history of mission and ministry;
• Propose lean and nimble governance structures that entrust and empower all local units of the church to be responsive and adaptive for relevant ministry near and far;
• Provide for differentiated regions of the church that organize for ministry, which is pertinent to the needs and ethos of each geographical and cultural setting;
• Provide for missional connections among regions of the church;
• Recommend a general church structure that is simpler, flatter, effective, and sustainable to further a vital polity in this age;
• Consider the role and relationships of general agencies, and set adaptable frameworks for the number, financial support, and accountability of such agencies;
• Make provisions so that if The UMC creates a regional US structure as proposed by the Connectional Table, the commission shall recommend the organizing documents for such a body.

Membership of the Commission for a 21st Century Church shall be limited to thirty-two (32) voting members appointed by the Council of Bishops. There shall be at least one member from each jurisdiction, at least one from each African central conference, at least one from the Philippines, and at least one from Europe. At least four (4) members shall have working knowledge of the global ministries of the church through General Board of Global Ministries or other general agencies. No more than five (5) members shall be bishops, and no more than half of the members shall be clergy. The Connectional Table shall provide staff support for the commission.

Members should have special knowledge in areas necessary to complete the tasks, including theology, ecclesiology, missiology, organizational management, legal expertise, etc. The commission is encouraged to seek engagement from a wide variety of experts and from a broad array of members. The members shall be named by the Council of Bishops. The leadership of the Commission for a 21st Century Church shall be selected by the Council of Bishops and shall include one bishop, one clergyperson, and one layperson. The first meeting of the commission would be scheduled to occur by August 1, 2020. Optimally, members would also attend jurisdictional and central conferences to observe and hear directly the aspirations of leaders in various contexts.

By authority of the Book of Discipline, ¶ 14, the General Conference calls for a Special Session of the General Conference in the autumn of 2023 at the exact time and location determined by the General Commission on the General Conference. Pursuant to ¶ 35 and ¶ 36 of the Discipline, General Conference clergy delegates who cease to be members in full connection of a UM annual conference, and lay delegates who cease to be professing members of a UM local church, in either case through actions of the local church or annual conference, or both, in which they had been members disaffiliating or otherwise ending its connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church, shall cease to be delegates.
The purpose of the special session is to:

- Deliberate and act on the recommendations of the Commission on the 21st Century Church;
- Consider and begin the process of making constitutional amendments or adopting a substitute constitution proposed by the Commission on the 21st Century Church, including steps that assure a clear delineation of the governing prerogatives between regional and global to regional entities. Constitutional amendments would need to be subsequently approved as enumerated in Division Five of the constitution.
- Expand and codify the full participation and leadership of LGBTQ persons in the ministries and mission of the Church.

**Rationale:**

The United Methodist Church must adapt to create a vital, global polity. This requires the thoughtful development of a new constitution by a Commission on the 21st Century Church and the focused attention of a special session of the General Conference in the autumn of 2023.

**Petition 20720.**

Petition Number: 20720-CO-NonDis-$-G; Lomperis, Ekatarina - Valparaiso, IN, USA.

**Study Costs of Russian Translation**

The General Conference directs the Commission on the General Conference to study the options, costs, benefits, and feasibility for having future General Conference provide translation into Russian of some or all of the written General Conference materials that are currently translated into English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili, and to present a report of its findings and recommendations to the 2024 General Conference. The commission shall undertake this study in consultation with appropriate leaders in potentially affected annual conferences, including but not limited to those within the Eurasia Episcopal Area. This study shall include researching possibilities for funding for such translations to be raised from within affected annual conferences and other sources without necessarily impacting the general church budget. In pursuing this task, the commission shall be guided by both the values of justice and inclusion, so that no significant group of delegates is excluded from full participation in future General Conferences, by the understanding that there should be a clear practical and principled basis for determining for which languages we can provide different levels of translation services, and by the recognition of such practical realities as the costs of translations, the limits of our denomination’s general budget and in particular the limits of how much has been budgeted for General Conferences, and the fact that fiscal responsibility demands setting some boundaries.

**Rationale:**

Russian remains widely spoken as a first or second language for millions of people in several countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, not limited to the five annual conferences within the Eurasia Episcopal Area. Many from this region are fluent in Russian but not English, French, Portuguese, or Kiswahili.

**Petition 20722.**

Petition Number: 20722-CO-NonDis-!-G; Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha - Chicago, IL, USA for The Connectional Table.

### Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference

**U.S. Regional Committee**

A U.S. Regional Committee ("the Committee"), a committee of the General Conference with legislative function, shall be established to deal with U.S. Region-Adaptable petitions concerning U.S. matters. The objectives of this Committee are to unburden the full General Conference from U.S. legal, contextual, and financial matters that are outside the purview of central conference delegates and to provide a venue for consideration of U.S. Region-Adaptable petitions and other matters pertaining to the church in the United States. This Committee may be an interim body and shall continue functioning until a United States regional conference is created and is functional. The Committee shall operate according to the following provisions:

1. A bishop assigned by the Council of Bishops shall convene the Committee initially for the purpose of electing Committee officers. Officer elections shall follow the processes for election of legislative committee officers in the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference.
2. Based on the number and nature of petitions assigned to the Committee, the Commission on the General Conference shall set the number of subcommittees as needed.
3. Legislative items receiving no more than fifty (50) votes against the prevailing position in the Committee shall be placed on a General Conference consent calendar for U.S. Matters. It shall require the requisite number of signatures, as per the Rules of the General Conference, to remove an item from this consent calendar.
4. The Commission on the General Conference shall be responsible for developing any other rules, responsi-
bilities, and limitations needed for the functioning of the Committee and the attainment of its objectives as stated above.

5. Where not otherwise specified in the Book of Discipline, in this petition or other General Conference actions, or in the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, the rules for General Conference legislative committees will direct the processes of this Committee.

6. Petitions which pertain to U.S. Region-Adaptable matters shall be coded accordingly, in a manner comparable to the coding used to denote petitions with financial implications or global impact.

Rationale:
A United States Regional Conference can provide a forum for discussion and action and unburden the full General Conference from legal, administrative, and financial matters pertaining only to the church in the United States. A regional conference also can provide the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the U.S. church.

Petition 20724.

Petition Number: 20724-CO-NonDis-!-G; Bigham-Tsai, Kennetha - Chicago, IL, USA for The Connectional Table.

Creation of a U.S. Regional Conference
A Non-Disciplinary Petition to Create a Plan for Organization of a United States Regional Conference

Authorization: There shall be an Interim Committee on Organization (ICO) for one quadrennium that organizes and plans for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference (USRC) comprising the five jurisdictions of the United States.

Composition: The Council of Bishops, through the Leadership Discernment Committee, shall appoint a 20-25-member Interim Committee on Organization (ICO) for one quadrennium. The committee membership shall be determined using proportionate representation of the U.S. jurisdictions, with a minimum of three members from each U.S. jurisdiction, ensuring broad diversity, including racial and gender inclusion. All members of the ICO shall be chosen from among the voting delegates elected by the annual conferences in the U.S. jurisdictions. Meeting and other necessary costs shall be funded by the General Administration Fund. In addition, two central conference members shall be elected by the central conferences or their leadership bodies to advise and consult the ICO.

Responsibilities: The ICO shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. The ICO shall choose the time and place for the convening of the initial gathering of the USRC.
2. The ICO shall work with the secretary of the General Conference and the business manager of the General Conference in planning for the first gathering of the USRC.
3. The ICO, in consultation with the appropriate committees of the Commission on the General Conference, shall recommend to the USRC for action at its first gathering what committees and officers are required to ensure the functionality of the USRC.
4. Upon the completion of the first USRC gathering, the ICO shall cease to exist as a committee of the General Conference, unless the USRC authorizes the continuation of their work for a specific time and purpose.

This petition will go into effect only upon the General Conference approval of the establishment of the United States Regional Conference (proposed new ¶¶ 11, 32-35, and 550-555).

Rationale:
A United States Regional Conference can provide a forum for discussion and action and unburden the full General Conference from legal, administrative, and financial matters pertaining only to the church in the United States. A regional conference also can provide the opportunity to develop missional strategies for the U.S. church.

Petition 20744.

Petition Number: 20744-CO-NonDis-!-G; Williams, Jay - Boston, MA, USA.

New Expressions Worldwide Plan—Enabling Legislation

New Global Methodist Denominations
Upon adjournment of the 2020 General Conference, The United Methodist Church gives birth to four new global Methodist denominations, according to disciplinary Petition 20743 (Birth Hing New Methodist Denominations—The New Expressions Worldwide Plan). These denominations are:

- **Traditionalist Methodist Church**, grounded in preserving traditionalism and biblical inerrancy.
- **Moderate Methodist Church**, grounded in personal salvation, conversion, and missions.
- **Progressive Methodist Church**, grounded in the social gospel.
- **Liberation Methodist Church**, grounded in Gospel-centered, anti-colonial, and intersectional justice that intentionally empowers PoC+Q+T [people of color + queer + trans] people.
These denominational names and descriptions are temporary placeholders until the new denominations organize and self-determine.

**Plan of Separation**

A Plan of Separation shall be presented to a special General Conference, occurring before 2024, that dissolves The United Methodist Church and attends to all practical, legal, and financial considerations related to this dissolution. The Plan of Separation shall be governed by the principles of self-determination, equitable distribution of general church assets, restorative justice, and reparations. The initial Plan of Separation will be developed by the Transitional Council—in consultation with the Council of Bishops, the General Council on Finance and Administration, Wespath, the Connectional Table, the General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women—with the assistance of an independent, professional mediator. The final Plan of Separation, as presented to the special General Conference, shall be achieved through independent, professional arbitration.

**Transitional Council**

There shall be a Transitional Council that develops the above-named Plan of Separation according to the values of self-determination, equitable distribution of general church assets, restorative justice, and reparations.

- **Composition**—Each of the four denominations will name five (5) individuals, which shall include at least two lay individuals per denomination. The president of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church will also be an *ex officio*, nonvoting member of the Transitional Council. Upon approval of this legislation, at the 2020 General Conference, a general secretary will convene a “caucus” of each new denomination for the sole purpose of electing members to the Transitional Council. Each new denomination will determine its own criteria for and process of election.

- **Organization and Staffing**—The Transitional Council will be empowered to organize and staff itself, according to its needs, in order to steward the Plan of Separation. After determining its human capital requirements, the Transitional Council may hire or temporarily co-opt staff from general agencies and annual conference staff.

- **Mutual Accountability and Transparency**—The Transitional Council will operate in such a way that it remains accountable to the four new denominations—and in communication with the Council of Bishops, the General Council on Finance and Administration, Wespath, the Connectional Table, the General Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women—at minimum through monthly briefings.

**Funding**

The General Council on Finance and Administration, in consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall fully fund the work of the Transitional Council—including meeting costs, assessments and research, mediation, and arbitration.

**General Principles**

1. **Dissolution**—The United Methodist Church is dissolved.

2. **Legality**—Each new global denomination is organized in such a way that adheres to the governing laws of the territories in which it is located.

3. **Worldwide Communion**—Denominations are part of a global convention or worldwide Wesleyan Communion and may be in full communion with one another.

4. **Self-Determination**—Denominations can organize under their own constitutional, connectional, and conference mechanism, as well as their own understanding of ordination and clergy membership. Each denomination will determine its own need for an episcopacy, general and regional conferences, and judicial process.

   a. Current annual conferences of The United Methodist Church will join one of the four new denominations. There is no mandate that the general and district superintendency would continue in new denominations.

   b. Local churches disagreeing with their annual conference’s decision could decide by 2/3 (two-thirds) majority vote of a church conference to align with a different denomination. All local church assets, and liabilities, as well as real and personal, tangible and intangible property, would be retained by that local church.

   c. Clergy would decide with which denomination to align. By default, they would remain part of their annual conference in whichever expression their annual conference affiliates, unless they request to affiliate with a different denomination.

5. **Self-Funding**—Each denomination will fund itself.

6. **General Agencies**—General agencies would become independent 501(c)3 organizations according to U.S. law, with their own self-perpetuating boards of directors, and will retain their current liabilities, assets, and reserves. Some agencies may choose to merge or dissolve. Their services could be offered to new denominations through agreement negotiated between each agency and each new denomination.

7. **Pensions**—Pension liabilities would persist and be transferred proportionally to the new denomination that an annual conference or a local church joins. It may be determined that the pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension obligations for at-risk congregations—particularly historically marginalized congregations—are forgiven.
8. Equitable Distribution of Common Assets—General church assets are divided equitably.

9. Restorative Justice and Reparations—Historically marginalized and particularly vulnerable churches, as determined jointly by the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, are set up for success worldwide. Injustices of colonialism, institutional racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and misogyny are repaired through financial re-investment.

10. Trust—Property held in trust is released to the entities that have stewarded those entrusted properties. Local congregations and annual conferences retain real and personal, tangible and intangible property, and are provided easement in transitioning to new denominations.

11. Urgency and Modulation—With sensitivity to the varying needs across the connection, individual congregations would be granted sufficient time to transition—until the special General Conference held prior to 2024.

12. Moratorium—There shall be an immediate moratorium on charges, complaints, and church trials related to ¶ 161, ¶ 304.3, ¶ 310.2, ¶ 341.6, ¶ 613.19, ¶ 806.9, and ¶ 2702.1(b).

13. Precedence and Effective Date—All provisions of this legislation shall take effect upon the adjournment of General Conference 2020. All provisions of this legislation shall take precedence over any conflicting provisions or paragraphs in the Book of Discipline not in the Constitution.

14. Severability—If one provision of this legislation is found unconstitutional, any other provisions not dependent upon that provision shall be severable and implemented as passed by the General Conference.
Proposed Resolutions

**R9999.**

Petition Number: 20663-CO-R9999-G; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA.

**New Form of Unity #4**

We United Methodists envision a more vibrant and missionally effective Wesleyan movement that no longer spends significant energy debating questions of human sexuality and inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons. We hope to preserve as much unity as possible while blessing new expressions of the Methodist movement.

To achieve this, we envision that the annual conferences of The United Methodist Church will join one of two or three self-governing churches. The United Methodist Church would continue to exist as an umbrella organization to facilitate this new form of unity. These churches will be in full communion and all will be allowed to use the name “United Methodist” but are not required to do so. They may all use the cross-and-flame logo but are not required to do so. The two or three churches will maintain regular contact among their leaders to coordinate shared mission and cooperation. All the churches should share in the governance of the General Council on Finance and Administration, Wespath, The United Methodist Publishing House, and the General Commission on Archives and History with governance strength proportional to lay membership strength.

**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. We need a brief resolution explaining that these new expressions multiply Wesleyan witness and strengthen our movement.
To challenge and support local church and annual conference leaders for their task of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

—Discipleship Ministries mission statement

Introduction

Discipleship Ministries equips world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.

Established by the 1972 General Conference to serve local churches and annual conferences, the General Board of Discipleship, doing business as Discipleship Ministries, consists of twenty-three (23) elected members in accordance with ¶ 1105 of the Book of Discipline and ¶ 705.3b of the General Provisions.

Discipleship Ministries is responsible for the equipping and spiritual care of church leaders. The agency leads the second area of focus, New Places for New People, through New and Revitalized Congregations, in full partnership with other boards and agencies, the Council of Bishops, the network of congregational developers, and the national plans. The agency also has a portion of its work aligned with the first focus area, Developing Principled Christian Leaders.

Rev. Junius B. Dotson was elected General Secretary and started his position in July 2016. Rev. Dotson led the agency through a process to clearly define our strategic direction as a global impact organization that is future-focused and mission driven. The goal was to bring focus to all efforts at Discipleship Ministries, to bring new energy to the workplace, and to solidify its standing as an agency indispensable and essential to the work of the denomination. Discipleship Ministries has engaged in a rigorous process to listen to the mission field, clearly define the agency’s missional priorities, and discern the best way to effectively live into these priorities.

Strategic Priorities and Core Strategies

To carry out Discipleship Ministries’ vision and to fulfill the goals of the focus area it leads, three strategic priorities and core strategies guide the agency’s work:

1. AN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE-MAKING PROCESS in every church.

   • Reorient and revamp our training efforts and redirect resources to emphasize the essential elements (core process) of an effective disciple-making system.
   • Convene strategic conversations with proven and effective practitioners to learn, listen, and drive the creation of new resources and specialized training that responds directly to the needs of our stakeholders.
   • Cultivate and build two-year covenant partnerships with annual conferences to develop a customized, comprehensive plan for training and resourcing its local church leaders.

2. ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE currently outside the church.

   • Champion, resource, and support the denomination-wide effort to re-evangelize the U.S. and reach more people, more young people, and more diverse people by creating new places for new people.
   • Communicate stakeholder stories of impact that provide clear models of effective community engagement (evangelism) that emphasizes relationship building.
   • Develop, invest in, and deploy a comprehensive messaging campaign that emphasizes the “why” of disciple-making and encourages focus, energy, and effort in connecting with people outside the church.
   • Leverage the success lessons of new church community engagement—become brokers of knowledge—to drive innovation in teaching, learning, and contextual best practices.

3. CULTIVATING LOCAL (CONTEXTUAL) RESOURCES around the globe.

   • Convene strategic conversations with central conference leaders for learning and develop resources that are contextually relevant and practically effective for the making of disciples of Jesus Christ.
   • Grow and expand the capacity of the central conference publishing team network for developing...
contextual resources and making them available, affordable, and appropriate to local churches in the conferences in which the teams are located across the connection.

- Bring the voice and contributions of central conference thought leaders to the churchwide conversation about intentional discipleship systems through author support and a central conference publishing channel.

Based on these strategies, Discipleship Ministries:

- **Equips church planters** who are starting new churches through an innovative series of resources, events, and initiatives.
- **Resources entrepreneurial clergy and lay leadership** in existing local congregations to become vital, vibrant, and transformed.
- **Works with young people and their adult workers** to bring them closer to the church and to God.
- **Publishes the world’s most widely read daily devotional** (*The Upper Room* daily devotional guide).
- **Provides essential Christian resources** to congregations in North America, Africa, the Philippines, and Europe.
- **Offers widely acclaimed online worship resources** to millions of United Methodist worship leaders worldwide.
- **Leads, co-leads, and sponsors some of the most mission-critical training events** in the denomination, such as the School of Congregational Development, Youth 2019, and the Children’s Ministry Forum.
- **Provides theological guidance** to the denomination’s Sunday school and other types of official United Methodist curricula.

**Highlights: 2017–2020**

**An Organizational Redesign**

In the fall of 2018, Discipleship Ministries implemented a complete organizational redesign across the agency, with the exception of The Upper Room. It was the culmination of a rigorous two-year process with its board of directors and leadership team to discern the best way to effectively live the three strategic priorities. The adaptive question that guided the reorganization was, “What does it mean to be brokers of knowledge and conveners of strategic conversations?” To be “brokers of knowledge,” Discipleship Ministries recognizes that the agency can no longer be the exclusive provider of content and expertise. As effective brokers, part of the agency’s responsibility is to know where the best resources are, regardless of whether those are found within or beyond Discipleship Ministries. The overall goal is to become the most trusted place to find resources that maintain fidelity to Wesleyan principles and resonate with our strategic priorities.

Being “conveners of strategic conversations” is a value-add to The United Methodist Church. The constant feedback from the field is that Discipleship Ministries has the influence to get the right people in a room for peer learning. These conversations broaden the agency’s ability to be effective brokers of knowledge because they lead to the discovery of new resources and expertise. If this work is done well, the conversations will help the agency be more attuned to the needs of its stakeholders, and the result will be content that is more targeted and has higher impact for users.

The experiment that encompasses the agency’s three priorities and its shift to being brokers of knowledge and conveners of strategic conversations is #SeeAllThePeople. What would an initiative look like that is a mix of original and brokered content, provides a learning platform for the sharing of models from the grassroots, allows for contextual adaptation, and develops based on strategic conversations? It’s called #SeeAllThePeople! The initiative is making a significant impact across the church. It is a learning platform that reaches beyond The United Methodist Church. Discipleship Ministries plans to continue the effort and allow what we are learning to inform the development of related resources and training.

Through #SeeAllThePeople and other initiatives, Discipleship Ministries learned that the design of the organizational structure no longer helped the agency fully reach its goals.
The new organizational design of Discipleship Ministries is more integrated across all areas. It is holistic in that it keeps disciple-making as its goal and keeps the organization focused on what is important for the church. It was also implemented to accomplish more with fewer expected financial resources in the coming quadrennia.

#SeeAllThePeople

The #SeeAllThePeople movement, initiated by Discipleship Ministries in 2017, encourages United Methodists to think less about “fixing” their churches and more about involving people in their communities as part of an intentional discipleship system.

Local congregations are encouraged to develop their own intentional systems for making disciples of Jesus Christ with the help of a variety of resources, including short film conversation starters, an online social hub with numerous social media opportunities, and two foundational resources, Developing a Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations and Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People.

A three-session online video teaching and discussion series, available for free from Discipleship Ministries, is designed to communicate the basic principles behind #SeeAllThePeople and assist local congregations as they develop their discipleship systems.

Across the United Methodist connection, annual conference leaders and clergy have embraced the #SeeAllThePeople initiative to be in relationship with the communities surrounding their churches as a way to fully embody the spirit of the Wesleyan tradition.

Other #SeeAllThePeople training assistance for lay and clergy include:

- Intentional Discipleship Systems Training and resources offered by Discipleship Ministries staff for local and annual conference leaders.
- Lay Servant Advanced Ministries Course utilizing #SeeAllThePeople resources.

New Church Starts

- Churches Planting Churches (CPC)—A partnership with vital churches across the U.S. to teach others the best practices of expanding ministry through healthy multi-site work.
- Multiplying Learning Community (MLC)—An effort seeking to connect, equip, and empower missional strategists to embrace multiplication mind-sets, raise up leaders in their districts to launch new faith communities, and participate in the movement to plant a church a day.
- Wesleyan Church Planting Resources (WCPR)—Assets providing multimedia resources rooted in a Wesleyan ethos for planters and multiplying churches.
- High Impact Residency Program (HIRP)—Residencies in host churches to prepare high potential church planters to plant high-impact faith communities.
- Experimental Research Projects in Church Planting—Activities to help inform future directions for church leadership, including:
  - UMC State of Church Planting in the United States in partnership with Lifeway Research.
  - New People in New Places in partnership with the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.
  - Hispanic Church Planting in partnership with Lifeway Research.
- Sentido, a research project that uses human-centered design (HCD) to understand the needs and values of Latino young adults and to design experiences that support them in their search for meaning, in partnership with the National Plan for Hispanic-Latino Ministries.

Worship Resources

- New Hymnal Project—An effort in collaboration with UMPh.
- 2018 FUSION—A national event focused on resourcing and supporting contemporary worship.
- Sermon Series Resources—Web-based worship resources for the Liturgical Seasons.
- Web Worship Resources—High-valued worship resources offered to thousands of United Methodist and non-United Methodist worship leaders across the globe. Sermon Series for the Liturgical Seasons began in 2017.

Resources for Church Leaders

- Courageous Conversations—A toolbox of resources for churches to engage in structured dialogues for learning about social issues or difficult conversations that arise in a congregational setting.
- Offering Training for Religious Fundraising—Offered through the Lake Institute (Lily Foundation).

Trinity Bible Study—A comprehensive five-year study of the Bible in the Korean language in twelve-week sessions.

Contextual Evangelism—A research project on nontraditional church planting methodologies.

Young People

Quadrennial Global Young People’s Gathering—The fourth quadrennial event was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in July 2018, attended by more than four hundred young people from across the globe.

YOUTH 2019—The national event for United Methodist youth and their adult leaders in July 2019, provided discipleship and leadership development. More than 3,200 people gathered at the Kansas City Convention Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

Holy Land Pilgrimage—Annually for the past four years, one young person from each U.S. jurisdiction and central conference had the opportunity to engage in personal discipleship, vocational discernment, and conflict resolution skills during a ten-to-twelve-day experience in Israel and Palestine.

The Upper Room

The Upper Room continues its task of inviting people to create a daily life with God and helping to deepen the prayer and spiritual life of the church.

Over one million copies of the daily devotional guide are distributed each issue, connecting with approximately 15,000 U.S. congregations and thousands of people through digital subscriptions and a retail newsstand program.

The Upper Room magazine is currently available in over one hundred countries and in thirty-five languages, facilitating the church’s global reach and a worldwide conversation about the importance of daily prayer and devotion. The most recent language edition, El Cenacle in Catalonia, was released January 2019, in five formats: print, app, email, web, and audio.

Exploratory conversations are underway with church leaders in China, Mongolia, and parts of southeast Asia, where Christian communities are growing but The Upper Room is not available.

The Upper Room Center for Christian Spiritual Formation was formed in 2017 to coordinate the ministry’s work, enhance relationships and strengthen the foundational work of prayer and spiritual formation. The center houses established and effective ministries, The Walk to Emmaus, The Academy for Spiritual Formation, and The Living Prayer Center, along with publishing and formational learning initiatives, while allowing capacity for adaptive response to emerging spiritual needs.

The Walk to Emmaus team released new manuals, redesigned its community support structure, launched a community database application, and started new communities in Nigeria, Bolivia, Kenya, and Argentina. In 2018, over one hundred United Methodist churches participated in a pilot test of Discovery Weekend, a promising congregational-based retreat for middle school students that was led by older teens with adult support. Discovery’s first manual, “Discover God’s Love through Church,” offers talk outlines, small group discussion guides, and weekend helps. The Academy for Spiritual Formation filled all of its intensive two-year programs with leaders in deep need of rest and renewal, while expanding its five-day Academies in the U.S. and abroad.

Churchwide worship and study resources, including Soul Rest by the Rev. Junius B. Dotson, provide quality resources for personal spiritual growth and small group discussion. Best-selling studies are available for Lent and Advent.

Prayer Initiatives. The Upper Room partnered with the General Conference and the Council of Bishops on prayer initiatives—daily prayer guides, online prayer community, and on-site prayer rooms—for the special called session in February 2019 that supported the church’s life together, while working through difficult issues.

Note regarding Upper Room funding: A self-funding ministry since 1935, The Upper Room does not receive any UMC apportioned funds. As charged by the Book of Discipline (¶ 1115), The Upper Room embodies an interdenominational and international character to address issues related to the spiritual life. The Upper Room’s impact is measured through mission clarity and financial soundness.

Teaching and Learning Resources

Discipleship Ministries works closely with The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH) to provide local
congregations with resources for Sunday school, small groups, and short-term and long-term programs for all age levels. The Curriculum Resources Committee (CRC), organized and administered by Discipleship Ministries with the support of UMPH, exercises oversight of this work. The CRC reviews plans and proposals with staff and at-large board members; critiques, advises, and acts on the plans for official United Methodist resources; and engages with staff about the curriculum and learning/study needs of the church.

The Future: In Development for 2020 and the Next Quadrennium

Initiatives, events, and major projects are underway for 2020 and the next quadrennium that will serve a changing church in new and creative ways. They include:

- **Hispanic-Latino Church Planting Bootcamp** to equip Hispanic-Latino planters to plant healthy and reproducing new churches and new faith communities within the Hispanic-Latino context.
- **Multicultural Church Planting Bootcamp** to provide the tools, strategies, and a comprehensive plan necessary for planting multicultural, multiethnic new congregations.
- **Certified Lay Ministers with Specialization in Church Planting** who seek to provide additional educational/training requirements specific in church planting.
- **Church Planting in Global Cities** to find, equip, and deploy leaders and churches to plant and re-plant United Methodist missions and ministries in global cities in the U.S. and globally.
- **Fresh Expression to Full Expression** to equip leaders, clergy, and laity to connect with new people in the community toward becoming a full expression within a connectional church.
- **Community Engagement Through Young People’s Ministries** to offer community engagement-oriented training for young people’s ministry leaders and young people in local churches.
- **Wesley Church Planting Resources for 2020**, a leadership approach to starting new ministries, faith communities, congregations, and churches.
- **Africana Hymnal Project II**, a liturgical resource by youth and young people from across North America that names contemporary issues. Millennials have written prayers, calls to worship, litanies, and spoken word for alternative worship styles across cultures.

- **United Methodist Worship Resources Collection (UMWRC)**, which will combine all currently approved UMC official hymnody and liturgies. It will be supplemented with a curated assortment of additional products of high quality, sound theology, and practical use for congregations to enrich, enliven, and expand options for vital UMC worship. The new collection will be available in multiple digital (including downloadable) and print formats.
- **Twenty-First Century Training Event** for Contemporary Worship Leaders.
- **New #SeeAllThePeople resource**, *Forming Disciples through Worship*.
- **Communication Strategy**: Support #SeeAllThePeople by providing People Story—faith sharing of new disciples actively participating in the life and ministry of new faith communities.
- **Church Multiplication Strategy**: Multiplication of Churches Planting Churches and multiplication of Disciples Making Disciples.
- **The Upper Room** is having exploratory conversations with church leaders in China, Mongolia, and in parts of southeast Asia, where Christian communities are growing but *The Upper Room* is not available.
- **Global City Strategy**: Find, equip, and deploy leaders and churches to reclaim UM Vital Presence in Global Cities in the United States and other parts of the world.

Administratively Linked

**Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century**

The Office of African American Ministries provides primary leadership for Discipleship Ministries’ response to the General Conference initiative on Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21). The SBC21 offices are located at Discipleship Ministries. Specific partnerships to support the transformation, renewal, and growth of Black churches provide learning through Congregation Resource Centers and personal coaching to partner congregations, including provisions of needed materials. Both SBC21 and Discipleship Ministries are working extensively in a covenantal spirit to strengthen and enhance the vitality of Black churches and ultimately all United Methodist churches throughout the connection.

**Native American Comprehensive Plan**

The Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) enriches United Methodist Native American ministries by partnering with New Church Starts (Path 1) to:
1. Develop and support existing and new United Methodist Native American congregational ministries and fellowships, enabling them to become a vital part of The United Methodist Church.
2. Develop Native American Leadership for service to The United Methodist Church.
3. Affirm the value and strengthen the role of traditional, cultural, and spiritual contributions of Native American people for the expression of Christian faith and faith development among the membership of The United Methodist Church.

**Note: Discipleship Ministries Response to 2016 General Conference Referrals**

Discipleship Ministries has taken action on all 2016 General Conference legislation items referred to the agency as noted in the minutes of the *Daily Christian Advocate*.

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**Services for the Ordering of Ministry in The UMC**

There are no changes to the Ordinal for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.
(From Executive Director, Rev. Fred Allen)

The purpose of SBC21 is to offer The United Methodist Church the gift of transformational learning models that enable annual conferences or local congregations to partner and share their gifts of vitality with other congregations and other annual conferences that are seeking church growth. To offer effective models to: increase our gifts in mission and ministry; to develop our lay and clergy leaders with new skills; to engage in ministry with the poor and incarcerated; to effectively identify, support, and mentor young adult Black clergy; and to ultimately transform and strengthen The United Methodist Church.

**The National Network of Young Adults**

The Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century (SBC21) National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) initiative provides an essential infrastructure designed to recruit and equip the highest potential of rising young African American/Ethnic clergy and campus leaders to a full complement of experiences, which provides leaders with the skills and competencies needed to transform, revitalize, and establish vital congregations and campus ministries and serve as leaders within The United Methodist Church.

*More than three hundred young adults are currently enrolled in the NNYA and participate in the annual Leading in Transformation Conference (LIT).*

The participants’ attitudes, behaviors, and intentions within the Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century’s National Network of Young Adults are transformative, enthusiastic, and motivated to lead in the church and beyond. Following the Leading in Transformation (LIT) Conference, we have received an outpouring of participation from young adults across the connection. We have expanded partnerships to include annual conferences, local churches, and cross-cultural campuses. Students have engaged via social media, via the app, and via survey expressing genuine affirmation of call and desire to be principled leaders of Jesus Christ.

We are tenaciously and intentionally seeking to help young adults (between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five) answer the question, “Where is God calling me to serve?” Our campus ministers, seasoned clergy coaches, and mentors are partnering with annual conferences, campus ministries, and Wesley foundations to provide student leaders with the support necessary to hear, discern, respond to, and clarify their call. We are excited to walk alongside over fifty young adults as they journey from exploring candidates to certified candidates or lay servant leaders. Currently, over twenty members of our design team have accepted ministerial internships at UMC local churches and/or agencies. Ten seminarians are matriculating at UM-related divinity schools. One recent undergraduate student will begin seminary this fall and five have begun the path toward ordained ministry as certified candidates. There are currently two undergraduate students serving as lay pastors in the South Carolina and Texas annual conferences. We anticipate more students will begin seminary upon their graduations in May. We are grateful and excited about the tremendous growth our leaders are exhibiting on campus, local churches, and in their communities. Truly they are disciples of Jesus Christ, transforming the world.

Currently this project has over thirty college chaplains and campus ministers serving from predominantly Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as mentors. These leaders serve on the campuses of Clark Atlanta University, Wiley College, Rust College, Florida A&M-Wesley Foundation, Grambling State University-Wesley Foundation, Dillard University, Philander Smith College, Orangeburg-Wesley Foundation, Howard University-Wesley Foundation, Tennessee State University-Wesley Foundation, Fisk University-Wesley Foundation, Alcorn State University, Paine College, Gammon Theological Seminary, Tuskegee University-Wesley Foundation, Claflin University, Texas College, North Carolina Central University-Wesley Foundation, North Carolina A&T-Wesley Foundation, Southern University-Wesley Foundation, Bethune Cookman University, Bennett College, Tuskegee University, Alabama State-Wesley Foundation, and Lane College. Our network has expanded to include young lay and clergy leaders from seminary campuses, such as Vanderbilt School of Divinity, Candler School of Theology, Duke Divinity, McCormick Theological, Claremont School of Theology, Wesley Seminary, and the Interdenominational Theological Center. We also welcomed our first cross-cultural delegation to our conference from the University of Memphis-Wesley Foundation. Our partnering annual conferences also include the Central Texas Annual Conference, North Georgia Conference (Black Congregational Development), the Tennessee Conference, the Susquehanna Conference, and North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. There
are several UM agencies represented in our network partnerships, which include Global Ministries, Missions Fellows Program, the Black College Fund, and Project Transformation. After observing the LIT Conference 2018, we have a new partnership forming with the Forum for Theological Exploration. We are excited to welcome and continue partnerships with a host of local churches from across the connection, which include Impact Church, Cascade UMC, St. James UMC, Journey UMC, John Wesley UMC, Gordon Memorial UMC, and Red Oak UMC.

Our ecumenical engagement has increased to include Pan Methodist and cross-denominational partners such as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church’s Connectional Young Adult Ministry, Amazing Grace Community Church, Salem Bible Church, and Friendship Baptist Church.

We are proud to report three hundred participants, five hundred worship experience attendees, ten local church partnerships, thirty campus ministries, five UM agency partners, seven seminaries represented, and representation from over ten annual conferences. Over thirty young adults are currently serving as pastoral interns or student pastors, ten young adults have been certified, six have been commissioned, and two ordained.

The Leading in Transformation (LIT) Conference will convene again in 2019; however, in response to participant surveys we will expand our format into a two-day conference. We anticipate five hundred registrants, thirty-five partners/sponsors, and the closing worship experience will bring together over six hundred young adults. Our facilitators will continue to represent a diverse range of expertise, including theology, business, ministry, academia, and the arts.

Several campus ministries/ministries are planning to re-create the “LIT Experience” during their respective chapel services, challenging students to lead in transformation on their campuses, within their communities, church, and ultimately the world. We have created a free downloadable curriculum and worship guide that will be made available online to assist campus ministers, chaplains, student leaders, and local churches to engage young adults and cultivate a culture of call.

We are grateful to the Young Clergy Initiative and our partners from Higher Education and Ministry for funding this great work, and being a resource as we seek to recruit, train, and support transformational leaders to serve the church and transform the world.

**NNYA (Leadership Development) is the top priority for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.**

We are shifting to a more programmatic and systematic structure because the network continues to grow and expand so rapidly. As executive director, I have observed the following needs: 1) develop more annual conference-level engagement to fulfill the large requests for assistance; 2) more sustainable and consistent income streams; 3) begin strategic plan to hire at least two other staff persons (administrative assistant and logistical person); as well as 4) diversify our network to include cross-cultural/racial persons.

The greatest success of our program is that it reflects the fundamental principles of Jesus’ ministry. Most of our programming is designed to be relational, we focus intentionally on discipleship/mentorship, and we are purposeful about developing principled and transformative leaders. For the past two years we have established relationships through national events, local campus gatherings, discernment groups, and other national initiatives. This has required tremendous hours of travel. Currently, there is only one full-time staff dedicated to this program. We have one part-time social media intern, and a seasonal event manager who assist only during the LIT planning stages. Therefore, as the travel and demand for our presence has increased, the program coordinator is often overly stressed and pressed and thus, we are having to be creative/innovative in order to keep up with administrative and logistical aspects of programming.

I am currently working alongside a coach and mentor to develop a detailed proposal and strategic plan to assure we meet the four SMART goals by 2020.

Lastly, I have observed that all annual conferences and local congregations are seeking strategies for young adult engagement and discernment. Our current success and momentum is not only inspiring, but it is sparking the interest of local churches and conferences who would like to learn and replicate our model. Therefore, we are developing new partnerships and immersing in new contexts to serve not only predominantly African American communities, but cross-cultural and cross-racial contexts as well. We are committed to providing all young adults with the opportunity to learn, grow, share, and lead in transformation.

### National Prison Ministry & Social Justice Initiative

The mission of the SBC21 Prison & Social Justice Initiative is to equip, engage, and inspire United Methodist annual conferences and local congregations to act now to end mass incarceration.

With collaborative resources, cutting-edge training and development, and through one-on-one consulting, we equip clergy and lay with best practices, allowing them to
Disciple persons impacted by mass incarceration experience transformation.

**Outcomes**

The SBC21 National Prison & Social Justice Ministry believes that by equipping local congregations with the tools to #SeeAllThePeople, an expected outcome could be discipleship growth with the existing congregation and persons impacted by incarceration. We teach leaders that local, county jails, and state and federal prisons represent a large mission field and therefore an opportunity, especially for returning citizens and persons impacted by mass incarceration.

**How do we fulfill our mission?**

The National Prison & Social Justice Ministry program is laser focused on its purpose. Fulfilling our mission is simple—by seeing all the people God has called us to reach. We have created intentional partnerships that have allowed our infrastructure in the national office to strengthen and resource African American congregations around the area of ministry to the poor.

**Some Facts**

- Did you know that more than six hundred thousand people are released from prison annually?
- Did you know that more than eleven million people cycle through jails each year?

**Some SBC21 Facts**

- SBC21 has provided training on the ABCs of Starting a Prison Ministry to more than twenty-five states.
- SBC21 has provided training on Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline to almost four hundred teachers and educators in the Dallas Independent School District as well as Metro Nashville Public Schools.

**Our Work and Impact**

- National Prison Ministry has directly resourced more than twenty states, about a half-dozen United Methodist annual conferences.
- Created more than 150 ecumenical partnerships.
- Developed intentional inter-agency partnerships with UMW, UMM, Church and Society, The Upper Room, Discipleship Ministries, United Methodist Communications, GBHEM, Global Ministries, and more.
- Directly reached more than ten thousand people since the 2013 National Prison Summit in 2018 through a myriad of engagement efforts, including the National Prison Summit, RELEASED town hall meeting, Mass Incarceration Training for North/South Carolina Annual Conference Retreat, Cal-Pac Mass Incarceration Town Hall Meeting, Expungement Clinics in Compton, California, and Nashville, Tennessee.
- Provided ten focus groups of clergy for a research project with UM Communications in order to develop resources for local churches.
- Beginning phases of a partnership with The Upper Room to teach writing workshops to UM Chaplains, who in turn will teach inmates. The goal is to solicit stories of impact to compile into an SBC21 Resource for churches—encouraging them to activate prison ministries in their congregations.

**Prison Summit Network**

SBC21 has developed national partnerships with entities doing exceptional work in the area of prison, juvenile, and correctional ministries. Our partner networks are also inclusive of UM general agencies, annual conferences and the local church, school districts, and other entities. Our network includes the following partners:

Prison Fellowship, Dallas ISD  
Children’s Defense Fund, Metro Nashville Public Schools  
Global Ministries, Hamilton Park UMC  
Discipleship Ministries, Crossroads UMC, Compton, California  
The Upper Room, Saint Mark UMC, Wichita  
United Methodist Communications, Heart of Christ Church, Wichita  
Church & Society, St. Johns Downtown, Houston  
Tennessee Prison Outreach Ministry, Concord Church  
United Methodist Women, Destiny Point  
Men of Valor, Cathedral of Praise  
Gordon Memorial UMC, Dallas County Juvenile Detention Center  
Preston Crest Church of Christ, St. Luke “Community” UMC  
Kairos, ExodusFoundation.org  
AZZ Ministries, Inc., West Angeles COGIC  
All In Program, West Ohio Conference, And more...
Ministry Development

The SBC21 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration is for motivated clergy leaders and team members from various churches who have expressed an interest in ministry development around prison or restorative justice ministries at their church. These leaders attend the National Prison Summits, receive training, and are coached to develop a ministry plan based on their community context.

SBC21, in partnership with our ministry partners at Exodus Foundation.org, has trained and equipped UMC teams from 2017-2018 at:

- St. Johns Downtown in Houston
- Crossroads UMC in Compton, California
- Saint Mark UMC in Wichita
- Hamilton Park UMC, Dallas
- St. Luke “Community” UMC, Dallas
- St. Paul UMC, Dallas
- Saint Mark UMC in South Carolina

The training supports ministry development around:

Education & Training—Focusing on providing information and training to churches on basic jail/prison facts and awareness and to offer different ways they can minister to incarcerated persons.

Resourcing—Providing practical assistance for successful collaboration between partners, ongoing ministries with contact people, various agencies/transitional housing, and family support ministries.

Advocacy—Providing practical and technical resources needed to advocate for the rights of the incarcerated and persons impacted.

Measure of Effectiveness

Since we have just entered our first year, we will use the 2018 National Prison Summit and the work being done in 2018 with the various annual conferences and local congregations to implement the effectiveness measurement tool created by our partners with ExodusFoundation.org.

ExodusFoundation.org has developed an evaluation tool with metrics. This tool’s focus is to qualitatively define and measure our successes, identify weaknesses, and improve the provision of services to congregations and communities as needed. The tool also requires appropriate reports as needed for each project.

Ministry Highlights

Collaborative Coaching & Training Network

SBC21 Coaching and Training initiative is an inspirational relationship that is collaborative in nature and fosters teamwork in congregational settings. The result of this relationship is the development of transformational leadership, strategic planning, and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Numbers and Outcomes

Annual Conferences

- 21-25 Coaches deployed to more than 52 congregations impacting 10,400 clergy and lay membership of UMC, impacting rural and urban communities.
- Design Team Leadership (4x16). Rio (3yrs.), North Carolina, Kentucky, Holston.
- 52 identified leaders within 4 conferences received coaching, training, resources, strategic planning for one-three years, impacting 120 churches in urban and rural congregations.
- 8 Design Team Coaches trained and deployed to work with leadership design teams within annual conferences, impacting over 24 churches and communities.
- Cabinet Meetings. Connected with 18 cabinets in annual conferences for relevant discussions regarding the Black Church, SBC21 services, and issues brought forth by the cabinet for consultation.

13 Large SBC21 Training Events—4,000 leaders impacted

(3) SC - (2) NC - (4) Rio - (4) South Carolina/North Carolina/Western North Carolina Conferences Pastor’s Retreat

SBC21 connects with annual conferences, providing local and regional training events offering coaching, custom designed training, and resources to clergy and lay leadership.

Resources Distribution

Over 1,000 copies of Discipleship Ministries resources distributed to local churches and promoted through SBC21 training and/or coaching services.

Collaborative Coaching and Training Network

34 SBC21 coaches trained annually to provide hundreds of site visits and custom training and coaching to congregations within 10 annual conferences.
13 Custom-designed large training events for local churches, clergy and lay leadership impacting over 360 congregations.

6 BMCR training and informative presentations impacting leadership, more than 1,800 leaders within all jurisdictions of The UMC. These services are provided to enhance skills development in Worship Planning and Leading, Christian Education, Missions and Outreach, Ministry Development, Discipleship Pathways, creating a Culture of Call and Exploration, raising awareness and knowledge of ways technology can enhance ministry.

20 custom-designed Listening Sessions, focus Groups, Think Tanks, Facilitation and Field Trips

Providing opportunity for clergy and lay teams to experience new methods and best practices for ministry; strategic planning, space for congregational healing and inspiration; spark innovation and creativity, improve congregational communication.
Native American Comprehensive Plan
Quadrennial Plan 2021-2024

Mission, Purpose, and Description

The Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) is one of the six racial/ethnic plans of The United Methodist Church. The mission of NACP is to make Native American disciples of Jesus Christ, to work toward the positive transformation of the world with emphasis on the Native American/Indigenous Nations of the United States and relating to the broader Indigenous Peoples communities of the world, and to offer the gifts of Native Americans to the global United Methodist Church, to the ecumenical community, and to other Native American entities. The purpose of NACP is to be a mechanism through which the Native American constituency of The United Methodist Church can access culturally relevant resources and training for respective leaders interacting within the context of Native American ministries. The NACP is to serve as a resourcing entity for efforts addressing the work of the denomination among Native American people. In addition, the NACP will relate to relative ecumenical communities of Native American constituents as it prepares annual conferences, general agencies, and respective denominations on developing healthy and life-giving relationships with Indigenous communities within Christianity and beyond. The Native American Comprehensive Plan will assist in developing culturally appropriate models of Christian discipleship in ways that embrace the cultural diversity possessed by Indigenous Peoples. It will serve as a crossroads where Native Americans and non-Native American disciples may find the Creator’s gifts in one another but also will serve as a place for Native American Christians and non-Christians to explore contemporary understandings of spirituality as each community recovers from centuries of missionary endeavors.

The work of the NACP is carried out through two staff positions: the executive director and administrative assistant. NACP Task Force members guide the work of the Plan and also assist in carrying out the mission of NACP. The Native American Comprehensive Plan Task Force is made up of the following representatives:

- One bishop assigned by the Council of Bishops.
- Two Native American representatives from each of the five U.S. jurisdictions, chosen by each College of Bishops.
- Two Native American representatives from the Native American International Caucus.
- Two Native American representatives from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.
- One Native American representative from the Alaska Conference.
- One Native American youth.
- One Native American young adult.
- One representative from each of the general boards and agencies attend Task Force meetings as non-voting liaisons.

Within the framework of honoring both Native American culture, identity, and cosmology and the Christian faith heritage, the following are core values for NACP:

- Living out of both our Native American and Christian identities.
- Cooperation, collaboration, and partnership with conferences, general agencies, and other UM structures, and with Native American Tribal Nations, government and secular organizations, and others serving the Native American/Indigenous communities.
- Respect for the peoples we have been sent to serve.
- Truth-telling, even when that truth is difficult to hear.
- Integrity in our programmatic and fiscal endeavors.
- Honesty in our relationships.

Native American Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

NACP seeks to be an entity of the church, that serves as a means of connection between two specific populations of persons in the U.S. The first is the Native American Comprehensive Plan, which seeks to connect the church with the Native American constituency of The UMC and connect the church to the broader Native American communities of the United States in general. Second, it is hoped that the NACP can connect the church to persons of the Native American constituency who are suffering from situations of poverty and its many forms. The Native American/Indigenous community we serve have unique needs embedded within their racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and historical identities. Examples of these unique needs include but are not limited to the vast epistemological and cosmological views of many Native American tribal communities that include a continued emphasis on oral traditions and forms of communication that possess an equal amount of wisdom and spiritual guidance as many publications in society today.
Discipleship

Many cultures continue to value face-to-face interactions as primary forms of consultation and often experience a lack of resources to engage in information technology, such as internet and remote access, that would allow the exchange of information that can lead to community/church development and sharing of cultural exchanges. In addition, many Native American tribal communities have been the recipient of numerous missionary endeavors of the Christian church and are searching for accountability from faith communities as they each are recovering from historical and intergenerational trauma and the long-lasting impact of displacement. In order to reach beyond the boundaries of the broader culture of The UMC in the United States, offer Christ in a meaningful way to Native Americans, and receive the amazing, God-given gifts that Native peoples have to offer, a special means is needed. The Native American Comprehensive Plan strives to serve as this means of ministry for The UMC.

The following narrative describes NACP’s objectives and the outcomes/impacts for annual conferences and local churches as they seek to live out their ministries in the four areas of focus and within disciplinary mandates.

**Leadership Development**

1. The first objective is the provision of consultant/support services to persons in leadership positions (both clergy and lay) within Native American churches, fellowships, ministries, faith communities, and in society in general in order to develop, improve, and enhance leadership skills of those Native American persons working in local communities. This objective is essential because of the unique needs and cultural context of Native American churches. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and enactment of leadership: provision of information/training resources and referrals, and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others in leadership. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/on-site and by referral to appropriate partnering agencies and/or denominations. Persons in leadership will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner as leaders within their Native American churches, The UMC, and in society.

2. The sponsorship of a Leadership Training Conference for clergy and lay leadership for Native American churches, fellowships, ministries, and community partners. Leadership skills will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened. Also, the relationship between the Native American constituency within The UMC and with those beyond the Christian faith will also be strengthened.

3. The third objective is sponsorship of a Native American Lay Servant School for Native laypersons. Participants will successfully complete a lay servant/lay speaking course and will follow through with their local church and conference to become certified lay servants/lay speakers; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened via the ministries of these persons called forth by the Creator. Participants will examine various forms of ministry that can potentially address the numerous concerns that manifest in working with Native American and Indigenous Peoples.

4. Next is the sponsorship of a training event for Native American adult workers with children and youth. Training these Native American clergy, laypersons, and community partners will not only impact their abilities as leaders, but will allow their talents to be shared with the children and youth they will mentor. This objective empowers and enables adults and young persons in the local church to serve as more effective leaders. Children and the protection of their place in Indigenous society is at the heart of many Native American/Indigenous cosmologies. A healthy young people’s program is essential to the work of The UMC amongst communities in the U.S. and across the world. This training will assist the participants in understanding the local cosmologies of the tribal communities, the social-economic challenges they face and the need to continue to work with community partners in providing safe sanctuaries and environments for the most innocent of our world.

5. The fifth objective that contributes to leadership development is the sponsorship of a Native American clergywomen’s gathering. Native American clergy, particularly clergywomen, serve in far-
flung appointments across the U.S. It is a rare occurrence for these clergy sisters to have the opportunity to gather together, learn, share, and experience their calling within the context of their Native identity. This objective strengthens Native American clergywomen to serve as effective leaders and therefore strengthens their churches and appointments. In societies across the world, there is not a community more marginalized than that of the Indigenous woman. It is hoped that this gathering will allow the venue for the Native American Clergywomen to have an opportunity to speak freely about challenges that exist in serving the church as well as strategies to remedy those challenges.

6. In addition to the clergywoman’s gathering, it is hoped that a broader summit on the role of Native American/Indigenous women in our society will be held. Building on the conversations found within the Native American clergywomen’s gathering it is hoped that a gathering celebrating the role of Indigenous women and their contributions to societal and environmental well-being can be convened. In this venue it will also discuss and examine the conditions of Indigenous women today as well as strategies to remedy these challenges.

7. A Native American Men’s project will be convened to assist in the discipleship development and spirituality development of today’s Indigenous male population. As a result of the evaluation process conducted in 2014 by the Connecational Table, the recommendation was made that the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) engage with the national racial/ethnic plans and general agencies in a coordinated effort. While the details of this objective have not yet been decided, it will be a unique and first-time partnership aimed at bringing forth new Native American men into leadership and enhancing the leadership skills of current Native American male leaders.

8. A Native American Clergy Mentorship program will be developed between Native American clergy and those beginning in ministry within The UMC. This training will be provided for mentors who possess the experience, education, and literacy to provide guidance to those entering into ministry with Native American people. Persons from throughout the U.S. will be recruited as potential mentors as well as persons who may wish to be mentees. A gathering for the group will be planned as well as respective curricula developed in hopes that it will assist in the long-term support for Native American leaders who may be isolated in local ministry settings.

**Church Growth**

1. The first objective is the provision of consultation/support services to annual conferences and persons engaged with new and prospective church plants, new fellowships, new ministries, and existing churches/ministries in need of revitalization. NACP will partner with annual conferences/CONAMs (Committees on Native American Ministries) in efforts to establish new Native American fellowships/churches/ministries and to revitalize existing Native churches/ministries.

2. The second objective is the sponsoring of a School of Discipleship and Evangelism for Native American clergy and laity. Participants’ skills will be enhanced and information imparted related to Native American discipleship and evangelism; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened.

3. The next objective for NACP is sponsorship of a Native American New Church Starts Summit for clergy and lay leadership from new church starts, fellowships, and ministries in the Native American community, and representatives from annual conferences desiring to begin new Native American churches/ministries. Due to unique cultural and historical factors, starting new Native American churches, fellowships, and ministries requires specialized skills, education, and training. Skills related to growing new Native American churches will be developed and enhanced for the majority of participants who will represent a cross section of Native churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and new Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be started and strengthened.

4. A new resource will be developed that will assist Committees on Native American Ministries conduct ministry with The UMC and with the unique cultures of Native American tribal communities. This objective will impact the confidence and skill of CONAMs and give them the necessary support and connection to succeed in ministry.
5. The fifth objective is the hosting of regular webinars on Native American Spirituality and Social Justice among Native American and Indigenous Peoples communities. It is hoped that these digital gatherings will be utilized by leaders in The UMC but also community members who are stakeholders in the community. Recent movements such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), Loss of Indigenous Languages, and Indigenous Food Sovereignty will be examined. These opportunities will also be utilized as continuing education opportunities for those searching for opportunities.

6. An emphasis will be placed on working with the broader ecumenical community and its respective Indigenous People’s gathering, namely the World Council of Churches and its Indigenous People’s Reference Group. By connecting with the greater Indigenous community worldwide, deeper connection to Indigenous identity can be cultivated and common relationships with the worldwide community can be created.

7. An emphasis on theological education will be developed in hopes of providing a venue for Native American clergy and laity or those engaging with Native American communities the opportunity to examine understandings of theology, ecclesiology, and cosmologies of Indigenous People. In addition, these discussions will examine healthy biblical hermeneutics that can assist in creating healthy relationships with contemporary Native American and Indigenous People.

Ministry with the poor is the third area of focus. Due to extensive poverty impacting Native Americans, all the NACP goals and objectives are considered to be ministry with the poor.

Global Health

NACP will sponsor a Native American Health Summit that shall educate and empower Native American local churches to engage in preventive and/or rehabilitative health activities within their local community. Native Americans in the U.S. are widely recognized to be at risk in many major health categories such as substance abuse/dependence, suicide (especially youth and young adults), domestic violence, diabetes, and many others. Education and information will be imparted related to these health issues and ways to positively impact them; representatives from local churches will take the information and materials back to share with their churches in order that a plan for sharing this information within their communities can be developed and carried out; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; and networks of communication and support will be established/enhanced.

Disciplinary Mandates

1. In this objective, NACP will provide consultation and support services to annual conferences in the development and effective use of annual conference committees on Native American Ministries (CONAM); and to CONAMs in the effective implementation of ¶ 654 of the Book of Discipline (describes ministries of CONAM). This objective is essential because CONAM is the singular structure within annual conferences, as defined by the Book of Discipline, that deals exclusively with Native American churches and ministries. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and ministry of CONAM, including provision of information/training resources and referrals; and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others engaged in CONAM ministry. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/onsite. Persons from annual conferences/CONAMs will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner in fulfilling the disciplinary mandate.

2. The final objective is sponsorship of a CONAM Training Conference. NACP will achieve this objective by holding this event early in the first year of the new quadrennium when most CONAMs have new membership appointed to their committees. The knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve on a conference CONAM will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American nations; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American ministries through the annual conference will be strengthened.

The Native American Comprehensive Plan of The United Methodist Church will work closely with all annual conferences, committees on Native American Ministries, and general agencies to fulfill these goals. The NACP is thankful for the continued presence of The UMC amongst the Indigenous Peoples of the United States and looks forward to the ministry of 2021-2024 with great excitement.
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶268.
Petition Number: 20118-DI-¶268-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

**Make National Plan Less U.S. Centric**

Amend ¶ 268 as follows:

3c) completed a track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate’s assignment as defined by the General Board of Discipleship, or the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry in collaboration with the General Board of Discipleship, and the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries or equivalent structure;

3e) had all requirements for certification, including appropriate screening and assessment as defined by the annual conference, reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be certified lay ministers and to make recommendation for certification (see ¶ 666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the candidate, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final certification by that committee.

4e) had all requirements for recertification reviewed by the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries, or equivalent structure, for referral to the district committee on ordained ministry for examination of persons who have applied in writing to be renewed as certified lay ministers and to make recommendations for recertification (see ¶ 666.11). After the district committee on ordained ministry interviews the certified lay minister, the district committee on ordained ministry will make a recommendation to the conference committee on Lay Servant Ministries for final recertification by that committee.

¶269.
Petition Number: 20119-DI-¶269-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

**Make National Plan Less US Centric**

Amend ¶ 269 as follows:

Lay missioners are committed laypersons, mostly volunteers, who are willing to be trained and to work together as a ministry team with their pastor-mentor, in order to develop and lead faith communities, establish community ministries, develop church school extension programs, and engage in congregational development with and into the local community. Lay missioners are formed according to, and follow the guidelines established by, the National Committee of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry, working in conjunction with the annual conference. They are certified jointly by their annual conference and the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The ministry team is supported by and accountable to the local congregation, district or annual conference entity that assigns it to its mission. The concept of the lay missioner is based theologically on the ministry of the laity, in order to complement the work of the pastor. A certified lay missioner shall be equivalent to a certified lay servant in the processes of certification as a lay minister (¶ 268.3-6), and the Module I-Module II formational sequence and Module IIIs for continuing education of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry shall be equivalent to the track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate’s assignment, and the advanced course or approved continuing education events described therein. The modular formational sequence and continuing education requirements of the Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry for lay missioners shall be equivalent to the track of study for certified lay ministers relevant to the candidate’s assignment, and the advanced course or approved continuing education events described therein.

¶533.
Petition Number: 20120-DI-¶533-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

**Update Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries to Reflect Proposed Changes to Division on Ministries with Young People**

Amend ¶ 533 as follows:

¶ 533. Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries—

1. Jurisdictions shall engage youth, young adults, and adults who work with them in creative partnership to:

   a) Network youth, young adults and young people’s ministries throughout the region,

   b) Support young people’s ministries in the annual conferences, and

   c) Provide a process by which representatives-nominees are chosen and sent to the Global Young People’s Convocation and the Division on
Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network.

2. Jurisdictions are encouraged to organize their Young People’s Ministries in creative ways that work best for their context. The jurisdictional young people’s ministries coordinator shall help design, maintain, and revise any processes to accomplish this work. In any process or coordinating group for Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries, the following representation is encouraged:

a) Participants from each conference in the jurisdiction
b) Racial/ethnic representation that reflects the demographic make-up of the jurisdiction
c) Participants who bring a variety of theological and cultural perspectives
d) Youth and young adults who may or may not also be serving on Conference Councils of Youth/Young Adult Ministry
e) Adult workers who may or may not also be conference youth/young adult staff or similar designee

3. There shall be a jurisdictional young people’s ministry coordinator who shall be accountable to the jurisdictional council on ministries or equivalent structure and the jurisdictional young people’s ministries coordinating team. This coordinator may or may not be the same person as the adult representative nominee to the Division on Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network.

4. Responsibility to Choose Representatives—Nominees to the Division on Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network—Using a process appropriate to each jurisdiction’s context, the Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries shall:

a) Choose one youth, one young adult, and one adult worker member to apply to serve on the Division on Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network of the General Board of Discipleship for a four-year term. Youth chosen nominated to serve on the apply to Division on Ministries With Young People shall be age sixteen (16) or younger at the time of appointment nomination. Young adults nominated to apply shall be age thirty (30) or younger at the time of nomination.

b) Nominations shall come from annual conference councils on youth ministry or equivalent structure, local churches, districts, conference youth coordinators, or other interested clergy or laity.

c) The Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries should ensure that either the youth or young adult, or adult worker nominated representative (who is elected in the jurisdictional election) will be a racial/ethnic young person.

d) As far as possible, members of nominees to the Division on Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network from each jurisdiction shall be from two different more than one annual conferences in that jurisdiction.

5. Responsibility to Choose Representatives to Attend the Global Young People’s Convocation—In the year prior to the Global Young People’s Convocation, Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries shall choose five youth and one adult to serve as voting delegates to the Global Young People’s Convocation.

6. Other suggested responsibilities for the Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministries:

a) Initiate and support jurisdictional events (camps, conferences, workshops, and so forth).

b) Recommend priorities, concerns, and/or policies to the Division on Ministries With Young People—Young People’s Connectional Network.

c) Promote the establishment and awareness of the needs, concerns, issues, and so forth, of racial/ethnic persons through caucuses, camps, and consultations, and so forth.

d) Promote the spiritual growth of participants in the jurisdictional young people’s ministry events and activities.

e) Promote an evangelistic outreach with young people and through young people by providing educational opportunities and resources that increase their awareness, exposure, and engagement in the areas of mission, social justice, discipleship, leadership development, and spiritual formation as they relate back to their annual conference and local church.

f) Provide training and supportive experiences for conference young people’s ministries personnel.

g) Enable communication between general and conference levels of young people’s ministries.

¶649.2.

Petition Number: 20121-DI-¶649.2-G; Lopez, Joseph—Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 649.2:

2. Membership—No more than one-third of the membership of the council shall be adults, one of whom may be the conference lay leader or his or her representative. It is strongly recommended that the membership of the council include an equal number of persons with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, person with disabilities, economic condition, and social status as defined by the annual conference or episcopal area. Where ethnic or language conferences overlap nonethnic conferences, provision shall be made for the inclusion of mem-
bers of the ethnic or language conferences and vice versa. Those serving on the conference council on youth ministry or equivalent structure shall be baptized or professing members of The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:
This petition is 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

¶650.2.

Petition Number: 20122-DI-¶650.2-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 650.2:
2. Membership—The membership of the council shall be young adults (as defined by annual conference or episcopal area). It is recommended there be one young adult elected by each district of the conference. There may also be members at large nominated by the conference nominating committee. It is strongly recommended that the membership of the council include an equal number of persons with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, economic condition, and social status as defined by annual conference or episcopal area, as well as persons of both genders to ensure inclusiveness. Those serving on the conference council on youth-adult ministry shall be members of The United Methodist Church. At least one-half of the members shall be laypersons who are professing members of The United Methodist Church. Members should represent the diversity of young adults in the general population, including college students, working persons, single, and married.

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

¶651.2.

Petition Number: 20123-DI-¶651.2-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 651.2:
2. Membership—The majority of the membership of the council should be older adults. It may also include persons (regardless of age) who, because of their specialized interests, education, training, and experience, have developed a passion for ministry with older adults. Those serving on the conference council on older-adult ministries shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church and shall include both laypersons and clergy. There may also be members-at-large, nominated by the conference nominating committee and elected by the annual conference, to achieve racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic condition, and geographic inclusiveness and to assure participation by people with specialized interests, education, training, and experiences. The conference lay leader (or designee), the conference coordinator of older-adult ministries (if any), and a cabinet representative shall serve ex officio with vote. Members should represent the diversity of older adults in the general population, including retired persons, working persons, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic illnesses, single persons, widowed persons, married persons, persons living in a variety of residential settings, and persons with a wide variety of family situations.

Rationale:
This petition is 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

¶672.2.

Petition Number: 20124-DI-¶672.2-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 672.2:
2. Membership—Each district may determine the membership and the method of election of its district council on youth ministry in consultation with the conference council on youth ministry. It is recommended that the membership include the following: a) no more than one-third of the membership shall be adults; b) an equal number of persons with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, economic condition, and social status as defined by the annual conference or episcopal area; c) the district youth coordinator,
to be a member by virtue of his or her office; and d) representa-
tives on the conference council on youth ministry.

Rationale:
This petition is 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

¶1101.
Petition Number: 20125-DI-¶1101-G; Webb, Mark - Liv-
erpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Update Language for General Board
of Discipleship

Amend ¶ 1101 as follows:

¶1101. Purpose—1. There shall be a General Board
of Discipleship, the purpose of which is found within the
expression of the total mission of the Church. Its prima-
ry purpose shall be to assist annual conferences, districts,
and local churches of all membership sizes to make disci-
ples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in
their efforts to win persons to Jesus Christ as his disciples
and to help these persons to grow in their understanding
of God that they may respond in faith and love, to the end
that they may know who they are and what their human
situation means, increasingly identifying themselves as
children of God and members of the Christian commu-
ity, to live in the Spirit of God in every relationship, to ful-
fill their common discipleship in the world, and to abide
in the Christian hope.

2. The board shall use its resources to enhance the
meaning of membership as defined in ¶¶ 216-220, which
emphasizes the importance of the identification of church
membership with discipleship to Jesus Christ. The board
shall seek to enable congregations to carry out their pri-
mary task and shall provide resources that support growth
in Christian discipleship. In doing its work, the board shall
listen to the needs and requests of the church, conduct re-
search, design and produce resources, offer training, and
deliver resources. All of this is to support congregations
in their primary task of reaching out and receiving all who
will respond, encouraging people in their relationship
with God and inviting them to commitment to God’s love
made known in Jesus Christ, providing opportunities for
them to be nurtured and formed in the Christian faith, and
supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of
the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples. The board, through all
activities, shall lead and assist congregations in becoming
inclusive communities of growing Christians, celebrating
and communicating to persons of every age, racial and
ethnic background, and social condition the redeeming
and reconciling love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

3. Members of the Board of Directors of the General
Board of Discipleship shall assume fiduciary, strategic,
and generative governing functions. Fiduciary respon-
sibilities include ensuring financial, legal, and ethical
stewardship of tangible assets; accountability for stated
performance standards; ensuring the annual evaluation
of the general secretary; and providing counsel to the gener-
al secretary regarding evaluation and deployment of staff.
Strategic responsibilities include ensuring that priorities,
goals, achievement markers, and agency resources are
aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the agency.
Generative responsibilities include long-range analysis
and planning in accordance with agency mission, vision,
and values; setting direction and priorities for the agency;
and exploring options in order to amend priorities when
needed.

4. Members of the Board of Directors of the General
Board of Discipleship are to be dedicated Christian lead-
ers who have a heart for the local church and a passion
for making disciples. They must be willing to invest time
and skills to support the work of the board, including in-
terpreting and articulating the GBOD strategy in a variety
of contexts. They must engage in regular and intentional
conversation with networks and individuals throughout
the church to ensure that the wide diversity of people and
perspectives present in The United Methodist Church are
considered as the board carries out its responsibilities.
They must be committed to supporting and implementing
the mandates and foci of the general church as well as the
General Board of Discipleship.

¶1102.
Petition Number: 20126-DI-¶1102; Webb, Mark - Liver-
erpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Eliminate Redundancy in 1102

Amend ¶ 1102 as follows:

¶1102. Responsibilities—All the responsibilities as-
signed to the units within the board shall be considered to
be the responsibilities of the board. In addition to these,
the board shall have authority to:

1. Provide for special publications directed toward
the local church nurture, outreach, witness ministries,
age-level and family ministries, ministry group represen-
tatives, the ministry group chairpersons, the pastor, and
the other local church officers for whom the board has primary responsibility.

2. Manage and produce *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide and a wide range of other resources to help people grow in their relationship with God.

3. Facilitate arenas that broker knowledge, convene strategic conversations, provide for contextualized ministries, and build upon Wesleyan theology and traditions for local church and annual conference clergy and lay leadership in the

3. Provide systems of resources and support to users of resources that will assist people in the historic disciplines of the church, i.e., Christian education, evangelism, lay ministries, spiritual growth, stewardship, and worship. The board’s response will address faith formation and discipleship systems for: These resources will address ministry concerns across a) all ages and stages of life, including support for comprehensive, specific ministries with children, youth, and adults including resources that ensure their safety and care; ages and family groupings and across programmatic and administrative functions of the congregation in order to improve ministry and the quality of Christian leadership for the future ministry of the Church.4. Develop and provide resources, training, and consultation for pastors of congregations. These resources will focus on equipping pastors for their spiritual and visioning b) clergy and lay leadership roles with their in congregations; and their role as partners with the laity.

5. Develop and provide resources, training, and consultation for pastors and congregational leaders as they enhance and evaluate the c) ministries of the laity and initiate new forms of ministry that nurture faith, build Christian community, and equip people for ministry in daily life.

6. Provide resources and training that will assist annual conference leaders in building, improving, and sustaining systems that develop spiritual leaders for congregations:

7. Provide resources and training that will assist leaders in planning and administering comprehensive children, youth, young adult, adult, and older adult ministries that encourage lifelong learning and growth in faith, that strengthen understanding of God and relationship with God and other people, and that lead to spiritual maturity in faith and in practice.

8. d) Provide representation in cooperation with ecumenical and interdenominational partners agencies as they relate to the work of the board;

9. e) Respond to requests and needs for mutual ministries throughout the world, in consultation with annual conferences and appropriate agencies;

10. Engage in needed research, experimentation, innovation, and the testing and evaluation of programs, resources, and methods to discover more effective ways to help persons achieve the purpose set forth in ¶ 1101. This responsibility will include authority for experimentation and research in all areas of ministry assigned to the General Board of Discipleship and will encourage cooperation with other agencies in the conduct of such research and experimentation. This research and experimentation may be assigned to appropriate units within the board:

4. Ensure that ethnic local church concerns shall be an integral part of the total life of the board, providing guidance, resourcing, and training as appropriate so that these concerns are incorporated in all areas of discipleship in the local church.

¶1102.

Petition Number: 20127-DI-¶1102-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: Support for Intersectional Justice Work—GBOD

Add new ¶ 1102.12:

12. 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.

¶1106.4.

Petition Number: 20128-DI-¶1106.4-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Broaden the Idea of Christian Education

Amend ¶ 1106.4 as follows:

4. In the discharge of its responsibility for Christian education in The United Methodist Church, the board may establish and provide for participation by church school groups, local churches in a fund (or funds) for missions and Christian education in the United States and overseas.
Plans for the allocation of, administration of, and education for this fund(s) shall be developed cooperatively by such means as the board shall determine in consultation with the General Board of Global Ministries.

¶1108.

Petition Number: 20129-DI-¶1108-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Broaden the Idea of Faith Formation

Amend ¶ 1108 as follows:

¶ 1108. Faith Formation, Intentional Discipleship and Christian Education—1. The board shall have general oversight of the educational interests of the church, which includes small group and intentional discipleship ministries, as directed by the General Conference. The board shall be responsible for the development of a clear statement of the biblical and theological foundations of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church and the mission of the board. The board shall devote itself to strengthening and extending the teaching ministry of the church through research; testing new approaches, methods, and resources; evaluation; and consultation.

2. Through the ministry of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries, United Methodist congregations shall reach out to people of all ages as they are, encourage them to commit themselves to Christ and membership in his church, provide opportunities for them to grow in faith and to connect that faith with their daily lives, and equip them to live as God’s people in the world. Opportunities for Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries shall include formational educational aspects of all the general areas and interests of the denomination, such as evangelism, stewardship, missions, Christian social action, and Bible instruction. The ministry of Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries shall be developed as a comprehensive, unified, and coordinated program for children, youth, adults, and families in local churches. It shall be promoted and administered by the board in cooperation with those agencies responsible for Christian education, small group and intentional discipleship ministries in jurisdictions, annual conferences, districts, and local churches. It shall give careful consideration to the needs of all churches, such as small and large membership churches, rural and urban settings, and ethnic populations.

¶1109.

Petition Number: 20130-DI-¶1109-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Amend ¶ 1109 as follows:

¶ 1109. Faith Formation, Intentional Discipleship, and Christian Education Responsibilities and Standards—The board shall organize as may be necessary for carrying on the educational ministry throughout the whole life span of persons. The board shall:

1. Formulate and interpret the philosophy of Christian education and faith formation based on biblical, theological, and educational foundations (consistent with the Doctrinal Standards and General Rules of The United Methodist Church, ¶ 104) as they relate to teaching and learning, the church school and related activities, individual or group study; fellowship, education, and action groups for children, youth, and adults; related educational programs provided by civic youth-serving agencies; weekday preschools and kindergartens; daycare centers; choirs, drama groups, mission studies; education for leisure; outdoor education; camping; education of persons with developmental disabilities and others of special need; special Bible study groups; confirmation and church membership training.

2. Develop contextual educational approaches in a variety of settings that appeal to persons of different ages, lifestyles, learning needs, and theological perspectives:

3. Develop educational approaches that will enable persons of different, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to appropriate the gospel for their own life situations, with particular attention given to the needs of persons with disabilities.

4. Promote church school extension in a variety of ways, such as providing resources and training that help persons in sponsoring new church schools, starting new church school classes, and expanding teaching and learning opportunities in the congregation and the community.

5. Provide resources and support services for clergy and lay leadership pastors, parents, educational leaders, teachers, and others who are responsible for teaching and learning with persons across the life span at the local church, district, and conference levels. These resources may include:3. Develop educational approaches that will enable persons of different, racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to appropriate the gospel for their own life situations, with particular attention given to the needs of persons with disabilities.
6. Provide resources and support services for a) teacher recruitment, development, and training in biblical, theological, and ethical thinking, as well as in b) procedures and methods for teaching and learning; work with the colleges and seminaries of the Church wherever possible to forward the common interest in the training of professional Christian educators and the training of ministerial students in local church Christian education; provide national camp training events and assist jurisdictions and annual conferences in designing, guiding, and resourcing camp training programs and outdoor Christian education.

7. Set c) standards and provide guidance concerning programming, leadership, and grouping for the various educational settings of the church, including the church school.

8. Establish and d) guidelines for the organization and administration of the church school; for recording and reporting membership and attendance in educational, religious, and educational assistants.

9. Provide resources and services related to the training and work of local church directors, ordained and diaconal ministers, and associates of Christian education and educational assistants:

10. Provide assistance and information for groups and organizations with direct oversight for United Methodist-related camp/retreat centers and ministries, to help them with their responsibility to establish standards, policies, and procedures related to physical facilities, program, and leadership. To the extent possible, all camps/retreat centers shall be accessible to persons with disabilities.

11. Cooperate with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as they develop standards for certifying professional ministry careers as provided in § 1421.2c and promote the continuing growth of local church staff related to educational ministries.

12. Provide resources, models, and training to support annual conferences and local churches as they help people make decisions related to their general Christian vocation as well as their specific occupations or careers.

13. Review and recommend for approval the curriculum plans developed in cooperation with the other boards and agencies in the Curriculum Resources Committee and interpret and support the curriculum developed by the committee.


8. Promote the General Rule of Discipleship “to witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit” 27 by advocating the formation of Covenant Discipleship Groups or equivalent models applicable to varied contextual settings for all ages.

¶1110.

Petition Number: 20131-DI-¶1110-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Examples in 1110 Eliminated for Clarity

Amend ¶1110 as follows:

¶1110. Cooperation—1. The board shall cooperate with other general boards and agencies and ecumenical partners in the promotion of stewardship, evangelism, worship, mission education, and social action, and in the evaluation of these ministries from the perspective of sound educational procedure.

2. The board, in cooperation with the General Board of Global Ministries, shall be responsible for developing a unified program of mission education for all age groups in the local church. The mission education program shall include provisions for the following:

a) Linking emerging philosophies of mission and of education through information flow and cooperative work of the respective staffs and boards;

b) Developing and interpreting varied styles of mission education appropriate to different groups, including age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures;

c) Curriculum planning for education in mission, providing mission information about projects supported by The United Methodist Church (including ecumenical projects) through the church school resources, and preparing curricular and other materials for mission education;

d) Participating with various agencies in the design, development, and promotion of ecumenical mission education resources;

e) Developing and interpreting educational approaches and channels for mission giving of children, youth, and adults, such as the Children’s Fund for Christian Mission;

f) Developing and interpreting models for new approaches to mission study and educational participation in mission;

g) Providing information regarding educational criteria to the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries for use in certifying leaders for schools of mission;

h) Disseminating a comprehensive listing of mission resources for leaders;
Cooperating with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Global Ministries in providing an emphasis on mission education in the schools of theology through United Methodist courses on history, polity, and doctrine now required for candidates considering ordination or consecration.

3. The board shall have authority to cooperate with other agencies of the Church, with defined organizations, and with ecumenical agencies to promote the ministry of Christian education.

4. The board is authorized to cooperate with the General Board of Global Ministries in the planning and execution of programs for the strengthening and development of the town and country, urban, and ethnic local church ministries of The United Methodist Church and of interdenominational cooperation in these fields.

¶1111.
Petition Number: 20132-DI-¶1111-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Eliminate Duplication

Amend ¶ 1111 as follows:

¶ 1111. Evangelism—The board shall have general oversight of the evangelism ministries of the church as directed by the General Conference. Evangelism is central to the mission of the church. Evangelism is defined in the Book of Discipline, ¶ 630.1.

The board shall share the blessing of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with people of all age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures by the development, promotion, and support of all phases of evangelism throughout The United Methodist Church.

¶1112.
Petition Number: 20133-DI-¶1112-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Eliminate Duplication

Amend ¶ 1112 as follows:

¶ 1112. Evangelism Responsibilities—In response to God’s love in Jesus Christ, the board shall have general oversight of the evangelism ministries of The United Methodist Church by the envisioning and developing of resources and by training and consultation in various settings. The board shall:

1. Set forth an adequate biblical and theological basis and understanding for the personal, corporate, and social aspects of evangelism, consistent with the doctrine and tradition of The United Methodist Church, and it shall communicate and interpret the same to the membership of the church.

2. Promote contextual ministries Give emphasis to the development, interpretation, and promotion of ministries of evangelism at the conference, district, and local church levels so that persons who are not active Christian disciples through any local church will be invited and cared for by a United Methodist church.

3. Provide to clergy and laity resources and training for strategies, ministries, and programs in evangelism, including resources for the local church ministry of evangelism (¶ 255).

4. Cooperate with other program agencies of the church in supporting and equipping both clergy and laity at all levels in involvement in evangelism, church growth, and new congregational development.

5. Provide and encourage research in what creative congregations of various membership sizes and settings are doing in effective evangelism that can serve as models for other churches, and foster experimentation and demonstration of additional evangelistic approaches, consistent with the nature of the Christian gospel and the church, at all levels of the church’s life, including new congregations and all racial and cultural groups.

6. Provide resources and services for those serving as pastors, diaconal ministers, directors of evangelism, general evangelists, and other professionals in evangelism in local churches.

7. Set standards for elders desiring to serve as general evangelists. The board shall send copies of these standards quadrennially to the bishops, district superintendents, conference boards of discipleship, and general evangelists. An elder who feels called by God to be a general evangelist should prepare definitely for such service under the guidance of the annual conference to which that person belongs.

8. Relate and provide liaison services to Foster cooperation with: a) denominational and ecumenical associations and fellowships of evangelism.

9. Seek mutual cooperation among and with the; b) seminaries of the Church and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in the training and nurturing of persons for ministry and in continuing education where the responsibilities intersect.

10. Communicate with; c) other agencies in whose programs the subject matter of who have an interest in evangelism would be included, and provide counsel, guidance, and resources for the implementation of such programs.

11. Participate in and cooperate with the work of the Curriculum Resources Committee of the board for the
inclusion of evangelism concepts and resources in local church study curriculum.

12. Provide consultation with: d) leaders of conferences, districts, local congregations, and other agencies to develop strategies in evangelism for outreach, church revitalization, and new congregational development.

12. Work with the; and, e) General Board of Global Ministries for the extension of the church. To this end there shall be a Joint Committee on Congregational Development with equal representation of members from the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Global Ministries, which shall meet regularly for mutual learning, through developing strategies for church extension, and providing resources and assistance to conferences and districts in the field of new congregational development and congregational revitalization.

¶1113.

Petition Number: 20134-DI-¶1113-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Clarify Responsibilities

Amend ¶ 1113 as follows:

¶ 1113. Worship Responsibilities—The board shall have general oversight of the worship interests of the church as directed by the General Conference. The board shall: 1. Set forth and interpret the biblical and theological basis for corporate worship with people of all age groupings and the various racial and ethnic cultures through resources, programs, and training materials consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church, and cultivate the fullest possible meaning in the corporate worship celebrations of the church to the glory of God, including liturgy, preaching, the sacraments, music, related arts, and the observance of the liturgical seasons of the Christian Year.

2. Develop standards and promote contextual resources for the conduct of public worship in the churches, including liturgy, preaching, the sacraments, music, and related arts.


4. Prepare revisions of the ritual of the church and approved orders of worship for recommendation to the General Conference for adoption.

5. Work with other North American Christian denominations through the Consultation on Common Texts in the continuing development of a common calendar and lectionary and encourage the voluntary use of the Revised Common Lectionary and resources based upon it.

6. Prepare and sponsor the publication of supplemental orders and texts of worship.26

7. Maintain a cooperative but not exclusive relationship with The United Methodist Publishing House in the preparation and publication of worship resources.

8. Advise the general agencies of the church in the preparation, publication, and circulation of orders of service and other liturgical materials bearing the imprint of The United Methodist Church, encouraging use of racial and ethnic, ethnic, and cultural worship resources and incorporation of language that recognizes the several constituencies of the church. (See ¶ 4.)

9. Counsel with the editors of the periodicals and publications of The United Methodist Church concerning material offered in the fields of worship, including preaching, music, and the other liturgical arts.

10. Participate in and cooperate with the Curriculum Resources Committee of the board for the inclusion of worship concepts and resources in local church study curriculum:

11. Encourage in the schools of theology and pastors’ schools, and other settings, the offering of instruction in the meaning and design of worship. This should include the worship practices and expressions of various styles (i.e., traditional, contemporary), cultures, and races.

12. Counsel with those responsible for planning and conducting the worship services of the General Conference and other general assemblies of the church.

13. Give guidance to, provide resources for, and encourage the continuing growth of those persons responsible for music and worship arts leadership in the local church, i.e., directors, ordained ministers, associates, music assistants, and those volunteering in music and the other worship arts. (See ¶ 1405.7.)

14. Cooperate with the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts and The Order of St. Luke in affirming the sacramental life embracing liturgy, preaching, music, and other arts appropriate for the inclusive worship life of the church.
Discipleship

§1114.
Petition Number: 20135-DI-§1114-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Clarify Responsibilities
Amend §1114 as follows:

§ 1114. Stewardship Responsibilities—The board shall have general oversight of stewardship interests of the church as directed by the General Conference. 1. To interpret the biblical and theological basis for stewardship through programs, resources, and training materials for people of all ages consistent with the doctrines of The United Methodist Church.

2. To provide education, counsel, resourcing, and training for the local church stewardship ministry group chairperson, commission on stewardship, board of trustees, endowment and permanent fund committees, wills and estate planning committees, memorial committees, committee on finance, committee on finance chairperson, financial secretaries, and treasurers, and to develop program resources and training materials for use with and by the above-named persons and/or groups (see ¶ 807.17). Matters relating to procedures involving official records, forms, and reporting of statistical and financial information shall be the responsibility of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

3. To convene strategic conversations and broker knowledge regarding the to create within The United Methodist Church a deepening commitment to personal and corporate Christian stewardship, which includes the use and sharing of talents and resources and the practice of a Christian lifestyle.

4. To develop strategies, provide resources, and implement actions that lead to a continuing improvement in the level of financial giving of United Methodists in providing adequate support for the mission of the Church for the purpose of strengthening intentional discipleship.

§1116.
Petition Number: 20136-DI-§1116-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Clarify Responsibilities
Amend ¶1116 as follows:

¶ 1116. Ministry of the Laity—The board shall interpret and spread The board shall organize as necessary for interpreting and spreading through the church all the rich meanings of the universal priesthood of believers, of Christian vocation, and of the ministry of the laity in daily life. The United Methodist Church has While the whole church has the responsibility of training and enabling the laos—the whole body of its membership—to enter into mission and to minister and witness in the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Although all units of the Church have some responsibility for this imperative, the General Board of Discipleship has a preeminent responsibility in that it is charged with developing discipleship. To this end, the board shall:

1. Help develop an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for ministry of the laity.

2. Develop and interpret ministry of the laity both inside and outside the institutional Church.

3–2. Provide resources and support services for the development and improvement of leadership in the local church, except as specifically delegated to other agencies; In the United States, resources and services pertain especially for those persons who serve as members of charge conferences, church councils, councils on ministries, committees on pastor-parish relations, personnel committees, committees on lay leadership, those who serve as lay leaders, lay members of annual conferences, and leaders of related organizations in local churches, districts, annual conferences, and jurisdictions.

4. Assist congregations, districts, and annual conferences in equipping persons for leadership in community ministries.

5. Provide resources and suggested plans for the observance of Laity Sunday in the local church.

6. Provide support to conference director and district director of Lay Servant Ministries, to conference and district committees on Lay Servant Ministries, and to the Association of Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries. In consultation with the conference directors, set standards for certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, and certified lay ministers, and provide teaching resources for use by annual conference and district committees.

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.

8. Initiate a process of coordination and collaboration in developing a comprehensive approach to leadership de-
velopment and training within all program areas for which the General Board of Discipleship has responsibility.

6. Encourage the selection and training of ordained elders to select and train laity to distribute the consecrated Communion elements to sick or homebound persons following a service of Word and Table. This distribution also may apply to laypersons who have been assigned pastoral roles in a church or in more than one church by the district superintendent.

¶1117.

Petition Number: 20138-DI-¶1117-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Adapted and Moved to 1108 and 1109

Delete ¶ 1117.

¶1118.

Petition Number: 20139-DI-¶1118-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Covered in 1102.11

Delete ¶ 1118.

¶1119.

Petition Number: 20140-DI-¶1119-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Covered in 1102.3

Delete ¶ 1119.

¶1120.

Petition Number: 20141-DI-¶1120-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Eliminate Duplications

Delete ¶ 1120.

¶1120.4.

Petition Number: 20142-DI-¶1120.4-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶1120.4:

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, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, economic condition, laity, clergy, or geographic distribution). Staff and/or board members will provide appropriate liaison and reports to their respective agencies. Board members and central conference and jurisdiction representatives shall serve no more than two consecutive terms (one term equals four years). Each board and agency will be responsible for travel, lodging, and other expenses incurred by representatives attending meetings of the Committee on Older Adult Ministries.

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

¶1201.

Petition Number: 20143-DI-¶1201-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Eliminate Redundancy, Clarify, and Rename Division on Ministries with Young People

Amend ¶¶ 1201-1212 and all other places where name “Division on Ministries with Young People” appears:

¶1201. There shall be a Division on Ministries With Young People of the General Board of Discipleship. There shall be a Young People’s Connectional Network.

¶1202. Purpose—The purpose of the Division on Ministries With Young People is to empower young peo-
Discipleship

1. Developing youth/young adult spiritual leaders of local congregations to transform lives by making disciples of Jesus Christ;

2. Challenging The United Methodist Church to embrace, confirm, and celebrate God’s call on the lives of young people;

3. Cultivating and nurturing life-giving ministries where influence and worth are not limited by age or experience;

4. Advocating for the issues and concerns of young people in the church and the global community;

5. Empowering young people to work as agents of peace, justice, and mercy;

Building a network of support and providing resources that connect the diverse experiences of youth and young adults in local ministries and communities across the globe.

The Young People’s Connectional Network will advocate for the full participation of young people in all levels of The United Methodist Church, build global partnerships, and empower young people to make world-changing disciples of Jesus Christ.

¶ 1203. Responsibilities—The responsibilities of the Division on Ministries With Young People shall be:

1. to promote and maintain active and effective systems for youth and young-adult ministry programming at the local church, district, conference, jurisdictional/central conference, and general church levels for the full involvement of young people in leadership and membership;

2. to advocate for the needs and concerns of young people throughout all arenas of church life, planning, and administration. Attention shall be given to the vast array of the life realities of young people;

3. to develop and support three constituency networks: a Network for United Methodist Youth, a Network for United Methodist Young Adults, and a Network for United Methodist Workers With Young People (may include youth workers, youth pastors, campus ministers, conference staff, chaplains, young adult workers, and so forth). These networks will provide ongoing communication and connectional links between local churches and other arenas of church life, relational ties to the denomination and one another, and resources for the spiritual formation of young people;

4. to provide leadership training models and resources that will support youth, young adults, and adult workers with young people to be full and active participants in the life and mission of the Church;

5. to plan and carry out a quadrennial global young people’s convocation and to provide program resources and support services for regional and national convocations;

6. to provide administrative oversight to the grants for ministries with young people distributed in consultation with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;

7. to provide administrative oversight to the Youth Service Fund;

8. to recommend youth and young adults to nomination committees of general boards and agencies, considering suggestions from annual conference councils on youth and young adult ministry (¶¶ 649.3e and 650.3e) and other appropriate organizations;

9. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to provide young people with effective strategies and opportunities to live out their faith through ministries of peace, justice, and mercy in vocational choices and other avenues of service;

10. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to strengthen the church’s challenge for young people to respond to God’s call to licensed and ordained ministry and to support young clergy through the development of networks and other appropriate resources;

11. to collaborate with appropriate boards and agencies to encourage the participation of young people in appropriate denominational, ecumenical, and interreligious relationships and deliberations.

Administrative Order—

1. To advocate for the varied concerns of all young people;

2. To assist in planning and carrying out a quadrennial global young people’s gathering;

3. To provide administrative oversight of grants for ministries with young people distributed in consultation with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Global Ministries, and General Board of Higher Education and Ministry;

4. To promote grants for ministries with young people and the Youth Service Fund;

5. To recommend young people to nomination committees of general boards and agencies;

6. To collaborate with boards and agencies to provide young people with opportunities to listen, discern, and respond to their vocational call whether laity or clergy;

7. To encourage the participation of young people in denominational, ecumenical, and interreligious relationships and deliberations.
¶ 1204. Authority and Accountability—The Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall be accountable to the General Board of Discipleship in programming, personnel, and administration. The division network shall have the authority to determine and interpret program directions that support its mandate. These program directions shall be in harmony with the charter of the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) and have the GBOD’s approval.

¶ 1205. Relationship of the Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network to the General Board of Discipleship—The Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall be related to the General Board of Discipleship as follows: Two members of the Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall be elected to the board, one youth and one young adult as defined by the age qualifications for the Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network, and United Methodist Students, Women, Young Adults, and United Methodist Workers with Young People.

¶ 1206. Membership—The membership of the Division on Ministries With Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall be inclusive with respect to geography, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, lay/clergy, and vocation.

1. Membership shall be as follows:
   a) Twelve youth—1 youth, elected by the youth organization of each central conference; 7 youth (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of 24); 1 youth, sixteen or younger at the time of election, elected by the jurisdictional youth convocation;
   b) Twelve young adults—1 young adult elected by the young adult organization of each central conference; 7 young adults (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of 35);
   c) Twelve adult workers with young people—1 adult from each central conference, appointed by the central conference nominating committee; 1 adult from each jurisdiction elected by the jurisdictional conference; 4 adult workers
   d) Additional Members:
      (1) One member of the General Board of Discipleship;
      (2) Two members of the United Methodist Student Movement steering committee (¶ 1412.2g); Four (4) additional members who, as determined by the network, may be nominated to ensure inclusiveness
   (3) up to 5 additional members who, as determined by the General Board of Discipleship, may be nominated by the division to ensure inclusiveness and expertise One bishop selected by the Council of Bishops

2. Nomination of Potential Network Members—
   1 youth (according to the age definition of each central and jurisdictional conference, but not to exceed the age of twenty-four (24) in central conferences or sixteen (16) in jurisdictions), 1 young adult (according to the age definition of each central and jurisdictional conference, but not to exceed the age of thirty-five (35) in central conferences or 30 in jurisdictions), and 1 adult worker shall be nominated by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministry and by central conference youth organizations.

3. Selection of the Network—Nominated potential network members will submit applications to the nominations committee of the current Division on Ministries with Young People. The nominations committee will select the members of the network ensuring representation of all jurisdictions and central conferences.

4. Resource People—The division network shall be responsible for connecting and highlighting the work of general agencies and other United Methodist entities in youth and young-adult ministry. In order to effectively carry out that charge, one staff person (or board member when staff are not available) from the following entities shall be present (with voice but not vote) at meetings of the division network: These representatives shall attend at the expense of the sending agency and shall relate the priorities of the division network to their agency and serve as resource people to the division network:

A. General Board of Church and Society
B. General Board of Discipleship
C. General Board of Global Ministries
D. General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
E. General Board of Pension and Health Benefits
F. General Commission on Archives and History
G. General Commission on Religion and Race
H. General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
I. General Commission on United Methodist Men
J. General Council on Finance and Administration
K. Connectional Table
L. United Methodist Communications
M. United Methodist Publishing House
N. United Methodist Women

¶ 1207. Youth Service Fund—There shall be a youth service fund.
1. **Organization**—The Youth Service Fund shall be a means of stewardship education and mission support of youth within The United Methodist Church. As a part of the fund’s cultivation, youth shall be challenged to assume their financial responsibilities in connection with the total program and budget of the church of which they are members. Local church treasurers shall send the full amount of Youth Service Fund offerings to the treasurer of the annual conference, who shall retain 70 percent of the amount for distribution by the annual conference council on youth ministry. The annual conference treasurer shall send the remaining 30 percent monthly to the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to be forwarded to the General Board of Discipleship. The Division on Ministries with Young People’s Connectional Network shall constitute a project review committee as determined by the The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network. Project Review shall constitute a project review committee to advise the total body in the selection of projects. The project review committee shall be comprised of youth and adult worker members of the Young People’s Connectional Network as determined by the The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network. All projects chosen by the network will be communicated back to the annual conferences who contributed funds.

2. **Project Review**—The youth of the Young People’s Connectional Network shall constitute a project review committee to advise the total body in the selection of projects. The project review committee shall be comprised of youth and adult worker members of the Young People’s Connectional Network as determined by the The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network. The projects shall be chosen according to the policies and criteria established by the The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network. All projects chosen by the network will be communicated back to the annual conferences who contributed funds.

3. A minimum of 70-80 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 shall assist the The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network in the promotion and interpretation of the Youth Service Fund.

### ¶ 1209 1208. **Grants for Ministries with Young People**—There shall be grants made available to local churches, affiliated organizations, campus ministries, districts, annual conferences, provisional conferences, jurisdictional conferences, and central conferences of The United Methodist Church.

1. **Purpose**—The purpose of these grants is to fund dynamic, creative ministries with young people that can serve as model programs for other organizations throughout the connection.

2. **Project Review**—The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall constitute a project review committee as determined by the group, made up of youth, young adults, and adult workers with young people who are members of the body. The committee may also include a staff representative and one board member each from the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The The Division on Ministries with Young People Young People’s Connectional Network shall establish criteria in consultation with the four participating program boards and in relation to the purposes of the network and the program boards.

### ¶ 1210 1209. **Global Young People’s Convocation**

**Global Youth and Young Adult Quadrennial Event**—There shall be a Global Young People’s Convocation global young people’s gathering every quadrennium.

1. **Purpose**—Global Young People’s Convocation shall be a global event held once every four years for the purpose of celebrating the mission and vitality of young people in The United Methodist Church, raising the joys and concerns of young people from the global community, developing leaders for effective ministry in local churches and communities of faith, highlighting emerging trends in youth and young-adult young people’s ministry, and providing a shared space that embraces the global reality of young people in The United Methodist Church.

2. **Legislation**—During the convocation there shall be opportunities for jurisdiction and central conference delegations and individuals to propose legislation in an appropriate forum. This forum shall be made up of delegations as defined under “Voting members.” Legislation brought to the forum shall relate to issues of concern to young people. Legislation adopted by the forum shall be referred to the Division on Ministries With Young People or sent to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church carrying the name “United Methodist Young People’s Convocation.” All legislation, petitions, and programming must be in accordance with ¶ 806.9 and ¶ 806.11.

2. **Participation**—The global young people’s gathering shall be inclusive in nature. It shall have equal representation of youth, young adults, and adult workers from each jurisdiction and central conference.

3. **Membership**—The membership at the forum of the United Methodist Young People’s Convocation shall be inclusive in nature and selected as follows:

a) **Voting members**—
   1. Five youth (ages 12–18) from each jurisdiction and five youth from each central conference according to the age definition of each central conference. These youth shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministry and by central conference
youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People’s Convocation.

(2) Five young adults (ages 19-30) from each jurisdiction and five young adults from each central conference according to the age definition of each central conference. These young adults shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministry and central conference youth adult organizations.

(3) Two adult workers with young people from each jurisdiction and two youth and young adult workers from each central conference. These adults shall be chosen by the process outlined by each Jurisdictional Young People’s Ministry and by central conference youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People’s Convocation.

b) Nonvoting members (In all cases, nonvoting members will have the status of voice without vote.)

(1) Youth and young adult members of the general agencies

(2) Members and staff of the Division on Ministries With Young People

(3) Additional members from jurisdictions, central conferences, and ecumenical partners.

4. Expenses—The expenses for the Global Young People’s Convocation are to be borne by participants wherever possible. An adequate funding plan shall be devised by the Division on Ministries With Young People to ensure the full participation of elected delegates to Global Young People’s Convocation. It is strongly recommended that jurisdictions, central conferences, and annual conference councils on youth and young adult ministries, or equivalent structures, secure funding for Convocation participants who are elected from said conference. A limited amount of need-based scholarships shall be made available through the Division on Ministries With Young People to promote the full participation of the body.

¶ 1210. Staff—1. The Division on Ministries with Young People’s Connectional Network shall have as its chief staff officer an associate general secretary. This staff officer shall be nominated by the personnel committee of the General Board of Discipleship for election by the board. The search committee shall be chaired by the general secretary of the General Board of Discipleship and composed of equal representation from the General Board of Discipleship and the Division on Ministries with Young People’s Connectional Network.

2. All other staff members of the Division network will be elected or appointed in a manner prescribed by the board (¶ 714).

¶ 1211. Division Funding—The operating funds for the division shall be derived from three main sources: World Service Fund, self-funding programs, and the general portion of the Youth Service Fund.

¶ 1205.

Petition Number: 20145-DI-¶ 1205; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Division on Ministries with Young People Reform A

Be it resolved that the following ¶ NEW be added to the Book of Discipline after ¶ 1205:

¶ NEW. Division Members Who Are Young People Serving on General Boards and Agencies as Members at Large—A youth or young adult member of the division may, should they so desire at the onset of division membership, serve on any general church leadership body of their choosing, except for those whose members are elected by the General Conference, as an at-large member with voice and vote. A person serving in this capacity shall not be counted for that board or agency’s representation purposes. At least 50 percent of the cost for attending meetings and other functions related to membership within that body shall be paid for by the receiving board or agency with Young People’s Ministry paying the remaining balance. This provision shall not apply to any member of the division who is elected to the General Board of Discipleship in accordance with ¶ 1205.

¶ 1206.

Petition Number: 20144-DI-¶ 1206; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for Upper New York Annual Conference.

Division on Ministries with Young People Reform C

Be it resolved that ¶ 1206 in the Book of Discipline be amended as follows:

¶ 1206. Structure—The Division on Ministries with Young People shall be organized around three basic units: United Methodist Youth, United Methodist Young Adults, and United Methodist Workers with Young People. Executive leadership of the division shall be elected by the division halfway through the quadrennium, and these elected leaders shall serve in that capacity until halfway through the next quadrennium. Executive leadership shall consist of:

1. Four co-chairs to be elected by the division, comprised of:
a. One youth from the U.S.,
b. One young adult from the U.S.,
c. One youth from the central conferences, and
d. One young adult from the central conferences

2. One secretary to be elected by the division
3. The chair(s) of each of the three basic units to be elected by the respective basic units
4. The chair(s) of any other committee or structure deemed necessary by the division to be elected by the respective committee or structure.

¶1207.
Petition Number: 20146-DI-¶1207-$; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Division on Ministries with Young People
Reform B

Be it resolved that ¶ 1207 in the Book of Discipline be amended by adding a new §3:

¶1207. Membership— . . . 3. Young People Serving as Members of General Boards and Agencies—Any youth or young adult who is serving on a general board or agency shall be invited to attend division meetings and functions in order to promote camaraderie and fellowship amongst young leaders throughout the connection. These persons shall have voice but no vote.

At least 50 percent of the cost for attending these meetings and other division functions shall be paid for by the sending board or agency with Young People’s Ministry paying the remaining balance.

¶1207.
Petition Number: 20147-DI-¶1207-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 1207. Membership—The membership of the Division on Ministries with Young People shall be inclusive with respect to gender, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities, economic condition, race/ethnicity, lay/clergy, and vocation.

Rationale:
This petition is 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

¶1207.1.
Petition Number: 20148-DI-¶1207.1-$-G; Francisco, Ciriaco - Manila, Philippines for Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Division on Ministries with Young People Membership Amendment

Amend ¶ 1207.1 as indicated following:

¶ 1207. Membership—The membership of the Division on Ministries With Young People shall be inclusive with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, lay/clergy, and vocation. 1.

Membership shall be as follows: a) Twelve Thirteen (13) youth—1 youth, elected by the youth organization of each central conference (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of twenty-four [24]); 1 youth, sixteen (16) or younger at the time of election, elected by the jurisdictional youth convocation; b) Twelve Thirteen (13) young adults—1 young adult elected by the young adult organization of each central conference (according to the age definition of each central conference, but not to exceed the age of thirty-five [35]); 1 young adult elected by the jurisdictional conference; c) Twelve Thirteen (13) adult workers with young people—1 adult from each central conference, appointed by the central conference nomination committee; 1 adult from each jurisdiction, elected by the jurisdictional conference;

Rationale:
The change from twelve to thirteen reflects the addition of a central conference in Africa (8 central conferences and 5 jurisdictional conferences). This petition is dependent upon the petition adding one central conference in Africa.

¶1210.3.
Petition Number: 20149-DI-¶1210.3-$-G; Fuller, Dan - Chenango Falls, NY, USA.

Fairer Inclusion of Young People

Amend ¶ 1210.3 as follows:

¶ 1210. Global Young People’s Convocation—There shall be a Global Young People’s Convocation.

3. Membership—The membership of the United Methodist Young People’s Legislative Assembly shall be inclusive in nature and selected as follows:

a) Voting members

1) Five Youth (ages 12-18) from each jurisdiction and five youth from each central conference according to
the age definition of each central conference: a total of sixty (60) allocated between the jurisdictions and central conferences to proportionally reflect each region’s combined clergy and lay church membership, provided that each jurisdiction and central conference shall be entitled to a minimum of three (3) youth voting members. These youth shall be elected at jurisdictional youth convocations or by central conference youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People’s Convocation. The Division on Ministries with Young People is responsible for notifying appropriate persons in a timely manner of the number of youth that should be elected from each jurisdiction and central conference.

(2) Five Young adults (ages 19-30) from each jurisdiction and five from each central conference according to the age definition of each central conference: a total of sixty (60) allocated between the jurisdictions and central conferences to proportionally reflect each region’s combined clergy and lay church membership, provided that each jurisdiction and central conference shall be entitled to a minimum of three (3) young-adult voting members. These young adults shall be elected by jurisdictional and central conference young-adult organizations. The Division on Ministries with Young People is responsible for notifying appropriate persons in a timely manner of the number of young adults that should be elected from each jurisdiction and central conference.

(3) Two adult workers with young people from each jurisdiction and two youth and young adult workers from each central conference. These adults shall be elected at jurisdictional youth and young-adult convocations (when appropriate) or by central conference youth organizations in the year preceding the Global Young People’s Convocation.

b) Nonvoting members (In all cases, nonvoting members will have the status of voice without vote.)

(1) Youth and young-adult members of the general agencies

(2) Members and staff of the Division on Ministries with Young People

(3) Additional members from jurisdictions, central conferences, and ecumenical partners

Rationale:

Protects generous minimal representation for each region and maintains same total numbers while making allocation more just. The current lack of proportional representation means that if a young person from a larger region wants to be a voting member, she or he will unfairly have less chances of getting this
Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20532.

Petition Number: 20532-DI-NonDis; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century

Non Disciplinary for General Conference Action:
The following Plan of Action shall be adopted as a basis to continue Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century 2021-2024 Quadrennial:

Faith in Action

The Vision

A bold vision stretches our imagination. Vision activates our faith to sail boldly into uncharted waters. A vision paints a picture of a future state that is not here yet. The vision calls us to step out unto the unknown, trusting God each step of the journey.

The work of SBC21 began in 1996 and became a National Plan of The UMC. The name, SBC21 casts the God-given vision of strengthening churches in this century, now with 81 years left. This is a huge God-given vision.

This work is just beginning, yet so far, even with minimal resources, has proven to be an effective, evolving, organic, systematic, innovative, and creative process. This God-given vision behind our name: Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, proclaims that God has declared our future as a church will be alive, well, and healthy.

Our vision is powerful: We envision all churches with healthy vitality, faithful determination, and fruitful ministries; led by strong and competent leadership. We envision the Black church to be equipped, prepared, and unapologetic in building the beloved kingdom of God on earth and resisting any form of evil and injustice anywhere.

This vision activates our FAITH to believe, imagine, and work diligently toward the realization of strong, vital congregations transforming the world through the power and grace of Jesus Christ.

Our hope is grounded in love, for only love can last longer than a century. Generations before us have paved the way, and we will do our part tilling the soil in our time, so generations after us will stay the course.

Mission

Our mission is to transform and sustain vital Black congregations and Black clergy including those in cross-racial appointments for making disciples of Jesus Christ who are sent to serve in a hurting world.

Our mission moves SBC21 among lay and clergy, as well as seekers and the lost, to encourage, equip, train, coach, and strengthen congregations and build a community where the love of God is demonstrated.

Our work is carried out in the mission fields beyond walls, connecting and equipping leaders to follow Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We go into the difficult places; churches who may be losing their zeal and want to regain their focus. We move inside the criminal justice system and communities to partner with those who want to end mass incarceration and other oppressive systems.

We go into places where young adults gather to build a secure strong network, engaging them in church leadership and equipping and encouraging them to live out the call of God on their lives.

In this second decade of the twenty-first century, we continue to offer unique services and gifts to equip our partner churches with practical tools and skills needed for vibrant worship, evangelism, discipleship, stewardship, outreach, and effective administration.

We strategically collaborate with the Council of Bishops, the Connectional Table, annual conference cabinets and connectional ministries, general agencies, national plans, councils, and commissions in this work.

Direction

In this quadrennium, we are moving quickly in the direction of prioritizing our program and ministry goals under one primary banner, the expansion of the SBC21 National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) to include a youth component ranging from ages 13 to 18. Our programmatic efforts will mainly focus on this target audience ranging from ages 13 to 35.

As we continue to serve annual conferences and partner and collaborate with other UM agencies, we believe it is essential to identify, nurture, and train young adult leaders capable of educating the next generation, perpetually and systematically during this 21st century.

The primary focus of SBC21 would be to assist annual conferences and local churches of The United Methodist Church to become more effective in reaching, connecting, and engaging youth and young adults, particularly Blacks and other racial and ethnic groups (multiethnic, multicultural) into the fold of active traditional and non-traditional churches. To create new and innovating ways for nurturing spiritual formation and making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
In partnership with young dynamic clergy and lay as well as with other appropriate entities within The United Methodist Church (general program agencies, annual conferences, HBCUs, campus ministers, local churches, etc., we are building a pipeline of effective servant leaders (lay and clergy) to serve and participate at every level in the denomination.

**2021-2024 Leadership Development**

We identify four areas of leadership development as our focus for this quadrennium 2021-2024.

- National Network of Young Adults (NNYA)
- Collaborative Coaching and Training Network (CCTN)
- Cultural and Generational Competency Partnership
- National Prison Ministry Movement
- SBC21 National Network of Young Adults (NNYA)

The Strengthening the Black Church for the 221st Century (SBC21) National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) initiative provides an essential infrastructure designed to recruit, equip, and train the highest potential of African American leaders/clergy and leaders/clergy of other ethnicities. The initiative promises to offer young adult leaders (ages 18 to 35) with a full variety of experiences throughout their various stages of development as they continue to hear, discern, and respond to the call of God upon their lives. The National Network of Young Adults is committed to equipping leaders with the skills and competencies needed to transform, revitalize, and establish vital congregations, campus ministries and serve as leaders within The United Methodist Church (UMC). According to data retrieved from The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Loan and Scholarship office for the 2015/2016 academic year; in 2015 merely 8 African American scholarship recipients reported they were a certified candidate or in pursuit of candidacy toward ordination in The UMC under the age of 35. In 2016, following the launch of the National Network of Young Adults, that number almost doubled to 15 African American scholarship recipients who reported they were a certified candidate or in pursuit of candidacy under the age of 35. As the United States continues to diversify rapidly, there will continue to be an increased demand for clergy leaders to minister to African American and ethnic communities. By expanding the National Network of Young Adults, the initiative is fortifying The UMC and the church universal to develop a wave of disciplined young leaders to serve communities of color and transform the world. The National Network of Young Adults upholds the highest convictions that by supporting young adult African American and ethnic clergy the initiative promises to resource transformational pastoral leaders. In light of recent deaths, violence, vitriolic and divisive speech in the nation, NNYA is convinced that the church and institutions of higher education are essential pillars of this society. This initiative organizes with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), campus ministries, and seminaries as the critical components of building an organic pipeline and partnership among local congregations, colleges, and the church to engage and train young adults for pastoral ministry nationally.

**Goals**

1. The SBC21 National Network of Young Adults provides an essential infrastructure designed to equip the highest potential of African American and ethnic young adult leaders to transform, revive, and establish new vital congregations to serve as pastoral leaders within The United Methodist Church. Through Discernment Covenant Groups, Transformational Leadership Development, Tuition Assistance and Loan Forgiveness, as well as Mentoring and Coaching we have created a national network of support to attend to the principal professional and personal transitions within African American and ethnic leaders' lives.

2. By 2022 the National Network of Young Adults will increase the number of undergraduates within the network entering seminary to at least 30 persons. Will develop a Transformational Leaders Training cohort of 20 young adults (10 seminarians and 10 young adults in first-time pastoral appointments) to increase the total number of ordained African American clergy (under the age of 35) in The United Methodist Church to 30. And will increase our Financial Empowerment Resourcing by assisting 10 seminarians with tuition assistance and 10 young adult pastoral leaders with loan forgiveness.

3. Engaging youth, as well as young adults in exploring models of pastoral ministry and Christian leadership committed to transforming the world, is an additional priority of the National Network of Young Adults. Studies show millennials are rapidly leaving the church and are more likely to not affiliate with any form of principled spiritual practice. This is an urgent time not only in predominately African American and ethnic congregations but in the body of Christ at large. NNYA has a vision and mission at this time to aggressively engage youth in addition to young adults and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of this world.

Moreover, transformational leaders need various experiences and opportunities to thrive and effectively lead, whether in pastoral, community, or nontraditional settings. The National Network of Young Adults believes that pastoral leaders should be provided the highest quality of training, support, mentoring, and coaching to thrive within even the most challenging contexts. NNYA's goal is to not merely help young adult leaders to survive the various stages of the pastoral journey but to also introduce
youth to the transformational leadership skills needed to navigate wherever God is calling them to serve.

The National Network of Young Adults guides the discernment process to cultivate a culture of call. This initiative believes hearing, discerning, and responding to God is a lifelong process and commitment. According to one of the National Network of Young Adults Discernment Covenant Group Leaders, Reverend Kevin Kosh, University Chaplain at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, “Calling is not a destination one arrives at nor a task accomplished. Calling is a journey where one continues to explore and discover.” Therefore, NNYA young adult and youth leaders are provided a safe space to develop, engage in critical conversations, and are surrounded by loving peers, mentors, and coaches. NNYA believes it is essential to ensure youth a network of support, connecting them with peers, as well as experienced clergy who demonstrate transformational leadership. Our vision for programming is always to be holistic. NNYA promises to journey with youth and young adult leaders through the various stages and transitions of leadership development, from high school to undergrad, from undergrad to seminary, and from seminary to pastoral ministry and beyond.

**Program Deliverables**

**Discernment Covenant Groups:** NNYA cultivates a culture of call and builds a pipeline of effective pastoral leaders to serve the church by walking with young adults from undergraduate school to theological exploration. Currently, the National Network of Young Adults resources 15 undergraduate campus ministries, seminaries, and local churches with curriculum, virtual training, and quarterly resource newsletters to promote theological exploration within their respective ministry contexts. The campus ministers and pastors leading the covenant groups of the network are African American clergy (average age 33), local pastors, and ministry candidates serving first-time appointments in communities of color, predominantly on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). NNYA partners include: Wiley College, Rust College, Alcorn State University, Grambling State University-Wesley Foundation, Tennessee State University-Wesley Foundation, Florida A&M University-Wesley Foundation, Fisk University-Wesley Foundation, Howard University-Wesley Foundation, Paine College, Clark Atlanta University, Claflin-Orangeburg Wesley Foundation, Philander Smith, Southern University-Wesley Foundation, Tuskegee University-Wesley Foundation, Gammon Theological Seminary and St. Luke CME Church, Nashville. NNYA partners provide spiritual support while working with SBC21 to cultivate meaningful opportunities for collegial conversations to develop principled leaders who are hearing, discerning, and responding to the call of God upon their lives. NNYA is seeking the Lilly Foundation Thriving in Ministry grant to expand funding to resource more partnerships and increase the number of undergraduates entering seminary from 10 to 30.

This network will strengthen collegial relationships among clergy by resourcing young adult pastoral leaders to attend the national Ebony Exploration discernment training at Gammon Theological Seminary. Ebony Exploration is a space where young clergy and scholars from United Methodist affiliated Historically Black Colleges, and Universities (ages 18 to 35) can hear, discern, and respond to God’s call and claim upon their lives. It is an opportunity to explore the possibilities of theological education and consider Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center as a place for spiritual and vocational development. In 2018 NNYA could only assist four campus ministers and 15 young adult undergraduate leaders to attend Ebony Exploration at Gammon Theological Seminary. By increasing the number from 4 to 8, and 14 to 30, NNYA is not only fulfilling the mission of the Thriving in Ministry initiative to inspire young people to explore calls into Christian congregations, but the program is also helping young clergy transition from student to pastoral leaders. By increasing the resources provided to respective Covenant Discernment Groups and the participants of Ebony Exploration the National Network will be able to meet the goal of increasing the number of undergraduates within the network entering seminary to at least 30 persons by 2022.

**Transformational Leaders Cohort:** NNYA is committed to journeying with African American young adult leaders throughout the various stages of ministry, especially from seminary to candidacy and from candidacy to ordained ministry/first pastoral appointment. Currently, the Young Adults hosts the national HBCU Leading in Transformation (LIT) Conference at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. The LIT Conference is designed to meet the spiritual, academic, and professional development of HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) young adult campus ministries and young clergy through vibrant worship experiences, relevant workshops, and engaging conversations. LIT supports campus ministers and students with resources that assist on campus and post-graduate development. Thus, building a pipeline between young adult leaders and The United Methodist Church. LIT helps young adult leaders develop an awareness and action plan to address social justice needs on campuses and within their respective ministry settings. Within just one year LIT has garnered the excitement of over 200 participants. In 2018 NNYA witnessed an increasing number of LIT participants making a total of more than 350 conferees.
The National Network of Young Adults initiative is being encouraged to apply for a grant from the Lilly Foundation Thriving in Ministry. If approved the grant will enable NNYA to expand the LIT Conference experience into a national Transformational Leaders Cohort that will assist 20 young adults (10 seminarians and 10 young adults in first time appointments) to increase the total number of Ordained African American Clergy (under the age of 35) in The United Methodist Church from 15 to 30 by 2022. By expanding the LIT Conference into a peer supportive, coaching and mentoring cohort, NNYA is building accountability, and practical leadership application to assist young adult leaders as they prepare for the Board of Ordained Ministry. This cohort will offer an organic discipleship experience based on community and faithful service.

This initiative will develop and test new patterns for clergy to build and sustain collegial relationships by providing a cohort of peers that consists of seminarians and recent seminary graduates serving in pastoral appointments. The National Network of Young Adults will also challenge the traditional forms of one-on-one mentor relationships by also developing a cohort of experienced transformational clergy leaders to serve as mentors and coaches. Mentoring and coaching is the cornerstone of achieving NNYA goals. The Bible illustrates many mentoring and coaching relationships from which NNYA draws wisdom: Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy. In each of these examples, the primacy of relationship and time invested as the ingredients for making a significant impact on young adults. The effect is especially in their spiritual values and beliefs, which will enable them to grow in their walk with the Lord.

In each relationship, the goal of the mentor and coach is to see his or her mentees grow to spiritual maturity and be used by God in a mighty way. Jesus had this goal in mind in mentoring the 12 disciples. He looked beyond their present circumstances as fisherman, tax collectors, and ordinary people and saw them as leaders of the kingdom of God.

The National Network of Young Adults is using the discipleship model to assure the young adults, and experienced clergy of the Transformational Leaders Cohort maximizes its potential for developing relationships amongst colleagues. By offering two intensives (two days) Training Retreats, NNYA will create group settings that provide an opportunity to learn and grow from one another, as well as create smaller intimate intergenerational groups that represent various stages of ministerial career to foster beneficial mentoring and coaching relationships. Our program believes experienced clergy can serve the purpose of not only a mentor, but as a coach to instruct/share practical wisdom on how to achieve ministry goals, and advocate for young clergy with district and conference Boards of Ordained Ministries throughout the process from candidacy to pastoral appointment. By expanding the National LIT Conference into a Transformational Leaders Cohort NNYA is not only fulfilling the mission of the Thriving In Ministry initiative to develop intergenerational groups of clergy but challenging traditional forms of one-on-one mentorship to include discipleship and coaching. NNYA anticipates that this cohort of 10 seminarians, young adult leaders in first-time appointments, and experienced transformational clergy (active or retired) will be the catalyst from increasing the current numbers of ordained African American clergy (under the age of 35) from 15 to 30 by 2022.

Financial Empowerment Resourcing: NNYA is determined to prepare transformational young adult leaders to serve effectively and confidently, particularly within communities of color. This initiative undergirds a leader’s holistic development of mind, body, soul, and spirit to prepare them to serve ministry settings facing particular socioeconomic challenges. Currently, NNYA offers multimodal training via social media platforms “Live at Five” to help leaders navigate resources from scholarships to student loan debt management. NNYA provides leaders with the tools necessary to make wise financial decisions such as credit improvement, acquire pastoral internships and develop budgeting plans. This network understands that the path to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church requires candidates for ordination to demonstrate sound financial stewardship. According to the Book of Discipline ¶ 347.3, page 289-90, certified candidates seeking approval for provisional membership in the annual conference must submit a full copy of their current credit report. Some districts and conferences even require a candidate to have at least a 650-credit score also to express interest in ordination. NNYA is seeking funding with the Thriving In Ministry initiative to expand the current Financial Empowerment Resourcing from social media platform training sessions into a strategic plan providing tuition assistance and debt relief for pastoral leaders serving first-time appointments in communities of color.

This network understands that the endowment-supported initiatives “have helped religious organizations address key barriers, such as excessive educational debt, that impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively.” According to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) Seminary Attendance Among UMC Ordinands report, only four of all seminary graduates ordained in The UMC in 2015 attended the de-
nominations only historically Black seminary, Gammon Theological Seminary (less than 1 percent) in comparison to 34 (8.23 percent) from Candler School of Theology, a UMC seminary serving the same geographical location of Atlanta, Georgia. The study also shows; Candler School of Theology significantly reports greater frequency than other United Methodist schools. This research suggests seminarians are more likely to frequent seminaries with ample resources to provide scholarships and tuition assistance. We are excited for the opportunity to partner with the Thriving in Ministry initiative to expand current Financial Empowerment Resource Training and assist/recruit young adult leaders into our principal seminary partner Gammon Theological Seminary to equip 10 African America leaders (ages 18 to 35) with tuition assistance for three years, as well as first-time pastoral leaders with loan forgiveness to effectively serve communities of color. NNYA believes by expanding the Financial Empowerment Resourcing program this initiative is reversing the current trends of decreasing number of African American young adult pastoral leaders and preparing them to serve in communities of color confidently.

A Story of Transformation

Amber Jones is a recent graduate of Wiley College who began seminary this Spring at Perkins School of Theology. She is a certified candidate with the Texas Annual Conference. Amber joined the design team of NNYA unsure about her call to ordained ministry; however, with the support of her peers, the encouragement of her mentor, and the backing of her church/conference, Amber is a confident leader pursuing her call by God. While sharing about her summer internship she says, “Today I had the opportunity to deliver a message to Quillian Summer Camp Chapel!! A Fearless Life is Built in Prayer.” As an NNYA design team member, a Wiley Pathway Intern, and a candidate for ordained ministry, Amber says, "I didn't know exactly what the path would be like when God called me, but as I allowed God to lead and order my steps, God never led me astray."

*Collaborative Coaching and Training Network*

SBC21 coaches are trained to challenge and support pastors and teams to find their voices, listen deeply to others, and exercise leadership on behalf of stronger, healthier, and more vital congregations. We do not fix churches or pastors! We help pastors create environments where communication and strategic planning improves, team development can flourish, leaders can emerge, ministries meet real needs, and the power of the Holy Spirit transforms lives.

In partnership with SBC21, progressive leaders within annual conferences are identified and coached to plan and implement leadership development for their own context to inspire, inform, encourage, and equip clergy and lay leaders with new skills for transforming congregations. SBC21 equips and resources these training experiences with master trainers and field experts.

Our methodology involves guiding churches through a comprehensive strategic planning process of visioning, goal setting, creating structures for effectiveness, and creating intentional paths for discipling making, revitalizing Christian education in the life of the church and systematic leadership development. We provide resources so congregations can explore their demographics, build community relationships, evaluate ministry, and refine operational and administrative management to increase accountability.

**Goals**

- To train and build a network of master trainers and coaches and deploy them to local churches and conferences to train leaders to offer specific skills development leadership training, coaching, and strategic planning and implementation.
- To deploy coaches, facilitators, experts, and team builders to work with lay and clergy in local congregational settings to assess community needs, identify opportunities for ministry, enhance worship experiences and to plan, implement, and evaluate the engagement of the congregation in missions.
- To create, develop, and implement leadership training webinars for local church access and to assist annual conferences with curriculum design suited for the Black church culture and context.
- To identify, train, and deploy young adult trainers, coaches, mentors, and consultants to assist the church in developing innovative ideas for ministry, space planning, marketing, and social media technology.
- To provide guided internships for young adults in a variety of ministry settings.

**Program Deliverables**

- A developed collaborative SBC21 network of lay and clergy experts, community leaders and professionals who are dedicated and deployed to serve within The United Methodist Church to create learning environments in ministry.
- Training is delivered through various media to increase knowledge, change attitudes, and sharpen skills of clergy and lay leadership to strengthen the congregation’s capability to understand its community and engage in ministry and service.
- Coaching, training, consulting, and facilitating is deployed to share best practices, assess and solve problems hindering ministry, and to create spaces for healing, inspiration, and reconciliation, so that congregations can move forward.
Outcomes

• The SBC21 Collaborative Coaching Network builds partnerships in annual conferences and partner churches to strategically strengthen churches.

• Black churches are unified in purpose and partner together in ministry for increased results in ministry, disciple-making, and resourcing.

Transformation Story

In the Kentucky Annual Conference, a recent partnership began with SBC21. A master coach was deployed to develop a conference design team of African American leaders from various local church and ministry settings. Both lay and clergy worked with their SBC21 design coach through a strategic planning process of visioning, listening, building relationships and partnerships, setting smarter goals, and strategies. They are now launching to implement the action steps in collaboration with all the local churches to strengthen their ministries, groom young adult leadership, and resource struggling congregations. Two of their local churches now have SBC21 coaches to work with their congregations in developing their strategic plan. Additional training is being deployed when needed.

• Building Cultural Competence—A Partnership

Since the dissolution of the UM Central Jurisdiction in 1968, there remains multiple layers of societal racism, sexism, and economic oppression affecting the Black church and communities in America. Despite these struggles; our perseverance, courage, and resiliency to overcome is evident in our faith journey.

The UMC has come a long way with still a long way to go to become the beloved community of God. We all strive to be a community that boldly resists sin, evil, and injustice everywhere and to love God fully with all our hearts and souls. In response to the Great Commandment and commission of Jesus Christ to love one another, we strive to transform into new creatures, witnessing, serving, and worshiping in new ways and new places with new people.

Community is the ultimate goal of human existence. Our Christian purpose is to love and to work toward understanding and harmony in God’s creation, and this requires more than a change of heart. We must produce evidence of this love in the way we invite, include, and serve. As disciples of Christ, we believe we are known as the church by our love.

In our church today, we need to increase our cultural competence to build genuine relationships beyond our backyards. Most of our exposure to cultures different than our own is often limited and shortsighted. Most of our daily interactions and friendships have not broadened to include persons from diverse backgrounds. It is harder to understand folk you have not broken bread with and whose ethnic background or culture is different.

Cultural incompetence is becoming a hindrance when our churches experience rapidly changing demographics, migration, or gentrification. We find it difficult to invite and include new people. Within The UMC today, we still resist integrating our congregations or building multicultural faith communities.

There are also generation gaps we can close. Each generation brings its own identity and needs to be met. In the life of the church, multiple generations gather to be part of the church family, yet sometimes there is misunderstanding, disconnect, and judgment.

Research reminds us that the timeframes in which people are born affect attitudes, values, and behaviors regarding meaning. This is evident in the life of the church. People differ based on many characteristics—class, race, gender <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/gender>, region, and generation. In most congregations, we lack generational understanding and appreciation.

SBC21 believes the National Plans with other UM agencies can partner together to close this gap of understanding and increase the church’s capacity to love all people. The plans have always helped the church value diversity. Each plan by its mission seeks to help the general church understand and appreciate the distinct cultures we all come from.

SBC21 is positioned to lead the National Plans in this collaboration and agency partnership in specific ways to offer the church, specific, custom-designed training in cultural and generational competence and to provide master coaches and facilitators to create environments in which groups of persons can have healthy dialogue and communion to increase understanding.

Goals

• To increase cultural competence in The United Methodist Church.

• To increase effective communication, understanding, healing, and reconciliation, and appreciation among staff, lay and clergy leaders, families, and guests involved in ministry.

• To increase our interactions within diverse communities with authenticity, respect, and appreciation and understanding of our unique cultures, views, perspectives, and generational values and behaviors.

Program Deliverables

• United Methodists are able to coordinate, work, or interact with other people that are of different cultures and social backgrounds and has awareness of personal views and culture and understands how cultural competence also involves the total perception of a person’s own
Discipleship

beliefs and culture to understand and appreciate other people in order to build authentic positive relationships.

- Local congregations, annual conferences, and agencies are prepared for significant and profound change in order to embrace new leadership, new neighborhoods, and partners.

- SBC21 is positioned and equipped to provide coaching and training in congregational transformation to churches who are ready to grow particularly in engaging the community, through leadership development, space planning, strategic planning, and gaining cultural and generational competence.

- **SBC21 National Prison Ministry Movement**

  Did you know that more than 600 thousand people are released from prison annually? Are you aware that more than 11 million people cycle through jails each year?

  The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, and its prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities are overwhelmingly filled with African Americans and Latinos. The paths to prison for young African American and Latino men and women are many, but the starting points are often local schools.

  This very alarming narrative highlights a glaring argument that children are being pushed into prison in what has become known as the cradle or school to prison pipeline.

  The mission of the SBC21 Prison Ministry is to equip and engage annual conferences and the local church with collaborative resources, cutting-edge training, and development to allow them to disciple persons impacted by mass incarceration.

  The SBC21 National Prison Ministry program believes that growth in local congregations is directly correlated to one of the largest mission fields and that would be returning citizens and persons impacted by mass incarceration.

  **Goals**

  - The launch of 4 Webinar (ABCs of Starting a Prison Ministry, How Expungement Revitalized Mission on a Small Church, Stay Woke: Faith and Juvenile Justice Reform, Understanding the Cradle/School to Prison Pipeline)
  - Upper Room/Resource Guide development
  - Activation of Awareness and Community Engagement (#SeeAllthePeople) events to help local churches reach new people. This will be the activation of the RIKERS film showing beginning in April 2019 and continuing through April 2024 (and after that).
  - Provide training to the National BMCR and United Methodist Men on The National Prison Ministry
  - Research and write at least two grants for program funding
  - Continue cultivating existing agency partnerships and relationships for ongoing collaborations, i.e., UMW, UM Justice, GCORR, etc.

  **Methodology**

  **Education & Training**

  Focusing on providing information and training to churches on basic jail/prison facts to increase awareness and to offer different ways the church can partner in ministry with incarcerated persons.

  **Resourcing**

  Providing practical assistance for successful collaboration between partners, ongoing ministries with contact people, various agencies/transitional housing, and family support ministries to aid in the transition of persons released and reentering society.

SBC21 has developed national partnerships with entities doing exceptional work in the area of the prison, juvenile, and correctional ministries. Our partners’ networks are also inclusive of UM general agencies, annual conferences, and the local church, school districts, and other entities.

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**Resourcing**

Providing practical assistance for successful collaboration between partners, ongoing ministries with contact people, various agencies/transitional housing, and family support ministries to aid in the transition of persons released and reentering society.
Advocacy
Providing practical and technical resources needed to advocate for the rights of the incarcerated and persons impacted.

Network
SBC21 has developed national partnerships with entities doing exceptional work in the area of prison, juvenile, and correctional ministries. Our partnering networks are also inclusive of UM general agencies, annual conferences, and the local church, school districts, and other entities. Our network include the following partners:
- Saint Mark UMC, Wichita
- St. Johns Downtown
- Houston Concord Church
- Destiny Point
- Cathedral of Praise
- Dallas County Juvenile Detention Center
- Gordon Memorial UMC
- Preston Crest Church of Christ
- Prison Fellowship Children’s Defense Fund
- Global Ministries
- Discipleship Ministries
- Church and Society
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
- The Potter’s House
- TORI Hamilton Park UMC
- Dallas Crossroads UMC, Compton, California
- Nashville Davidson County Sheriff’s Department

Program Deliverables
- SBC21 National Prison Ministry will directly resource dozens of United Methodist annual conferences and other ecumenical partners.
  - National Prison Summits
  - Ending Mass Incarceration Training for annual conferences, local churches, parachurch organizations, and community social justice advocates
- Town Hall Meetings
- Expungement Clinics

Outcomes:
- National Prison Ministry has directly resourced more than 20 states, about a half-dozen United Methodist annual conferences
  - Create multiple ecumenical partnerships
  - Equip lay and clergy leadership with tools, information, and understanding on ways to build or partner within a local prison ministry.
- Developed intentional inter-agency partnerships with UMW, Church and Society, Upper Room, Discipleship Ministries, and United Methodist Communications

Measure of Effectiveness
We will use the 2018 National Prison Summit and the work being done in 2018–2019 with the various annual conferences and local congregations to implement the effectiveness measurement tool created by our partners with Exodus Foundation.org.

Exodus Foundation.org has developed an evaluation tool with metrics. This tool focus is to qualitatively define and measure our successes, identify weaknesses and improve the provision of services to congregations and communities as needed. The tool also requires appropriate reports as required for each project.

The SBC21 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration is for motivated clergy leaders and team members from various churches who have expressed an interest in ministry development around prison or restorative justice ministries at their church. These leaders attend the National Prison Summits and receive training and are coached to develop a ministry plan based on their community context.

SBC21, in partnership with our ministry partners at Exodus Foundation.org, has trained and equipped UMC teams from 2017–2018 at:
- St. Johns Downtown in Houston
- Crossroads UMC in Compton, California
- Saint Mark UMC in Wichita
- Hamilton Park UMC Dallas
- St. Luke “Community” UMC Dallas
- St. Paul UMC Dallas
- Saint Mark UMC in South Carolina

While the measurement tools were not in place for the work done in 2018, however, there was a significant impact with some of our churches.

- Directly reached more than 1,000 people in 2018
  through the National Prison Summit, RELEASED, Mass Incarceration Training for North Carolina/South Carolina/Western North Carolina Annual Conference Black Pastors Retreat, Cal-Pac Mass Incarceration Town Hall Meeting, Expungement Clinics
  - Mass Incarceration 101 Training for North/South Carolina—100 were trained
  - Crossroads UMC Expungement Clinics continue and new this year (September 2019) Mass Incarceration Town Hall Meeting—100 attended
- National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration—500 over the course of the summit

Story of Transformation
SBC21 provided a unique, safe, and transforming space at the 2018 National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration for incarcerated women to tell their stories. Our effort to bring the summit participants to experience real life stories and conditions of incarcerated persons was played out in real time.

Summit participants were able to hear the firsthand testimonies of what landed 8 women behind bars for var-
Discipleship

ious sentences. The Davidson County sheriff’s office approved the daytime release of these women to kick off
the National Prison Summit on Mass Incarceration. It was
our centering experience that allowed everyone present to
understand our WHY!
The stories of transformation first were shared with an
opening video that set the stage of the ladies introducing
themselves, followed by a panel discussion that engaged
the women in a discussion around who they were before
receiving an inmate number. The moderated discussion allowed a perspective that allowed the summit participants
to see mothers, daughters, aunties, and friends instead of
the red jumpsuits they wore.
Summary
SBC21 Equips God’s People
How do we build up the body of Christ for serving in
a hurting world? This is the question progressive or struggling churches seek to answer for themselves in a variety of ministry settings. Often, Black churches in diverse
and changing communities, must deal with this question;
while navigating through a myriad of critical social injustices and issues.
How can the church become more relevant in times
such as this? Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st
Century (SBC21) is dedicated to helping predominately
Black congregations become more effective and fruitful
in mission and ministry. This is done by offering specific
services to collaborating churches based on needs identified by annual conference bishops and cabinets, local
congregations, clergy, and laity. SBC21 partner churches
receive relevant tools, coaching, training, strategic planning, hope, inspiration, and encouragement to go forward
with a fresh vision the Lord has given the church.
The United Methodist Church believes in social
justice action. The SBC21 Prison Ministry movement creates a more sane, humane, and safe world where color and
class discrimination cease to contaminate justice and its
resources and punishment as the answer to criminal activity is replaced by atonement, reconciliation, restorative
justice, and secured mental health treatment. This movement transforms lives, the church, and the community.
How can the church create a culture of call exploration for young people of color and groom them for leadership? SBC21 is building a strong network that will connect young, gifted, and Black leaders into the life of The
United Methodist Church. SBC21 moves forward with
the National Network of Young Adults (NNYA) initiatives setting the pace.
SBC21 understands the importance of developing
leaders for now and in the future, who are ready to take
risks, launch into uncharted waters, and cast fresh visions.
As we continue to claim and celebrate our unique identity

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and heritage, SBC21 believes in collaborative relationships.
We can all work together in ministry and produce results.
We believe in the transformative power of God
through the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we
move towards 2021–2024.
EXPENSE BUDGET
2021–2024
PROGRAM
Leadership Development & Church Growth . . . .$71,000
• Covenant Partner Congregations
• Train Lay/Clergy (Training Summits)
• Coaching Model of Ministry: Partner Churches site visits
Partner Congregations (PCs) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$71,000
• Sustain 10 Partner Congregations/New Partner Churches
• Faith Partner Model of Ministry
Engaging in Ministry with the Poor. . . . . . . . . .$200,000
• Prison Ministry
Youth/Young Adult Models of Ministry . . . . . .$360,000
• National Network of Young Adults (NNYA)
Technology Enhancement . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . $20,000
• Website maintenance
• Social Media
Program Administrative Support
• Coordinating Committee Meeting and . . . . . .$100,000
Travel
• Consultants . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$100,000
• Vending Display and Materials (i.e., mugs,
key chains etc.). . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$8,000
__________________________________________
Subtotal
$930,000
ADMINISTRATIVE
2 Exempt Staff Salary . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$560,000
1 Support Staff Salary . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$200,000
Staff Travel. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$80,000
Benefits . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$100,000
Office Equipment and Supplies . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$20,000
Discipleship Ministries Administrative
Services . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .$90,000
Subtotal $1,050,000
TOTAL $1,980,000
Rationale:
Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century
(SBC21) partnership, leadership, and support for Black
congregations as existing congregations are strengthened
and new faith communities are formed for fulfilling the
mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
It is recommended that the 2020 General


Petition 20533.

Petition Number: 20533-DI-NonDis; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Native American Comprehensive Plan

Adopt the following plan:

The United Methodist Church
Quadrennial Plan 2021-2024

Mission, Purpose, and Description

The Native American Comprehensive Plan (NACP) is one of the six racial/ethnic plans of The United Methodist Church. The mission of NACP is to make Native American disciples of Jesus Christ, to work toward the positive transformation of the world with emphasis on the Native American/Indigenous Nations of the United States and relating to the broader Indigenous peoples communities of the world, and to offer the gifts of Native Americans to the global United Methodist Church, the ecumenical community, and to other Native American entities. The purpose of NACP is to be a mechanism through which the Native American constituency of The United Methodist Church can access culturally relevant resources and training for respective leaders interacting within the context of Native American ministries. The NACP is to serve as a resourcing entity for efforts addressing the work of the denomination among Native American people. In addition, the NACP, will relate to relative ecumenical communities of Native American constituents as it prepares annual conferences, general agencies, and respective denominations on developing healthy and life-giving relationships with Indigenous communities within Christianity and beyond. The Native American Comprehensive Plan will assist in developing culturally appropriate models of Christian discipleship in ways that embrace the cultural diversity possessed by Indigenous peoples, it will serve as a crossroads where Native Americans and non-Native American disciples may find the Creator's gifts in one another but also will serve as a place for Native American Christians and non-Christians to explore contemporary understandings of spirituality as each community recovers from centuries of missionary endeavors.

The work of the NACP is carried out through two staff positions: the executive director and administrative assistant. NACP Task Force members guide the work of the plan and also assist in carrying out the mission of NACP. The Native American Comprehensive Plan Task Force is made up of the following representatives:

- One bishop assigned by the Council of Bishops,
- Two Native American representatives from each of the five U.S. jurisdictions, chosen by each College of Bishops,
- Two Native American representatives from the Native American International Caucus,
- Two Native American representatives from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference,
- One Native American representative from the Alaska Conference,
- One Native American youth, and
- One Native American young adult.
- One representative from each of the general boards and agencies attend Task Force meetings as non-voting liaisons.

Within the framework of honoring both Native American culture, identity, and cosmology and the Christian faith heritage, the following are core values for NACP:

- Living out of both our Native American and Christian identities.
- Cooperation, collaboration, and partnership with conferences, general agencies, and other UM structures, and with Native American tribal nations, government, and secular organizations and others serving the Native American/Indigenous communities.
- Respect for the peoples we have been sent to serve.
- Truth-telling, even when that truth is difficult to hear.
- Integrity in our programmatic and fiscal endeavors.
- Honesty in our relationships.

Native American Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

NACP seeks to be an entity of the church that serves as a means of connection between two specific populations of persons in the U.S. The first is the Native American Comprehensive Plan seeks to connect the church with the Native American constituency of The UMC and connect the church to the broader Native American communities of the United States in general. Second, it is hoped that the NACP can connect the church to persons of the Native American constituency who are suffering from situations of poverty and its many forms. The Native American/Indigenous community we serve have unique needs embedded within their racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and historical identities. Examples of these unique needs include but are not limited to the vast epistemological and cosmological views of many Native American tribal communities that include a continued emphasis on oral traditions and forms of communications that possess an equal amount of wisdom and spiritual guidance as many publications in society today. Many cultures continue to value face-to-face interactions as primary forms of consultation and often experience a lack of resources to
engage in information technology, such as internet and remote access, that would allow the exchange of information that can lead to community/church development and sharing of cultural exchanges. In addition, many Native American tribal communities have been the recipient of numerous missionary endeavors of the Christian church and are searching for accountability from faith communities as they each are recovering from historical and intergenerational trauma and the long-lasting impact of displacement. In order to reach beyond the boundaries of the broader culture of The UMC in the United States, offer Christ in a meaningful way to Native Americans, and receive the amazing, God-given gifts that Native peoples have to offer, a special means is needed. The Native American Comprehensive Plan strives to serve as this means of ministry for The UMC.

The following narrative describes NACP’s objectives and the outcomes/impacts for annual conferences and local churches as they seek to live out their ministries in the four areas of focus and within disciplinary mandates.

**Leadership Development**

1. The first objective is the provision of consultant/support services to persons in leadership positions (both clergy and lay) within Native American churches, fellowships, ministries, faith communities, and in society in general in order to develop, improve, and enhance leadership skills of those Native American persons working in local communities. This objective is essential because of the unique needs and cultural context of Native American churches. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and enactment of leadership: provision of information/training resources and referrals, and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others in leadership. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/on-site and by referral to appropriate partnering agencies and/or denominations. Persons in leadership will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner as leaders within their Native American churches, The UMC, and in society.

2. The sponsorship of a Leadership Training Conference for clergy and lay leadership for Native American churches, fellowships, ministries, and community partners. Leadership skills will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened. Also, the relationship between the Native American constituency within The UMC and with those beyond the Christian faith will also be strengthened.

3. The third objective is sponsorship of a Native American Lay Servant School for Native laypersons. Participants will successfully complete a lay servant/lay speaking course and will follow through with their local church and conference to become certified lay servants/lay speakers; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened via the ministries of these persons called forth by the Creator. Participants will examine various forms of ministry that can potentially address the numerous concerns that manifest in working with Native American and Indigenous peoples.

4. Next is the sponsorship of a training event for Native American adult workers with children and youth. Training these Native American clergy, laypersons, and community partners will not only impact their abilities as leaders, but will allow their talents to be shared with the children and youth they will mentor. This objective empowers and enables adults and young persons in the local church to serve as more effective leaders. Children and the protection of their place in Indigenous society is at the heart of many Native American/Indigenous cosmologies. A healthy young people’s program is essential to the work of The UMC amongst communities in the U.S. and across the world. This training will assist the participants in understanding the local cosmologies of the tribal communities, the socioeconomic challenges they face, and the need to continue to work with community partners in providing safe sanctuaries and environments for the most innocent of our world.

5. The fifth objective that contributes to leadership development is the sponsorship of a Native American clergywomen’s gathering. Native American clergy, particularly clergywomen, serve in far-flung appointments across the U.S. It is a rare occurrence for these clergy sisters to have the opportunity to gather together, learn, share, and experience their calling within the context of their Native identity. This objective strengthens Native American clergywomen to serve as effective leaders and therefore strengthens their churches and appointments. In society across the world, there is not a community more marginalized than that of the Indigenous woman. It is hoped that this gathering will allow the venue for the Native American clergywomen to have an opportunity to speak freely about challenges that exist in serving the church as well as strategies to remedy those challenges.

6. In addition to the clergywomen’s gathering, it is hoped that a broader summit on the role of Native Ameri-
can/Indigenous women in our society will be held. Building on the conversations found within the Native American clergywomen’s gathering, it is hoped that a gathering celebrating the role of Indigenous women and their contributions to societal and environmental well-being can be convened. In this venue will also be discussed and examined the conditions of Indigenous women today as well as strategies to remedy these challenges.

(7) A Native American Men’s project will be convened to assist in the discipleship development and spirituality development of today’s Indigenous male population. As a result of the evaluation process conducted in 2014 by the Connectional Table, the recommendation was made that the GCUMM engage with the national racial/ethnic plans and general agencies in a coordinated effort. While the details of this objective have not yet been decided, it will be a unique and first-time partnership aimed at bringing forth new Native American men into leadership and enhancing the leadership skills of current Native American male leaders.

(8) A Native American clergy mentorship program will be developed between Native American clergy and those beginning in ministry within The UMC. This training will be provided for mentors who possess the experience, education, and literacy to provide guidance to those entering into ministry with Native American people. Persons from throughout the U.S. will be recruited as potential mentors as well as persons who may wish to be mentees. A gathering for the group will be planned as well as respective curricula developed in hopes that it will assist in the long-term support for Native American leaders who may be isolated in local ministry settings.

**Church Growth**

(1) The first objective is the provision of consultation/support services to annual conferences and persons engaged with new and prospective church plants, new fellowships, new ministries, and existing churches/ministries in need of revitalization. NACP will partner with annual conferences/CONAMs (Committees on Native American Ministries) in efforts to establish new Native American fellowships/churches/ministries and to revitalize existing Native churches/ministries.

(2) The second objective is the sponsoring of a School of Discipleship and Evangelism for Native American clergy and laity. Participants’ skills will be enhanced and information imparted related to Native American discipleship and evangelism; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be strengthened.

(3) The next objective for NACP is sponsorship of a Native American New Church Starts Summit for clergy and lay leadership from new church starts, fellowships, and ministries in the Native American community, and representatives from annual conferences desiring to begin new Native American churches/ministries. Due to unique cultural and historical factors, starting new Native American churches, fellowships, and ministries requires specialized skills, education, and training. Skills related to growing new Native American churches will be developed and enhanced for the majority of participants who will represent a cross section of Native churches; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and new Native American local churches, fellowships, and ministries will be started and strengthened.

(4) A new resource will be developed that will assist Committees on Native American Ministries conduct ministry with The UMC and with the unique cultures of Native American tribal communities. This objective will impact the confidence and skill of CONAMs and give them the necessary support and connection to succeed in ministry.

(5) The fifth objective is the hosting of regular webinars on Native American Spirituality and Social Justice among Native American and Indigenous Peoples communities. It is hoped that these digital gatherings will be used by leaders in The UMC but also community members who are stakeholders in the community. Recent movements such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), Loss of Indigenous Languages, and Indigenous Food Sovereignty will be examined. These opportunities will also be used as continuing education opportunities for those searching for opportunities.

(6) An emphasis will be placed on working with the broader ecumenical community and its respective Indigenous People’s gathering, namely the World Council of Churches and its Indigenous People’s Reference Group. By connecting with the greater Indigenous community worldwide, deeper connection to Indigenous identity can be cultivated and common relationships with the worldwide community can be created.

(7) An emphasis on theological education will be developed in hopes of providing a venue for Native American clergy and lay or those engaging with Native American communities the opportunity to examine understandings of theology, ecclesiology, and cosmologies of Indigenous people. In addition, these discussions will examine healthy biblical hermeneutics that can assist in creating healthy relationships with contemporary Native American and Indigenous people.
Discipleship 423

Ministry with the Poor is the third area of focus. Due to extensive poverty impacting Native Americans, all the NACP goals and objectives are considered to be ministry with the poor.

Global Health

(1) NACP will sponsor a Native American Health Summit that shall educate and empower Native American local churches to engage in preventive and/or rehabilitative health activities within their local community. Native Americans in the U.S. are widely recognized to be at-risk in many major health categories such as substance abuse/dependence, suicide (especially youth and young adults), domestic violence, diabetes, and many others. Education and information will be imparted related to these health issues and ways to positively impact them; representatives from local churches will take the information and materials back to share with their churches in order that a plan for sharing this information within their communities can be developed and carried out; participants will represent a cross section of Native American churches; and networks of communication and support will be established/enhanced.

Disciplinary Mandates

(1) In this objective, NACP will provide consultation and support services to annual conferences in the development and effective use of annual conference Committees on Native American Ministries (CONAM); and to CONAMs in the effective implementation of ¶ 654 of the Book of Discipline (describes ministries of CONAM). This objective is essential because CONAM is the singular structure within annual conferences, as defined by the Book of Discipline, that deals exclusively with Native American churches and ministries. NACP will achieve this objective by providing consultation on any matter related to the development and ministry of CONAM including provision of information/training resources and referrals; and support through encouragement, advocacy, and facilitation of connections with others engaged in CONAM ministry. Consultation and support services may be offered online, by phone, via written and printed resources, and/or in-person/on-site. Persons from annual conferences/CONAMs will receive consultation and support services that enable them to function in an enhanced manner in fulfilling the disciplinary mandate.

(2) The final objective is sponsorship of a CONAM Training Conference. NACP will achieve this objective by holding this event early in the first year of the new quadrennium when most CONAMs have new membership appointed to their committees. The knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve on a conference CONAM will be enhanced for participants who will represent a cross section of Native American nations; networks of communication and support will be established and enhanced; and Native American ministries through the annual conference will be strengthened.

The Native American Comprehensive Plan of The United Methodist Church will work closely with all annual conferences, committees on Native American Ministries, and general agencies to fulfill these goals. The NACP is thankful for the continued presence of The UMC amongst the Indigenous Peoples of the United States and looks forward to the ministry of 2021-2024 with great excitement.

Petition 20632.

Petition Number: 20632-DI-NonDis-$-G; Henry, Katharine - La Cañada Flintridge, CA, USA.

ALL BELONG: New Book of Worship

Worship Resource Committee

In accordance with ¶ 1113.3 of The Book of Discipline (2016), we petition the General Conference to enact the following in accordance with ¶ 16.6:

A Global Book of Worship Revision Committee (2021-2024) is hereby constituted and authorized to prepare and present to the 2024 General Conference a core ritual resource to be of use to the global church as an official resource of The United Methodist Church. It should include our official denominational teachings on the sacraments ("By Water and the Spirit" and "This Holy Mystery") as well as basic worship resources to resource the basic ordering of the ritual and worship life of our congregations in all their diverse contexts. Efforts should be made to choose language that speaks to our diverse contexts and gives voice to our commitments in expansive practice for both fully including diverse people in the lives of our churches and in the language and imagery used to describe God, so our ritual is consistent with our commitment to actively resist intersecting structures of white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, patriarchy, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, colonialism, classism, and establishmentism. This General Conference authorizes the establishment of a Worship Resource Committee appointed by the General Board of Discipleship in consultation with The United Methodist Publishing House. The Worship Resource Committee will build on the work of Hymnal Revision Committees and the standing Hymnal Advisory Committee.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WORSHIP RESOURCE COMMITTEE

The Worship Resource Committee shall ensure that the resources they develop and propose are attentive to:
1) the breadth of the United Methodist family and how God has been revealed across its varying contexts, perspectives, traditions, and cultural heritages;

2) expansive and nondiscriminatory language for God and humanity;

3) worship and ritual resources that are both indigenous and reflective of United Methodist worship and doctrinal standards and ecumenical commitments;

4) the needs of churches of every size.

**Rationale:**
Because all belong in the body of Christ, this action would seek to provide foundational resources for our worship life that make accessible our sacramental theology and help order our ritual life across the diverse contexts of our connection around shared forms and grace-filled Wesleyan theology.
Proposed Resolutions

R3461.
Petition Number: 20636-DI-R3461-G; Prusha, Connor - Chardon, OH, USA for United Methodist Young People's Convocation.

Prioritizing Young People in the Local Church

Amend #3461 as follows:

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church supports young people and is called to minister to them; and
WHEREAS, the young people in The United Methodist Church are in need of growth and revival church-wide; and
WHEREAS, in order for young people to grow in the worldwide church, they must first grow in the local church,

Therefore, be it resolved, that each local church is responsible for the inviting, engaging, and involving of young people through prioritizing outreach and programs, in order to do all in its power to support and strengthen young people’s ministries at its local level, so that the presence of young United Methodists may be strengthened, rejuvenated and empowered worldwide.

Rationale:

Young people need to be more involved, feel they are accepted and that they have a purpose in The United Methodist Church.

R8031.

Re-adopt "By Water and the Spirit"

Retain Resolution No. 8031, “By Water and the Spirit” for the ensuing two quadrennia (2021-2024 and 2025-2028).

Rationale:

Since 1996, “By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism” has been an official teaching statement for the church. It continues to be instrumental in deep exploration of the sacrament of baptism across our church and as a basis for developing full communion agreements with other churches.

R8032.

Re-Adopt "This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion"

Readopt as follows:

WHEREAS, the 2000 General Conference directed the General Board of Discipleship in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, and the Council of Bishops, to develop a comprehensive interpretive document on the theology and practice of Holy Communion in United Methodism and report their findings and recommendations to the 2004 General Conference; and

WHEREAS, in developing its report the Holy Communion Study Committee took intentional steps to heed our United Methodist heritage and history, remain sensitive to the ecumenical church, and hear the voices of United Methodists in the United States as well as in central conferences in the Philippines, Africa, and Europe;

WHEREAS, The General Conference adopted “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” in 2004 as an authoritative contemporary statement of its understanding of Holy Communion; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has used this document to strengthen our interpretation and practice of the Lord’s Supper in its congregations and ministries and as a basis for deepening our ecumenical conversations and relationships with other denominations;

Therefore, be it resolved, that “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” be continued in the Book of Resolutions as an official interpretive statement of theology and practice in The United Methodist Church for the next two quadrennia (2021-2024 and 2025-2028); and

Be it further resolved, that “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion” 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 Holy Communion; and

Be it further resolved, that "This Holy Mystery" be used by The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and the Council of Bishops in interpreting United Methodist understandings and practices in ecumenical dialogue; and

Be it further resolved, that the 2020 General Conference commend to the church the principles, background, and practices in "This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion" for the interpretation and use of the services of Word and Table in our hymnals and The United Methodist Book of Worship; and

Be it further resolved, that "This Holy Mystery" be published in the Book of Resolutions, and that the General Board of Discipleship continue to offer it online and in study editions with a leader’s guide.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20631-DI-R9999-G; Webb, Mark - Liverpool, NY, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Support for the Upper Room’s Emmaus Ministries at All Levels of the Church

WHEREAS, the Emmaus Ministries; including Walk to Emmaus, Chrysalis, Face to Face, Journey to the Table, and Discovery Weekend, is given to us from the Upper Room; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Emmaus Ministries is "Renewing Christian Disciples, Strengthening Local Churches"; and

WHEREAS, this ministry brings a spiritual awareness of Jesus Christ to many life stages in a unique, loving, patient, and kind way; and

WHEREAS, we rejoice in the truth that is revealed in this effort; and

WHEREAS, this ministry involves many of our members in a very important ministry; and

WHEREAS, this ministry enables and encourages members to return to their local churches and be present and future leaders of the church,

Therefore, be it resolved, that General Conference:

1. urge all annual conferences to increase their efforts and resources relating to the Walk to Emmaus;

2. encourage churches to enlist and involve their members; older adults, young adults, and youth in the life and work of Emmaus Ministries so that they may return and be leaders within their own congregations; and

3. encourage the General Board of Discipleship and The Upper Room to continue their emphasis on enhancing the reach of Emmaus Ministries.
# Financial Administration
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Volume 2  Nashville, Tennessee

## General Council on Finance and Administration

### Reports for Action

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Report No. 1
WORLD SERVICE FUND

Introduction

When United Methodist congregations give their share of apportioned funds, they participate in God’s work. The World Service Fund is the heart of our collective church ministry. Through this fund, individuals partner with church agencies to be in mission and ministry at home and around the world. The World Service Fund truly makes a difference by supporting ministries across the globe.

World Service is God’s people reaching out in love and compassion in the name of Christ. It represents a call and a challenge to each United Methodist. As the 2016 Book of Discipline states, the full payment of the World Service Fund is each congregation’s “first benevolent responsibility” (¶ 812).

Overview

For the 2021-2024 quadrennium, the program agencies will continue their programmatic emphasis centered around four areas of focus: (1) Making New Disciples in New Places, (2) Leading Where God Calls, (3) Overcoming Poverty Together, and (4) Seeking Health and Wholeness for All.

The proposed budget of $244,500,350 represents a significant decrease of $66,228,059, or 21.3 percent, compared to the previous quadrennium.

World Service Fixed Charges

General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”). GCFA is accountable to The United Methodist Church connection through the General Conference for “receiving, disbursing, and reporting” all general funds (¶ 806). This line item is an estimate of the World Service Fund’s share of GCFA’s expenses for the quadrennium.

The Connectional Table (“CT”). As part of the total mission of the church, CT facilitates the church’s program life as determined by the General Conference. Its task is to discern and articulate the “vision for the church and the stewardship of the mission, ministries, and resources of The United Methodist Church” (¶ 904).

Interpretation Resources. Along with producing materials to interpret United Methodism’s connectional funds, the Marketing Team of United Methodist Communications (“UMCom”) uses money from this section of the budget for “Promotion of Giving,” a joint effort of UMCom, GCFA, and the General Board of Discipleship (“GBOD”). The “Promotion of Giving” goal is to develop comprehensive financial stewardship tools, leading to improved financial support of ministry at all levels of the connection. “Promotion of Giving” resources are financed through the World Service Fund.

Program Agencies

The World Service Fund provides basic financial support to program-related general agencies, which are especially important to the common vision, mission, and ministry of The United Methodist Church. Through World Service funding, agencies support annual conferences and local congregations in living out God’s mission for the worldwide church. General agencies also provide essential services and ministries beyond the scope of individual local congregations and annual conferences through services and ministries that are highly focused, flexible, and capable of rapid response.

Strategic Directions for 2021-2024

“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” (¶ 121). For 2021-2024, The United Methodist Church has a clear sense of mission discerned by the Council of Bishops and CT.

Our vision remains to increase the number of vital congregations worldwide through sustained attention to the Four Areas of Focus. As such, United Methodist disciples will engage in mission and ministry throughout the connection to live out God’s vision for a world where poverty is reduced and poor people and communities flourish; a world where children live to their full potential; a world where Christian leaders heed God’s call to discipleship; and a world where new faith communities offer God’s love and grace worldwide.

Our UMC Mission: VITAL CONGREGATIONS.

Our 2024 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist church that increases the number of highly vital congregations worldwide.

A vital congregation is a body of Christ making and engaging disciples for the transformation of the world. This is rooted in our understanding that local congrega-
tions provide the primary arena through which Christian disciples are called, formed, and nurtured. Five markers of vitality—disciples in worship, new disciples (professions of faith), disciples in small groups, disciples in mission, and giving to mission—help us gauge our progress together through a shared approach.

The real measure of our missional impact will not be in membership increases or improved giving, but in the lives that will be touched and drawn to Christ as disciples because these vital congregations were able to reach people with the gospel of Christ who might otherwise not be reached.

Our Mission Strategies: THE FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS. Vital congregations are shaped by and witnessed through four focus areas: leading where God calls; making new disciples in new places; overcoming poverty together; and seeking health and wholeness for all.

1. Leading Where God Calls: Our 2024 Vision look forward to a United Methodist Church equipping people across the connection to be “difference makers,” by leading where God calls.

Our United Methodist Church believes that Jesus is “calling you out” for something greater than any one person. The question for every United Methodist today and into our future is: “What difference will you make?”

The simple answer is that you can make a difference by following God’s call to leadership wherever you are: at the local church, in the mission field, in each community and society across our world. We believe we can equip every United Methodist across our connection to be effective “difference makers” for Jesus.

2. Making New Disciples in New Places: Our 2024 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church with new disciples who profess their faith through renewed and new faith communities around the world.

Creating new, vital faith communities is critical to the task of making new disciples and transforming the world. A faith community is a group that gathers under the lordship of Jesus Christ to worship, engage, and send. It is within faith communities that we receive new disciples through professions of faith and increase professions of faith. This multilayered strategy focuses on increasing the number of new faith communities in annual conferences across the world.

3. Overcoming Poverty Together: Our 2024 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church with vibrant, flourishing, and transforming communities addressing issues of poverty together.

As faith disciples, we are called to love our neighbors—to walk, worship, and witness so that all may enjoy God’s vision of abundant life. As United Methodists, we will challenge and transform systems and structures that create and perpetuate poverty. Leveraging connections and partnerships within and beyond The United Methodist Church, we can transform communities and open doors for a more promising future.

4. Seeking Health and Wholeness for All: Our 2024 Vision looks forward to a United Methodist Church that can reach people around the world with life-saving interventions.

Every child is a life filled with promise and potential; yet, every five seconds, a child dies from preventable causes. The United Nations Health Organization estimates that 41 million people die of preventable chronic illnesses around the world. The United Methodist Church has a sacred calling to ensure abundant health for all people, engaging disciples to be agents of God’s healing transformation in the world. Jesus said, “I came that [you] may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NRSV).

There is a global movement to significantly improve health for all people by 2035, through education, direct health services to those in need, and increased access to medical care.

2016 General Conference Action

The 2016 General Conference approved the continuation of two initiatives begun in 2012, which are funded through the World Service Fund:

Commission on Central Conference Theological Education Fund. Paragraph 817 provides for a Commission on Central Conference Theological Education Fund, elected by the Council of Bishops, to determine policies and procedures and approve disbursements from this fund. The commission includes one person from each central conference and also includes members of the Council of Bishops, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and representatives of theological schools, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (“GBHEM”), the General Board of Global Ministries (“GBGM”), and the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters.

Proceeds from this fund are to be used in central conferences at the discretion of the commission to: (1) develop theological schools; (2) develop courses of study; (3) develop libraries and contextually developed resources; (4) provide scholarships and faculty development; (5) support associations and networks of faculty and schools; and (6) support new and innovative approaches
to theological education. GBHEM administers this designated fund.

**Young Clergy Initiative Fund.** This Fund provides support to increase the number of young clergy among the jurisdictional conferences. This is a three quadrennium effort, which ends in 2024, to enable The United Methodist Church to focus efforts on encouraging young adults responding to the call to ordained ministry by providing a strong theological education in the United Methodist tradition. This initiative is in addition to the funds that the church already has budgeted for discernment, recruitment, nurturing, education, and support of young clergy leaders.

The boards and commissions, in collaboration with annual conference boards of ordained ministry, seminars, bishops, and cabinets, will continue to determine the most effective use of the Young Clergy Initiative Fund in response to the needs of young clergy leaders. GBHEM administers this designated fund.

**Other Ministries**

**Contingency Fund.** The Contingency Fund for World Service provides funding for emerging needs in the World Service Fund areas that occur during a quadrennium. These funds are normally granted to program agencies for new programs to address unanticipated needs with the approval of CT. CT will not make grants from the World Service Contingency Fund for general administrative costs, fixed charges, or capital outlay without approval from GCFA.
### Financial Administration

**Fixed Charges**

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<tr>
<th>Service/Program</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation Resources</td>
<td>$1,442,000</td>
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<td>$1,068,114</td>
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<td>Connectional Table</td>
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<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,028,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,945,084</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,928,972</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(1,016,112)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-9.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On-Ratio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Program</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Church and Society&lt;sup&gt;(1)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>$11,178,712</td>
<td>$11,021,671</td>
<td>$8,751,773</td>
<td>$(2,426,904)</td>
<td>-20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Discipleship&lt;sup&gt;(1)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>35,497,388</td>
<td>34,952,169</td>
<td>29,537,233</td>
<td>$(5,414,136)</td>
<td>-15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>1,080,664</td>
<td>1,073,317</td>
<td>1,069,109</td>
<td>$(4,208)</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the Black Church</td>
<td>1,989,960</td>
<td>1,976,432</td>
<td>1,964,176</td>
<td>$(12,256)</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Global Ministries</td>
<td>112,100,584</td>
<td>111,338,501</td>
<td>88,582,858</td>
<td>$(22,755,643)</td>
<td>-20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American Language Ministry</td>
<td>1,408,000</td>
<td>1,398,428</td>
<td>1,392,527</td>
<td>$(6,101)</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Ministry Plan</td>
<td>3,082,000</td>
<td>3,061,048</td>
<td>3,043,230</td>
<td>$(17,818)</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry&lt;sup&gt;(1)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2,382,000</td>
<td>3,143,830</td>
<td>3,126,770</td>
<td>$(17,060)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Island Ministry</td>
<td>544,000</td>
<td>540,302</td>
<td>557,041</td>
<td>$(3,261)</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Higher Education and Ministry&lt;sup&gt;(2)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27,512,708</td>
<td>26,932,588</td>
<td>21,427,920</td>
<td>$(5,504,668)</td>
<td>-20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Conference Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>6,961,637</td>
<td>$(3,038,363)</td>
<td>-30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Clergy Initiative: Jurisdictional Conferences</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>6,952,413</td>
<td>5,967,118</td>
<td>$(985,295)</td>
<td>-14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on Religion and Race</td>
<td>7,404,806</td>
<td>7,354,467</td>
<td>7,313,597</td>
<td>$(40,770)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Group Self-Determination Fund</td>
<td>2,505,812</td>
<td>2,488,777</td>
<td>2,475,359</td>
<td>$(13,418)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on the Status and Role of Women</td>
<td>3,984,606</td>
<td>3,957,518</td>
<td>3,936,209</td>
<td>$(21,209)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on United Methodist Men</td>
<td>1,487,084</td>
<td>1,476,974</td>
<td>1,468,905</td>
<td>$(8,069)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Communications</td>
<td>72,111,492</td>
<td>71,651,059</td>
<td>46,661,201</td>
<td>$(25,049,858)</td>
<td>-35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total On-Ratio - Program Agencies</strong></td>
<td><strong>$296,299,816</strong></td>
<td><strong>$299,319,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$234,156,663</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(65,162,837)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-21.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Ministries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Program</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>467,000</td>
<td>463,825</td>
<td>414,715</td>
<td>$(49,110)</td>
<td>-10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Ministries</strong></td>
<td><strong>$467,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$463,825</strong></td>
<td><strong>$414,715</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(49,110)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-10.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total On-Ratio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$296,766,816</strong></td>
<td><strong>$299,783,325</strong></td>
<td><strong>$234,571,378</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(65,211,947)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-21.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$307,786,816</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,728,409</strong></td>
<td><strong>$244,500,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(66,228,059)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-21.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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(1) In the 2017-2020 quadrennium, the programmatic support and funding for the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry that was provided by the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Discipleship, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, was moved solely to the plan operated by the General Board of Global Ministries. The Funding for this plan in total decreased by .7% in the 2017-2020 quadrennium compared to the 2013-2016 quadrennium.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Charges</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Resources</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectional Table</td>
<td>505,465</td>
<td>505,465</td>
<td>505,465</td>
<td>505,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>1,709,750</td>
<td>1,709,750</td>
<td>1,709,750</td>
<td>1,709,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,482,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,482,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,482,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,482,240</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Ratio:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Church and Society</td>
<td>2,187,943</td>
<td>2,187,943</td>
<td>2,187,943</td>
<td>2,187,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Discipleship</td>
<td>7,384,308</td>
<td>7,384,308</td>
<td>7,384,308</td>
<td>7,384,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>267,277</td>
<td>267,277</td>
<td>267,277</td>
<td>267,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening the Black Church</td>
<td>491,044</td>
<td>491,044</td>
<td>491,044</td>
<td>491,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Global Ministries</td>
<td>22,145,715</td>
<td>22,145,715</td>
<td>22,145,715</td>
<td>22,145,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American Language Ministry</td>
<td>348,082</td>
<td>348,082</td>
<td>348,082</td>
<td>348,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Ministry Plan</td>
<td>760,808</td>
<td>760,808</td>
<td>760,808</td>
<td>760,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry</td>
<td>781,693</td>
<td>781,693</td>
<td>781,693</td>
<td>781,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Island Ministry</td>
<td>134,260</td>
<td>134,260</td>
<td>134,260</td>
<td>134,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Higher Education and Ministry</td>
<td>5,356,980</td>
<td>5,356,980</td>
<td>5,356,980</td>
<td>5,356,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Conference Theological Education Fund</td>
<td>1,740,409</td>
<td>1,740,409</td>
<td>1,740,409</td>
<td>1,740,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Clergy Initiative: Jurisdictional Conferences</td>
<td>1,491,780</td>
<td>1,491,780</td>
<td>1,491,780</td>
<td>1,491,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on Religion and Race</td>
<td>1,828,424</td>
<td>1,828,424</td>
<td>1,828,424</td>
<td>1,828,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Group Self Determination Fund</td>
<td>618,840</td>
<td>618,840</td>
<td>618,840</td>
<td>618,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on the Status and Role of Women</td>
<td>984,077</td>
<td>984,077</td>
<td>984,077</td>
<td>984,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on United Methodist Men</td>
<td>367,226</td>
<td>367,226</td>
<td>367,226</td>
<td>367,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Communications</td>
<td>11,650,300</td>
<td>11,650,300</td>
<td>11,650,300</td>
<td>11,650,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total On-Ratio - Program Agencies</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,539,166</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,539,166</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,539,166</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,539,165</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ministries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>103,679</td>
<td>103,679</td>
<td>103,679</td>
<td>103,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Ministries</strong></td>
<td><strong>$103,679</strong></td>
<td><strong>$103,679</strong></td>
<td><strong>$103,679</strong></td>
<td><strong>$103,678</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,642,845</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,642,845</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,642,845</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58,642,943</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td><strong>$61,125,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,125,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,125,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,125,083</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Report No. 2  
MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

Background

The Ministerial Education Fund was established by action of the 1968 General Conference. Its mission is to engage the membership of the church in an effort to equip annual conferences, theological schools, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to meet the need for increased resources for the recruitment and education of persons for ministry.

Every clergyperson who has served in The United Methodist Church over the past fifty-two years has been shaped in part by the ministries and institutions supported by the Ministerial Education Fund. Support is provided for the thirteen United Methodist seminaries in the United States, as well as local pastor Courses of Study, continuing education, and other programs that strengthen the ministry of every local church. The 25 percent retained by each annual conference directly supports ministerial education as approved by that conference.

Recommendations

The Ministerial Education Fund was first apportioned in 1970 to the jurisdictional annual conferences as one of the church’s general funds. During the forty-eight-year period through 2018, more than $853 million has been raised to support this important work. The council recommends that the General Conference approve that the amounts apportioned for the 2021-2024 quadrennium are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-Ratio</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Conferences</td>
<td>$26,417,000</td>
<td>$26,237,412</td>
<td>$19,144,503</td>
<td>$(7,092,909)</td>
<td>-27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Higher</td>
<td>79,251,000</td>
<td>78,712,235</td>
<td>57,433,508</td>
<td>$(21,278,727)</td>
<td>-27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Ministry</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$105,668,000</td>
<td>$104,949,647</td>
<td>$76,578,011</td>
<td>$(28,371,636)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-Ratio</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Conferences</td>
<td>$4,786,126</td>
<td>$4,786,126</td>
<td>$4,786,126</td>
<td>$4,786,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Higher</td>
<td>14,358,377</td>
<td>14,358,377</td>
<td>14,358,377</td>
<td>14,358,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Ministry</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$19,144,503</td>
<td>$19,144,503</td>
<td>$19,144,503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amounts received by the annual conference treasurers for this fund have been distributed as described in The 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 816.
Background

The 1972 General Conference established the Black College Fund as one of the apportioned general church funds. The objective of the fund is to provide financial support for institutions of higher education that have historically served the educational needs of Black students. This support helps the institutions maintain academic quality and financial stability while limiting individual student tuition costs. More than $320 million has been raised to assist the programs and ministries of these schools since the fund was established.

Recommendations

The General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) recommends:

1. That the 2021-2024 apportionments be set as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-Ratio General Board of Higher Education and Ministry</td>
<td>$42,150,000</td>
<td>$41,863,455</td>
<td>$35,388,987</td>
<td>$(6,474,468)</td>
<td>-15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$42,150,000</td>
<td>$41,863,455</td>
<td>$35,388,987</td>
<td>$(6,474,468)</td>
<td>-15.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. That GCFA remit monthly receipts for this fund to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (“GBHEM”) for distribution to the colleges using the formula described in the 2016 Book of Discipline, ¶ 815. Promotion of the Black College Fund shall be by the Division of Higher Education.

3. That an annual conference may make direct and/or designated gifts for current expense or capital funds purposes to one or more of these colleges, but only after it has met its full Black College Fund apportionment. There may be reasonable exceptions to this restriction, but such exceptions will be negotiated with GBHEM prior to implementation.
Background

The 1988 General Conference approved a report of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) providing for the establishment of a United Methodist university on the continent of Africa. By the time the 1992 General Conference convened, the site selection process was complete, the Zimbabwe Annual Conference had gifted the university with a large tract of land on which to establish the main campus, and the university had been granted a charter by the government of Zimbabwe. On March 23, 1992, the College of Theology and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources opened on a site near Old Mutare to forty students from six African countries.

Subsequent General Conferences have heard and affirmed reports on the continuing development of this university for all of Africa. The vitality of the university was evidenced by the creation of additional courses (now over fifteen hundred), increases in the number of faculty members and students, and the growth of the physical plant. There are currently three colleges within the university, namely: (1) College of Health, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences; (2) College of Business, Peace, Leadership, and Governance; and (3) College of Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities, and Education.

Current Realities

The student body numbers about sixteen hundred full-time students and seven hundred part-time students from twenty-six African countries. All fourteen Africa central conferences, where The United Methodist Church is experiencing significant growth, are well-represented in the student body. The university has a 97 percent graduation rate and more than 94 percent of the students live on the continent of Africa.

Africa University’s more than ninety-two-hundred alumni have solidified the university’s status as a leadership preparation institution. They are college and seminary presidents, faculty members, district superintendents, communicators, hospital and clinic managers, farmers and agricultural extension workers, and leaders in every walk of life.

Africa University’s fourth vice chancellor (president) has prioritized fiscal accountability, resulting in the eradication of an $800,000 budget deficit and moving the university to positive numbers in the 2018 audit.

The Africa University Fund supports the ministry’s core needs and amounts to 17.2 percent of the institution’s $14 million annual budget. Africa University is deeply thankful to the local churches for their ever faithful and generous contributions, leading to a significant number of annual conferences paying 100 percent or more of their asking in 2018. With 93.1 percent in overall giving in 2018, the Africa University Fund continues to be actively supported within the church.

World Service Special Gifts have also been sought since 1988. These gifts have been held and invested by the GBHEM and the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) as permanent endowment funds for the university. As of 2018, contributions and investment earnings have resulted in an endowment fund of $71 million, with the proceeds going primarily to pay for student scholarships.

The Africa University Board of Directors, Development Office, GBHEM, and GCFA are working to expand the basic infrastructure of the main campus and increase the permanent endowment fund.

Recommendations

GCFA has deep appreciation and respect for all who have worked diligently and successfully to bring the university to this point in its development—members and staff of GCFA, GBHEM, the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM); the members of the three Africa University–related board of directors; administration, faculty, alumni, and students of the university; and all of the persons, churches, conferences, and other organizations who have supported the university with their time, energy, talents, and gifts. GCFA believes that the university will continue to enjoy enthusiastic support.
The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) recommends the following:

1. That the 2021-2024 apportionments be set as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFRICA UNIVERSITY FUND</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Board of Higher Education and Ministry</td>
<td>$9,433,000</td>
<td>$9,368,872</td>
<td>$7,956,157</td>
<td>$(1,412,715)</td>
<td>-15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>$9,433,000</td>
<td>$9,368,872</td>
<td>$7,956,157</td>
<td>$(1,412,715)</td>
<td>-15.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Board of Higher Education and Ministry</strong></td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,039</td>
<td>$1,989,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. That GBHEM shall be authorized to disburse funds for the development and operation of Africa University and to release such funds to the Africa University Board of Directors or such other structural units as may be created for that purpose, provided that GBHEM shall be accountable for such funds to GCFA under a written agreement developed in consultation with and approved by GCFA and the three Africa University-related Board of Directors, and, provided further, that no such funds shall be released to any structural unit whose charter, bylaws, or other governing documents have not been approved by GBHEM.

3. That permanent endowment funds for the university be held and invested by GCFA, GBHEM, and other investment managers as identified by GBHEM and the three Africa University-related Board of Directors. Permanent endowment funds include the World Service Gift receipts and any other funds that may be raised by the university and designated by the donor for this purpose. GCFA and GBHEM are authorized to disburse income earned from the permanent endowment funds under the same conditions as set forth in ¶ 2 above. The provisions of this report shall not limit the authority of the Africa University-related Board of Directors to raise and administer permanent endowment funds and/or funds for the development and operation of the university from sources other than those from which contributions to the Africa University Fund or the World Service Special Gifts fund would normally be sought.

4. That an annual conference may make direct and/or designated gifts for current expense or capital funds purposes to Africa University.

5. That adjustments in the provisions of this report, except for the amount of the Africa University Fund, may be made by the GCFA on recommendations of GBHEM and the Africa University-related Boards of Directors after consultation with the Council of Bishops.
The General Council on Finance and Administration ("GCFA") has prepared a budget for support of the bishops of The United Methodist Church that reflects current economic conditions. Health-care costs are projected to rise annually by 6 percent and overall inflation is anticipated to be approximately 2 percent per year during the 2021-2024 quadrennium. Apportionment funding from the jurisdictional conferences is increasing by 6.7 percent. Support from the central conferences is decreasing by 0.5 percent, as professing membership is lower than the projection used in preparing the 2017-2020 budget. The net result is an increase of episcopal funding globally of 6.4 percent. Assuming an annual collection rate of 90 percent during 2019-2024, this projection would require use of $8.4 million of accumulated reserves, with a projected ending reserve level of $0.9 million at the close of the 2021-2024 quadrennium.

Given the already high utilization of reserves with a 90 percent collection rate, and the low level of reserves projected, it will be important for GCFA, in cooperation with the Council of Bishops, to closely monitor both income and expenses and find appropriate solutions to ensure Episcopal Fund reserves are not entirely depleted. Cost containment measures incorporated into this budget include:

- 1.5 percent annual salary increase for all bishops;
- A 12 percent reduction in office allowance funding compared to the 2019 level;
- No increase to the housing grant from the $10,000 per year that was approved for the 2017-2020 quadrennial budget; and
- $1.6 million reduction in cost projections for Council of Bishops and other meetings, which will be accomplished through the increased use of online or virtual meetings, as well as selecting sites that have a lower cost base.

Section III-A below provides authority to GCFA to adjust the budget as necessary to respond to relevant changes in economic circumstances.

The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with ¶ 818.3, provides for the salary and expenses of active bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops. This budget provides for the same number of bishops in the jurisdictions as 2017-2020 and, as mandated by the 2016 General Conference, for five additional bishops in Africa. The average total cost of each active jurisdictional bishop for the upcoming quadrennium is projected to be $1,415,000, while the average cost of a central conference bishop for the upcoming quadrennium is projected to be $970,000. Subject to the approval of GCFA, the treasurer will have authority to borrow for the benefit of the Episcopal Fund such amounts as may be necessary for the proper execution of the orders of the General Conference.

GCFA presents the following recommendations concerning items in the Episcopal Fund for the 2021-2024 quadrennium, to become effective at the adjournment of the 2020 General Conference. The items will be reviewed and set annually by GCFA.

I. Bishops Elected by the Jurisdictional and Central Conferences

A proposed annual spending plan of estimated receipts on apportionment of the Episcopal Fund and expenses for each episcopal office will be submitted to GCFA on forms furnished by it. The proposed spending plan will include funding for salary, housing allowance, and office expense as recommended by the respective episcopal area, jurisdictional or central conference, or its committee on episcopacy.

A. Salaries

1. Active Bishops. All salaries are set annually by GCFA. The salary of a bishop newly elected in 2020 or 2021 will begin on the date of his or her consecration, or up to seven weeks prior to their assignment date, whichever is later, at the annual rate established by GCFA for 2020 or 2021.

   a. Jurisdictional Conferences. In 2019, the salary for jurisdictional bishops is $162,350. Any salary adjustments for 2021 through 2024 will be set by GCFA annually. While the current projections are for a 1.5 percent annual increase, considerations for determining salary adjustments each year will include the percentage adjustment for workers in state and local government as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the review of other relevant compensation studies as determined by GCFA, and the overall economic status of the Episcopal Fund and its reserves.
GCFA will notify each newly elected bishop’s current salary-paying unit of the date on which payment of salary from the Episcopal Fund will begin.

b. Central Conferences. The salary of each bishop will be recommended by the respective central conference or its committee on episcopacy as included in the area spending plan. For 2019, the salaries for central conference bishops are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episcopal Area / Regions</th>
<th>2019 Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>$ 79,788.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>$ 79,788.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and Southern Europe</td>
<td>$ 127,491.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasia</td>
<td>$ 65,982.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>$ 61,824.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic and Baltic</td>
<td>$ 96,553.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any salary adjustments for 2021 through 2024 will be set by GCFA annually after reviewing the recommendations. While the current projections are for a 1.5 percent annual increase, GCFA will determine the salary adjustments each year with consideration to the requests individually and in total. Additional considerations will include the review of cost-of-living changes in each episcopal area, relevant compensation studies as determined by GCFA, and the overall economic status of the Episcopal Fund and its reserves.

2. Special Assignment (¶ 408.1d)

a. Bishops who have retired pursuant to ¶ 408.1 and who accept a special assignment from the Council of Bishops to a general agency or United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education as outlined in ¶ 408.1d(2) will receive remuneration not to exceed 20 percent of an active bishop’s salary in the episcopal area from which they retired. The Episcopal Fund’s share will not exceed 50 percent of the established compensation. The agency or institution of higher learning will assume all responsibility for the bishop’s operational and travel expenses related to the assignment.

b. Retired bishops who accept a special assignment from the Council of Bishops with a direct relationship and accountability to the Council of Bishops following mandatory retirement, as outlined in ¶ 408.1d(1) (example: COB Executive Secretary or Ecumenical Officer), will receive remuneration of 20 percent of an active bishop’s current salary in the episcopal area from which the bishop retired.

3. Salary Payment. Due to the variation in time of election, consecration, and assignment, there may be up to seven weeks of salary and benefits provided from the Episcopal Fund prior to the date of assignment for any newly elected bishop.

B. Episcopal Residence/Housing

The annual conference or conferences constituting the episcopal area to which the bishop is assigned will be responsible for providing an episcopal residence or allowance for the bishop.

1. Housing Grant (Jurisdictional Conferences). The Episcopal Fund will provide a grant annually to the annual conference to assist in the cost of providing an episcopal residence or allowance. The amount for each episcopal area will be set annually by GCFA.

2. Housing Grant (Central Conferences). The Episcopal Fund will provide a grant annually to the annual conference to assist in the cost of providing an episcopal residence or allowance. The amount for each episcopal area will be set annually by GCFA.

3. Guidelines will be developed by the respective jurisdictional or central conference committees on episcopacy for transition in episcopal residences.

4. If a bishop dies while in active service and the episcopal residence is provided by the annual conference, the surviving spouse may continue to occupy the episcopal residence for up to 120 days following the date of death of the bishop.
C. Office Expense

1. Each episcopal area will receive an annual grant as set each year by GCFA to be applied toward the operation of the office. Such grant will be paid quarterly to jurisdictional bishops and monthly to bishops in central conferences.

D. Pension

1. **Jurisdictional bishops.** For service years beginning before January 1, 1982, pensions for the support of bishops elected by jurisdictional conferences and those of their surviving spouses and minor children will include the benefits provided by the Global Episcopal Pension Program.

   For service years beginning January 1, 1982, and thereafter, pensions for the support of bishops elected by jurisdictional conferences and those of their surviving spouses and minor children will include the benefits provided by the Ministerial Pension Plan, amended and restated effective January 1, 2007, as the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), and the Comprehensive Protection Plan of Wespath.

2. **Central Conference bishops.** Pensions for the support of bishops elected by central conferences and those of their surviving spouses and minor children shall include the benefits provided by Wespath.

E. Travel Expense

The Episcopal Fund will pay the travel expenses of all members of the Council of Bishops in accordance with the Episcopal Fund Travel Expense Guidelines and Policies then in effect. These travel expense policies are in accordance with the General Agency Expense and Reimbursement Policies for all general funds of The United Methodist Church as approved by GCFA.

II. Miscellaneous Other Matters

A. Council of Bishops Staff Office

The Council of Bishops will submit an annual spending plan to GCFA providing for the expenses related to the Council of Bishops staff and the office located in Washington, D.C. The administrative costs and other expenses incurred by the Council of Bishops staff in the performance of the duties of this office will also be included in the spending plan. The spending plan will be subject to the approval of GCFA.

B. Ecumenical and Interreligious Ministries

The Council of Bishops will submit an annual spending plan to GCFA to provide for expenses incurred pertaining to the Ecumenical and Interreligious ministries of the Council of Bishops. The spending plan is subject to the approval of GCFA.

C. Faith and Order Ministries Work

The Council of Bishops will submit an annual spending plan to GCFA to provide for expenses incurred pertaining to the Faith and Order ministries of the Council of Bishops. The spending plan is subject to the approval of GCFA.

III. Funding

A. Changes During Quadrennium

If, in the judgment of GCFA, economic conditions require increasing or decreasing the amounts authorized in this report, GCFA is authorized to make such adjustments.
B. Apportionment for the Episcopal Fund

Both the jurisdictional and central conferences will be apportioned based upon the formulas recommended by GCFA in Report No. 8. GCFA recommends the apportionment for the Episcopal Fund during the 2021-2024 quadrennium be:

**Episcopal Fund**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Charges</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>$3,000,000</td>
<td>$2,979,605</td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
<td>$(379,605)</td>
<td>-12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,979,605</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,600,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$(379,605)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-12.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdictional On-Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
<td>$84,436,000</td>
<td>$83,861,986</td>
<td>$95,576,000</td>
<td>$11,714,014</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Christian Unity and Interreligions Relationships</td>
<td>$5,213,184</td>
<td>$5,177,744</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$(5,177,744)</td>
<td>-100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jurisdictional On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$89,649,184</strong></td>
<td><strong>$89,039,730</strong></td>
<td><strong>$95,576,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,536,270</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Jurisdictional Apportionments</td>
<td>$92,649,184</td>
<td>$92,019,335</td>
<td>$98,176,000</td>
<td>$6,156,665</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Conference On-Ratio (1)</td>
<td>$3,664,928</td>
<td>$3,690,081</td>
<td>$3,671,650</td>
<td>$(18,431)</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$96,314,112</strong></td>
<td><strong>$95,709,416</strong></td>
<td><strong>$101,847,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,138,234</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) During 2013-2016, there was not an apportionment formula for the Central Conferences. The amounts shown were voluntary contributions from each Episcopal area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Charges</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$650,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$650,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$650,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$650,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdictional On-Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
<td>$23,894,000</td>
<td>$23,894,000</td>
<td>$23,894,000</td>
<td>$23,894,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Christian Unity and Interreligions Relationships</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jurisdictional On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,894,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,894,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,894,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23,894,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Jurisdictional Apportionments</td>
<td>$24,544,000</td>
<td>$24,544,000</td>
<td>$24,544,000</td>
<td>$24,544,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Conference On-Ratio</td>
<td>$917,913</td>
<td>$917,913</td>
<td>$917,913</td>
<td>$917,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,461,913</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,461,913</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,461,913</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25,461,913</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The General Administration Fund (Book of Discipline, 2016, ¶ 813) finances general church activities that are specifically administrative in nature, as contrasted with programmatic, missional, or ecumenical in scope and purpose.

In the 2021-2024 quadrennium, the jurisdictional apportionments for these General Administration Fund activities will decrease by 18.4 percent from the 2017-2020 quadrennium. Since the central conference apportionments are a factor of per member apportionments in the jurisdictions (see Report No. 8), they are also declining, but only by 16.1 percent.

Discussion of Specific Budget Items

The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) (¶ 805.6a). GCFA reports to and is amenable to the General Conference and is responsible for receiving and distributing general church funds. In addition, GCFA provides certain administrative services to the General Administration Fund including general ledger processing and maintenance, cash management, and group insurance plan administration. A more detailed description of GCFA’s activities is found in Report No. 14.

General Conference (¶¶ 501-511). The apportionments for General Conference go to fund delegate expenses, operation costs (convention center and equipment rental, publishing, petition tracking software, worship, labor), language services (printed translation of advance materials and spoken interpretation on site), expenses of the offices of the secretary, business manager, and treasurer of the General Conference, and expenses of the several commissions and committees in support of the event.

The changing global nature of the church is due in part to the rapidly growing membership in central conferences. The percentage of delegates from central conferences has increased significantly since the start of this millennium, which was 16 percent in 2000. The percent of delegates from central conferences for the most current four quadrennia is 29 percent in 2008; 38 percent in 2012; 42 percent in 2016; and 44 percent in 2020. This change in representation has resulted in two of the four major cost drivers increasing significantly:

1. The budgeted cost of language and translation services in 2024 is:
   a. Oral interpretation - $1,450,000
   b. Written interpretation - $490,000

2. In 2016, the average travel costs for delegates from within the United States was approximately $765 for each delegate, while the average travel cost for delegates from central conferences was approximately $3,365 each. As representation from central conferences grows, because of growth in membership, so likewise does the cost of travel for delegates.

The Commission on the General Conference launched a ministry partner program for the 2012 General Conference with the intent of creating an income stream that may permit the payment of some of the accumulated costs. This program will continue through the 2024 General Conference. Ministry partnership net income (after expenses) provided in 2016 was approximately $400,000 and is expected to be approximately $725,000 in 2020.

The General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) (¶¶ 1701-1712). The purpose of the GCAH is to promote and preserve the historical interests of The United Methodist Church and its antecedents. The commission accomplishes this uniquely administrative and programmatic mission by gathering, preserving, holding title to, and disseminating materials representing the history of the denomination.

The commission’s “Ministry of Memory” serves these functions for all levels of the connection. In addition, it serves UMC seminary students and professors worldwide in basic preparatory and more highly academic Wesleyan-Methodist studies. It also anticipates increased support for central conference historians and leaders, many beginning basic archival collections of their own.

The commission also manages a Historic Sites and Heritage Landmarks (¶ 1712) program supervising more than five hundred denominational historic sites and nearly fifty heritage landmarks across the global connection.

The Judicial Council (¶¶ 2601-2612). The Judicial Council is the highest judicial body in The United Methodist Church connection. It determines the legality and/or constitutionality of actions by agencies, boards, conferences, and officials of the church. Paragraph 813.3 provides that the expenses of the Judicial Council will be paid from the General Administration Fund, within a budget submitted annually to GCFA for its approval.

Pension and Salary Aid. Funding for salary and pension assistance programs are included in this item. In the
Contingency Reserve. This allocation provides funding for unforeseen or emergency situations that fall within the scope of general administration. There is funding from both the jurisdictions and central conferences for this fund.

The amount of funding from the jurisdictional apportionments is declining by more than 52 percent from 2017-2020. During 2017-2020 the majority of spending from the Jurisdictional Funds was $1.0 million to help fund the 2019 session of General Conference, $0.2 million for extended cabinet meetings in the fall of 2016 and $0.15 million for the Jurisdictional Study Committee.

The funds that have come from central conference apportionments since 2017 have given priority to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters in its work to develop the *General Book of Discipline* for presentation to the 2020 General Conference, including a third meeting during the quadrennium, the new membership composition of the Standing Committee, and the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Africa. A total of $0.5 million was allocated for these purposes during 2017-2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pension Aid</td>
<td>138,000</td>
<td>137,062</td>
<td>112,420</td>
<td>(24,642)</td>
<td>-18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Aid</td>
<td>1,556,000</td>
<td>1,545,422</td>
<td>1,267,580</td>
<td>(277,842)</td>
<td>-18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande Annual Conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Aid</td>
<td>805,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$2,499,000</td>
<td>$1,682,484</td>
<td>$1,380,000</td>
<td>$(302,484)</td>
<td>-18.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2013-2016 quadrennium, funding for salary aid to the Rio Grande Annual Conference was included. Since the 2017-2020 quadrennium funding was not specifically identified for this Conference, due to the merger with the Southwest Texas Annual Conference, the funding that was utilized for Rio Grande salary aid was moved to Contingency Funds for the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

The proposed budget for 2021-2024 for these purposes is:
### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND

#### Jurisdictional On-Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>$16,844,000</td>
<td>$16,729,491</td>
<td>$12,979,000</td>
<td>$(3,750,491)</td>
<td>-22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on Archives &amp; History Historic Shrines, Landmarks &amp; Sites</td>
<td>4,162,000</td>
<td>4,133,706</td>
<td>3,927,000</td>
<td>$(206,706)</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference</td>
<td>11,903,000</td>
<td>11,822,081</td>
<td>10,451,000</td>
<td>(1,371,081)</td>
<td>-11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Committee Central Conference Matters</td>
<td>293,000</td>
<td>291,008</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(2,910,08)</td>
<td>-100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Council</td>
<td>587,000</td>
<td>583,009</td>
<td>583,000</td>
<td>(4,009)</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension and Salary Aid - Rio Grand Conf. (1)</td>
<td>805,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension and Salary Aid - Oklahoma Conf.</td>
<td>1,694,000</td>
<td>1,682,484</td>
<td>1,380,000</td>
<td>(302,484)</td>
<td>-18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>861,000</td>
<td>1,654,674</td>
<td>790,000</td>
<td>(864,674)</td>
<td>-52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jurisdictional On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$37,149,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$36,896,453</strong></td>
<td><strong>$30,110,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>($6,786,453)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-18.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Central Conference On-Ratio (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing Committee Central Conference Matters</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>1,479,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Central Conference On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 1,479,590</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Grand Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jurisdictional On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$37,149,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Conference On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38,376,043</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$78,525,043</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Rio Grande Annual Conference has merged with the Southwest Texas Annual Conference. Apportionment support in 2013-2016 was $805,000. These funds were moved to the Contingency Fund in 2017-2020.

(2) This represents the Central Conference apportionments as outlined by the formula in Report 8.

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### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FUND

#### Jurisdictional On-Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>$3,244,750</td>
<td>$3,244,750</td>
<td>$3,244,750</td>
<td>$3,244,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commission on Archives &amp; History Historic Shrines, Landmarks &amp; Sites</td>
<td>981,750</td>
<td>981,750</td>
<td>981,750</td>
<td>981,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference</td>
<td>2,612,750</td>
<td>2,612,750</td>
<td>2,612,750</td>
<td>2,612,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Council</td>
<td>145,750</td>
<td>145,750</td>
<td>145,750</td>
<td>145,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension and Salary Aid - Oklahoma Conf.</td>
<td>345,000</td>
<td>345,000</td>
<td>345,000</td>
<td>345,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>197,500</td>
<td>197,500</td>
<td>197,500</td>
<td>197,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Jurisdictional On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,527,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,527,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,527,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,527,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Central Conference On-Ratio (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing Committee Central Conference Matters</td>
<td>118,750</td>
<td>118,750</td>
<td>118,750</td>
<td>118,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>191,750</td>
<td>191,750</td>
<td>191,750</td>
<td>191,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Central Conference On-Ratio</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Grand Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>$7,838,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,838,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,838,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,838,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,838,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) This represents the Central Conference apportionments as outlined by the formula in Report 8.
“As part of the church universal, 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: through world relationships with other Methodist churches . . . through councils of churches, and through plans of union and covenantal relationships with churches of Methodist or other denominational traditions.”

From the Book of Discipline, ¶ 6. Article VI. Ecumenical Relations

The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund allows The United Methodist Church to partner with Christian sisters and brothers throughout the world to fulfill a shared ecumenical mission. Our relationships with ecumenical partners enable us to witness together while respecting our unique traditions and distinctions, engaging in ministries that foster justice, mercy, and peace in God’s world.

In partnership with other Christian communions, the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund provides operating and other support for organizations that relate to the ecumenical responsibility of the Council of Bishops. The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) recommends the annual budgeted amounts for the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund to the General Conference from recommendations developed in consultation with the Council of Bishops (Book of Discipline, ¶ 814.2).

GCFA, working collaboratively with the Connectional Table (CT), determined that the funding for the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund would be significantly below previous levels, resulting in a reduction of 87 percent from the 2017-2020 quadrennium. This reduction is designed to reduce the fund balance that has increased over the past several years, with the expectation that the General Conference of 2024 may choose to increase the funding as fund balances diminish during 2021-2024. At the end of 2018 there was a total fund balance of $5,951,812. These funds are also restricted for specific purposes as shown in the chart below.

**INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND BALANCES AT 12/31/18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization / Activity</th>
<th>2018 Fund Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Councils of Churches / Regional Ecumenical Organizations</td>
<td>$2,914,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Council of Churches / International Ecumenical Organizations</td>
<td>844,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian World Communions / Methodist Unity:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Methodist Council</td>
<td>119,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan Methodist Commission</td>
<td>240,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical / Multilateral Conversations</td>
<td>342,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Representative Travel</td>
<td>711,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interreligious Relations</td>
<td>280,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches Uniting In Christ</td>
<td>34,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Reserve</td>
<td>463,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fund Balances</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,951,812</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the increasing balances for the restricted purposes shown above and the significant decrease in funding for 2021-2024, the total of all Interdenominational Cooperation Fund balances at the end of 2020 will be transferred to a single line item called Ecumenical & Interreligious Activity & Relations. Each year the Council of Bishops will continue to present an annual spending plan for the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund to
GCFA for approval. This spending plan will show the specific areas of funding. This will provide greater flexibility to provide support to organizations and areas as needs change and develop.

**Explanation of Items Historically Funded by the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund**

**General Council on Finance and Administration.** GCFA reports to and is amenable to the General Conference and is responsible for receiving and distributing general church funds. A portion of the council’s expenses is charged as a direct charge to the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund as provided in ¶ 805.6a and Report No. 14.

**National Councils of Churches/Regional Ecumenical Organizations.** This line includes funds to support the work of councils or organizations whose membership is limited to a specific country or geographic region. Among the specific organizations currently receiving support is the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. This council comprises thirty-eight member denominations and communions in the United States representing more than 40 million Christians and about 100,000 local congregations.

**World Council of Churches/International Ecumenical Organizations.** This category includes funds to support the work of councils or organizations whose membership is not limited to a specific country or geographic region. The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund supports the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948. The council includes 350 member communions throughout the world representing more than 500 million Christians. Funds in this category provide for United Methodist participation in the work and life of the World Council of Churches, with a focus on justice and peace. Funds are also provided for the United Methodist commitment for costs of the World Council of Churches Assembly, the next one to be held in Germany in 2021, including travel and related expenses for Christians from around the globe.

**Christian World Communions/Methodist Unity.** This category includes funds to support the work of ecumenical organizations whose members trace their origins to religious traditions started by John Wesley. One such conciliar partner, dedicated to nurturing unity in the Methodist family, is the World Methodist Council. Established in 1881, the World Methodist Council is a worldwide association of eighty Methodist, Wesleyan, and related Uniting and United Churches representing more than 80 million people in 138 countries. The Interdenominational Cooperation Fund allocation provides for United Methodist participation in the work and life of the council.

**Pan-Methodist Commission.** This allocation of funding relates to ongoing ministry on matters of mutual interest among representatives of The United Methodist Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The African Union Methodist Protestant Church, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and The Union American Methodist Episcopal Church. The commission is currently engaged in fulfilling the vision of full communion among its member churches.

**Ecumenical/Multilateral Conversations.** Provides funding for ongoing and proposed meetings with representatives of other denominations for dialogue, including but not limited to the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Provinces), and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**Ecumenical Representative Travel.** To ensure a United Methodist voice and presence in worldwide deliberations and meetings of funded ecumenical bodies, travel expenses for United Methodist representatives named by the Council of Bishops are paid from the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund (¶ 814.4). Costs and expenses are paid in accordance with guidelines adopted by GCFA, with appropriate and approved limitations. Covered meetings include those of the governing board, convening tables, and other units of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; the central and executive committees of the World Council of Churches, including other structural units and periodic assembly; the executive committee members and at-large delegates of the World Methodist Council; meetings of Churches Uniting in Christ, Christian Churches Together, and the Pan-Methodist Commission; and United Methodist participation in concordat relationships, and other ecumenical activities of recognized bodies.

**Interreligious Relations.** This funding provides resources for United Methodists to engage more directly with neighbors of other faith communities. Funding could be used to provide information, materials, and support for dialogues locally and regionally, and to support ecumenical programs involving interfaith partners, such as Religions for Peace, USA.
## INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>206,000</td>
<td>204,600</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>(140,600)</td>
<td>-68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 220,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 206,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 204,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 64,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ (140,600)</strong></td>
<td><strong>-68.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On-Ratio

| National Councils of Churches/Regional Ecumenical Organizations | $2,600,000 | $2,500,000 | $2,483,005 | $ - | $(2,483,005) | -100.0% |
| World Council of Churches/International Ecumenical Organizations | 2,290,000 | 2,192,000 | 2,177,098 | - | (2,177,098) | -100.0% |
| Christian World Communions/Methodist Unity: | | | | | | |
| World Methodist Council | 2,115,000 | 1,940,000 | 1,926,812 | - | (1,926,812) | -100.0% |
| Pan Methodist Commission | 135,000 | 100,000 | 99,320 | - | (99,320) | -100.0% |
| Ecumenical/Multilateral Conversations | 300,000 | 316,000 | 313,852 | - | (313,852) | -100.0% |
| Ecumenical Representative Travel | 740,000 | 760,000 | 754,833 | - | (754,833) | -100.0% |
| Interreligious Relations | 155,000 | 150,000 | 148,980 | - | (148,980) | -100.0% |
| Ecumenical & Interreligious Activity & Relations | 994,520 | 994,520 | | | | |
| Contingency Reserve | 100,000 | 100,000 | 99,320 | - | (99,320) | -100.0% |
| **Total On-Ratio** | **$8,435,000** | **$8,058,000** | **$8,003,220** | $ 994,520 | **$(7,008,700)** | **-87.6%** |
| **Grand Total** | **$8,655,000** | **$8,264,000** | **$8,207,820** | **$1,058,520** | **$(7,149,300)** | **-87.1%** |

### INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION FUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Charges</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Council on Finance and Administration</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 16,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 16,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 16,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 16,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On-Ratio

| Ecumenical & Interreligious Activity & Relations | 248,630 | 248,630 | 248,630 | 248,630 |
|**Total On-Ratio** | **$ 248,630** | **$ 248,630** | **$ 248,630** | **$ 248,630** |
|**Grand Total** | **$ 264,630** | **$ 264,630** | **$ 264,630** | **$ 264,630** |
The 2016 *Book of Discipline* provides that the General Council on Finance and Administration ("GCFA") will recommend the formulas by which all apportionments to the annual conferences shall be determined, subject to the approval of the General Conference (¶ 806.1c). This report is therefore concerned with the following funds: World Service, Ministerial Education, Black College, Africa University, Episcopal, Interdenominational Cooperation, and General Administration.

**Recommendations**

1. GCFA recommends adoption of the following jurisdictional conference apportionment formula:

   The recommended formula is:

   \[ A = E \times P \]

   Where:

   A represents an annual conference’s *General Church Apportionment*

   E represents the annual conference’s “Net Expenditures”

   P represents the “Base Percentage”

   a. “Net Expenditures” (E) consists of the total local church expenditures in the annual conference, less (1) current capital expenditures, (2) expenditures on capital debt service, (3) payments toward general church apportionments, and (4) all other benevolence giving. The net expenditures will be calculated with the most recent year for which complete data is available. All the components are currently reported through local church statistical reports. The actual and estimated net expenditures for the 2021-2024 quadrennium are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Data</th>
<th>Year of Apportionment</th>
<th>Net Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$4,621,552,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>$4,609,329,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>$4,572,580,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>$4,480,122,723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   b. “Base Percentage” (P) consists of a simple percentage set by the General Conference on recommendation of GCFA. When applied to the “Net Expenditures” for all conferences, it will yield the total to be apportioned for all general church funds. After determining the amount it recommends to the General Conference as the annual total of all apportioned general funds, GCFA recommends the “Base Percentage” for each year of the quadrennium as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Projected Apportionment</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$123,442,008</td>
<td>2.6710075%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>$123,442,008</td>
<td>2.6780905%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>$123,442,008</td>
<td>2.6996134%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>$123,442,001</td>
<td>2.7553263%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. While there is a three-year lag between the year of apportionment and the data year, any churches that are closed or no longer affiliated with The United Methodist Church when the apportionments are calculated and communicated to the annual conferences will be excluded from the calculations. The apportionments are usually delivered to the annual conferences by December 31st of the apportionment year minus 2 years. For example 2022 apportionments would be given to the annual conferences by December 31, 2020.
2. GCFA recommends that the central conference apportionment formula for 2021-2022 apply to both the Episcopal Fund and the General Administration Fund, since both of these funds directly support the central conferences.

GCFA recommends adoption of the following central conference apportionment formula for the Episcopal and General Administration Funds:

The recommended formula is:

\[ A = (J \times M) \times i \]

Where:

- **A** represents a central conference annual conference’s General Church Apportionment
- **J** represents the Jurisdictional Apportionments per Professing Member for each of the Episcopal and General Administration Funds
- **M** represents the number of Professing Members in the Central Conference Annual Conference
- **i** represents the central conference’s “Economic Adjustment Factor”

a. “Jurisdictional apportionments per professing member” (**J**). This factor will be calculated each year based upon the actual apportionments for that year divided by the number of professing members three years prior. For example, 2021 apportionments per professing member would use the actual apportionments for 2021 and the professing members at the end of 2018. The current estimate for this factor in 2021-2024 is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episcopal Fund</th>
<th>General Administration Fund</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$3.80</td>
<td>$1.17</td>
<td>$4.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. “Professing Members” (**M**) consists of the professing members of each annual conference within the central conferences as reported in the annual statistics sent to GCFA. These statistics should also agree with the data published in the annual conference journals. Membership was chosen as a basis for the apportionment formula because the availability and reliability of the data was better than revenue or expenditure-based options. The membership used in this calculation will be the membership of the annual conference three years prior to the apportionment year. This is consistent with the membership used in the calculation of “J” above.

c. “Economic Adjustment Factor” (**i**) is unique to each annual conference within the central conferences. The exact value of the “Economic Adjustment” for a conference will vary during the quadrennium as new economic and statistical reports become available. The factor to be used for the economic adjustment in the annual conferences is each country’s or annual conference’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita in relation to the U.S., expressed as a percentage. The source used for this data for the current quadrennium will be a credible source as chosen by GCFA, and the most recent data point available at the time of apportionment calculations will be used. In calculating the average GDP for annual conferences in multiple countries, the country GDP data will be weighted by the number of professing members as reported in each country.

Based upon the recommended formula and the assumptions outlined above, the projected central conference apportionments for the 2017-2020 quadrennium are shown in the chart at the bottom of the page.

3. Using the jurisdictional formula, GCFA will first calculate the total amount to be apportioned to each annual conference for the applicable apportioned general funds. The apportionment for each fund will then be calculated
in direct proportion to that fund’s approved amount. Each annual conference will therefore continue to receive from GCFA an annual statement showing its apportionments for each applicable general fund. Each annual conference will continue to have the authority to apportion those amounts to its charges or churches by whatever formula or method it determines (¶ 613.3).

4. If an annual conference decides to combine general church apportionments with each other or with conference apportioned funds for apportioning to local churches, the receipts on such combined funds will be allocated in direct proportion to the budgeted amounts for each fund or cause included in the combined fund budget, and amounts so allocated to general church funds will be remitted to GCFA on a monthly basis.

5. If more than 100 percent of the amount voted by General Conference for jurisdictional apportionments for a general fund is received in any given year, the excess funds will be held in trust by GCFA in an apportionment stabilization fund. All monies placed in such a fund will be considered as fund balances restricted by the General Conference to the fund or line item in which the surplus occurred. They will be held by GCFA until such time as shortfalls in such receipts occur during the same quadrennium, at which time they may be distributed to compensate for the shortfalls. If undistributed funds remain at the end of the quadrennium, due to excess receipts beyond the amounts needed to compensate for shortfalls, GCFA will recommend for action by the next General Conference how any remaining fund balances should be distributed, provided that those recommendations will be consistent with the purposes for which the funds were raised.

6. In adopting this report, the General Conference authorizes GCFA to make such changes in the language and definitions of this report as other General Conference actions or changed circumstances may require, while preserving as much as possible the substance and content of this report.

7. Additional information concerning local church expenditures and economic growth will be collected between the time of this publication and the meeting of the 2020 General Conference. The projected total apportioned funds presented herein represent only a current recommendation to General Conference, and the final total apportioned funds are subject to being determined by General Conference. This additional information and possible changes adopted by General Conference could alter both the projections of net expenditures and the total apportioned funds used to calculate the base percentage for the 2021-2024 quadrennium.
The General Council on Finance and Administration ("GCFA"), in consultation with the Connectional Table ("CT") and the Council of Bishops, makes recommendations to the General Conference regarding any offerings to be received in connection with special days observed on a churchwide basis. All such recommendations are subject to the approval of the General Conference.

### Sundays with General Church Offerings

The 2016 *Book of Discipline* designates six special Sundays during which offerings for general church purposes are to be received (¶¶ 824, 262, 263).

1. The following table indicates the total offerings remitted to GCFA from the Special Sundays during 2013-2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Sunday Offering</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations Day</td>
<td>519,093</td>
<td>521,392</td>
<td>540,834</td>
<td>516,071</td>
<td>544,329</td>
<td>493,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>2,590,372</td>
<td>3,001,634</td>
<td>2,827,829</td>
<td>2,613,106</td>
<td>2,348,825</td>
<td>2,795,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Student Day</td>
<td>408,420</td>
<td>430,115</td>
<td>408,155</td>
<td>428,326</td>
<td>431,753</td>
<td>398,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Communion Sunday</td>
<td>795,899</td>
<td>836,385</td>
<td>832,678</td>
<td>819,346</td>
<td>777,600</td>
<td>711,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace With Justice Sunday</td>
<td>209,801</td>
<td>216,746</td>
<td>226,157</td>
<td>220,803</td>
<td>221,736</td>
<td>255,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Ministries Sunday</td>
<td>359,623</td>
<td>265,781</td>
<td>318,958</td>
<td>325,674</td>
<td>301,847</td>
<td>329,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,883,208</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,272,053</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,154,612</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,923,326</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,626,091</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,985,152</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. For the 2021-2024 quadrennium, GCFA recommends six general church special Sunday offerings be received:

- **Human Relations Day** (¶¶ 824.1, 263.1)
- **One Great Hour of Sharing** (¶¶ 824.2, 263.2)
- **United Methodist Student Day** (¶¶ 824.3, 263.4)
- **World Communion Sunday** (¶¶ 824.4, 263.3)
- **Peace with Justice Sunday** (¶¶ 824.5, 263.5)
- **Native American Ministries Sunday** (¶¶ 824.6, 263.6)

### Directives

The following directives will apply to each of the six general church Special Sunday offerings:

1. Promotion of all authorized general church special Sunday offerings will be by the General Commission on Communications ("UMCom"), in consultation with the administering agencies. Expenses of promotion for each offering shall be a charge against receipts in an amount determined in the manner described in Report No. 11.

2. Receipts from all authorized general church special Sunday offerings will promptly be remitted in full by the local church treasurer to the annual conference treasurer, who will, within thirty days of receipt, remit the funds in full to the treasurer of GCFA, except where noted differently below. Local churches will report the amount of the offerings in the manner indicated on the Local Church Report to the Annual Conference. In the case of Native American Ministries and Peace with Justice Sunday offerings, the annual conference treasurer will divide the receipts as specified in the relevant disciplinary paragraphs.

3. The following table indicates the amounts of the respective offerings that are to be remitted and the amounts that are to be retained for use by the annual conference:
Sundays with Offerings Authorized for Use Within the Annual Conference

The 2016 Book of Discipline authorizes offerings in connection with five special Sundays for which the offering receipts are to be retained for use within the annual conference. These offerings may be received in accordance with the provisions of the 2016 Book of Discipline:

- Christian Education Sunday (¶ 265.1)
- Golden Cross Sunday (¶ 265.2)
- Rural Life Sunday (¶ 265.3)
- Disability Awareness Sunday (¶ 265.4)
- Volunteers in Mission Awareness Sunday (¶ 265.5)
The Committee on Audit and Review (“Committee”) of the General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) has the principal function of assessing the fiscal stewardship of the agencies and missions wholly or partly funded by The United Methodist Church. This function is only a part of the general church’s fiduciary duty to effectively and transparently utilize funds entrusted to it by donors and by the blessings of our God.

The Committee has two primary methods for accomplishing its function.

The first is to evaluate the qualifications, independence, experience, and expertise of outside auditing firms and engage the best firm available to examine the records, financial statements, and procedures of each church agency. The Committee’s task is to evaluate the auditor’s findings and reports to determine whether there are any opportunities to improve on the fiscal transparency or accountability of each agency. Each year, this audit firm reports all findings resulting from its examination of each agency directly to the Committee.

The second is to employ an internal audit firm to examine areas of particular concern in agency or mission operations, in partnership with the external auditor. While the outside auditor can evaluate an agency’s fiscal processes and procedures on an overall scale once a year, the internal auditor identifies specific areas within an agency for additional focused examination throughout the year, and reports to the agency and to the Committee opportunities for improvement regarding the areas examined.

Awareness of the fiduciary obligations to the general church and its donors must be continually reinforced by the Committee, as must the importance of the perception and the reality of financial and operational transparency. Identifying opportunities for improving methods for achieving these goals, followed by prompt, effective action, is central to this effort.

**Internal Audit Function**

The internal audit function is performed by the accounting firm of Lattimore, Black, Morgan & Cain, PC (“LBMC”). The firm was recommended by the Committee and approved by GCFA. LBMC has performed the internal audit function since 2012. The internal audit firm reports to the Committee. This reporting relationship ensures that the internal audit function can remain objective and independent while performing audits.

The internal audit function is responsible for auditing the general agencies and other affiliated entities that receive general church funds. A cornerstone of strong governance, internal auditing bridges the gap between management and the board, assesses the ethical climate and the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, and serves as an organization’s safety net for compliance with rules, regulations, and overall best business practices. General agency staff involved in internal audits throughout the quadrennium expressed appreciation for the work done by LBMC for a high degree of professionalism in its work, and for helpful and relevant feedback given to improve fiscal operations at the agencies. In 2018, the Committee approved a new four-year contract to continue with LBMC as the internal audit firm through 2022.

**External Audit Firm**

The certified public accounting firm of Cherry Bekaert has performed external audit services for the general agencies since 2014. The treasurers and chief financial officers of the general agencies have expressed gratitude for the quality of work, timeliness of the audits, and the professionalism of the Cherry Bekaert team. In 2018, the Committee approved a new two-year contract with Cherry Bekaert through the fiscal year 2019 audits.

**Audit and Review Observations**

The overall level of financial controls at the general agencies continues to improve. The Committee would like to point out three areas that continue to need focused attention by the Committee as well as agency staff during internal and external audits.

**Incomplete Operational Documentation.** The lack of documented operational procedures continues to weaken the overall level of control at the agencies. This is especially true for those agencies that have lost key employees. A great deal of institutional and operational knowledge has been lost because a number of key operational processes were not documented. While time is critical and limited for all agency personnel, time is saved overall with effective succession planning and procedure documentation when staff transition does occur.

**Incomplete Financial Documentation.** For some agencies, the external audit work revealed inadequate documentation for financial asset classification, including endowment, permanently restricted, and board-designated funds. Documentation of asset classification and fund reconciliations strengthens internal controls and provides more information for board and management decisions.
Recommendations have been made to help ensure adequate documentation is available moving forward.

**Unsecured Network and Internet Applications.** Unsecured network and internet applications continue to present a significant risk to the general agencies. As reliance on these applications to conduct critical business functions increases, the risk associated with unsecured applications increases. Both internal and external audit work has been performed to identify key areas of vulnerability and corrective actions have been recommended. This work will continue as new technologies emerge and relevant feedback is given to increase security in this area.

**Episcopal Area Audits**

Coordination of the receipt of the episcopal offices’ external audits is being handled by GCFA’s Committee on General Agency and Episcopal Matters (“GAEM”). The Committee’s internal audit firm works with GAEM by providing reviews of the audits. Any findings/observations noted are reported to the GAEM and Audit and Review Committees.

All episcopal offices are required to have audited financial statements. The option of separate audits or the inclusion of a supplemental schedule in the related annual conference audit is acceptable. The Committee is pleased to report that all episcopal office audits were received and reviewed for fiscal year 2018. These include reports from forty-six jurisdictional conference episcopal offices and nineteen central conference episcopal offices. Some deficiencies were noted in both internal controls for offices and consistency in information provided in the audit reports. Feedback was provided to the episcopal office staff where deficiencies were noted in order to assist in complete and accurate reporting for fiscal year 2019.

In addition to the external financial statement audits, the Committee has requested the internal audit function to perform process and internal control reviews at a sample of jurisdictional and central conference episcopal offices for fiscal years 2016-2018. The purpose of the reviews has been to ensure appropriate processes and internal controls are in place within the episcopal offices (or the related annual conferences) to provide reasonable assurance that allocations from the Episcopal Fund are spent only for their intended purposes and are not misappropriated or otherwise misused. Further, the reviews are an opportunity for the internal audit function to provide training to the office personnel on sound internal control practices. Based on feedback received from the related bishops and episcopal office (or annual conference) personnel, the reviews have been a welcomed service from internal audit. Further, a residual positive impact is that many of the recommendations may also be implemented by the related annual conference, which will strengthen the conferences’ internal controls as well.

**Future Activities**

The Committee remains committed to leading the church in fiscal accountability and transparency. The Committee is continually working with its internal audit firm to perform risk assessments and to address those areas where gaps in internal controls may be present.
1. **Fixed Charges.** Fixed charges in any of the general funds will be paid as expended within the limits of the approved budgets. However, the General Council on Finance and Administration ("GCFA") is authorized to adjust the fixed charges amounts in general fund budgets as emergencies, changing conditions, or the responsibilities placed upon the general agencies by the General Conference may require.

2. **On-Ratio Allocations.** All allocations from the general funds of The United Methodist Church shall be paid on ratio of net receipts after payment of fixed charges.

3. **Validity of Claims.** GCFA will be authorized to determine the validity of claims in all matters involving the World Service Fund, the Episcopal Fund, the General Administration Fund, the Black College Fund, the Ministerial Education Fund, the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund, the Africa University Fund, World Service Special gifts, the Advance, the Special Sunday offerings, or any other general fund, where these are not specifically set forth or determined by the General Conference.

4. **Conformity with Other General Conference Actions.** GCFA is granted authority to make such editorial changes in its reports as may be needed to bring them into conformity with the approved general fund budget amounts and totals, and any other applicable actions of the 2020 General Conference.

5. **GCFA Expenses.** General fund allocations to GCFA fall into two categories, as provided in ¶ 805.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*: 1) an on-ratio line item in the General Administration Fund budget; and 2) fixed charges in certain other funds for which GCFA incurs significant administrative costs, proportionate to their estimated receipts. The budget of GCFA is presented in its Report No. 14.

6. **Travel Expense and Meeting Policy for Special Committees Funded by the General Funds.** Any special committee, study group, special commission, or other special group is not directly responsible to a general agency, it will make all meeting and travel arrangements through GCFA.

7. **Application of Apportionment Formula.** As the apportionment formula is applied during the quadrennium to actual events, the outcome of the calculation may result in a different amount being apportioned than those amounts contained in the published reports. When each annual apportionment is determined, GCFA will calculate the total amount to be apportioned for each of the general funds and to each fund line item, including fixed charges, in direct proportion to the amounts approved in its Reports numbered 1 through 7.

8. **Consultants.** As part of its oversight function, GCFA will prepare and make available an annual listing of all consulting contracts entered into by agencies and organizations amenable to the Connectional Table. This shall also include the Council of Bishops. This listing will be prepared by April 1 of each year and will include contracts in place during the preceding calendar year. The list will include the name of the individual or corporate entity, address, length and purpose of the contract, and the amount of money paid for the contractor.

9. **General Agency Audits.** All treasuries receiving general church funds are required to have an annual audit as provided in ¶ 806.5.

10. **Internal Audit Functions.** GCFA has the responsibility to establish and conduct the internal auditing functions for all agencies receiving general church funds (¶ 806.6). All agencies receiving general church funds are required to comply with fiscal accountability policies and practices established by GCFA. The Committee on Audit and Review will monitor compliance with such policies and practices. If the Committee determines there are any violations, it shall proceed in a manner as outlined in ¶ 806.13 and within established policies of the Committee at that time.

11. **General Agency Budget Review.** As outlined in ¶¶ 806.3, 806.4, 806.7, 806.11, and 806.12, GCFA will review the proposed spending plan and the financial operations for each agency receiving general church funds. If GCFA determines that an agency is not in compliance
with the provisions of these paragraphs, it will proceed within its established policies at that time.

12. Approving Emerging Ministry Opportunities Between Sessions of General Conference. In the interim between quadrennial sessions of the General Conference, potential programs and initiatives of churchwide consequence may arise in response to unforeseen opportunities for mission and ministry. When these opportunities involve the expenditure of general church funds, the proposed programs or initiatives shall require the joint approval of GCFA, the Council of Bishops, and CT. When timeliness of action warrants, the executive committees or equivalent of these bodies may act in such matters for the body itself, but only by a three-fourths vote. Such programs and initiatives shall be governed by established policies of the General Conference. A report on any such programs and initiatives will be made by CT to the General Conference at its next quadrennial meeting.

13. General Commission on Communication. The General Commission on Communication ("UMCom") serves as the central agency for promoting general church funds throughout the church, as provided in ¶ 1806.12.

Promotion is aimed at individual United Methodists and seeks to foster an understanding of how giving of one’s financial resources is an integral part of the Christian life. The focus is on shared ministries that change lives. Print, video, and computer-delivered resources help United Methodists see their mission outreach, understand how their diverse ministries make a difference in human lives, and learn how the local church benefits from shared outreach.

Interpretation is aimed at the leadership of annual conferences, districts, and local congregations. It provides specific information about church funds and encourages leaders to be faithful in remitting funds to conference and general church benevolent causes. UMCom provides resources in a variety of media to be used by conference leadership, pastors and local church leadership, and staff of other general agencies.

The cost of promotional resources related to a particular fund or group of funds is covered by a fixed-charge line item in the budget of the respective funds. UMCom, following consultation with the general agency responsible for administering the fund, recommends the annual budget of fixed-charge amounts, subject to approval by GCFA. For 2021-2024, the fixed charges line items total $2,472,114, which is a 19.7 percent decrease compared to the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

In 2021-2024, as in the past, one resource item may interpret or promote several funds. UMCom will be promoting all of the general apportioned funds using the monies provided by the fixed charges for the World Service Fund, as well as with other monies from its share of the World Service Fund. In such cases, UMCom is authorized to allocate costs for such items among the funds included in particular resources.

No promotional funds will be taken from general Advance Special gifts or World Service Special gifts except for the $947,240 for promotion of the Advance, a 20.4 percent decrease from 2017-2020. Any additional costs of promoting these funds is borne entirely by the administering agencies or from other funds approved by the General Conference.

The schedule of amounts authorized for program and benevolence interpretation resources for the 2021-2024 quadrennium are shown in the following tables:
### Connectional Giving Interpretation Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Service Fund</td>
<td>$1,442,000</td>
<td>$1,432,197</td>
<td>$1,068,114</td>
<td>(364,083)</td>
<td>-25.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Relations Day</td>
<td>255,000</td>
<td>255,000</td>
<td>208,000</td>
<td>(47,000)</td>
<td>-18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMCOR Sunday</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>416,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Ministries</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>156,000</td>
<td>(134,000)</td>
<td>-46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace With Justice Sunday</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>(12,000)</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Communion Sunday</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>260,000</td>
<td>248,000</td>
<td>(12,000)</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Student Day</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>(52,000)</td>
<td>-21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td>$3,087,000</td>
<td>$3,077,197</td>
<td>$2,472,114</td>
<td>(605,083)</td>
<td>-19.7%</td>
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</table>

### Allocation for interpretation resources for Special Gifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation statement</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Advance (paid by participating agencies)</td>
<td>$1,190,000</td>
<td>$1,190,000</td>
<td>$947,240</td>
<td>(242,760)</td>
<td>-20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>$4,277,000</td>
<td>$4,267,197</td>
<td>$3,419,354</td>
<td>(847,843)</td>
<td>-19.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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### Connectional Giving Interpretation Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Service Fund</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,029</td>
<td>$267,027</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Relations Day</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
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<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMCOR Sunday</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>104,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Ministries</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>39,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace With Justice Sunday</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Communion Sunday</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Student Day</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td>$618,029</td>
<td>$618,029</td>
<td>$618,029</td>
<td>$618,027</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Allocation for interpretation resources for Special Gifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allocation statement</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The advance (paid by participating agencies)</td>
<td>$236,810</td>
<td>$236,810</td>
<td>$236,810</td>
<td>$236,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>$854,839</td>
<td>$854,839</td>
<td>$854,839</td>
<td>$854,837</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Report No. 12
PAY EQUITY IN THE GENERAL AGENCIES
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Executive Summary

The Book of Discipline, ¶ 807.12a, requires the General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) to “gather from all general agencies, at such intervals and in such format as it may determine, information regarding salary remuneration and pay equity and number of agency employees and staff.” Annually, GCFA’s Committee on Personnel Policies and Practices (“CPPP”), per ¶ 807.12b, presents recommendations to GCFA on an appropriate salary schedule, based upon the responsibilities of covered personnel. Pay equity is at the core of these recommendations, as a means of ensuring there is no discrimination in the wage-setting system.

Current Situation

During 2017, CPPP facilitated and affirmed the work of an all-encompassing Compensation Study, which resulted in the development of Salary Administration Guidelines, a new job evaluation process, job families, and a new salary structure. The compensation philosophy and evaluation processes established covered all staff at all general agencies receiving general church funds.

Equality in pay is a significant affirmation of our faith and is taken seriously. All agencies of the general church support the belief of a united pay structure that is fair to all. Today, we follow the structure provided to us from the pay equity study performed in 2017. As a result of that study, great emphasis was placed on supporting racial, gender, and ethnic equality.

CPPP has maintained its commitment to an annual review and evaluation process of internal wage structures and practices. As a result of these annual reviews, small, incremental adjustments have been made to the salary scale. A review of the compensation structure will be conducted each year to determine if the salary structure needs to be adjusted based on cost of living. Such evaluation will consider both salary and benefit packages. Furthermore, in 2018, CPPP implemented a Pay Equity Sub-Team to ensure no discrimination in the wage-setting system occurs. This team will annually review the compensation data of all general agencies receiving general church funds to ensure no racial, gender, and ethnic inequality occurs. The findings of the Pay Equity Sub-Team reviews will be reported to CPPP and the GCFA Board.

Adopting these recommendations for an overall compensation philosophy statement and evaluation process have validated our beliefs of human value and equal worth for all those employed by the agencies of the general church.

Recommendations

1. General Conference reaffirm the church’s commitment to pay equity.
2. General Conference direct each general agency receiving general church funds to continue to work collaboratively in efforts to gather, analyze, and report on pay equity issues within and across the general church.
3. GCFA be directed to obtain from its Committee on Personnel Policies and Practices recommendations relating to overall compensation philosophy and structure that will reach pay equity goals.
Portions of Plan UMC Revised Proposal

The 2016 General Conference referred three petitions (60945, 60946, 60947) to the Connectional Table (“CT”), the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters (“Standing Committee”), and GCFA. Each of these petitions represented a portion of the “Plan UMC Revised” proposal:

- 60945 would have revised the membership of the general agencies;
- 60946 would have modified the duties of the Connectional Table, including giving it the role of electing the general secretaries of the general program agencies; and
- 60947 would have changed the membership of both GCFA and its Committee on Audit and Review.

In relation to petition 60945, the 2016 General Conference directed CT, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and GCFA to “consider the following issues as it relates to the original petition”:

- select general secretary;
- support and evaluate the general secretary;
- ensure effective planning;
- monitor and strengthen programs and services;
- ensure adequate financial resources;
- protect assets and provide proper financial management;
- ensure legal and ethical integrity;
- enhance the agency’s public standing

The following provisions shall govern the nomination . . .

For petition 60946, CT, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and GCFA were to consider:

- P. 713 Election of General Secretaries of Agencies. The General Secretary of each general program board that is accountable to the Connectional Table shall be elected quadrennially by ballot of the board of the agency included . . .

3. In the exercise of its responsibility prescribed in § 2 hereof, the Connectional Table shall have authority during the 2017 to 2020 quadrennium to work with all program and administrative agencies and connectional bodies, to include the general secretaries of The United Methodist Church to plan for and implement the overall restructure and reorganization approved by the 2016 General Conference for those agencies and bodies. One of the goals is ensuring that critical and important connectional ministries are functional and adequately carried forward.

P. 905 Objectives. The essential functions of the Connectional Table are . . .

The 2016 General Conference did not provide any specific direction in relation to petition 60947. The above-quoted language for petitions 60945 and 60946 is taken directly from what was printed in the Daily Christian Advocate.

CT, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and GCFA reviewed these three referrals. Given that the 2016 General Conference decided not to adopt any portion of the Plan UMC Revised proposal and there are prominent, ongoing discussions on other issues within the denomination that could impact the topics addressed in the referred petitions, CT, the Standing Committee, and GCFA recommend that no further action be taken in relation to the three referrals.

Translation of the Book of Discipline

The 2016 General Conference referred petition 60591 to GCFA and The United Methodist Publishing House (“UMPH”). This petition would have modified ¶ 1637 as follows:

¶ 1637. 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, including the translation, publication, and distribution of the Book of Discipline in all the official languages of General Conference. This literature . . .

The phrase “official languages of General Conference” is not currently found in the Discipline or in the General Conference’s Plan of Organization. The rationale
included with the petition mentioned “the official languages spoken in the General Conference.”

Pursuant to ¶ 511.4c, the *Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate* must be provided in English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili (as must certain portions of the *Daily Christian Advocate*). Additionally, the Plan of Organization adopted by the 2016 General Conference, in Part VI.A.1 (“Languages of the General Conference”) mentions English, French, Portuguese, Kiswahili, German, Russian, Spanish, and Korean. It is unclear which specific languages were contemplated by the petition. Thus, per language cost estimates were developed:

New Translations (French, Portuguese, Kiswahili, German, Russian, Tagalog)

- Initial translation: $89,000 each**
- Copy processing/prepress: $5,000 each
- Administrative costs (20% of costs): $19,000 each
- Contingency (15% of costs): $14,000 each
- **Total cost per language: Approximately $127,000 each**

Korean and Spanish Translations

- Initial translation: $17,500 each**
- Copy processing/prepress: $4,500 each
- Printing and Distribution: $8,000 each
- Administrative costs (20% of costs): $6,000 each
- Contingency (15% of costs): $4,000 each
- **Total cost per language: Approximately $40,000 each**

**Initial translation includes per word translation fee, editing, proofreading, QC review, XML coding, formatting, and production editing using the same or similar translation service, additional personnel, and processes employed in producing the *ADCA, DCA*, and English language *Discipline*. Alternative translation and production methods, including use of volunteer translators under local supervision for management and quality control at the initiative of each central conference, may be feasible at reduced costs.

In relation to the potential translation of the *Discipline*, GCFA and UMPH make the following recommendations:

- Translation of the *Discipline* into specified languages should be postponed until the work on the creation of the *General Book of Discipline* is completed. UMPH and GCFA will work together to formulate further details on funding and logistics to report to the 2024 General Conference.
- In preparing future legislation regarding the translation of the *Discipline*, stipulating the specific additional languages to which the legislation pertains will aid planning, budgeting, and implementation.
- Provisions for printing and distribution of the translations other than English, Spanish, and Korean should be carried out by each of the relevant central conferences, in order to match production and delivery methods and decisions with local needs and to reduce the associated costs.

**Apportionment Formula**

The 2012 General Conference adopted GCFA Report 8 which stated: “GCFA commits to study the implications of implementing an apportionment formula for the support of the general Church funds based upon current income received by the local churches and report its findings and any recommendations to the 2016 General Conference.” During the 2013-2016 quadrennium, GCFA formed a special committee, comprised of an annual conference treasurer from each jurisdiction and selected GCFA Board members in fulfillment of that directive.

The special committee analyzed different options for an income-based formula, but ultimately concluded further analysis and information was necessary. It was agreed that the analysis would continue into the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

Due to developing dynamics within the denomination, GCFA formed an Apportionment Sustainability Task Force to analyze several aspects of the apportionment process. The Task Force decided that the income-based apportionment analysis should be further postponed, but it did reach a conclusion that echoed a suggestion made by the special committee during the prior quadrennium—i.e., the removal of the “i” factor from the current apportionment formula.
Report No. 14
GENERAL CHURCH SOURCES OF FUNDING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) fulfills a wide variety of oversight responsibilities within The United Methodist Church. Spending by GCFA is in support of various processes and activities mandated by the 2016 Book of Discipline and is entirely administrative in nature. The projected income for GCFA from general church funds for the 2021-2024 quadrennium is $20,624,400, representing a decrease of $5,196,420, or 20.1 percent compared to the 2017-2020 quadrennium. The funding comes primarily from the General Administration Fund, the World Service Fund, and the Episcopal Fund, collectively representing 96 percent of the total amount. GCFA’s administrative ministries mandated by the 2016 Book of Discipline include:

1. Coordinating preparation of the quadrennial budget for the denomination’s boards and agencies (¶ 806.1);
2. Administering the collection and distribution of apportionments (¶¶ 806, 806.2);
3. Reviewing annually the budget of each agency and treasury receiving general church funds (¶ 806.4);
4. Coordinating external audits for all agencies and treasuries receiving general church funds (¶ 806.5);
5. Maintaining an internal audit function to conduct audits of general church agencies and treasuries (¶ 806.6);
6. Performing various fiscal responsibilities, such as accounting for the general funds, GCFA, the United Methodist Church Foundation, the Permanent Fund, the Board of Trustees, certain other general church agencies, and may perform payroll, banking, and check preparation responsibilities for all general agencies receiving general church funds (¶ 806.7);
7. Ensuring no board, agency, committee, commission, or council expends funds in a manner that is in violation of the expressed commitments of The United Methodist Church (¶¶ 806.9-.11);
8. Serving as custodial trustee for donations or bequests given to the denomination (¶ 807.1);
9. Protecting the legal interests, rights, and intellectual property of the denomination (¶¶ 807.9-.11);
10. Developing and overseeing investment policies and guidelines for all agencies receiving general funds, including managing an investment pool for the general church agencies (¶ 806.12);
11. Maintaining a consultative travel and meeting planning service to assist general agencies in planning and making arrangements for national meetings, conferences, and convocations (¶ 807.13);
12. Managing, interpreting, and maintaining various statistics and records for the denomination (¶¶ 807.15-.16);
13. Providing guidance and consultation to various groups within The United Methodist Church, including through training programs and workshops, establishment of professional standards, certifications, informational resources, and staff support (¶¶ 807.18);
14. Overseeing an insurance program for the denomination (¶ 807.19);
15. Assisting in the preparation for, and management of, General Conference (¶ 807.20); and

In addition to the 2016 Book of Discipline mandates, GCFA, in the form of shared services, also performs other administrative functions in support of general agencies and the denomination as a whole. Examples of shared services include:

1. Travel and meeting planning services that include online event registration, meeting planning, and travel arrangements;
2. Information technology services that include financial accounting software, database creation and maintenance, and an online system to track those who are entering the ministry;
3. Legal services related to The United Methodist Church trademark and insignia, tax exemption status, and other areas of legal consultation;
4. Data services, including systems allowing electronic submission of data to GCFA from annual conferences, and an online tool providing the general public certain information and statistics about the United Methodist connection.
Financial Administration 461

10. Developing and overseeing investment policies and guidelines for all agencies receiving general funds, including managing an investment pool for the general church agencies (¶ 806.12);

11. Maintaining a consultative travel and meeting planning service to assist general agencies in planning and making arrangements for national meetings, conferences, and convocations (¶ 807.13);

12. Managing, interpreting, and maintaining various statistics and records for the denomination (¶¶ 807.15-.16);

13. Providing guidance and consultation to various groups within The United Methodist Church, including through training programs and workshops, establishment of professional standards, certifications, informational resources, and staff support (¶¶ 807.18);

14. Overseeing an insurance program for the denomination (¶ 807.19);

15. Assisting in the preparation for, and management of, General Conference (¶ 807.20); and


In addition to the 2016 Book of Discipline mandates, GCFA, in the form of shared services, also performs other administrative functions in support of general agencies and the denomination as a whole. Examples of shared services include:

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2. Information technology services that include financial accounting software, database creation and maintenance, and an online system to track those who are entering the ministry;

3. Legal services related to The United Methodist Church trademark and insignia, tax exemption status, and other areas of legal consultation;

4. Data services, including systems allowing electronic submission of data to GCFA from annual conferences, and an online tool providing the general public certain information and statistics about the United Methodist connection.

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**General Church Sources of Funding to The General Council on Finance and Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Administration Fund (1)</td>
<td>$14,980,976</td>
<td>$14,348,820</td>
<td>$10,278,400</td>
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**Fixed Charges: (2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>2013-2016</th>
<th>2017-2020</th>
<th>2021-2024</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Service Fund</td>
<td>$7,423,000</td>
<td>$7,423,000</td>
<td>$6,839,000</td>
<td>$(584,000)</td>
<td>-7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
<td>$3,000,000</td>
<td>$3,000,000</td>
<td>$2,600,000</td>
<td>$(400,000)</td>
<td>-13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdenominational Cooperation Fund</td>
<td>206,000</td>
<td>206,000</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>$(142,000)</td>
<td>-68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations Day</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>453,000</td>
<td>453,000</td>
<td>453,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Student Day</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Communion Sunday</td>
<td>154,000</td>
<td>154,000</td>
<td>154,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace With Justice Sunday</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Ministries Sunday</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Service Fund</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Fixed Charges** | $11,492,000 | $11,472,000 | $10,346,000 | $(1,126,000) | -9.8% |

**Total General Church Funding** | $26,472,976 | $25,820,820 | $20,624,400 | $(5,196,420) | -20.1% |

---

(1) This represents the actual collections for 2013 - 2018 and estimates for 2019-2024.

The projected collection rate for 2021-2024 is 80.0%. The total 2021-2024 apportionments to the Council from the General Administration Fund is $12,979,000 as shown in Report # 6.

(2) The collection rate for fixed charges is 100%.
### General Church Sources of Funding to
The General Council on Finance and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>On-Ratio Allocations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Administration Fund (1)</td>
<td>$2,945,494</td>
<td>$2,945,494</td>
<td>$2,945,494</td>
<td>$2,945,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed Charges: (2)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Service Fund</td>
<td>$1,709,750</td>
<td>$1,709,750</td>
<td>$1,709,750</td>
<td>$1,709,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdenominational Cooperation Fund</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations Day</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>20,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>113,250</td>
<td>113,250</td>
<td>113,250</td>
<td>113,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Student Day</td>
<td>19,750</td>
<td>19,750</td>
<td>19,750</td>
<td>19,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Communion Sunday</td>
<td>38,500</td>
<td>38,500</td>
<td>38,500</td>
<td>38,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace With Justice Sunday</td>
<td>7,750</td>
<td>7,750</td>
<td>7,750</td>
<td>7,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Ministries Sunday</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fixed Charges</strong></td>
<td>$2,586,500</td>
<td>$2,586,500</td>
<td>$2,586,500</td>
<td>$2,586,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total General Church Funding</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,531,994</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,531,994</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,531,994</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,531,994</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) This represents the actual collections for 2013 - 2018 and estimates for 2019-2024.
The projected collection rate for 2021-2024 is 80.0%. The total 2021-2024 apportionments
to the Council from the General Administration Fund is $12,979,000 as shown in Report # 6.

(2) The collection rate for fixed charges is 100%.
Report No. 15
INCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND THE PERMANENT FUND

The General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”), by action of the 1972 General Conference, serves as the Board of Trustees of The United Methodist Church, as the successor to its predecessor bodies. In this capacity, GCFA provides for the management of assets that have been given to The United Methodist Church as part of the Permanent Fund (Book of Discipline, ¶ 807.3), or are under the purview of the Board of Trustees for the benefit of specified ministries.

GCFA maintains records of all distributable income received in the name of both the Board of Trustees and the Permanent Fund. The Permanent Fund provides funding for the World Service Fund from its distributable income as affirmed by successive General Conferences. In the four-year period of 2016 to 2019, the Permanent Fund has provided a total of $2,238,507 to the World Service Fund. Thus, the Permanent Fund has continued to help underwrite the mission and outreach of The United Methodist Church.

GCFA recommends that a portion of the Permanent Fund distributions be made a part of the World Service Fund receipts annually for distribution during the 2021-2024 quadrennium.

Report No. 16
REPORT ON GENERAL AGENCIES
HEADQUARTERS/STAFF LOCATION

Background and Mandate

Via ¶ 807.6 of the Book of Discipline, the General Conference has assigned the General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) the following responsibility:

To establish general policy governing the ownership, sale, rental, renovation, or purchase of property by a general agency in the United States. [GCFA] shall consider the plans of any general agency proposing to acquire or sell real estate or erect a building or enter into a lease in the continental United States and determine whether the proposed action is in the best interest of The United Methodist Church. On the basis of that determination it shall approve or disapprove all such proposed actions. In the case of such proposed action by a general program agency, it shall solicit and consider the recommendation of the Connectional Table.

Procedure

Paragraph 807.7 requires GCFA “[t]o establish a procedure for making a quadrennial review, initiating proposals and/or responding to proposals by the general agencies regarding the location of headquarters and staff and reporting the same to the General Conference.”

GCFA’s Committee on Fiduciary, Foundation, and Property Matters reviews any proposal and other relevant information, including input from the Connectional Table, then makes a recommendation to GCFA’s Board for its action.

Activity Concerning Headquarters/Staff Relocation

During the 2017-2020 quadrennium, GCFA received a proposal on behalf of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (“GBHEM”) and the General Board of Discipleship (“Discipleship Ministries”) relating to potential sale of the Kern Building, which is jointly occupied by the two general church agencies in Nashville, Tennessee. Historically, the Kern Building has housed all of the GBHEM employees and some employees of Discipleship Ministries. GBHEM is currently evaluating its relocation options should a sale of the Kern Building take place. After hearing from representatives of the two agencies, the GCFA Board determined as follows:

GCFA supports the official launching of the joint effort by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and Discipleship Ministries to evaluate and recommend a way forward for the Kern Building and its seven associated parcels, with a clear plan of the long-term implications for these two agencies.
Once a final plan is in place with specific details, the committee will be happy to review those details and take final action.

**Headquarters Property Report**

The Headquarters Property Report is summarized in another GCFA Report to General Conference in volume 3 of the *Advance Daily Christian Advocate*. It will detail the resources and methodologies used to compile the information contained in the report. Findings relevant to the location, condition, and status of agency properties are also presented in that report.

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**Recommendations**

It is GCFA’s recommendation that the location of the other headquarters buildings and staff of the general agencies of The United Methodist Church connection remain at their current locations for the 2021-2024 quadrennium. This recommendation is contingent upon any actions of the General Conference that may affect agency headquarters locations.

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**Report No. 17**

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FOUNDATION
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
Progress in the Face of Change

The United Methodist Church Foundation Investment Management (“Foundation Investment Management”/”FIM”) will celebrate its twentieth year of growth as a ministry of the church in 2019. The mission of the FIM is to create opportunities for growth and vitality throughout the church. The FIM’s founding board set direction and policy to continue ongoing ministries to accomplish this mandate through: 1) a multifaceted investment program offering common investment funds and specialized portfolios to all general agencies, organizations, and conference foundations (but not to local churches) with a progressive rollout of avoidance screens and shareholder advocacy consistent with the United Methodist Social Principles; and 2) a general agency endowment program collaborating with United Methodist agencies and organizations that has now established twenty-five endowment efforts to date, for future financial efficacy of ministries of the agencies and organizations benefited.

**A Season of Change:** The United Methodist Church Foundation was founded in 1999 as a nonprofit foundation supporting The United Methodist Church connection. Over the following two decades, our focus moved to become more of a partner for the investment management of our partners’ assets and less of a resource to help them raise those assets from donors. Because of this strategic shift, the Foundation Investment Management Board decided that a more accurate name would be beneficial. In 2018, The United Methodist Church Foundation changed its name to The United Methodist Church Foundation Investment Management, marketed as Foundation Investment Management, or FIM. This name appropriately describes the role we play as a partner to the foundations, agencies, organizations, and endowments of The United Methodist Church. Though the name has changed, our commitment to providing world-class investment opportunities continues unchanged.

**Endowments:** Foundation Investment Management has initiated and is growing the twenty-five endowment efforts for the ministries currently served by almost all of the agencies receiving general church apportioned funds, as well as the Council of Bishops. Endowment efforts that come to the FIM for its services and administration give testimony to the trust and confidence earned in a short time. Annual distributions are available to fund ministry once a fund has grown to a prescribed amount as agreed by the ministry benefited. Almost $2.5 million is in place today to fund future ministry through the endowments that would not have been given without this vital ministry.

**Funds Management:** The funds management program of the FIM provides superior investment performance as well as environmental, social, and governance witness. Foundation Investment Management provides many investment strategies, from protection of principal to growth strategies. Though most participants choose to emphasize total return from capital appreciation, dividend, and interest income, we have the capability to create a portfolio that is allocated to suit each participant’s long-term needs. The primary objective in the investment
management for the FIM’s participant assets is to achieve current income consistent with the preservation of the purchasing power of the investment principal. Over the long-term investment horizon (ten years or more), the goal for investment return is to meet or exceed the return required to fund the strategic programs as defined in the FIM’s mission and vision statements.

The downside capture strategy of the FIM’s funds management program is designed to minimize loss and to maintain value during down market periods. Market conditions from 2016 to the present have served to vindicate the decisions of the FIM’s Investment Committee in this regard. In 2018, the Foundation Investment Management Board of Directors voted to create a new series of funds that will track the various equity indexes. This will allow FIM to diversify our portfolios, creating further opportunity for long-term growth. FIM’s Board of Directors continues to enjoy the collective wisdom and expertise of some of the best minds and resources in the field within our denomination.

Since its inception, FIM has included social screens in its investment policies and applied those screens to further the principles and policies in the United Methodist Social Principles. FIM continues to expand its socially responsible investment ministry through portfolio screening and shareholder advocacy. FIM has filed or co-filed resolutions with corporations to achieve corporate behavioral change in the areas of board diversity, EEO reporting, reduction of violence in video gaming, greenhouse gas emission reduction and reporting, and the fight against human trafficking. FIM has been a primary participant in dialogue with management at major corporations regarding climate change initiatives. FIM has also negotiated improved commitments to diversity in board policies relating to persons of color and women with many others.

Foundation Investment Management continues to give thanks for the opportunity to be a growing participant in a ministry of administration to support the church. Always keeping a primary focus on growth and stewardship in the pews of our local churches, FIM seeks to build a strong financial base for future denominational ministries that seek to eradicate poverty, train leaders, vitalize congregations, and pursue health and wholeness of all people worldwide. FIM’s leadership and board members are poised to increase the dimensions of general church caretaking and giving in exponential ways.
Introduction

Since 1976, the General Conference has required the General Council on Finance and Administration (“GCFA”) to make available a “church-wide [property and liability] insurance program.” The General Conference revisited the issue of property and liability insurance in 1992, and local church boards of trustees were required to do the following:

[R]eview annually the adequacy of property, liability, and crime insurance coverage on church-owned property. . . . The board shall include in its report to the Charge Conference the results of its review and any recommendations it deems necessary. (See ¶ 2533.2, 1992 Book of Discipline.)

Without affordable, widely and consistently available comprehensive property and liability insurance, the assets with which the church wins disciples to Christ and the gifts of generations of United Methodists given for that purpose are at risk. The journey toward fulfilling the potential of the connection for protecting its own ministries and ministry resources remains important to us today.

After much study, it was determined that a single member captive insurance company could deliver additional savings and flexibility to benefit local churches, annual conferences, and general agencies. The company began issuing policies in its own name on October 1, 2012, with the support of top-rated reinsurance companies. In December 2013, UMI merged with its predecessor (UMPACT), bringing together the capital invested in both companies.

In 2018, GCFA and the board of directors of UMI determined that ongoing operational losses and a need for significant addition of capital made it necessary to discontinue the use of UMI as a captive insurance company. UMI entered into an agreement with AmVenture Insurance Agency to provide coverage to churches on a fully insured basis using A.M. Best A-rated insurance companies. On January 1, 2019, AmVenture began insuring churches through the newly formed United Methodist Insurance Program (UMI Program). As a result, UMI no longer has exposure to underwriting risk and has no current need to raise capital to fund its captive insurance company.

In 2018, the United Methodist Insurance Agency (UMIA) was formed to facilitate the operation of the UMI Program. A portion of the policy premiums written through the UMI Program are retained by UMIA.

Mission

UMI’s sole mission is to protect the property and ministries of The United Methodist Church connection.

The “business” of UMI is to provide access to comprehensive insurance coverage with limits sufficient to cover property losses and liability claims in the current litigious environment, and to stabilize (and ultimately reduce) the cost of insurance by leveraging the combined purchasing power of the churches within the United Methodist connection.

Our ministry includes using revenue generated by the business of providing insurance for the benefit of local churches, annual conferences, and general agencies. In addition, our focus is on helping local churches protect resources and the people they seek to serve. For example, UMI actively helps the entire connection by providing access for local churches, conferences, and general church agencies to obtain background checks for clergy and volunteers. UMI works with AmVenture, its insurance partners, and experts within the church to provide access to risk management programs and information to assist local churches in establishing policies and programs designed to protect finances, people, and property.

As stewards of the denomination’s financial resources, local church and annual conference trustees have a duty to focus on the cost of coverage because the purchase of insurance is a “business transaction.” However, as stewards we are also obliged to ensure our churches have coverage limits sufficient to respond in the event of loss and to recognize the importance of denomination-specific resources and training in preventing losses.

Moving Forward

The availability of GCFA-sponsored insurance programs has laid the foundation for a new understanding of insurance as a tool for living out “trust-related stewardship.” We have, in turn, set a new standard for the commercial insurance market. Following are a few examples:
• UMI offered limits and coverages previously unavailable, forcing the commercial insurance market to improve their offerings to match ours.
• UMI has involved several annual conferences and GCFA in establishing minimum levels of insurance required for local church boards of trustees to use in evaluating whether a church had adequate insurance.
• UMI’s presence in the property and liability insurance market benefits the entire denomination.

In order to be of service to as many churches as possible, the UMI Program plans to expand the number of carriers it represents. The carriers will include those dedicated to serving the church market and other carriers providing specialty coverage for difficult to place risks and specialty lines of coverage. With the elimination of the risk of underwriting losses, UMI will be better positioned to provide additional services and resources to local churches, annual conferences, and general church agencies.

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Report No. 19
WORLD SERVICE SPECIALS
Program Definition

The 2016 Book of Discipline defines a World Service Special as “a designated financial contribution made by an individual, local church, organization, district, or annual conference to a project authorized as a World Service Special project” (¶ 820.2). These are approved by the General Conference (and in the interim by the General Council on Finance and Administration [“GCFA”] and the Connectional Table). The World Service Special projects are listed below with their applicable receipts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa University</td>
<td>2,956,727</td>
<td>4,402,684</td>
<td>3,098,083</td>
<td>5,187,083</td>
<td>2,736,353</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perryman Scholarship</td>
<td>3,541</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>5,535</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,436</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Receipts</td>
<td>$2,960,268</td>
<td>$4,404,484</td>
<td>$3,108,054</td>
<td>$5,188,783</td>
<td>$2,736,353</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With certain conditions, general agencies receiving support from the general funds of the church are eligible to participate in this program. Those units of general agencies authorized to receive general Advance Special support are not eligible to participate in this giving program.

Administration of Program

GCFA has the responsibility for receipt and distribution of World Service Special Gifts funds.
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

Summary of Report One: Overview

Caring for Those Who Serve

In July 2016, The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits was renamed Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) to better reflect our work and mission as a general agency of The United Methodist Church (UMC).

- Wes—recognizes and honors John Wesley; and
- Path—refers to our goal of providing participants and institutional clients with a path toward retirement, well-being, and investment objectives.

We have been serving The UMC since 1908. Our mission is to care for those who serve by providing investment and benefit services that honor the mission and principles of The UMC. Wespath administers retirement, health, disability, and death benefit plans and services on behalf of over 100,000 people (“participants”) around the world, including active and retired clergy and lay employees, and their families. Wespath and its Wespath Institutional Investments subsidiary manage investments for over 130 United Methodist-affiliated institutions.

Sustainable Investment Supports Wespath’s Fiduciary Role

Wespath is first and foremost a fiduciary. The Book of Discipline ¶ 1504.14 requires that our agency’s fiduciary activities should be “solely in the interest of participants and beneficiaries and for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to participants and their beneficiaries.” We carry out this responsibility with integrity and humility. Wespath invests in a sustainable and responsible manner that seeks to create long-term value for participants and institutional clients, while upholding UMC values and making a positive impact on the environment and society.

Wespath’s Avoid-Engage-Invest investment approach promotes sustainability of financial assets and environmental resources; upholds ethical exclusions related to alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, adult entertainment, weapons, gambling, and privately operated correctional facilities; and exercises stewardship of operating costs while enabling favorable returns.

Among Largest U.S. Denominational Investors

Wespath consistently ranks among the largest faith-based pension funds in the U.S., with nearly $22 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2018.

Cost of Operations

Wespath does not receive general church funds to support its operating expenses. With commitment to our stewardship responsibility and our obligation as plan fiduciary, we continually strive to improve operating efficiencies.

2017-2020 Quadrennium Highlights

Investing for the Future

- Launched our Social Values Choice suite of funds for participants and investors who have a heightened focus on companies’ environmental and social performance.
- Invested more than $2 billion (U.S.) in affordable housing and community development projects, including over 52,000 affordable housing units in all fifty U.S. states; microfinance investments across four continents, homeless shelters, and healthcare centers.

Vitality of the Global Church

- Fund-raising efforts supported by Wespath and UMC leaders in prior quadrennia created a $25 million endowment for central conference pensions. Investment earnings have enabled distribution of $9.5 million (January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2019), supporting more than 3,100 retirees and surviving spouses across sixty-nine conferences in Africa, the Philippines, and Eurasia.

Cross UMC Collaboration

- Provided analysis to the Commission on a Way Forward (CWF) and Council of Bishops regarding pension impacts of CWF proposals to the Special Session General Conference.
- Collaborated with UMC leaders through the Connectional Table Advisory Group, creating a U.S.
regional conference and governance structure for U.S.-centric matters and benefit plans.

- In alignment with Resolution 8008 (Task Force on Israel and Palestine): Actively participated in dialogue with other UMC agencies and leaders, as well as non-Methodist leaders, in ongoing efforts toward a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Additionally, we have pursued investment opportunities that can have a positive impact in the Palestinian territories, including providing support for solar energy projects in the West Bank.

**Promoting Health and Vitality**

- Expanded health-care offerings and flexibility for active and retired clergy and lay employees.

**Engaging Church Leaders**

- Continued our partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, National Association of United Methodist Foundations, and Lilly Endowment to address economic challenges facing pastoral leaders.
- Launched our Young Leaders Advisory Board to better serve young leaders in the church.

**External Recognition**

- Earned an A+ rating for 2018 and for 2017 from the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment for our approach to strategy and governance in sustainable investing.
- Honored by ChildServ (social service agency) for a decade of supporting children.
Caring for Those Who Serve

In July 2016, The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits was renamed Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) to better reflect our work and mission as a general agency of The United Methodist Church (UMC). The name Wespath was created with two primary elements in mind:

- Wes—recognizes and honors John Wesley; and
- Path—refers to our goal of providing participants and institutional clients with a path toward retirement, well-being, and investment objectives.

We have been serving The UMC since 1908. Our mission is to care for those who serve by providing investment and benefit services that honor the mission and principles of The United Methodist Church. Wespath administers retirement, health, disability, and death benefit plans and services on behalf of over 100,000 participants around the globe, including active and retired clergy, lay employees, surviving spouses, and dependents. These plans and services help support the personal and financial well-being of clergy and church workers throughout life’s transitions and in a manner aligned with UMC values. Wespath and its Wespath Institutional Investments subsidiary manage investments for over 130 United Methodist-affiliated institutions.

During this quadrennium, Wespath outlined a Strategic Plan to focus on five core ways to advance our service to participants, plan sponsors, institutional investors, and The UMC, including:

- Improving the retirement readiness and lifelong well-being of participants;
- Enhancing our customers’ experience through improved use of technology and processes;
- Optimizing U.S. benefit plans to balance the common good of participants and plan sponsors, while meeting our fiduciary obligations and church needs;
- Advancing the vitality of the global church through central conference pension benefits and services; and
- Continuing growth and long-term sustainability by serving a broader range of organizations related to The United Methodist Church.

Sustainable Investment Supports Wespath’s Fiduciary Role

Wespath is first and foremost a fiduciary. The Book of Discipline ¶ 1504.14 requires that our agency’s fiduciary activities should be “solely in the interest of participants and beneficiaries and for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to participants and their beneficiaries.” We carry out this responsibility with integrity and humility.

Wespath invests in a sustainable and responsible manner that seeks to create long-term value for participants and institutional clients, while upholding UMC values. Our comprehensive approach to sustainable investment supports our role as a prudent fiduciary and entrusted steward of the individuals and UMC-affiliated institutions we serve, while also making a positive impact on the environment and society.

We are directed by the Book of Discipline ¶ 717 to “make a conscious effort to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, or funds with policies and practices that are socially responsible, consistent with the goals outlined in the Social Principles.” Wespath’s investment approach promotes sustainability of financial assets and environmental resources; upholds ethical exclusions related to alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, adult entertainment, weapons, gambling, and privately operated correctional facilities; and exercises careful stewardship of operating costs while enabling favorable returns.

Among Largest U.S. Denominational Investors

Wespath consistently ranks among the largest faith-based pension funds in the U.S., with nearly $22 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (as of December 31)</th>
<th>Assets Under Management (in billions, U.S.)</th>
<th>Expense Ratio (Percent of Assets)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$20.2</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$21.3</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$24.1</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$21.9</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: Includes operating costs, investment management, and bank custodial fees.
Investment Performance

Wespath’s funds have consistently produced competitive investment returns compared to similar retail and institutional funds available in the mutual fund market. Participants and institutional investors benefit from our funds’ low expense ratios due to efficient cost structure, services provided by high-quality investment management firms, and access to a broad variety of asset classes. Additional information regarding historical fund performance and rankings compared to the mutual fund universe is available at www.wespath.com and www.wespath.org.

Cost of Operations

In accordance with the Book of Discipline, Wespath does not receive general church funds to support its operating expenses. As a result, our operations are primarily funded from investment income and the pass-through to our funds of investment management, bank custody, and fund administration expenses related to the various plans. Limited expenses (included in these aggregate amounts) are funded by the plans that directly benefit from the expense incurred.

With commitment to our stewardship responsibility and our obligation as plan fiduciary, we continually strive to improve operating efficiencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fund Administration Expenses (Operating Costs) (in millions, U.S.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$61.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017-2020 Quadrennium Highlights

Following are key highlights of Wespath activities during this quadrennium:

Investing for the Future

- At the end of 2015, the U.S. Congress enacted the Church Plan Clarification Act, which Wespath advocated for through the Church Alliance (www.church-alliance.org), and which allowed church plans to add auto-enrollment features like corporate retirement plans. Wespath implemented Automatic Features to improve retirement savings outcomes.

Automatic Enrollment increases participation in the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) by automating enrollment in the plan at a savings percentage set by the plan sponsor, while Automatic Contribution Escalation automates increases in participant contribution rates.

- Continued to partner with EY Financial Planning Services to provide confidential financial planning assistance to participants, including debt management and assistance with clergy-specific questions related to the housing allowance exclusion and other matters.

- Launched Wespath Institutional Investments, a subsidiary dedicated exclusively to serving a broad range of institutional investors related to The United Methodist Church, including foundations, children’s homes, older adult facilities, universities, and health-care organizations.

- Strengthened our Avoid-Engage-Invest investment approach to avoid investments related to The UMC’s ethical exclusions, engage companies and policymakers toward adopting positive and sustainable policies, and investing in companies that will generate financial growth as well as a favorable social and environmental impact.

- Expanded our guiding Investment Beliefs by adding a belief that Wespath must prepare for the inevitable transition to a low-carbon economy by identifying climate change-related risks and opportunities from an investments perspective and advocating companies to prepare for a lower-carbon future.

- Partnered with BlackRock, Inc. to develop an innovative “Transition Ready” strategy and methodology that evaluates companies’ preparedness for the global transition to a low-carbon economy, and then incorporates this insight into investment decision-making.

- Launched our Social Values Choice suite of funds for participants and investors who have a heightened focus on companies’ environmental and social performance.

- Participated in the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI), Global Climate Action Summit, UNPRI Conference, and other ongoing engagement and advocacy related to protecting the environment.

- Invested more than $2 billion (U.S.) in affordable housing and community development projects, including over 52,000 affordable housing units in all fifty U.S. states; microfinance investments across four continents, homeless shelters, and health-care centers.

- In 2019, converted electric energy to 100 percent green sourcing at our Glenview, Illinois, building,
and reduced our annual landfill waste by approximately 70 percent through aggressive composting efforts.

**Vitality of the Global Church**

- Fund-raising efforts supported by Wespath and UMC leaders in prior quadrennia created a $25 million endowment for central conference pensions. Investment earnings have enabled distribution of $9.5 million in funds to date (cumulative January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2019), supporting more than 3,100 retirees and surviving spouses across sixty-nine conferences in Africa, the Philippines, and Eurasia.
- Continued to support the central conferences by encouraging best practices in the administration and funding of pension programs in place outside the United States to ultimately support self-funded, self-governed, and self-sustaining plans.

**Cross UMC Collaboration**

- Provided financial analysis to the Commission on a Way Forward (CWF) and Council of Bishops regarding pension impacts of CWF proposals by developing Appendix 4, “Pension Impacts of Commission Proposals” for the CWF Report to the Special Session General Conference 2019. Assisted CWF in developing petitions to protect pensions.
- Collaborated with UMC leaders through the Connectional Table Advisory Group for an initiative creating a U.S. regional conference; helped develop analysis, rationale, and recommendations for a governance structure regarding U.S.-centric matters and benefit plans that would be parallel to central conferences benefit plan and certain other policy governance.
- Provided educational resources for clergy and consultative support for local churches and annual conferences in response to U.S. tax law changes impacting clergy—in particular regarding loss of the tax exclusion related to moving expenses and new taxes on church parking lots.
- In alignment with Resolution 8008 (Task Force on Israel and Palestine): Actively participated in dialogue with the General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Global Ministries, and other UMC leaders, as well as non-Methodist leaders representing diverse faiths, in ongoing efforts toward a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Additionally, we have pursued investment opportunities that can have a positive impact in the Palestinian territories, including providing investment support for solar energy projects in the West Bank.

**Promoting Health and Vitality**

- Expanded health-care offerings for active clergy and lay employees to thirty annual conferences, with twenty-two offering our HealthFlex Exchange, which gives participants flexibility to select health coverage that best fits their personal needs and budget while offering conferences better opportunities for predictable cost control.
- In partnership with Willis Towers Watson’s Via Benefits™ (a leading provider of health-care solutions for Medicare-eligible retirees), expanded Medicare supplemental coverage for retirees to twenty-three conferences, thereby helping annual conferences balance their disciplinary responsibility to provide access to retiree medical coverage with their need to manage long-term liability costs for retiree medical services. (See Report Three for more detail on post-retiree medical [PRM] coverage and liabilities.)
- Conducted biennial clergy well-being research study to identify favorable trends (16 percent increase in physical activity and 52 percent feel “on-track” for comfortable retirement) and opportunities for further improvement related to stress, obesity, and prediabetes rates.

**Engaging Church Leaders**

- Continued our partnership with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), National Association of United Methodist Foundations (NAUMF), and Lilly Endowment to address economic challenges facing pastoral leaders. This partnership aims to relieve clergy from personal financial burdens including seminary debt, while also improving financial skills necessary to manage local church budgets and cultivate congregational giving, which is vital for supporting ministry work.
- Hosted annual educational events to provide clergy with information on benefits, financial management, taxes, and leadership development. Through a grant from the Lilly Endowment, scholarships were also made available to attend select educational events.
- Launched our Young Leaders Advisory Board (Y-LAB) to focus on ways to engage—and better serve—young clergy and lay from across the connection through Wespath services.

**External Recognition**

- Earned an A+ rating for 2018 and for 2017 from the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) for our approach to strategy and governance in sustainable investing.
• Ranked among the top three organizations in the U.S. and top twenty globally in the annual Asset Owners Disclosure Project’s Global Climate 500 Index.

• Honored by ChildServ (social service agency) for a decade of partnership supporting children with toys, clothing, and school supplies donated by Wespath employees, and for Wespath’s long-term investment in affordable housing, schools, and community development that helps improve the lives of children and families.


• Earned a Commendation from Responsible Investor for Wespath’s 2017 Sustainable Investment Report.

Benefits and Tax Advocacy on Behalf of Clergy

• As leaders of the multidenominational Church Alliance, Wespath provided a strong voice on legislative and legal issues that impact clergy benefits. This advocacy included defending the clergy housing allowance exclusion in courts and Congress, repealing new Unrelated Business Income Tax on certain benefits provided to church employees, and supporting retirement security legislation, including the Retirement Enhancement and Security Act (RESA) and the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act, and other employee benefits issues related to clergy and church workers.

Wespath Benefits and Investments—Board of Directors

(Clergy shown in italics)

Bishop Robert Schnase, Chairperson
Bishop Paul Leeland, Vice Chairperson
Tracy Bass, Recording Secretary

Larry Baldwin (non-board committee member—Audit)
Nate Berneking
Brenda Biler
Daniel Carmichael
Christopher Davis (non-board committee member—Fiduciary)
Necia Dexter
Jean Edin
Joel Fitzgerald
John Goodwin
Kevin Goodwin
Will Green (non-board committee member—Fiduciary and Personnel)
Jan Griffith
Stacie Hawkins
Glenn Heisey
Steve Johnson (non-board committee member—Audit)
William Junk
Teresa Keese
John Kellington

Herman Lightsey
Jennifer Lineberry (non-board committee member—Audit)
Robert Long
Irwin Loud (non-board committee member—Fiduciary)
Robby Lowry
Tonya Manning (non-board committee member—Fiduciary)
Liz Mariano
Paul Nessler
Jeonghyun Park
Thomas Parkinson
Mathew Pinson
Neal Purcell
Charles Savage (non-board committee member—Audit)
Elizabeth Ingram Schindler
Tim Smith (non-board committee member—UMC Principles)
Gray Southern
David Stotts
Cheryl Tillman
Ed Tomlinson
Neal Wise
Report Two: Legal Update: Changes in Response to Local Law Changes

Judicial Council Decision 481 states “[o]nly the General Conference has authority to create, establish, revise, amend, terminate or continue . . . the various pension plans of The United Methodist Church.” This decision and Judicial Council Decision 1008 further state that changes in federal or state law may make some modifications to plan provisions necessary between sessions of the General Conference. Accordingly, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits [dba Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath)] may amend the plans to conform to requirements of secular law.

Wespath has not had to make any such plan changes during this quadrennium.
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

Summary of Report Three: Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination

Paragraph 1506.6 of the Book of Discipline directs Wespath to “present a quadrennial report to General Conference concerning the long-term benefit liabilities of the denomination.”

Quadrennial Report Concerning Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination

This report focuses on long-term benefit obligations and related benefit funding for the defined benefit components of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), which provide pension and retirement benefits for clergy of annual conferences in the United States. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities and Pre-1982 Plan benefits are part of these obligations. The report also addresses post-retirement medical benefits provided at the discretion of the U.S. annual conferences.

Unlike United Methodist pension and retirement plans outside the U.S., CRSP and its predecessor plans for U.S. clergy are governed by the General Conference. Plan liabilities are obligations of the U.S. conferences that sponsor the plans. The U.S. conferences often collect monies from local churches to pay for these plans or use designated reserves.

The sustainability and affordability of the defined benefit components largely depend on the plan sponsor’s ability to pay for the contributions due. Church membership across the U.S. has been declining, creating uncertainty as to whether local churches can continue to pay for these plans in the same capacity in the future.

U.S. Membership Per Retired Clergy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members per 1 retiree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Compares 2017 membership to 2018 retired clergy
** Reflects year the plan started (MPP and CRSP)

Retirement Plan Defined Benefit Liabilities

Denominational defined benefit liabilities (lifetime payments for retired clergy and beneficiaries) include the defined benefit component of CRSP (CRSP-DB), MPP annuities, and benefits of the Pre-1982 Plan. CRSP-DB and MPP annuities have the same funding levels across all U.S. conferences. The Pre-82 Plan has a different funding level for each conference.

Conference Funding and Benefit Levels for the Pre-82 Plan

Unlike CRSP and MPP, the Pre-82 Plan did not require conferences to fund benefits as they were earned. General Conference 1980 set December 31, 2021, as the due date for fully funding accrued Pre-82 benefits. Effective 2017, the minimum contribution methodology was modified to avoid a potential contribution spike in 2021 and contribution volatility after 2021. This mitigating methodology amortizes the unfunded liability and any new gains or losses over five years.

The Pre-82 Plan also makes each U.S. conference responsible for setting its own benefit levels; therefore, Pre-82 benefit rates and funding levels vary from conference to conference. Increases to benefit levels must be funded before becoming effective. Some conferences are over-funded on their Pre-82 Plan liability. Assuming individual conferences will retain any surplus they have accumulated (after all benefit claims are paid), the plan overall is 97 percent funded as of January 1, 2018.

If the financial support and associated risks were to be transferred elsewhere (for example, to an insurance carrier), the liabilities would be significantly higher (due to risk premiums and current market rates being used), and the funded status would be lower.

As of this report, roughly 70 percent of conferences are at or above 100 percent funded as of January 1, 2018. The rest of the conferences are on a path to becoming 100 percent funded by making required contributions each year. Note: Even after 100 percent funding of accrued benefit liabilities is achieved, contributions will likely be required from time to time due to market fluctuations, mortality changes, and any benefit increases.

Post-Retirement Medical Benefit Obligations in The UMC

Paragraph 639.6 of the Book of Discipline states that the annual conferences shall provide access to Medicare
supplement plans and prescription drug coverage plans, but does not compel the conferences to fund such coverage. Paragraph 1506.19 calls for conferences to submit valuations of post-retirement medical (PRM) liabilities on a biennial (every other year) basis. Report Three provides an overview of PRM liabilities across the annual conferences in the United States.

Key Observations and Conclusions about Post-Retiree Medical Liabilities

- The retiree population continues to grow.
- U.S. conferences remain challenged with the overall funding of their portion of PRM liabilities, with only 46 percent of conferences reporting fully funded status and over $1 billion of total liability.
- Nevertheless, at least 75 percent of U.S. conferences report plans to continue offering some form of PRM coverage indefinitely.
- There is a continued need for PRM to be included in regular comprehensive funding plans. There are opportunities for some conferences to consider adjustments to benefits, cost-sharing, and funding strategies in order to close funding gaps and to support sustainability of retiree medical benefits throughout the denomination.
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

Report Three: Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination

Paragraph 1506.6 of the Book of Discipline directs the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (dba Wespath) to “present a quadrennial report to General Conference concerning the long-term benefit liabilities of the denomination.”

Quadrennial Report Concerning Long-Term Benefit Liabilities of the Denomination

This report focuses on long-term benefit obligations and related benefit funding for the defined benefit components of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), which provides pension and retirement benefits for clergy of annual conferences in the United States. Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) annuities and Pre-1982 Plan benefits are part of these obligations.

The report also addresses post-retirement medical benefits provided at the discretion of the U.S. annual conferences. Paragraph 639.6 of the Book of Discipline states that the annual conferences shall provide access to Medicare supplement plans and prescription drug coverage plans. As described in ¶ 639.6, access to Medicare supplement coverage can be defined and provided in a variety of methods across the U.S. annual conferences. Further, ¶ 639.6 does not compel the conferences to fund such coverage.

Unlike United Methodist pension and retirement plans outside the U.S., CRSP and its predecessor plans for U.S. clergy are governed by the General Conference. Plan liabilities are obligations of the U.S. conferences that sponsor the plans. The U.S. conferences often collect monies from local churches to pay for these plans or use designated outside reserves.

The sustainability and affordability of the defined benefit components largely depend on the plan sponsor’s ability to pay for the contributions due. Church membership across the U.S. has been declining, creating uncertainty as to whether local churches can continue to pay for these plans in the same capacity in the future.

U.S. Membership Per Retired Clergy

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compares 2017 membership to 2018 retired clergy
**Reflects year the plan started (MPP and CRSP)

Retirement Plan Defined Benefit Liabilities

Denominational defined benefit liabilities include the defined benefit component of CRSP (CRSP-DB), MPP annuities, and benefits of the Pre-1982 Plan. These components of the clergy retirement program provide a lifetime pension for retired clergy and their spouses and survivors. CRSP-DB and MPP annuities have the same funding levels across all U.S. conferences. The Pre-82 Plan has a different funding level for each conference. Each of these plans is connectional in nature across all U.S. annual conferences.

Effective January 1, 2016, the Pre-82 Plan and CRSP-DB implemented five-year asset smoothing to help mitigate the impact of deviations from expected asset returns. The intent of this strategy was to reduce the volatility of contributions needed to support the benefit programs. Asset smoothing has been in place for MPP annuities since January 1, 2014.

The following table depicts assets, liabilities, and funded ratios on a long-term funding basis for CRSP-DB, MPP annuities, and Pre-82 as of the 2018 valuation (January 1, 2018 data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Assets* (Millions)</th>
<th>Liabilities* (Millions)</th>
<th>Funded Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRSP-DB</td>
<td>$1,904</td>
<td>$1,740</td>
<td>109%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPP Annuities</td>
<td>$3,885</td>
<td>$3,607</td>
<td>108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-82</td>
<td>$2,158</td>
<td>$1,937</td>
<td>111%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Long-term funding basis with 5-year asset smoothing
The plans are also valued on a market basis. Market liabilities are calculated using an interest rate consistent with those used to establish the price at which benefit payments would currently trade in an open market. Because interest rates are lower than long-term rates in today’s persistent low interest rate environment, market liabilities are higher than long-term funding liabilities, as seen in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Assets** ( Millions)</th>
<th>Liabilities** ( Millions)</th>
<th>Funded Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRSP-DB</td>
<td>$1,998</td>
<td>$2,956</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPP Annuities</td>
<td>$3,957</td>
<td>$4,645</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-82</td>
<td>$2,243</td>
<td>$2,488</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Market basis with no asset smoothing

Conference Funding and Benefit Levels for the Pre-82 Plan (formally, Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program)

Unlike CRSP and MPP, the Pre-82 Plan did not require conferences to fund benefits as they were earned. General Conference 1980 set December 31, 2021, as the due date for fully funding accrued Pre-82 benefits. Effective 2017, the minimum contribution methodology was modified to avoid a potential contribution spike in 2021 and contribution volatility after 2021. This mitigating methodology amortizes the unfunded liability and any new gains or losses over five years.

Subject to certain restrictions, the Pre-82 Plan also makes each U.S. annual conference responsible for setting its own benefit levels for Pre-1982 service. Accordingly, Pre-82 benefit rates and funding levels vary from conference to conference. Any increases to benefit levels are required to be funded before becoming effective.

The chart below reflects the January 1, 2018 valuation results¹ and only Pre-82 Plan assets held and protected by the pension trust.

The top half of the graph represents U.S. conferences that have achieved 100 percent funding or more. The left-hand side represents conferences with benefit levels below the average.

Considering the Pre-82 Plan’s maturity, Wespath’s goal is to decrease the potential for volatility by making ongoing incremental reductions in the plan’s equity exposure, coupled with a corresponding decrease in the discount rate used to value the plan’s liabilities. For the 2020 contribution, the discount rate was 6.50 percent.

If funding surpluses from overfunded conferences were used to satisfy other conferences’ unfunded liabilities, the Pre-82 Plan would be more than 100 percent funded in aggregate. However, assuming individual conferences will retain any surplus they have accumulated (after all benefit claims are paid), the plan is 97 percent funded as of January 1, 2018.

If the financial support and associated risks were to be transferred elsewhere (for example, to an insurance carrier), the liabilities would be significantly higher (due to risk premiums or commercial profit loading, and current market rates being used), and the funded status would be lower.

As of this report, all conferences have contributed the minimum amount required each year and several conferences have contributed additional amounts. Roughly 70 percent of the conferences are at or above 100 percent funded as of January 1, 2018. The rest of the conferences are on a path to becoming 100 percent funded by making required contributions each year. Note that even after 100 percent funding of accrued benefit liabilities is achieved, contributions will likely be required from time to time due to market fluctuations, mortality changes, and any benefit increases.

Results from the 2019 Comprehensive Benefits Funding Plan

U.S. annual conferences are required to complete a formal funding plan each year known as the Comprehensive Benefits Funding Plan (CBFP). Wespath is required to report related findings to each General Conference. All annual conferences have funding plans for their 2019 Pre-82 funding needs and received a favorable opinion. All but one conference also received a favorable opinion for their funding plans for benefit programs outside of Pre-82. The single conference that did not receive a favorable opinion received a qualified opinion because some required retiree medical information was not provided.

Non-plan assets in conference-held accounts designated for Pre-82 contributions are disclosed in the annual Comprehensive Benefits Funding Plan (CBFP). The most recently completed CBFP was for 2019 contributions based on the January 1, 2017 valuations.

The Funding Plan Funded Ratio graph below shows how funded positions change when considering assets in conference-held accounts in addition to plan assets based on January 1, 2017 valuation results.3 Many conferences with unfunded liabilities have enough assets held outside the plan to meet their Pre-82 Plan obligations. However, the vast majority of these assets are available for uses

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2. January 1, 2017 valuation results are based on the 2019 PSR benefit level.
other than Pre-82 funding, e.g., subject to the claims of creditors or potential lawsuits.

Please see Appendix A for more conference-specific information, including expectations for future benefit increases as reported in their 2019 CBFP.

The percentage of a married clergyperson’s pension benefit that will continue, upon death, to his or her surviving spouse varies among conferences. As of January 1, 2017, forty-three conferences elected 70 percent or 75 percent and eleven elected 85 percent or 100 percent as the surviving spouse percentage.

Post-Retirement Medical Benefit Obligations in The UMC

In addition to the ¶ 1506.6 provisions for conferences to prepare Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plans and Wespath to provide this report to the General Conference, ¶ 1506.19 calls for conferences to submit valuations of post-retirement medical (PRM) liabilities on a biennial (every other year) basis. This report provides an overview of PRM liabilities across the annual conferences in the United States, as well as an overview of conferences’ approaches to funding these liabilities based on information received from conferences in accordance with ¶ 1506.6 and ¶ 1506.19. Participating conferences provided the necessary PRM information, including actuarial assumptions and demographic data, through the CBFP.

Conference PRM information provided through the CBFP is primarily as of December 31, 2017, and contained in the 2018 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan. Combined with other data collected by Wespath, conference PRM information in the CBFP serves as the basis for this report on the denomination’s long-term retiree medical benefit liabilities.

I. Demographic Shift

For purposes of PRM liabilities, the percentage of retirees has been growing steadily over the years and is expected to continue growing as the clergy population ages.

II. PRM Liabilities (Benefit Obligations) and Funded Status

Despite continued increase in the retiree population, this trend has not resulted in a corresponding growth in conference PRM obligations, primarily because of cost shifting and changes in benefits provided, as described in the next section. As depicted in the chart below, the value of projected liabilities (expected PRM obligations) has actually decreased fairly significantly compared with previous years.

[Image of chart showing PRM Benefit Obligations (Liabilities) - Net Conference Cost]

Percentages for HRAs (health reimbursement arrangements) include only the conferences for which PRM liabilities were reported.
Although the net conference liability trend appears to be significantly favorable, most conferences continued to be challenged with the funding of these liabilities. Only 46 percent are reporting a fully funded status in 2017, though this is up from 30 percent reporting being fully funded status four years ago. This underscores the importance of including PRM liabilities on regular CBFPs, to allow conferences to identify funding gaps and consider options for closing those gaps. It also reinforces the need for conferences to report how they will satisfy ongoing funding contributions for PRM in the CBFP. Wespath has recognized that many conferences have continued the efforts to reduce ongoing PRM liabilities and improve funding levels by continuing to focus on cost shifting and changes to benefits provided since the data was collected in 2018. Wespath expects that this will become more apparent in future reporting periods. Wespath has prioritized outreach and consultation with conferences that are less than 50 percent funded on their PRM liability to discuss options for closing that gap.

III. PRM Benefits and Cost-Sharing Strategies

Given that the retiree population continues to grow, the decreasing net plan sponsor cost trend highlighted in Section II has been achieved through changes in conference strategy as to the type of PRM benefits offered and the cost sharing with retirees over the past decade. Evidence of this shift in conference strategy is also reflected in other data collected by Wespath.

Regardless of the financial pressures that PRM benefits place on both the conferences and retirees, at least 75 percent of U.S. conferences report plans to continue offering some form of PRM coverage indefinitely. Because many conferences are either holding steady or decreasing their own annual per-retiree contribution in order to control their liability, more than 50 percent are no longer offering group plans, but rather offering Health Reimbursement Arrangements (HRA) or cash stipends for individuals to seek coverage through the individual Medicare supplement market. This also provides retirees and spouses more plan choices and therefore greater flexibility to control their own costs and align plan coverage with their own needs on an ongoing basis.

As of December 31, 2018, more than half of U.S. conferences had moved away from offering traditional group Medicare supplement or Medicare Advantage plan coverage (typically one or two plan offerings, with funding support provided through traditional group plan premium cost-sharing). This is expected to continue, with multiple groups considering a transition in the coming quadrennium. Access to the individual Medicare supplement market varies by conference and includes channels such as the state health insurance plans (SHIP) for retirees, or individual retiree plan market “connector” providers (whose benefit advisors assist retirees and spouses in “navigating” state and local individual retiree plan market options). The most common offering is through Willis Towers Watson’s Via Benefits, which pairs benefit advisors with an HRA to provide decision support and financial assistance to retirees and spouses purchasing plans in the individual Medicare Supplement market.

Notably, the individual supplement market typically has more lower-cost plan options compared to a group plan. A smaller conference contribution can purchase more on a dollar-for-dollar coverage basis, without the
retiree or spouse forgoing necessary coverage levels. Further, the individual market offers more plan choices than conference-sponsored group coverage, thereby better positioning the retiree or spouse to select a plan most closely aligned with his or her individual needs. Some conferences have significantly reduced their post-retirement medical liability by selecting stipend or HRA solutions.

IV. Key Observations and Conclusions

- The net plan sponsor cost trend (PRM benefit obligations) is favorable even amid a growing retiree population.
- Even with the favorable net cost trend, conferences remain challenged with the overall funding of their portion of PRM liabilities, with only 46 percent of conferences reporting fully funded status and over $1 billion of total liability.
- There is a continued need for PRM to be included in regular comprehensive funding. There are opportunities for some conferences to consider adjustments to benefits, cost-sharing, and funding strategies in order to close funding gaps and to support sustainability of retiree medical benefits throughout the denomination.
## Appendix A

### 2019 Pre-82 Funding Plan Summary by Conference, January 1, 2017 for 2019

Funded status of the fifty-four annual conferences participating in the Pre-82 Plan follows. The values in this table reflect long-term assumptions, not market basis assumptions. All have had 2019 opinions issued. Some of the PSRs or PSR increases differ from the 2019 CBFP due to revisions not reflected in the CBFP. (Red Bird Missionary Conference does not participate in the Pre-82 Plan.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>2019 Past Service Rate</th>
<th>Assumed PSR Increases</th>
<th>Funded Ratio</th>
<th>Funded Status</th>
<th>Disclosed Assets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama-West Florida</td>
<td>773.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>(308,486)</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska (AUMC)</td>
<td>791.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>(208,845)</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>577.00</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>(469,373)</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore-Washington</td>
<td>720.00</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>138%</td>
<td>19,510,170</td>
<td>138%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California-Nevada</td>
<td>887.00</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>(5,908,586)</td>
<td>130%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California-Pacific</td>
<td>731.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>117%</td>
<td>8,856,551</td>
<td>117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Texas</td>
<td>702.00</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>115%</td>
<td>3,591,383</td>
<td>122%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakotas</td>
<td>718.00</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>(2,489,829)</td>
<td>169%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Southwest</td>
<td>688.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>105%</td>
<td>649,694</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Ohio</td>
<td>900.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>116%</td>
<td>11,665,462</td>
<td>116%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Pennsylvania</td>
<td>502.00</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>(6,223,734)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>771.00</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>(6,065,992)</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Plains</td>
<td>791.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>122%</td>
<td>19,408,029</td>
<td>122%</td>
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<td>(1,264,330)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>(2,910,094)</td>
<td>112%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>(3,122,227)</td>
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<td>83%</td>
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<td>(749,168)</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<td>Rocky Mountain</td>
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<td>137%</td>
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<td>674.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>(10,673,989)</td>
<td>124%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Susquehanna</td>
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<td>7,013,148</td>
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<td>1,159,342</td>
<td>105%</td>
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<td>(334,461)</td>
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<td>(2,146,874)</td>
<td>104%</td>
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<td>(7,139,133)</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<td>2.00%</td>
<td>130%</td>
<td>10,583,582</td>
<td>136%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western North Carolina</td>
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<td>95%</td>
<td>(3,535,639)</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.80%</td>
<td>108%</td>
<td>5,637,329</td>
<td>108%</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>89%</td>
<td>(5,283,576)</td>
<td>92%</td>
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<td>Yellowstone</td>
<td>485.00</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>141%</td>
<td>3,118,096</td>
<td>141%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>103%</strong></td>
<td><strong>68,049,407</strong></td>
<td><strong>111%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Excluding Conferences’ Surpluses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>95%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(114,370,353)</strong></td>
<td><strong>98%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

2018 PRM Funding STATUS by Conference

The following exhibit lists the available information for the conferences known to offer a retiree medical program at the time the CBFPs were completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>APBO*</th>
<th>Disclosed Assets</th>
<th>Funded Status</th>
<th>Funded Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama-West Florida</td>
<td>$24,244,293</td>
<td>$21,429,241</td>
<td>($2,815,052)</td>
<td>88.39%</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>$9,441,000</td>
<td>$193,669</td>
<td>($9,247,331)</td>
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<td>Baltimore-Washington</td>
<td>$34,235,026</td>
<td>$61,058,795</td>
<td>$26,823,769</td>
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<tr>
<td>California-Nevada</td>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California-Pacific</td>
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<td>$459,668</td>
<td>($25,185,951)</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
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<td>($1,310,208)</td>
<td>76.27%</td>
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<td>Dakotas</td>
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<td>$13,929,483</td>
<td>($1,802,180)</td>
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<td>Desert Southwest</td>
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<td>($6,909,801)</td>
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<td>Disclosed Assets</td>
<td>Funded Status</td>
<td>Funded Ratio</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>$2,383,739</td>
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<td>Yellowstone</td>
<td>$2,249,531</td>
<td>$2,805,333</td>
<td>$555,802</td>
<td>124.71%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,067,828,636</strong></td>
<td><strong>$824,567,754</strong></td>
<td><strong>($243,260,882)</strong></td>
<td><strong>76.33%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*APBO: Accumulated post-retirement benefit obligation*
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

Summary of Report Four: Referrals from General Conference 2016

The 2016 General Conference referred three items to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits [dba Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath)]. Two of the referral items were nearly identical amendments to two separate benefit plan petitions: Petition 60039 and Petition 60040. The third referral was a petition regarding appointments to certain extension ministries: Petition 60651.

Petition 60039 and Petition 60040 (Calendar Items 29 and 27, respectively)

Proposed amendments to Petition 60039 (CRSP Amendments) and Petition 60040 (CPP Amendments) were referred by the 2016 General Conference to Wespath. The proposed amendments to the two petitions were very similar. The General Conference approved the two petitions un-amended. However, the 2016 General Conference referred each amendment to Wespath for analysis of the impact of the amendments and consideration of whether certain provisions of the two petitions would be constitutional without the proposed amendments. Wespath’s report to the 2020 General Conference follows.

The transcript related to these referrals can be found on pages 2717 and 2718, and continued on pages 2761 through 2765 of the Daily Christian Advocate for the 2016 General Conference.

More detail on these referrals is provided in Report Four.

Background: During the 2013-2016 quadrennium, a small number of U.S. annual conferences decided to cease offering employer-sponsored group health plan coverage to clergy and instead make a direct payment to the clergyperson, to be used for purchase of individual health coverage. These annual conferences were attempting to keep the cost of clergy benefits and compensation packages the same, but chose to provide health benefits to clergy in a different manner: the employer-subsidized group health insurance coverage.

This new practice had an unintended consequence of increasing denominational average compensation (DAC), which is used to determine certain benefits in both mandatory clergy benefit plans [the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)]. The new practice being used by a few conferences inadvertently increased the DAC, which then increased future benefit levels of all U.S. clergy and the long-term liabilities and plan contributions for all U.S. annual conferences—including conferences that did not adopt the new practice.

To address this issue, Wespath proposed a change to the definitions of “plan compensation” and DAC in CRSP and CPP to the 2016 General Conference to exclude, “cash compensation paid in lieu of employer-provided group health plan coverage.” In other words, clergy benefit levels and conference liabilities would not increase inadvertently across all U.S. clergy due to the practice of a few conferences.

Question Presented: Do the amendments to CRSP and CPP in Petition 60039 and Petition 60040 respectively, impede the authority of the charge conference over compensation for appointed clergy, or otherwise conflict with other paragraphs of the Book of Discipline?

Wespath Response: No. Wespath believes that the definitions of plan compensation and DAC in CRSP and CPP do not infringe on powers of the charge conferences to establish clergy compensation. The General Conference has authority to determine what factors, such as particular definitions of compensation, are to be used to calculate benefit amounts under the retirement and welfare plans, i.e., CRSP and CPP, to the extent they are distinctively connectional. The definitions of plan compensation and DAC used in the CRSP and CPP are separate and distinct from the cash compensation (the actual remuneration paid to clergy), which is set by charge conferences. Based on Judicial Council Decision No. 568, Wespath does not believe that the definitions of compensation or DAC in CRSP and CPP are unconstitutional or in conflict with any provisions of the Book of Discipline. Nor do CRSP’s and CPP’s definitions of DAC define ministerial salaries.

Petition 60651 (Calendar Item 126)

Petition 60651 (Appointments to Academic Settings) was referred by the 2016 General Conference to Wespath for further analysis of whether it would cause an annual conference to incur the cost of another year of service for each clergyperson appointed in this manner under CRSP. Would it be any different
than what would accrue if the clergyperson were appointed to “attend school” (an appointment category that already exists)?

The transcript related to this referral can be found on pages 2540 and 2541 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*. The intent of the petition was to allow for a specific category of extension ministry that would include appointments as students in research doctoral programs and persons who are serving as instructors or professors or administrators in colleges, universities, and theological schools affiliated with The United Methodist Church.

**Question Presented:** If enacted, would the terms of Petition 60651 cause an annual conference to incur the cost of another year of service under the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) for each clergyperson appointed in the manner proposed by the petition?

**Wespath Response:** Generally no. The only way a clergyperson appointed in such a manner would be a participant in CRSP eligible to “accrue service” (i.e., earn pension credit) under such an appointment would be if the annual conference making the appointment to the extension ministry chose to designate the particular extension ministry as a “conference-elective entity” under the terms of CRSP. Making such a designation is wholly in the discretion of the annual conference as plan sponsor of CRSP. Therefore, Wespath believes that a clergyperson appointed to an extension ministry as described in Petition 60651 would not accrue service under CRSP unless the annual conference affirmatively chooses to provide participation in CRSP to clergy appointed to that extension ministry by designating the extension ministry a conference-elective entity.
Quadrennial Report of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

Report Four: Referrals from General Conference 2016

The 2016 General Conference referred three items to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits [dba Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath)]. Two of the referral items were nearly identical amendments to two separate benefit plan petitions: Petition 60039 and Petition 60040. The third referral was a petition regarding appointments to certain extension ministries: Petition 60651.

Petition 60039 and Petition 60040 (Calendar Items 29 and 27, respectively)

Proposed amendments to Petition 60039 (CRSP Amendments) and Petition 60040 (CPP Amendments) were referred by the 2016 General Conference to Wespath. The proposed amendments to the two petitions were very similar. The General Conference approved the two petitions un-amended. However, the 2016 General Conference referred each amendment to Wespath for analysis of the impact of the amendments and consideration of whether certain provisions of the two petitions would be constitutional without the proposed amendments. Wespath’s report to the 2020 General Conference follows.

The transcript related to these referrals can be found on pages 2717 and 2718, and continued on pages 2761 through 2765 of the Daily Christian Advocate for the 2016 General Conference.

Background: During the 2013-2016 quadrennium, a small number of U.S. annual conferences decided to cease offering employer-sponsored group health plan coverage to clergy. Generally, this was because of the availability of alternative coverage through the marketplaces created by federal law, i.e., the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Some or all of the funds that annual conferences had been contributing on behalf of clergy to a group health insurance plan as nontaxable employer subsidies instead were being paid directly to clergy in the form of taxable cash compensation. This new practice had an unintended consequence of increasing denominational average compensation (DAC), which is used to determine certain benefits in both mandatory clergy benefit plans [the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)] due to the fact that more of the total benefits and compensation package was being paid in cash (i.e., direct payment to the clergyperson, to be used for purchase of individual health coverage). The new payment of “cash in lieu of” group health plan coverage was being included in the DAC, whereas the traditional manner of “payment” of health benefits (i.e., nontaxable employer-subsidized group health plan coverage) was not included in the DAC. The new practice being used by a few conferences inadvertently increased the DAC, which then increased future benefit levels of all U.S. clergy and the long-term liabilities and plan contributions for all U.S. annual conferences—including conferences that did not adopt the new practice.

To address this issue, Wespath proposed a change to the definitions of “plan compensation” and DAC in CRSP and CPP to the 2016 General Conference, under which “cash compensation paid in lieu of employer-provided group health plan coverage” would be excluded. The definition of these terms in CPP incorporates by reference the CRSP definitions. In other words, clergy benefit levels and conference liabilities would not increase inadvertently across all U.S. clergy due to the practice of a few conferences providing cash compensation for health benefits directly to their clergy.

Delegate Robert Zilhaver proposed an amendment to each petition:

“To retain the denominational average compensation calculation based upon actual auditable economic transactions of compensations adopted by Charge Conferences in accordance to ¶ 247.13,” rather than the language that delegates pieces of this denominational average compensation to the annual conference for calculations. And, the paragraphs that would be affected in the DCA would be on p. 709, to amend section 2.16, Denominational Average Compensation, that would be to restore the original language. And on p. 709, section 2.20, Plan Compensation, and that would be to restore the original language. And, to amend on p. 712, section 502c, to restore the original
language, and to add an additional language at the end as a note, “the 2016 General Conference requests that the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits review the denominational average compensation calculations as presented in its petition 60040-FA-1504.1, ADCA pp. 705 to 709 for compliance with Judicial Decision 51, 390, and other identified decisions, as well as, Constitutional ¶ 16.4, 16.8, 16.9, 16.5; Disciplinary ¶ 247.13, 604.1, 604.4, 604.8, 604.13, 639.4, 639.5, 639.6, 639.7, 1506, and other identified paragraphs. It is recommended that the board use the provisions of ¶ 2610 to ensure compliance.

The General Conference voted 627 to 133 to refer the proposed amendment to petition 60039 to Wespath; and 604 to 182 to refer the same proposed amendment to petition 60040 to Wespath.

**Question Presented:** Do the amendments to CRSP and CPP in Petition 60039 and Petition 60040, respectively, impede the authority of the charge conference over compensation for appointed clergy, or otherwise conflict with other paragraphs of the *Book of Discipline*?

**Wespath Response:** No. As explained below, Wespath believes that the definitions of plan compensation and DAC in CRSP and CPP do not infringe on powers of the charge conferences to establish clergy compensation. The General Conference has authority to determine what factors, such as particular definitions of compensation, are to be used to calculate benefit amounts under the retirement and welfare plans, i.e., CRSP and CPP, to the extent they are distinctively connectional. The definitions of plan compensation and DAC used in the CRSP and CPP are separate and distinct from the cash compensation (the actual remuneration paid to clergy), which is set by charge conferences. Based on Judicial Council Decision No. 568, Wespath does not believe that the definitions of compensation or DAC in CRSP and CPP are unconstitutional or in conflict with any provisions of the *Book of Discipline*.

The General Conference has the authority to establish and modify the terms of the mandatory benefit plans under *Book of Discipline* ¶ 1504.1. The revised definitions of plan compensation and DAC, which are merely part of the plans’ benefit formulas, do not infringe on the rights of charge conferences to establish clergy compensation. The assertion in the referral and proposed amendment confuses two separate and distinct uses and definitions of the term “compensation.” More importantly, the assertion has been rejected by Judicial Council.

In Judicial Council Decision No. 568 (http://www.umc.org/decisions/41461/P50), the North Dakota Annual Conference challenged the constitutionality of the definition of compensation used in the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) [a predecessor plan to CRSP and now a supplement in CRSP] and CPP. MPP and CPP included housing allowances and the value of parsonages in the definition of compensation, whereas the 1984 *Book of Discipline* ¶ 256.3(f) ¶ 252.4(e) in the 2016 *Book of Discipline* indicated that “housing shall not be considered a part of compensation or remuneration, but shall be considered as a means provided by the local church, and for the convenience of the local church, to enable its ministry and the itinerant ministry of the Annual Conference.” Thus, there was a clear difference between the definition of compensation in the church’s benefit plans, and a definition of compensation in the *Book of Discipline*, in a paragraph dealing with local churches and the determination and reporting of housing and clergy compensation.

The Judicial Council found such differences in definitions of compensation to be permissible. The Judicial Council stated:

Just because plan compensation is defined differently in MPP 2.1(k) and CPP 2.1(g) than ministerial compensation in ¶ 256.3 does not in itself make the former invalid. It is within the power of a legislative body, in this case General Conference, when dealing with two different issues, to define the same word differently when separate circumstances, as here are involved. Although not raised directly, there is an implication in the material received from the North Dakota Conference that to have different definitions of compensation is unconstitutional. No Constitutional violation has been called to our attention nor have we found any.

The concerns raised by Delegate Zilhaver, and contained in the referral to Wespath by the 2016 General Conference, have already been addressed by the Judicial Council in Decision No. 568. The Judicial Council held that a difference in definitions of compensation is permissible because these are two separate matters for distinct purposes. Like the definitions of compensation examined in Decision No. 568, CRSP’s and CPP’s definitions of DAC “do not define ministerial salaries but rather establish a formula . . .” DAC is merely a part of the benefit formula upon which clergy benefits are based. These definitions have no impact on actual ministerial cash compensation determined by and paid to clergy by churches through charge conferences, or its taxation. Thus, there is no constitutional infirmity or disciplinary defect with the amended definitions of plan compensation and DAC in CSRP and CPP, which were approved overwhelmingly by the General Conference.
Petition 60651 (Calendar Item 126)

Petition 60651 (Appointments to Academic Settings) was referred by the 2016 General Conference to Wespath for further analysis of whether it would cause an annual conference to incur the cost of another year of service for each clergyperson appointed in this manner under CRSP. Would it be any different than what would accrue if the clergyperson were appointed to “attend school” (an appointment category that already exists)?

The transcript related to this referral can be found on pages 2540 and 2541 of the Daily Christian Advocate. The intent of the petition was to allow for a specific category of extension ministry that would include appointments as students in research doctoral programs and persons who are serving as instructors or professors or administrators in colleges, universities, and theological schools affiliated with The United Methodist Church. The petition would allow for the service of local pastors to include this particular extension ministry appointment. This would encourage the strengthening of relationships between The United Methodist Church and various higher education institutions, and would allow a certain category of students to meet the service requirement of provisional membership, while also working on a doctoral degree. The General Conference voted 581 to 104 to refer the petition to Wespath.

Question Presented: If enacted, would the terms of Petition 60651 cause an annual conference to incur the cost of another year of service under the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) for each clergyperson appointed in the manner proposed by the petition?

Wespath Response: Generally no. The only way a clergyperson appointed in such a manner would be a participant in CRSP eligible to “accrue service” (i.e., earn pension credit) under such an appointment would be if the annual conference making the appointment to the extension ministry chose to designate the particular extension ministry as a “conference-elective entity” under the terms of CRSP. Making such a designation is wholly in the discretion of the annual conference as plan sponsor of CRSP. A conference-elective entity is one for which the annual conference chooses to make CRSP contributions (both defined benefit and defined contribution costs) on behalf of all clergypersons appointed by that annual conference’s bishop to that extension ministry. Therefore, Wespath believes that a clergyperson appointed to an extension ministry as described in Petition 60651 would not accrue service under CRSP unless the annual conference affirmatively chooses to provide participation in CRSP to clergy appointed to that extension ministry by designating the extension ministry a conference-elective entity.
The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH)
2017-2020 Summary Report

The United Methodist Publishing House is an extension of the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church (UMC). Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is not only our mantra; it is the core passion and motivation for all that we do.

We serve tens of thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of individuals. The tasks involved range from researching customer needs to identifying and partnering with authors, and from maintaining infrastructure to keeping current with digital technology and information systems. Financially, UMPH is fully self-supported through sales and our work is accomplished without the use of any general church funds. Over the last fifty years, UMPH has contributed nearly $50 million to support clergy and their dependents’ pensions across the jurisdictional and central conferences.

UMPH provides an array of products for teaching and learning, scholarship, applied theology and professional ministry, leadership development, Christian living, music and worship, and support for the mission and ministries of congregations. Despite disruptions of the publishing and bookselling industries, and declines in worship, and Sunday school attendance in North America, we continue to provide to The United Methodist Church and the ecumenical community a wide variety of quality services and resources that help more people in more places know and deepen their knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, learn to love God, and choose to serve God and neighbor.

Cumulative sales from continuing operations for the 2016–2019 period were $219,249,000. Cost of goods sold (the price of resources purchased or manufactured for resale) and operating expenses totaled $216,968,000. Net operating revenue was positive over the four years totaling $2,281,000, and non-operating revenue and investment earnings added $39,814,000. This resulted in a total four-year net revenue of $35,402,000. During this period UMPH sold two parcels of property in downtown Nashville and completed the transition to the New House Commons Campus. UMPH also sold its Distribution Center property after outsourcing those operations in 2017. The UMPH balance sheet shows total assets and liabilities of $84,233,000 at the end of the quadrennium.

Although the 2008–2009 world financial crisis resulted in the shortfall of assets of the UMPH defined benefits pension plan, UMPH has been diligently restoring the defined benefit plan assets from a low of 68 percent of the actuarially determined amount needed to cover future liabilities by investing proceeds from the sale of property and an aggressive multiyear plan for cash contributions. We expect to reach the threshold of the corpus required to fund projected long-term pension liabilities by 2022.

During the quadrennium, hundreds of new products were published under the Abingdon Press imprint in the areas of theology, leadership, biblical studies, small-group studies, ministry resources, Christian living, and fiction. These include several new editions of the Common English Bible (CEB); curriculum, such as the Deep Blue and Bible Story Basics children’s curriculum and the Adult Bible Studies quarterly curriculum with a new video component; ministry resources, such as Adam Hamilton’s Creed, Melissa Spoelstra’s Abingdon Women Bible studies, and the Advent book The Redemption of Scrooge; new books that enrich Christian living; official United Methodist resources; and more.

In 2019, UMPH launched a major digital initiative called Amplify (amplifymedia.com), a digital multimedia platform designed and developed in collaboration with customer focus groups to enable churches to engage their constituents with UMPH and the church’s own content, with churches able to use their own branding. Amplify is designed to facilitate access to study, discipleship development, and other ministry resource content anywhere, anytime via online streaming to desktops, mobile devices, and smart TVs. Additionally, UMPH launched Connected Faith, a mobile app-based platform for delivering Christian teaching and learning resources to smartphones and tablets.

Along with these two digital initiatives, UMPH also completed the migration of Cokesbury.com from its legacy infrastructure to an up-to-date, open-source e-commerce platform in the winter of 2019. While improving customer experience and engagement was the primary driver for the change, the investment also moves our infrastructure to a simpler technology “footprint” that, in turn, increases our adaptability and better positions us for sustainability, including allowing faster implementation of upgrades and modifications to meet ever-evolving technologies and customer expectations. We initiated other projects that streamlined operations and reduced complexity. And, in collaboration with a third-party technology partner and GCFA, we managed the development of the Daily Christian Advocate website to provide fully digital access to the DCA content, improve efficiency of delivery of the DCA by reducing dependence on print and related onsite operations at conferences, and help mitigate the impact of conference location on staffing and operational costs.
The 230-year history of the Publishing House has been marked by changes and uncertainties, but also by faithful people who trusted God, acted with tenacity and imagination, and navigated those uncertainties and changes by the grace of Jesus Christ. Likewise today, despite changes we face in our congregations, denomination, marketplace, and industry, we trust in the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We aim to share the good news of Jesus Christ with a world hungry for salvation and hope, and we commit ourselves to a relentless pursuit of excellence and seek your support, critique, and participation along the way.
The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH)
2017-2020 Quadrennial Report

Introduction

The United Methodist Publishing House is an extension of the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church (UMC).

Global social upheavals as well as the contemporary challenges faced by The United Methodist Church are marked by high levels of variability. More things change, more often. Over its 230-year history, The United Methodist Publishing House has been subject to—and a leader of—change in how and whom we serve to advance the cause of Christianity rooted in our rich Wesleyan tradition. As a part of United Methodism’s adventure, UMPH has changed and will continue to experience and lead changes that help more people know, love, and serve God.

The Publishing House operates as a financially self-sustaining, mission-centric agency, receiving no general church funds. When our essential ministry aims intersect with viable business practices, they are thoroughly intertwined and mutually correcting. And that’s precisely when we are fully accountable, effective, and sustainable.

To achieve these goals we are challenged to envision with others and help make possible new, relevant, and resonant ways for . . .

- congregations (the primary setting for ministry),
- supported by annual conferences (the basic unit of the church),
- and connected to the global United Methodist fellowship,

. . . to discover and employ practices that

- reach out to people with the good news of Jesus Christ, and
- effectively invite and welcome them to be a part of the journey of discipleship,
- deepen their relationship with God,
- form them as faithful pilgrims,
- and help to embolden and send them out to help make the world more loving and just.

Fulfilling our Mission

UMPH strives to fulfill our mission through pursuing both innovative new approaches to our work and consistent excellence in the products and services we offer. Following are examples of these initiatives and our commitment to high quality work.

Digital Strategy and Amplify. We are enthusiastically hopeful about a new approach to serving churches and leaders. Amplify is a multimedia platform providing church leaders and congregations with quality resources that add momentum to their Spirit-led missions. Knowing one size doesn’t fit all, we listened to church leaders to learn more about life and hopes in their communities of faith—large and small—and what resources they most need and want.

Amplify is a partnership, not a product. It is a set of tools that can easily be curated and customized to fit the specific needs of each congregation with results that ignite leadership, facilitate deeper discipleship, and enable effective ministry. UMPH will invest nearly $2 million over the coming quadrennium in Amplify.

Inventive and adaptive approaches. Increasingly we are employing a variable cost model to adjust spending across the enterprise. This allows us to scale up and down as needed to fit often unpredictable variability in the marketplace and avoid maintaining excessive overhead burdens. Product distribution services are the prime example where instead of maintaining our own distribution center (we closed operations and sold the property in 2018), UMPH is using an outside vendor, paying for services on the basis of changing order volumes, which has already resulted in savings (versus projected volume) of almost $700,000 in the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years.

New tools, methods, and processes. A major redesign of the functionality at cokesbury.com, plus new ways of deploying Cokesbury Resource Consultants and managing annual conference events, have resulted in sustaining sales at lower costs. We have implemented a process improvement methodology called Lean, which has resulted in increased efficiencies and reduced costs through strategic work process improvements. Combined, these efforts have saved UMPH hundreds of hours in personnel time by improving and streamlining processes and tens of thousands of dollars in related costs.

Our commitment to excellence is exemplified by numerous products and services that consistently deliver high-quality help that local church leaders value, including:

- Adult Bible Studies quarterly curriculum consistently receives favorable feedback from adult Sunday school classes across the U.S. and has added a
video component generating increased interest, use, and sales.

- **Abingdon Women** provides small group studies for women that are broadly acclaimed and sell across denominations, even in an aggressively competitive marketplace.

- **Cokesbury’s Vacation Bible School** is regularly rated first or second by users and is known for its quality Bible lessons and “fun” factor.

- **Our Standing Order Fulfillment Process** has been expertly perfected and receives high customer rating for ease of planning, ordering, and accounting by local churches.

- An **Online Chats** feature at Cokesbury.com is customer-centric and provides a level of interactive customer service that is not available through many other digital retailers, particularly by delivering real-time assistance for placing curriculum standing orders, a detail-intensive undertaking.

### Financial Performance

UMPH’s ministry and services are inextricably linked with the activities of The UMC’s local churches. Our sales performance since the 2015 fiscal year has closely tracked churchwide declines in membership, worship attendance, and program participation across the U.S.

From the 2015 to the 2019 fiscal year, UMPH experienced an annualized sales decline of 6.4 percent. That translates to $14.8 million in less revenue over the five years. Cokesbury’s portion of the drop was $12.7 million, and trade sales (sales to other retail vendors) decreased over those 5 years by $2.3 million.

### The UMPH Team

The 330-person staff team of IT experts, editors, marketers, operations specialists, accountants, strategic planners, researchers, and others are well trained, highly productive, imaginative, rigorous, and persistent. They are deeply committed to our shared ministry and to maintaining high service levels and quality products while also curtailing expenses.

### High Variability & Continuous Adaptation

The Publishing House released 7,143 new products from fiscal years 2016-2019 and conducted extensive customer research to match our own and other publishers’ offerings with the customers’ expressed interests, resulting in 1,844,250 customer orders, 6,215,053 line items shipped, and sales of 23,071,352 units of books, curriculum, and supplies.

Meanwhile, we have invested over $5,433,434 to update UMPH computing systems and related processes; established and maintained competitive performance standards with improved processes for sales, customer service, and distribution activities; and greatly reduced operating expenses by at least $4,951,000 in that same period.

As a publisher and retailer, Abingdon Press and Cokesbury are part of industries where digital technologies and the concentration of commerce by mega online retailers is reshaping the way resources are conceived, developed, stored, marketed, distributed, and used. UMPH has been eagerly learning, adapting, and keeping pace with these changes.

Congregations are on the front lines of ministry, experiencing enormous amounts of disruption and degrees of variability. As attendance patterns change, as program ministries are reimagined in light of cultural shifts, and given less availability by volunteer leaders, congregational ministries are in flux.

Factors include:

- Drops in membership and worship attendance;
- Changes in levels and frequency of participation and engagement/volunteerism in Christian formation and other disciple-making efforts;
- Different patterns in charitable giving causing budget challenges;
- The aging of members and leadership.

UMPH is engaged in continuously and rigorously seeking to better understand what new forms and experiments are being conceived and implemented in local settings. In some places, churches are replacing the traditional Sunday school as a primary setting for intentional faith development. An eclectic array of worship and music resources is proving to be relevant and resonant in different contexts. We are learning from successful ventures and identifying the gaps and challenges churches face in order to apply our experience and expertise. We will continue to gather and organize practitioners and thought leaders who can craft and deliver training, services, curriculum, and other program resources that churches will choose, use, and value.

As is true in many places and especially in North America, The United Methodist Church sees sharp trends in movement away from an emphasis on **convergence** (where we seek commonality and interdependence) to a much greater level of **divergence** (where we highlight differences and independence) affecting nearly every aspect of our common life and work. One result is that The UMC has become increasingly fragmented. It is in that envi-
vironment that UMFP is developing product content along with multiple distribution channels to serve an ever-more diverse and disrupted church.

As divergence increases, UMFP strives to understand and empathize with myriad congregational decision makers who are the persons who actually choose which study to purchase for small groups or which Sunday school curriculum best fits their community, people, and goals.

We view the ongoing changes and uncertainties occurring in our congregations, denomination, marketplace, industry, and our own organization not with dread, but with deep appreciation for the witness of our predecessors who for 230 years faced their own steep climbs to traverse and puzzles to be solved. With imagination, tenacity, and a spirit-filled confidence that by God’s mercy they would find the path forward, they did just that and gave us the opportunity to pick up the baton and run the race for this time.

Trusting in the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following Jesus who tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God and neighbor, we aim to share the good news with a world hungry for salvation and hope, and we commit ourselves to a relentless pursuit of excellence and seek your support, critique, and participation along the way.

Publishing Ministry

(Abingdon Press – Cokesbury – The United Methodist Publishing House)

The publishing program of UMFP is carried out under three imprints and is designed to provide to The United Methodist Church and the ecumenical community a wide variety of quality services and resources that will help more people in more places know and deepen their knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, learn to love God, and choose to serve God and neighbor. The scope includes varied offerings for teaching and learning, scholarship, applied theology and professional ministry, leadership development, Christian living, music and worship, and support for the mission and ministries of congregations.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ is the core passion and motivation for all that we do. Recognizing and responding to the dreams, challenges, and needs of congregations and their leaders is critical as they are the primary settings for the church’s engagement with the world. Assuring the quality, integrity, and relevance of products is not an option but an unconditional requirement. It is essential that we find better and more effective ways to work with local church leaders to conceive, fashion, and deliver life-changing ministry resources in their settings. Product developers strive to be increasingly alert and responsive, move at an ever-faster pace, and make greater use of digital technologies as enhancements and as means of delivery.

The tasks include researching customer needs; developing staff skills; identifying and partnering with authors, educators, and other publishers; maintaining the infrastructure for product development; keeping current with digital technology and information systems; and assuming the financial risks associated with production, inventory maintenance, and launch of new products. The work is fully self-supported through sales and is accomplished without the use of any general church funds.

During the quadrennium, hundreds of new products were published under the Abingdon Press imprint in the areas of theology, leadership, biblical studies, small-group studies, ministry resources, Christian living, and fiction. In addition, more than a thousand new Abingdon Press church supplies and new music resources were produced for use in United Methodist churches and beyond. These and other products in print, digital, and video formats were developed and offered through both the multi-channel Cokesbury system (call center, Cokesbury Resource Consultants, on-site sales at events, and Cokesbury.com) and through the trade (other retail vendors and internet sites).

The teaching and learning staff developed and delivered several hundred new and revised curriculum products under the Cokesbury imprint each year for use by all age groups in Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and other settings.

Official resources, such as the Book of Discipline and the Book of Resolutions, were completed and published under The United Methodist Publishing House imprint following the 2016 General Conference, and the Daily Christian Advocate was published for the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference.

While there is much continuity in the publishing ministry that is now over 230 years in continuous existence, The UMC faces challenges as worship and Sunday school attendance, as well as church membership, continue to decline in the U.S. As a result, the products that support these activities are showing steady declines in unit sales. This affects the financial vitality of the publishing and distribution ministry that is totally dependent upon sales.

Bibles, Leadership, Theology, and Music

UMFP advances the love of God and neighbor throughout the world by producing Bibles, books, music, and digital resources such as MinistryMatters.com. The products include music and liturgy for worship, and books
and essays about the Bible as well as Wesleyan and other works in systematic theology. Leadership titles emphasize the skills needed by competent leaders (paid and volunteer), and focus on the core daily practices for ministry, including passionate preaching, music and worship, radical hospitality, congregational care, outreach, extravagant generosity, risk-taking mission, and intentional faith development.

During the quadrennium several new editions of the Common English Bible (CEB) were published, such as The CEB Women’s Bible, The Storyteller’s Bible, and The CEB Lectio Divina Bible. The CEB Deep Blue Kid’s Bible sold more than 400,000 additional copies as the platform for the UM children’s curriculum, Deep Blue.

**Christian Living**

UMPH seeks authors with a clear voice whose knowledge and insight edify and enrich readers’ lives. In categories ranging from personal and spiritual growth to family and relationships, Christian Living titles provide readers with information and encouragement from a Christian perspective. Recently Abingdon Christian Living launched a line of gift books, including Common English Bible-based daily devotions and beautiful combinations of art and inspirational writing that create new ways to share hope and faith. Standouts in the Christian Living line during this quadrennium include What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Jewishness of Jesus by Rabbi Evan Moffic, Raising White Kids by Dr. Jennifer Harvey, and Winning the Worry Battle by Barb Roose.

**Church School Publications/Teaching and Learning, Official Resources, and Bulletins**

Through children’s, youth, adult, Vacation Bible School, Korean- and Spanish-language curriculum, UMPH supports the teaching and learning needs of congregations. We publish curriculum and study resources for children, youth, and adults in a variety of settings such as Sunday school, small groups, and fellowship times. The resources are offered in multiple formats including print, video, downloads, and apps; and in languages including English, Spanish, and Korean.

Research has confirmed that Christian educators are likely to give equal weight to whether a children’s learning program is new and different as well as to its theological content. These educators tell us that a theological lesson can be perfectly faithful, coherent, and important—but if it is perceived as boring, they will not be able to reach, teach, and serve the children.

The Deep Blue Children’s Bible launched for fall 2015, and Bible Story Basics was first published in the fall of 2019. In the interim we have also introduced a number of undated children’s studies, including Wonderfully Made: Faith and Sexuality Education for Ages 10-12, Deep Blue Rotation Stations curriculum, Bible storybooks, and options for reaching parents. We delight in being able to share the many stories of rich learning and expressions of praise from children’s ministry leaders about how these resources are helping their children come to know and love Jesus.

Outstanding results during the quadrennium include sales of nearly 1.8 million units of the children’s curriculum Deep Blue and nearly 2.5 million units of the Adult Bible Studies quarterly. This quadrennium saw the publication of three Disciple Fast Track studies, which are shorter versions of the traditional in-depth Disciple Bible Study. Publishing for adult small groups also includes resources such as FaithLink, a weekly downloadable current events study, and materials such as the Holy Living series that teach about spiritual disciplines.

The work of the Teaching and Learning team is specifically outlined in the Book of Discipline in the sections about the Curriculum Resources Committee (see paragraphs 1121, 1122, and 1124).

Official and UM projects published during the quadrennium include The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016; The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church, 2016; and Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2017–2020 in English, Spanish, and Korean; as well as Massacre at Sand Creek: How Methodists Were Involved in an American Tragedy; Jubilee! The 50th Anniversary of The United Methodist Church; Women Bishops of The United Methodist Church: Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; and the forthcoming They Also Serve: Methodist and United Methodist Bishops’ Spouses, 1940-2018.

The WordAlive! weekly church bulletin subscription service achieved notable sales of over 1.5 million units.

**Ministry Resources**

In the Ministry Resources area, Abingdon Press serves congregations and their leaders by supporting congregation-wide initiatives, special ministries, and other church events to aid leaders as they plan and implement critical ministries.

Congregation-wide initiatives include stewardship, prayer, all-ages studies, Wesleyan studies, mission, and special ministry areas that serve a specific need, such as women’s groups. Resources for seasonal church family events for Advent and Lent that involve worship, study, and devotion are also part of the publishing plan.
Ministry resources include tools and materials for pastors, leaders, worship planners, teachers, families, and individuals. Among these helps are strategic planning aids, plans for worship emphasis, small group study and video for all ages, promotional helps, and resources for individual reading, study, and reflection.

A wide array of products in these categories were offered during the quadrennium, with some of the most popular being Adam Hamilton’s *Creed*, Melissa Spoelstra’s Abingdon Women Bible studies, and the Advent book, *The Redemption of Scrooge*.

### Cokesbury Retail Ministry

UMPH’s retail system, Cokesbury, is a complementarity, multichannel sales organization with a cohesive marketing and merchandising strategy. Cokesbury is continuously adapting to challenges such as channel migration by customers, declines in institutional purchases of traditional church supplies and furnishings, and competitive moves such as free freight and deep discounting, as well as to opportunities such as targeted marketing enabled by sophisticated customer data.

UMPH closed the Cokesbury retail stores in the spring of 2013. Years of changing market conditions, rapidly increasing costs of maintaining stores, staff, and inventory, along with our customers’ evolving purchasing habits, contributed to financial results for retail operations that were unsustainable. The decision to bolster alternative retail channels gave rise to important strategic initiatives that have played out during this quadrennium.

Many regions of the U.S. are supported through local, full-time Cokesbury Community Resources Consultants, who meet personally with church leaders and manage sales at annual conferences and some other events. Churches in many communities are served by a specially assigned, trained team member from Cokesbury Customer Care based in Nashville.

The Cokesbury Call Center customer service standards have been improved through changes in staffing to provide for extended hours of operation and state-of-the-art training.

Major upgrades to Cokesbury.com were completed in February of 2019, including a new development platform and design. Other improvements have continued at a steady pace, with a new shopping cart and checkout experience and a very competitive pricing strategy. UMPH also made significant investments to enhance Cokesbury.com with a new search engine, a better browsing experience, an expanded live chat feature, and more predictable delivery times. We remain vigilant as we evaluate, adapt, change, and make continuous improvements.

Increasingly, Cokesbury is seen as the source of products and services for the broad Christian community. Retail agreements with other denominations, along with other strategic partnerships and investments, including arrangements with The Upper Room and the curriculum departments of the AME and CME churches, position Cokesbury to strengthen its role as the shopping destination for resources and services for students and scholars, participants and leaders from a wide array of Christian denominations, and all who desire to know more about Christian faith and ministry.

### Digital Innovation and Infrastructure

UMPH continues to invest in digital technology to enhance customer engagement and streamline operations. We pursue opportunities to leverage third-party software services and “cloud” solutions as a means for providing resonant business solutions while reducing back-office complexity, increasing flexibility, managing long-term investments, and moderating staffing requirements in an aggressive talent market.

Highlights of digital initiatives include the initial launch of Amplify (amplifymedia.com), a digital multimedia platform designed and developed in collaboration with customer focus groups to enable churches to engage their constituents with UMPH and the church’s own content, and presented under the banner of each congregation’s own branding. Amplify is designed to facilitate access to study, discipleship development, and other ministry resources content anywhere, anytime via online streaming to desktops, mobile devices, and smart TVs. We also recently launched Connected Faith, a mobile app-based platform for delivering Christian formation teaching and learning resources to smartphones and tablets.

In addition to these digital initiatives we completed the migration of Cokesbury.com from its legacy infrastructure to an up-to-date, open-source e-commerce platform in the winter of 2019. While improving the customer’s experience was the primary objective, the investment also moves our infrastructure to a simpler technology “footprint” that, in turn, increases our adaptability, including faster implementation of upgrades and modifications to meet ever-evolving technologies and customer expectations. Examples of other projects that streamlined operations and reduced complexity include the migration from our legacy, proprietary metadata management and product planning system to an outsourced, cloud-based solution used by over 200 other publishers. In collaboration with a third-party technology partner and GCFA, UMPH managed the development of the *Daily Christian Advocate* website to provide fully digital access to the *DCA* content,
improve efficiency of delivery of the DCA by reducing dependence on print and related onsite operations at conferences, and help mitigate the impact of conference location on staffing and operational costs.

Financial Overview

Efforts by UMPH to offer new products, reach more customers, and control the cost of goods and operating expenses resulted in a positive bottom line in our ongoing core business financial operations for the last four years. UMPH made significant operational changes to ensure financial sustainability going forward. Positive results over the most recent four years was accomplished despite declines in worship and Sunday school attendance in UM churches in North America; changing patterns in congregations related to purchase of items such as choir robes and pew cushions; stiff competition in pricing for books, Bibles, congregational resources, furnishings, and other products; and overall declines and dramatic business disruptions in both the religious and secular bookselling industries.

Cumulative sales from continuing operations for the 2016-2019 period were $219,249,000. Cost of goods sold and expenses totaled $216,968,000. Net operating revenue was positive over the four years totaling $2,281,000, and non-operating revenue and investment earnings added $39,814,000. This resulted in a total four-year net revenue of $35,402,000. During this period UMPH sold the remaining two parcels of property in downtown Nashville and completed the transition to the New House Commons Campus in Metro Center. UMPH sold its Distribution Center property and outsourced distribution operations in 2017.

UMPH used the proceeds from the property sales along with funds from investment reserves to provide $32,800,000 toward defined pension funding requirements; $8,500,000 in capital expenditure investments for software and technology, equipment and facility upgrades, and liability; and $5,770,000 for growth and expansion projects to launch new business opportunities and fund research and development for new products and services.

The UMPH balance sheet shows total assets and liabilities of $95,145,000 at the beginning of the quadrennium and $84,233,000 at the end. Assets declined by $10,912,000 due to a reduction in accounts receivable and inventories totaling $3,775,000, and a reduction in property, plant, and equipment of $6,634,000. Total liabilities were reduced by $44,213,000, primarily due to the $27,650,000 reduction of the accrued pension benefits liability and a $12,323,000 reduction in the balance of borrowing using our short-term credit line. At the end of the last quadrennium, the credit line was used to help finance the building costs of the new property while waiting for the receipt of payment from the sale of the office building property in downtown Nashville. The credit line was immediately reduced upon receipt of the proceeds from the property sale.

Although UMPH provided significant funds toward the defined benefit pension obligations, the UMPH financials had a frozen defined benefit pension plan liability of $135,000,000 at the end of the 2019 fiscal year. Since the value of the pension plan’s assets was only $97,000,000, the plan is underfunded by $38,000,000. This underfunding must be held as a liability on the UMPH financial statements. Pension liability is an actuarial calculation and is based on GAAP methodology that predicts a yield rate on investment grade bonds.

Pensions and Conference Claimants

The 2008-2009 world financial crisis resulted in the shortfall of assets of the UMPH defined benefits pension plan. The plan, which has been in existence over 70 years and is completely independent of all other UMC pension plans, was frozen and an alternate 403(b) defined contributions plan was augmented to provide ongoing staff pension benefits. UMPH has been diligently restoring the defined benefit plan assets from a low of 68 percent of the actuarially determined amount needed to cover future liabilities by investing proceeds from the sale of property and an aggressive multiyear plan for cash contributions. We expect to reach the threshold of the corpus required to fund projected long-term pension liabilities by 2022. When sufficient assets are restored to guarantee ongoing pension distributions to fulfill all commitments to participants, and UMPH funds retiree healthcare obligations as well as critically needed capital investments, available monies will be distributed for conference claimants.

Personnel

UMPH employs 330 staff members who develop, deliver, and support quality services and products that are sold through the Cokesbury and Abingdon Press telephone and internet order centers, in person, and at sales displays at conferences and events across the United States.

UMPH has periodically utilized compensation specialists to evaluate and recommend base and incentive pay based on scales of similar positions for comparable publishing, retail, and nonprofit organizations. UMPH pay has typically fallen below market norms for the same jobs in similar industries and organizations of comparable size and dollar volume.
The UMPH Board of Directors annually reviews and approves executive staff pay and sets the midpoint of pay at the 50th percentile of the market as a benchmark. In accordance with its disciplinary responsibilities, UMPH reports the current salaries of: Brian K. Milford, President and Publisher/Book Editor of The United Methodist Church—$302,328; Audrey Kidd, Chief Revenue and Customer Experience Officer—$287,515; Tammy Gaines, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer—$220,861. As with most UMPH personnel, the executive staff members are eligible for incentive compensation as approved by the Board of UMPH annually based on UMPH and individual performance.

Justice Cornelia A. Clark
Chair of the Board

Reverend Brian K. Milford
President and Publisher
2016–2020 Board of The United Methodist Publishing House

Council of Bishops

Rodolfo Juan
Gregory V. Palmer

Kidapawan City, Philippines
Worthington, OH

North Central Jurisdiction

James C. Bushfield
Linda Johnson Crowell
Lindsay Drake

Ft. Myers, FL
Oakwood Village, OH
Ankeny, IA

Northeastern Jurisdiction

Maidstone Mulenga
Thomas L. Salsgiver

Edgewood, MD
Mechanicsburg, PA

South Central Jurisdiction

Ellen R. Alston
Randy Biggerstaff
Todd Burris

Sulphur, LA
Wright City, MO
Little Rock, AR

Southeastern Jurisdiction

Robert Amundsen
Dale Cohen
June Jernigan
Cornelia A. Clark
Anne S. Travis
Michael B. Watts

Thousandsticks, KY
Florence, AL
Montgomery, AL
Franklin, TN
Knoxville, TN
Shelbyville, KY

Western Jurisdiction

Janine DeLaunay

Newberg, OR

Central Conferences

Eliseo C. Balisi
Klaus Ulrich Ruof

Cauayan City, Isabela, Philippines
Frankfurt, Germany

Additional Members

David V. Braddon
Sunyoung Lee

Johns Island, SC
Los Angeles, CA

Ex Officio

Brian K. Milford

Nashville, TN
Discipleship Ministries (DM) and The United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH) sought authorization by the 2016 General Conference for organizing a Hymnal Revision Committee to work with the two agencies in preparing recommended content for a new United Methodist Hymnal for approval by the 2020 General Conference (Petition 60106; page 573 of the 2016 DCA Advance Edition). The timing seemed opportune given that The United Methodist Hymnal had been curated in the late 1980s, and because of the availability of quantities of newly created music and liturgies, coupled with the introduction of advanced digital technologies and evolving expectations and needs expressed by congregations.

The proposal was adopted and the Hymnal Revision Committee was formed to work with agency staff on tasks including research, review of existing content, solicitation and review of new content, and envisioning principles and processes needed to generate recommendations for the 2020 General Conference.

The original scope of work and the time line did not foresee developments at the 2016 General Conference that led to the formation of the Commission on a Way Forward and the ensuing stresses and disagreements across The UMC. At the time the budget and schedule were crafted, we didn’t know there would be a called Special Session of General Conference in 2019, that proposals for constitutional changes affecting the jurisdictions would gain traction, or that some UMC leaders would call for dissolution of The UMC.

Since 2017, The United Methodist Publishing House and Discipleship Ministries have been monitoring the unfolding events and administering the complex work of curating a much larger collection of potential hymns, tunes, and texts than ever previously approved. Work on expanding the content has been coupled with managing logistics in selecting the required new digital technologies and evaluating options for product delivery methods. In 2018, progress and challenges uncovered in these efforts led DM and UMPH to revise the proposed timetable and provide for an interim report in 2020 with final recommendations to be submitted to General Conference in 2024.

Work then continued, including market research to ascertain the discrete needs of diverse congregations, assisting the talented and dedicated members of the Hymnal Revision Committee in evaluating thousands of submitted hymns and tunes, and reviewing existing and potential liturgical aids. The agencies have investigated available technologies useful in delivering an extensive online collection plus customizable print and digital versions tailored to the needs of different congregations.

Parallel with administering and supporting the work of the Hymnal Revision Committee, DM and UMPH have been assessing the project’s financial feasibility and the degree of risk associated with what is expected to be more than $2 million in development costs alone. The majority of the costs for development and continuous distribution of a new hymnal are not supported through any general church funds and must be recovered through the sale of the eventual products. This necessitates major up-front cash and in-kind investments that are invested with the expectation of future revenue generated over multiple years. Consequently, continuity and predictability of factors such as worship attendance, product appeal, and the amount of interest and buying capacity of local churches are imperative considerations for a project of this importance and magnitude.

As work by the Hymnal Revision Committee and the two agencies continued, we saw in the aftermath of the Special Session in 2019 high levels of ongoing conflict and disruption across The UMC, including disputes over denominational policies and multiple proposals for organizational and polity changes. In light of this, the boards of directors of Discipleship Ministries and The United Methodist Publishing House each reviewed timetables for making major investments, gaining General Conference approval, and production and sales forecasts for a new hymnal collection.

An official hymnal is a key resource in answering: ‘What to teach?’ ‘How to teach?’ and ‘What to do?’ It must encapsulate a point-in-time consensus about what is essential and most useful for the worship and teaching ministries of the whole church. As a unifying official resource, the hymnal depends on substantial harmony in The UMC around these key issues and how they impact our theological and social teachings, ordination standards, and rules affecting marriages celebrated in UM congregations.

Importantly, given the fact that neither the cost of the Hymnal Revision Committee nor the related work of the agencies in the development and later the marketing, training and support, production, selling, and delivery of the hymnal are funded other than by purchases over several years, the boards determined that current realities make such a multiyear effort too precarious to pursue at this time. By suspending and deferring work on a new official hymnal, it is hoped that an interval will provide time for
disputed questions in United Methodist life to be resolved and for continued careful selection and testing of further music and preferred liturgical resources that are experienced as highly useful by UMC congregations.

Therefore, the boards of directors of Discipleship Ministries and The United Methodist Publishing House each determined in June 2019 that given their administrative accountabilities, the most prudent course of action was to suspend work on researching and crafting a new version of the General Conference approved United Methodist Hymnal until at least the 2025-2028 quadrennium.

This was a decision of the agencies charged with administration and not of the Hymnal Revision Committee that, while charged with developing recommendations about content, is not responsible for managing product development and assuring financial feasibility. With the suspension of work on a new official hymnal, the two agencies are collaborating and inviting the participation of the Hymnal Revision Committee members and others to compile and make available other collections of new, vibrant, and practical worship resources. These projects will be fashioned in a manner consistent with the ongoing responsibilities of the two agencies, and the new materials will augment the treasure chest of previously approved and other widely used UMC hymnody and liturgies.


Discipleship Ministries and The United Methodist Publishing House commend the high quality work of the members of the Hymnal Revision Committee. A complete record of discussions, decisions, and outputs by the committee will be preserved for future use. The contributions of talent and time by the dedicated and skilled committee members have been both generous and substantive. The Hymnal Revision Committee members have fulfilled their responsibilities over the last months with diligence, passion, and timeliness. The church is in their debt.

But given the degree of uncertainty and the high costs of the project, along with the long timetable for securing adequate sales to recoup investments, seeking General Conference approval of a new official standard corpus of hymns, tunes, and texts has been deemed to be too great a risk at this time by the boards of directors of the agencies charged with financial and administrative oversight.

A future decision about restarting the extensive and expensive remaining work of fashioning a new official collection will be made in due course. Until then, congregations will continue to supplement music and worship resources with an array of offerings from multiple sources, including DM and UMPH.

DM and UMPH will use this interval as an opportunity to test on a smaller scale alternate delivery methods and fresh materials that are easily accessed and affordable, and that reflect and amplify UMC theology, values, affections, and affirmations. Those efforts will make it possible for local churches to obtain updated worship tools at lower costs. Over the next quadrennium, DM and UMPH will also closely monitor unfolding events across the connection and initiate appropriate proposals for consideration by the 2024 General Conference.

Rev. Brian K. Milford  
President & Publisher  
The United Methodist Publishing House  

Rev. Junius B. Dotson  
General Secretary/CEO Discipleship Ministries
§613.

Petition Number: 20181-FA-§613-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA. Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference.

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 6 of 8

[Also submitted as:
Next Generation UMC #12, ALL BELONG: Funding Freedom, A Simple Plan #6]

Amend the following portions of the Book of Discipline as indicated:
Delete ¶ 613.19 in its entirety.

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.

§613.

Petition Number: 20653-FA-§613-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA.

Apportionment Limits in Annual Conferences

Amend ¶¶ 613 and 615 as follows:

¶ 613.3. To recommend to the annual or missionary conference for its action and decision the methods or formulas by which apportionments to churches, charges, or districts for duly authorized general, jurisdictional, conference, and district funds shall be determined (¶ 615.4). However, whether apportionments are directed toward churches, charges, or districts, no local church shall be apportioned more than 25 percent (25%) of the apportionable budget of the annual or missionary conference.

Rationale:
A conference that relies heavily on one church financially puts itself in a vulnerable state. A conference should be able to grow its budget only by growing vital congregations throughout the conference. Limiting any one local church’s share of the apportionable budget will move the conference in that direction.

§613.19.

Petition Number: 20182-FA-§613.19-G; Dodson, Christine - Garner, NC, USA.

Amend Funding Statement

Delete ¶ 613.19 (Book of Discipline, 2016) and substitute the following:

19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of the UMC “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶161G). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. The restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude funding for dialogs or educational events where the Church’s official position is fairly and equally represented.

To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any group, or otherwise use such funds to reject any LGBTQIA+ person or openly discriminate against LGBTQIA+ people, in order to follow to commitment of The UMC “not to reject or condemn lesbian or gay members and friends” (¶161G), and to honor our commitment to the inclusion of all people in the life of the church “that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community, and the world” (¶140). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. Funding shall not be provided for dialogs or educational events where rejection of LGBTQIA+ persons is promoted.
Rationale:
Whereas, ¶ 140 defines “inclusiveness” as “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” (The Book of Discipline, 2016).

Amend 613 The Annual Conference

Amend:
19. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The UMC “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161G). The Council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. This restriction shall not limit the Church’s ministry. The church shall continue its ministry in response to the HIV epidemic, nor shall it preclude and will continue funding for dialogs or educational events where the church’s official position is fairly and equally represented.

Rationale:
Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Not some neighbors, but all neighbors. The United Methodist Church’s denial of full membership to our LGBTQ siblings because of their gender identity, determined before birth, is antithetical to Christ’s teaching.

Certifying Board of Ministry Compliance

Amend ¶ 613.19 at its conclusion to state:
Every annual conference secretary shall certify to the General Council on Finance and Administration that the bishop has nominated only members of the Board of Ordained Ministry who 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). Failure to do so shall result in the General Council on Finance and Administration neither receiving funds from nor sending funds to the annual conference and withdrawing the annual conference’s ability to use the denominational cross and flame logo.

Rationale:
Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this provides that the annual conference ensures that the bishop has complied with the requirement to nominate only persons who are committed to upholding the Discipline to the Board of Ordained Ministry, adding accountability for the annual conference as well.

Including Annual Conference Budget Line Items

Amend by Addition to ¶ 614 by insertion of a two-sentence paragraph:
¶ 614. Budgets—The council shall recommend . . . to the churches, charges, or districts.
The council shall prepare, as noted below, a budget for the annual conference that includes line items, that is, specific amounts for administration and program costs for every board, agency, cause, program, institution, mission, and conference benevolence. Line items shall be before the annual conference and subject to debate prior to its vote on the whole conference budget.
Prior to each regular session of the annual conference . . . claims of that agency before the council.

Rationale:
The current pattern of offering a general budget and trusting conference officers to take care of the “details” provides no protection from their neglecting, jeopardizing, and excluding ministries desired by the annual conference, contrary to ¶ 614.3a), which demands “that none may be neglected, jeopardized, or excluded.”

Proportional Payment

Amend these four interrelated and interdependent paragraphs of the Book of Discipline as follows.
Delete ¶ 615.5 as follows, and renumber subparagraphs as necessary.

¶ 615.

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5. If an annual conference establishes an apportioned fund that combines funds subject to proportional payment under ¶ 622 with funds not subject to proportional payment, it shall establish procedures to ensure that the proportional payment provisions of ¶ 622 are observed.

Delete ¶ 622 as follows, and renumber subsequent paragraphs as necessary:

¶ 622. When the apportionments for bishops, district superintendents, conference claimants, and the Equitable Compensation Fund for the several districts and charges have been determined, payments made to the same in each pastoral charge shall be exactly proportional to the amount paid on the clergy base compensation (¶ 818.3). The treasurer or treasurers of each pastoral charge shall accordingly make proportional distribution of the funds raised in that charge for the support of the ordained ministry and shall remit monthly if practicable and quarterly at the latest the items for bishops, district superintendents, conference claimants, and the Equitable Compensation Fund to the proper treasurer or treasurers.

Amend ¶ 639.4 as follows:

¶ 639.

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4. Proportional Payment by Churches and Charges—The board shall compare the records of the amounts paid by each pastoral charge for the support of pastors and for pension and benefit programs, computing the proportional distribution thereof and keeping a permanent record of defaults of the churches of the conference that have failed to observe the following provisions pertaining to make required proportional payments, and shall render annually to each church that is in default a statement of the amounts in default for that and preceding years:

a) When the apportionment to the pastoral charges for the pension and benefit program of the annual conference has been determined, payments made thereon by each pastoral charge shall be exactly proportionate to payments made on the salary or salaries of the ordained minister or clergy serving it.

b) The treasurer of the pastoral charge shall be primarily responsible for the application of proportional payment; but in the event of the treasurer’s failure to apply it, the pastor shall adjust cash salary and payment according to the proper ratio, as provided above, before the pastor enters the respective amounts in the statistical report to the annual conference.

c) The conference statistical tables shall provide separate columns for reporting the amount apportioned to each pastoral charge for pension and benefit purposes and the amount paid thereon:

d) It shall not be permissible for a pastor to receive a bonus or other supplementary compensation tending to defeat proportional payment.

***

Amend ¶ 818 as follows:

¶ 818. Purpose—1. The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with ¶ 818.3, shall provide for the salary and expenses of effective bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops. Subject to the approval of the General Council on Finance and Administration, the treasurer shall have authority to borrow for the benefit of the Episcopal Fund such amounts as may be necessary for the proper execution of the orders of the General Conference. The General Commission on Communication shall promote the Episcopal Fund.

2. Requirements—The council shall recommend to each quadrennial session of the General Conference for its action and determination: (1) the amounts to be fixed as salaries of the effective bishops or a formula by which the council shall fix the salaries; (2) a schedule of such amounts as may be judged adequate to provide for their office expense; (3) provision for an annual operating budget for the Council of Bishops, including the salaries and office and travel expenses of the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops; (4) guidelines governing the payment of bishops’ travel expenses, including all travel authorized by the Council of Bishops; (5) the amounts needed to fund the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program); and (6) provisions for allowance for the surviving spouses and for the support of minor children of deceased bishops. From the facts in hand, the council shall estimate the approximate total amount required annually during the ensuing quadrennium to provide for the items of episcopal support mentioned above and shall report the same to the General Conference. This amount as finally determined shall be the estimated episcopal budget. The administration of the Episcopal Fund budget as determined by the General Conference shall be under the direction and authority of the General Council on Finance and Administration, including annual fiscal statements and audits. Nothing in this paragraph shall preclude the annual conference or conferences of an episcopal area from including in their budgets amounts for an area expense fund.

3. Proportionality—The amount apportioned to a charge for the Episcopal Fund shall be paid in the same proportion as the charge pays its pastor (see also ¶ 622):
Financial Administration

Rationale:
Remove out-of-date language that requires a proportional relationship between conference apportionment of pension/benefits costs and pastors’ salaries, which does not comport with current practices. Flexibility for annual conferences reflected in ¶ 621 is clear and should not be limited.

¶624.1.

Reducing a Pastor’s Compensation
Amend ¶ 624.1
¶ 624. Payment Obligation—1. Each church or charge has an obligation to pay the base compensation, the benefits adopted by the annual conference, and other ministerial support (including housing) adopted by the charge conference, to its pastor(s). If it becomes apparent that a church or charge will be unable to so provide the base compensation, support, and benefits adopted by the charge conference, the church or charge SPRC chair, finance chair, or treasurer, shall immediately notify, both in writing and verbally, the pastor, district superintendent, and congregation. This communication shall indicate all avenues explored to meet the base compensation, support, and benefits, including requesting consideration for a short-term emergency subsidy grant from the Equitable Compensation Fund (¶ 625.7). If it becomes necessary to reduce a pastor’s compensation, it shall occur can be reduced only at the end of the conference appointment year, or when there is a change of appointment.

Rationale:
Clarifies the original wording and makes possible a salary change midyear if there is an appointment change.

¶624.2.
Petition Number: 20187-FA-¶624.2; Howell, Jeremy - Moncks Corner, SC, USA for National Association of Commission on Equitable Compensation.

Clarifying "Timely Fashion"
Amend ¶ 624.2
2. In the event the annual conference has no arrearage policy in place, all such claims shall be subject to, and controlled by, the civil laws applicable to such claims in the state in which the claim arises. Any pastor who does not receive a full scheduled payment of the approved compensation shall immediately report such, in writing, to the church or charge SPRC chair, church council chair, and district superintendent. Failure to report in a timely fashion within 90 days may result in surrender of any/all arrearage claims, subject to the annual conference arrearage policy (¶ 625.2d).

Rationale:
Specifies what “timely fashion” is.

¶625.1.

Ensuring Existence of Commission on Equitable Compensation
Amend ¶ 625.1
¶ 625. Equitable Compensation—1. There shall be in each annual conference a commission on equitable compensation, or other structure to provide for these functions and maintain the connectional relationships. It shall be composed of an equal number of lay and clergypersons, including at least one layperson and one clergyperson from churches of fewer than two hundred members, who are nominated by the conference nominating committee and elected by and amenable to the annual conference. It is recommended that in selection of commission members, consideration shall be given to inclusiveness. The chair of the commission shall alternate between lay and clergy or be shared by such. In addition, one district superintendent named by the cabinet shall be a nonvoting member. Members of the executive committee of the National Association of Commissions on Equitable Compensation shall be ex officio members of their respective annual conference’s commission.

Rationale:
Ensures the existence of the Commission on Equitable Compensation in order to carry out the functions listed in ¶ 625.2 and not have these relegated to CFA or a “budget committee.”

¶625.2.
Petition Number: 20189-FA-¶625.2; Howell, Jeremy - Moncks Corner, SC, USA for National Association of Commission on Equitable Compensation.
Commission on Equitable Compensation
Meetings and Function

Amend ¶ 625.2

2. It is the purpose of the commission on equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by The commission on equitable compensation shall meet at least twice a year for the purpose of: (a) recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; and (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations; and (d) submitting an arrearage policy to be adopted by the annual conference; and (e) recommending the amount needed to fund the Equitable Compensation Fund as described and secured in ¶¶ 614.1e and 625.7. For pastors receiving equitable compensation . . .

Rationale:
This sets a minimum meeting schedule and affirms the commission as the appropriate body to propose the recommended amount to the annual conference for the Equitable Compensation Fund.

¶640.

Petition Number: 20648-FA-¶640; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Joint Distributing Committee Cross-Reference

Insert a new ¶ 640 that reads as follows, and renumber subsequent paragraphs as necessary:

¶ 640. Joint Distributing Committees—Whenever two or more annual conferences or provisional annual conferences are to be merged, in whole or in part, or an annual conference or provisional annual conference is to be divided, there shall be elected by each conference affected three members and three alternates, who, with members and alternates from the other conferences, together shall form a joint distributing committee, in accordance with the terms of ¶ 1509.

Rationale:
Adding a cross-reference to the joint distributing committee text in ¶ 1509 within the annual conferences ¶ 600s will help raise awareness of the process for conference stakeholders, in annual conference merger or division circumstances.

¶806.

Petition Number: 20190-FA-¶806-G; Brooks, Lonnie - Anchorage, AK, USA. Taylor, Deborah Tinsley - Riverside, IL, USA for Northern Illinois Annual Conference. 9 Similar Petitions

A Fully Inclusive Way Forward-Part 7 of 8

[Also submitted as:
Next Generation UMC #13, ALL BELONG: Freeing the church to do ministry, A Simple Plan #7]

Amend the following portions of the Book of Discipline as indicated:
Delete ¶ 806.9 in its entirety.

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.

¶806.1.

Petition Number: 20193-FA-¶806.1-!-G; Brewer, Scott - Topeka, KS, USA.

Budgetary Guidelines for World Service Contingency Funds

Amend ¶ 806.1d

¶ 806.1 d) Before the beginning of each year, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall estimate and communicate to the Connectional Table the sum available at that time from World Service contingency funds to meet requests for additional funding from the general program agencies. The Connectional Table shall be authorized to approve allocations to the general program agencies for additional program funding up to the limit so established. No money shall be allocated by the Connectional Table from this source for general administrative costs, fixed charges, or capital outlay without approval by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

The budget recommended by the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table to the General Conference may contain an allocation for contingency funds that shall not to exceed 1 percent of the total World Service Fund budget. Should the total amount of funds held for contingency exceed 5 percent of the total quadrennial World Service Fund budget, GCFA shall not include additional contingency funding in the approved annual spending plan; these monies shall instead be allo-
cate to the general program agencies on ratio.

Rationale:
This provides GCF and CT guidance in the budget development process as they balance the financial needs of agencies’ ongoing programmatic commitments with the desire to provide adequate funding for emerging ministries.

¶806.9.
Petition Number: 20191-FA-¶806.9-G; Dodson, Christine - Garner, NC, USA.

**GCFA Responsibility**
Delete ¶ 806.9 and substitute the following:
9. To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any gay caucus or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of The United Methodist Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161.G). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. It shall not limit the Church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.

To ensure that no annual conference board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any group or otherwise use such funds to reject any LGBTQIA+ person or limits the response to the HIV epidemic, in order to follow the commitment of The United Methodist Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161.G). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. It shall not limit the church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.

Rationale:
Whereas, in ¶ 140 defines “inclusiveness” as “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” (The Book of Discipline, 2016).

¶806.9.
Petition Number: 20192-FA-¶806.9-G; Lambrecht, Thomas - Spring, TX, USA.

**Certifying Board of Ministry Compliance**
AMEND ¶ 806.9 at its conclusion to state:
Every annual conference secretary shall certify to the General Council on Finance and Administration that the bishop has nominated only members of the Board of Ordained Ministry who 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). Failure to do so shall result in the General Council on Finance and Administration neither receiving funds from nor sending funds to the annual conference and withdrawing the annual conference’s ability to use the denominational cross and flame logo.

Rationale:
Guarding against nonconforming boards of ordained ministry, this provides that the annual conference ensures that the bishop has complied with the requirement to nominate only persons who are committed to upholding the Discipline to the Board of Ordained Ministry, adding accountability for the annual conference as well.

¶806.9.
Petition Number: 20194-FA-¶806.9-G; Bollerud, Kenneth - Saratoga Springs, NY, USA.

**Amend 806.9**
Amend as follows:
9. It shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any group or otherwise use such funds to reject any LGBTQIA+ person or limits the response to the HIV epidemic, in order to follow the commitment of The United Methodist Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends” (¶ 161.G). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. It shall not limit the church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.

Rationale:
Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Not some neighbors, but all neighbors. The United Methodist Church’s denial of full membership to our LGBTQ siblings because of their gender identity, determined before birth, is antithetical to Christ’s teaching.

¶807.
Petition Number: 20199-FA-¶807; Kumar, Moses - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Finance and Administration.

**Administrative Services**
Insert the following language as a new subparagraph 18 in ¶ 807, and renumber accordingly:
To offer administrative services, and to charge reasonable and appropriate fees for such services, to other non-United Methodist churches and religious organizations. The council shall not expend general church funds in the provision of such services.

Rationale:
Taking this step will help the ministry of GCFA by potentially spreading its fixed costs over a wider base, which will assist GCFA in serving The UMC denomination in a more cost-efficient manner.

¶807.1.
Petition Number: 20197-FA-¶807.1; Kumar, Moses - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Finance and Administration.

Donations to General Agencies

Modify ¶ 807.1 as follows:

To receive, collect, and hold in trust for the benefit of The United Methodist Church; and its general funds, or its general agencies—any and all donations, bequests, and devises of any kind, real or personal, that may be given, devised, bequeathed, or conveyed to The United Methodist Church as such or to any general fund or agency of The United Methodist Church for any benevolent, charitable, or religious purposes, and to administer the same and the income therefrom in accordance with the directions of the donor, trustor, or testator.

Rationale:
This change reflects the reality that general agencies regularly and directly receive donations, bequests, and devises from donors. It is unnecessary, and often not possible, for GCFA to be an intermediary in such instances.

¶807.8.
Petition Number: 20195-FA-¶807.8; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

General Agency Property Reporting Exemptions

Amend ¶ 807.8 as follows:

8. To exercise on behalf of the General Conference a property reporting function by receiving reports annually from general agencies of the church concerning property titles, values, debts, general maintenance, lease or rental costs, space usage, and such other information as the council may deem relevant. The council may consult and advise with the general agencies concerning any property problems that may arise. A summary of the property data shall be reported to each quadrennial General Conference. This provision shall apply to headquarters buildings but not to properties that are part of the program responsibilities of the General Board of Global Ministries or to any of the properties of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, The United Methodist Publishing House or United Methodist Women.

Rationale:
Wespath should be exempt from building expense and debt reporting requirements as a general agency not receiving general church funds, like The United Methodist Publishing House and United Methodist Women. The requirement is a vestige of years before 2006 during which Wespath and GCFA co-owned a headquarters building in Evanston.

¶807.10.
Petition Number: 20201-FA-¶807.10-G; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA.

New Form of Unity #3

Amend ¶ 807.10 by addition of a sentence:
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. It shall maintain appropriate registration to protect the insignia on behalf of the denomination. The insignia may be used by any official United Methodist agency, including local churches, to identify United Methodist work, programs, and materials. The use indicates the identity of The United Methodist Church, with the cross proclaiming Jesus Christ as its foundation, and the two flames descending to one point celebrating its origin when two denominations became one, and affirming its readiness to go forth to the ends of the earth to all people to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, as the anointing of the Holy Spirit with “individual flames of fire” sent forth the apostles speaking the language of people wherever they went. In order to preserve the integrity of its design, the insignia should not be altered or modified. Users of the insignia must ensure that it stands independent from and is not covered by or layered over other designs or words. Any commercial use of the design requires express prior authorization in writing by an appropriate officer of the General Council on Finance and Administration and shall be used only in accordance with
guidelines and fees set forth by the General Council on Finance and Administration. It shall grant a perpetual right to use the cross and flame insignia to any self-governing church formed by one or more annual conferences as long as it is formed by December 31, 2022.

Rationale:

New Form of Unity #3 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. New Churches coming out of The UMC should have the right to use the cross and flame.

¶807.11.

Petition Number: 20200-FA-¶807.11-G; Jones, Scott - Houston, TX, USA.

**New Form of Unity #2**

Add a sentence to existing ¶ 807.11
¶ 807.11. To supervise the use of the name “United Methodist” and maintain the appropriate registrations of this name on behalf of the denomination. It shall grant a perpetual right to use the name “United Methodist” to any self-governing church so long as it is formed by one or more annual conferences before December 31, 2022.

Rationale:

New Form of Unity #2 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. New churches coming out of The UMC should have the right to use the name “United Methodist.”

¶807.12c.

Petition Number: 20196-FA-¶807.12c; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

**General Agency Pay Equity Reporting**

Amend ¶ 807.12c as follows:

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, except for the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and The United Methodist Publishing House, 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, 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.

Rationale:

General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and United Methodist Publishing House do not receive general church apportionments or have representation on the committee on personnel policies and practices; they should be excluded from pay equity review by GCFA. These agencies monitor pay equity and self-report/publish certain compensation information.

¶807.18.

Petition Number: 20198-FA-¶807.18; Kumar, Moses - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on Finance and Administration.

**PAUMCS Name Change**

Modify the second sentence of ¶ 807.18 as follows:

Such guidance and consultation may, as the council deems appropriate, include: establishing relevant professional standards, training programs, continuing education, and certifications; encouraging participation in associations related to these services (for example, the Professional Administrators Association of the United Methodist Connectional Structure (PAUMCS), Church Secretaries, the United Methodist Network of Practice, the National Association of Commissions on Equitable Compensation of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Information Technology Association, and The United Methodist Church Conference Chancellors Association, or similar organizations); and providing staff and/or in-kind services to such associations.

Rationale:

This reflects the recent name change of the organization.

¶811.

Petition Number: 20202-FA-¶811-G; Brewer, Scott - Topeka, KS, USA.
Agency Fundraising

Amend ¶ 811.5

5. Individual donors or local churches may make contributions to the support of any cause or project that is a part of the work of any general church agency. Such miscellaneous gifts shall be sent to the General Council on Finance and Administration, which shall then forward the gift to the agency for which it is intended. Agencies receiving miscellaneous gifts shall acknowledge receipt of the gift to the donor. No agency shall solicit or cultivate gifts for any cause or project in a Churchwide appeal that has not been approved for support through World Service Special Gifts (¶ 820), general Advance Special Gifts (¶ 822), or a special appeal (¶ 819). Agencies shall at least annually provide a public accounting of their fundraising activities as directed by the council. This report shall include a description of each campaign or effort, the amount of funds spent by the agency for fundraising in each campaign or effort, and the amount raised from donors from each campaign or effort.

Rationale:

As the denomination faces an uncertain financial future, general agencies should be provided greater flexibility in their fundraising efforts in order to reduce their reliance on apportionments, provided that in these fundraising efforts they maintain their accountability to GCFA.

¶811.

Petition Number: 20203-FA-¶811-G; Smith, Jeremy - Seattle, WA, USA.

Retain Accountability in Disbursement of General Funds

Add a new paragraph following ¶ 811.6 as follows:

7. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall not approve disbursement of general funds and general agency assets to offshoot or successor denominations or organizations that have left The United Methodist Church if the formerly Methodist bodies did not pay 100 percent of either their apportioned general church funds (in the case of a former annual conference) or the local church percentage paid of their apportionment (in the case of departing groups of churches) in two of the last three years of the quadrennium prior to General Conference 2020 (2017, 2018, 2019). This authority becomes effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference.

Rationale:

Apportioned gifts to general church funds were sacrificially given in trust and accountability. If a Methodist body (annual conference or group of local churches) has not been faithful in this giving prior to departing, they should not be eligible to receive money in payout, payment, or return.

¶811.1.

Petition Number: 20204-FA-¶811.1-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 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, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, 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, persons with disabilities, economic condition, sexual orientation, 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 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 two commissions; (3) in consultation with the 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, 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.
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

§814.

Petition Number: 20205-FA-§814; Carter, Kenneth - Washington, DC, USA for Council of Bishops.

Amend 814 to Update Policies Related to Interdenominational Cooperation Fund

Amend ¶ 814 as follows:

¶ 814. Interdenominational Cooperation Fund—1. This fund shall provide United Methodist support of the basic budgets of those organizations, dialogues, and ministries that relate to the ecumenical and interreligious responsibilities of the Council of Bishops. Those organizations are described in Chapter Three, Section IX—Ecumenical Relationships in ¶¶ 431-442.

2. The Council of Bishops, shall recommend to the General Council on Finance and Administration the amounts of the several annual allocations from the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund budget. The council shall recommend to the General Conference the amounts to be included in the annual Interdenominational Cooperation Fund budget.

3. The Council of Bishops shall determine annually the designations of all funds for ecumenical agencies to be paid from the following year’s Interdenominational Cooperation Fund budget that have not been specifically designated by the prior General Conference. The Council of Bishops shall communicate such designations to the General Council on Finance and Administration prior to the beginning of the fiscal year made the subject of such designations. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall then disburse funds to each recipient in accordance with such designations during that fiscal year to the extent funds are available.

4. The fund shall also provide for the expenses of representatives chosen by the Council of Bishops to attend meetings and committees of such ecumenical agencies. The General Council on Finance and Administration shall reimburse such expenses from vouchers approved by persons designated by the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops.

5. Disbursement of Funds to Ecumenical Organizations— a) The General Council on Finance and Administration shall remit monthly to each organization included in the approved Interdenominational Cooperation Fund budget an on-ratio share of the fund’s net receipts, after the payment of any fixed charges.

b) In the interim between sessions of the General Conference, exceptions to this directive may occur under one of the following circumstances:

(1) If the organization is unable to fulfill, or ceases to fulfill, the purpose or purposes which were the basis for the Council of Bishops’ original recommendation for funding.

(2) If the organization ceases to exist.

c) If the Council of Bishops determines that such circumstances warrant, it may recommend to the General Council on Finance and Administration that funding for the organization be suspended or reduced, either indefinitely or for a specified period of time. The Council shall then reduce or suspend remittance of fund receipts to the organization until such time as the Council of Bishops determines that the circumstances which led to reduction or suspension of payments no longer exist. The Council of Bishops shall then recommend to the General Council on Finance and Administration whether remittances to the organization are to be resumed in amounts based on current Interdenominational Cooperation Fund receipts only, or whether amounts previously withheld should be disbursed along with the amounts payable from current receipts.

d) If funding to an organization is reduced or suspended, the funds which otherwise would have been disbursed shall be held by the General Council on Finance and Administration until the Council of Bishops recommends that they be restored to the organization or used to support a similar ecumenical and interreligious ministry organization. If the funds are not expended prior to the next session of the General Conference, the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, shall report to the General Conference the amount of funds being held and may recommend, for General Conference action, the disposition of the funds.

6. Before the beginning of each calendar year, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall determine and communicate to the Council of Bishops the sum available from the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund Contingency Reserve to be allocated to meet emerging needs of ecumenical and interreligious ministries.

7. The General Commission on Communication shall promote the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund.
Rationale:
Language in this paragraph regarding the use of the ICF does not reflect the full range of ministries named in ¶¶ 431-442 or in the financial commitment handbook. Minor adjustments in this paragraph can bring these more closely in line.

¶816.
Petition Number: 20206-FA-¶816-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Annual Conference Reporting for Ministerial Education Fund

Amend ¶ 816
¶ 816. The Ministerial Education Fund—The council General Council on Finance and Administration shall recommend to the General Conference the sum . . .
1. Of the total money raised . . . Administrative costs of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall be a claim on the conference’s operating budget. 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. No annual conference that participated in a 1 percent plan or other conference program of ministerial student scholarships and loan grants prior to the establishment of this fund shall receive less for this purpose than it received in the last year of the quadrennium preceding the establishment of the fund, provided the giving from that conference for ministerial education does not fall below the level achieved in the quadrennium preceding the establishment of the fund.
   a) “Service Loans” from the conference . . .

Rationale:
Since 1968, MEF has supported ministers’ education (primarily seminary students). Seventy-five percent of funds collected from conferences are distributed to the thirteen UM theological schools, with 25 percent retained in conferences. Schools submit an annual expenditures report to GBHEM. For accountability to the connection, annual conferences should likewise submit similar

¶816.2.
Petition Number: 20207-FA-¶816.2-G; Hardt, Philip - Glendale, NY, USA. 1 Similar Petition

Christian Focus of UMC Seminaries

Amend ¶ 816.2 by adding a new sub-section b and re-lettering the subsequent subsections accordingly:
¶ 816. The Ministerial Education Fund—The council shall recommend . . .
1. Of the total money . . .
2. Of the total money . . . a) At least . . .
   b) No theological school of The United Methodist Church receiving Ministerial Education funds under this section of the Discipline shall offer any course work, degree program, or formal certificate explicitly designed for training religious leaders of faith communities outside the boundaries of Trinitarian Christianity. The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry shall monitor compliance with this provision.
   b) c) The remaining portion . . .
   c) d) . . .

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.

¶818.
Petition Number: 20211-FA-¶818-G; Holley, Del - Knoxville, TN, USA for Jurisdictional Study Committee.

Jurisdictional Study Committee Petition #4—Bishop’s Office Expenses

Amend ¶ 818 by the following additions and deletions:
¶ 818. Purpose—1. The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with ¶ 818.3, shall provide for the salary and expenses of effective bishops from the date of their consecration and for the support of retired bishops and surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops. Subject to the approval of the General Council on Finance and Administration, the treasurer shall have authority to borrow for the benefit of the Episcopal Fund such amounts as may be necessary for the proper execution of the orders of the General Conference. The General Commission on Communication shall promote the Episcopal Fund.

2. Requirements—The council shall recommend to each quadrennial session of the General Conference for its action and determination: (1) the amounts to be fixed as salaries of the effective bishops or a formula by which the council shall fix the salaries; (2) a schedule of such
amounts as may be judged adequate to provide for their office expense of central conference bishops; (3) provision for an annual operating budget for the Council of Bishops, including the salaries and office and travel expenses of the executive secretary and the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops; (4) guidelines governing the payment of bishops’ travel expenses, including all travel authorized by the Council of Bishops; (5) the amounts needed to fund the Clergy Retirement Security Program or the Global Episcopal Pension Program (or, in either case, any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program); and (6) provisions for allowance for the surviving spouses and for the support of minor children of deceased bishops. From the facts in hand, the council shall estimate the approximate total amount required annually during the ensuing quadrennium to provide for the items of episcopal support mentioned above and shall report the same to the General Conference. This amount as finally determined shall be the estimated episcopal budget. The administration of the Episcopal Fund budget as determined by the General Conference shall be under the direction and authority of the General Council on Finance and Administration, including annual fiscal statements and audits. Nothing in this paragraph shall preclude the annual conference or conferences of an episcopal area from including in their budgets amounts for an area expense fund.

3. Proportionality—The amount apportioned to a charge for the Episcopal Fund shall be paid in the same proportion as the charge pays its pastor (see also ¶ 622).

4. Bishops’ Salaries—The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall remit monthly to each effective bishop one-twelfth of the annual salary as determined by the General Conference, less such deductions or reductions from the salary as each bishop may authorize. Allowances for retired bishops and for the surviving spouses and minor children of deceased bishops shall be paid in equal monthly installments.

5. Housing Expenses—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall provide an annual grant from the Episcopal Fund to share in the costs of providing the episcopal residence owned by the annual or central conference(s) in the episcopal area. The amount of such grant is to be approved by the General Conference on recommendation of the council. The Episcopal Fund shall not make a payment directly to a bishop for housing. It shall go to the annual conference(s) for episcopal residence housing purposes. The treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration shall remit the annual housing grant to the respective annual or central conference(s) in the episcopal area. The treasurer shall also remit periodic installments of the amount approved by the council as office expenses to each bishop, or to the office designated by the bishop to receive such payments.

6. Episcopal Expense Reimbursement and Honoraria Policies—The treasurer of the council shall pay monthly the claim for the official travel of each bishop upon the presentation of an itemized voucher with such supporting data as may be required by the General Council on Finance and Administration. 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, 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. No part of the expense and no honoraria for any such visitations shall be accepted from local churches or enterprises or institutions of The United Methodist Church, such expense being a proper claim against the Episcopal Fund. Nothing in this interpretation is intended to preclude special or nonofficial engagements of a bishop other than the oversight of the temporal and spiritual affairs of the Church, such as series of lectures in educational institutions, baccalaureate addresses, and preaching missions for several days’ duration when such engagements do not interfere with official duties, nor does it preclude the acceptance of honoraria for such services.

7. Audit of Episcopal Area Offices—Fiscal reporting and audit procedures of each area office shall be determined according to a schedule as set forth by the council upon recommendation of a committee designated by the General Council on Finance and Administration.

8. Episcopal Pensions—The pensions for the support of retired bishops elected by General, jurisdictional, or central conferences and the surviving spouses and minor dependent children of such deceased bishops shall be administered by the General Council on Finance and Administration in consultation with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and in accordance with such program and procedures as may from time to time be determined by the General Council on Finance and Administration with the approval of the General Conference. For service years beginning January 1, 1982, and thereafter, the pensions for the support of bishops elected by jurisdictional conferences and those of their surviving spouses and dependent children shall include the benefits provided by the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor bishop pension or retirement plan or program) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The pensions for the support of bishops elected by central conferences and those
of their surviving spouses and, for service years beginning before January 1, 1982, the pensions for the support of bishops elected by jurisdictional conferences and those of their surviving spouses shall both include the benefits provided by the Global Episcopal Pension Program.

9. Episcopalian Group Health Care Plan—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall sponsor or participate in a group health care plan that cover bishops elected by jurisdictional conferences, in the United States. For the purpose of this paragraph, group health care plan shall mean a health insurance plan, group health care plan, or multiple-employer health care plan that provides benefits for major medical and hospitalization expenses. The General Council on Finance and Administration may recommend additional eligibility for the group health care plan in its discretion.

Alternatively, in the event that federal law or state law governing health care plans and health insurance establishes coverage options for those persons without employer-provided coverage that ensure access, regardless of health status or condition, to affordable coverage through health insurance exchanges, connectors, single-payer systems, or other mechanisms, the General Council on Finance and Administration may cease maintaining its group health care plan for bishops to the extent such coverage is available to the bishops. In such event, the General Council on Finance and Administration nevertheless shall provide continues administrative and financial support of bishops toward the purchase of such coverage through these alternative mechanisms to the extent individuals’ coverage may not be subsidized by government agencies, i.e., because their compensation exceeds certain thresholds, particularly considering the tax advantages of employer-provided financial support toward health care coverage.

In addition, the Council of Bishops shall provide and maintain health and wellness programs for bishops. Moreover, annually, the General Council on Finance and Administration shall submit Episcopal health plan data, to the extent the General Council on Finance and Administration maintains a group health care plan for bishops, de-identified as necessary, including, but not limited to, financial soundness, claims experience and other cost drivers, plan designs and coverage, and eligibility criteria to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

10. Episcopalian Retiree Health Care Access—The General Council on Finance and Administration shall respect the health and wholeness of retired bishops in the United States and their spouses by facilitating access to Medicare supplement plans and prescription drug coverage plans. Access for retirees and their spouses may include, but shall not be limited to (i) sponsoring an employer retiree health care plan that supplements Medicare; (ii) participating in a multiple employer retiree health care plan that supplements Medicare; (iii) securing individuals’ eligibility under group contracts with Medicare supplement plan providers or exchanges; (iv) subsidizing the costs of coverage for retirees and their spouses enrolled in Medicare part D plans or Medicare Advantage plans; (v) providing subsidies toward and group relationships with providers of individual Medicare Supplement and other retiree coverage policies; and (vi) providing fixed dollar retiree health benefits through health reimbursement arrangements, stipends, or otherwise. The General Council on Finance and Administration must submit a generally accepted financial valuation, such as in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standard No. 106, as amended, of its projected medical liabilities for the retired population covered by the Episcopal Group Health Care Plan to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, biennially.

11. Bishops Whose Service Is Interrupted—Should any effective bishop in the interim of the quadrennial sessions of the jurisdictional conference be relieved by the College of Bishops of the jurisdiction from the performance of regular episcopal duties on account of ill health or for any other reason, the president of the said College of Bishops shall so notify the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund. Beginning ninety days after such notification, the said bishops shall receive at least the minimum regular pension allowance of a retired bishop; the amount of such benefit for which the Episcopal Fund is responsible shall be reduced by the amount of any disability payment payable from the Comprehensive Protection Plan of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Such pension allowance shall continue until the regular duties of an effective bishop are resumed or until the bishop’s status shall have been determined by the jurisdictional conference. Assignment of another bishop or bishops to perform the regular episcopal duties of a bishop so disabled or otherwise incapacitated, for a period of sixty days or more, shall be interpreted as a release of the said bishop from the performance of regular episcopal duties.

12. Retired Bishops Appointed to Ad Interim Service—Should any retired bishop, in the interim of the quadrennial sessions of the jurisdictional conference, be called into active service and assigned to active episcopal duty (¶ 406.3), that bishop shall be entitled to remuneration for such service. The Episcopal Fund shall be responsible for the difference between the pension of the retired bishop and the remuneration of an active bishop. In the event of such assignment of a retired bishop to active episcopal duty, the president or secretary of the Council of Bishops shall notify the treasurer of the Episcopal Fund.
The treasurer of the Episcopal Fund shall make remittance accordingly.

Rationale:

See Jurisdictional Study Committee report for full rationale—This petition proposes amendments to ¶ 818 to remove episcopal office expenses of jurisdictional bishops from the Episcopal Fund apportionment, but retain the current practice of generally apportioning the office expenses of the central conference bishops. This petition is part of a legislative

¶824.3.

Petition Number: 20212-FA-¶824.3-G; Bergquist, Greg - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Proposed Changes for United Methodist Student Day

Amend ¶ 824.3:

¶ 824.3—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 any Sunday in the month of May as appropriate to the local church to celebrate high school graduates or active students in higher education. The offering shall support United Methodist scholarships and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund (¶ 263.4). The observance . . .

Rationale:

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

¶1501.

Petition Number: 20213-FA-¶1501; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

GBPHB-Wespath Name

The General Conference hereby changes the name of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to Wespath.

To effectuate such, amend ¶ 1501 as follows:

¶ 1501. Establishment—1. a) There shall be a general board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church, which shall be known as Wespath, hereinafter called Wespath, the general board, having the general supervision and administration of the support, relief, and assistance and pensioning of clergy of this denomination, lay workers of the various units of the church, and their families.

b) Wespath, formerly known as the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church, is the successor to the General Board of Pensions of The United Methodist Church, the Board of Pensions of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, and the General Board of Pensions of The Methodist Church.

2. Wespath shall have authority to establish, maintain, and discontinue the location of its headquarters and such auxiliary offices as it shall deem proper and advisable.

3. Wespath shall report to and be amenable to the General Conference.

Related non-disciplinary implementation text: To further effectuate such change, the General Conference hereby directs that all references to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, general board or its board, wherever they appear in Discipline ¶ 1501 through ¶ 1509, shall be changed to Wespath, the Wespath board of directors, or Wespath’s board depending on the grammatical and syntactical context of each mention.

Further, the General Conference hereby directs that the name of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits be changed to Wespath, wherever it appears in the Book of Discipline, the Book of Resolutions, and plan documents.

Rationale:

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBPHB) has been operating under the Wespath name since 2016 and the name has been embraced by church stakeholders. This petition would change the GBPHB name to Wespath in Discipline ¶ 1501 and throughout the Discipline and Book of Resolutions.

¶1502.1.

Petition Number: 20214-FA-¶1502.1; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

GBPHB Membership

Amend ¶ 1502.1 as follows:
¶ 1502. 1. Membership

a) The membership of the general board shall be composed of two bishops, elected by the Council of Bishops; six members elected by the jurisdictional conferences from the annual conference nominations, one from each jurisdiction on a ratio providing for an equitable distribution among the various jurisdictions, based on the combined clergy and laity membership thereof, as determined by the secretary of the General Conference; six members, from the central conferences with not more than two from the same jurisdiction, elected by the General Conference on nomination of the Council of Bishops; and fifteen additional members for the purpose of bringing to the general board special knowledge or background, not more than two from the same giving due consideration to jurisdictional representation, nominated and elected by the general board in such manner as it shall provide in its bylaws. Notwithstanding Discipline ¶ 705 and ¶ 710, up to three members may be professing members of Pan-Methodist churches, churches in the United States that are members of the World Methodist Council, covenanting churches that share full communion with The United Methodist Church, or churches that share common Wesleyan religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church.

b) The aforementioned electing bodies shall give consideration during the nominating process to equitable representation on the basis of race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, economic condition, and people with disabilities.

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

¶1502.3.

Petition Number: 20215-FA-¶1502.3; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

GBPHB Meetings

Amend ¶ 1502.3 as follows:

3. Meetings—The general board shall hold meet at such times and in such manner as indicated in its bylaws at least one meeting in each calendar year.

a) The place and time of all meetings shall be designated by the general board, but if it fails to do so, then the time and place shall be designated by the chairperson.

b) It shall convene at such other times on call of the chairperson, on written request by one-fifth of its members, or on written request by a majority of its executive committee.

c) A majority of the members of the general board shall constitute a quorum.

Rationale:

Remove unnecessary language from the Discipline regarding Wespath’s meeting schedules and quorum; instead simply refer to Wespath’s bylaws.

¶1502.4.

Petition Number: 20216-FA-¶1502.4; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

GBPHB Committees

Amend ¶ 1502.4 as follows:

4. Committees—The general board shall establish the following committees:

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 1502.1.b
a) Executive Committee—An executive committee shall be elected by the general board from its membership. During the periods between the meetings of the general board, its business and affairs shall be managed by the executive committee.

b) Committee on Audit and Review—A committee on audit and review shall be elected by the general board. The committee on audit and review shall be responsible for reviewing the financial audits and related policies of the general board and its constituent legal entities.

c) Committee on Appeals—A committee on appeals shall be elected by the general board. The committee on appeals shall hear appeals from participants in the funds, plans, and programs administered by the general board, unless specified otherwise in the governing document of any such fund, plan, or program. Decisions of the committee on appeals shall be final and not reviewed by the full general board.

d) Other Committees—The general board shall have the authority to establish, from time to time, such other standing committees or special committees as provided in its bylaws.

e) Committee Membership—The general board shall elect the membership of its standing committees in accordance with its bylaws. The membership of any special committees shall be selected in accordance with the resolution establishing such special committee.

f) Committee Members at Large—The general board shall have the authority to elect additional members to its committees, always making up less than not to exceed one-half of the committee membership, for the purpose of bringing to those committees special knowledge or background. These committee members at large shall have full voice and vote on the committee, but they shall have voice, but not voting privileges, on the general board.

Rationale:

Clarify that the appeals committee hears appeals under the mandatory plans and voluntary plans unless Wespath has engaged a claims administrator or insurer as appeals fiduciary. Also clarify committee membership ratio to ensure compliance with Illinois not-for-profit corporate law.

¶1504.1.

Petition Number: 20219-FA-¶1504.1; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.
tributable to the legacy defined benefit components necessary to fully fund the associated liabilities, shall determine additional assets needed to fully fund any annuities that were created related to general agency employees under other legacy plans (e.g., the Personal Investment Plan, Ministerial Pension Plan, etc.), and shall retain such assets to fund the plans until all beneficiaries are paid (or until such annuities are assumed by an insurer). Full funding in the previous sentence will be based on such pension and annuity liabilities being determined using market factors similar to those used by a commercial annuity provider. Any excess assets above these aforementioned amounts from RPGA shall be transferred to the General Agency Benefit Trust.

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and directed to amend RPGA to conform with this petition as of the close of the 2020 General Conference.

Rationale:

Under certain disruptive circumstances UMC general agencies could benefit from or need the flexibility and affordability of a voluntary defined contribution plan. The petition also seeks to ensure that payments of historical defined benefit obligations of the Retirement Plan for General Agencies are secure.

§1504.1.

Petition Number: 20220-FA-§1504.1; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Compass Retirement Plan

Adopt the Compass Retirement Plan, which is referenced in § 1504.1 of the Book of Discipline, in the form of Exhibit A attached hereto (including any needed revisions to section numbering, formatting, pagination, or Table of Contents), effective as of January 1, 2023.

Exhibit A

Compass Retirement Plan

A Church Retirement Benefits Plan of
The United Methodist Church
Effective January 1, 2023, as Adopted by the 2020 General Conference

Compass Retirement Plan

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The Compass Retirement Plan (the “Plan”) was established by General Conference 2020, effective as of January 1, 2023 (the “Effective Date”). The Plan replaces the Clergy Retirement Security Program, which is partially frozen as of the Effective Date of this Plan.

1.2 The Plan. The Plan consists of the following subdivisions:

(a) The Plan document, which is the main body of the Plan, including Appendix A; and

(g) The Adoption Agreement for any Plan Sponsor.

Appendix A describes core benefit design features of the Plan that may be amended only by General Conference, as further described in section 11 below, if ¶ 1504.1 of the Discipline is amended by General Conference 2020 to reflect such amendment authority. If ¶ 1504.1 of the Discipline is not amended in such manner by General Conference 2020, the Plan sections within Appendix A will revert to their numbered locations within the main body of the Plan document, and Appendix A will be deleted.

The Plan will apply to an individual as of the earlier of the date such person first became eligible for the Plan or first had an Account and will remain applicable, as the Plan exists from time to time, until such person no longer has an Account under the Plan. If any issue under the Plan applies after such person’s Account has been distributed, then the terms of the Plan as they existed on the date of such distribution will apply to such person. In the case of a Beneficiary or any other person who does not have an Account but who claims a benefit under the Plan, the terms of the Plan as they existed at the time or times such person would have been entitled to an Account if such claim were upheld will govern.

1.3 Type of Plan. The Plan is intended to be a program of one or more church-sponsored retirement income accounts within the meaning of Code §403(b)(9). The Plan is a defined contribution plan, as that term is defined in Code §414(i). For the purpose of Code §401(a)(4), the Plan is intended to be a multiple employer plan involving more than one Plan Sponsor. For the purpose of Code §414(e), the Plan Sponsors are each intended to be a church, a convention or association of churches (within the meaning of Code §414(e)(3)(C)), or an organization controlled by or associated with a church or a convention or association of churches (within the meaning of Code §414(e)(3)(D)). Accordingly, the Plan Sponsors

Note: The Compass Retirement Plan is a church plan that is not subject to registration, regulation, or reporting under the Investment Company Act of 1940, the Securities Act of 1933, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Title 15 of the United States Code, or State securities laws. Similarly, the Administrator and the Trustee of the Plan and the entities maintaining any investment funds under the Plan are not subject to those provisions of those Acts or laws. Therefore, Plan participants and beneficiaries will not be afforded the protection of those provisions.

**Compass Retirement Plan**

**SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION**

1.1 History. The Compass Retirement Plan is a church plan controlled by or associated with a church or a convention or association of churches (within the meaning of Code §414(e)(3)(C)), or an organization controlled by or associated with a church or a convention or association of churches (within the meaning of Code §414(e)(3)(D)).
are intended to be one employer for the purpose of Code §414(e). The Plan is a “church plan” as that term is defined in Code §414(e) and ERISA §3(33).

1.4 Funding. Contributions to fund the benefits provided under the Plan are made by the Plan Sponsors.

(a) The Trust. To receive the Contributions, the General Board has established the Trust pursuant to an agreement with the Trustee. All benefits under the Plan will be provided exclusively by distributions from the Trust. The Trustee has the powers and duties specified in the agreement establishing the Trust. The General Board has the authority to replace the Trustee of the Trust at any time, or to establish additional Trusts to fund benefits under the Plan.

(b) Separate Accounts. The Administrator will maintain a separate accounting for each Plan Sponsor’s Contributions and for each Participant, Beneficiary, or Accountholder. Such accounting will reflect Contributions, earnings, losses, forfeitures, transfers, distributions, and any other relevant events necessary to keep accurate accounts.

(c) Contributions for Missionary Conferences. [See Appendix A]

1.5 Exclusive Benefit. The Plan is for the exclusive benefit of Accountholders. No portion of the funds contributed to the Plan will revert to or be applied for the benefit of the Plan Sponsors, except as specifically permitted herein.

1.6 Plan Sponsors. [See Appendix A]

SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS AND RULES OF INTERPRETATION

As used in this Plan, capitalized terms, including acronyms, have the meanings set forth in this section. When not set forth in this section, capitalized terms have the meanings set forth in predecessor plans, given to them in the Discipline, or understood in common usage.

2.1 Account. All of the separate accounts maintained according to the books and records of the Plan for the purpose of recording Contributions made by a Plan Sponsor, Salary-Paying Unit, or Participant for the benefit of a Participant, an Alternate Payee or a Beneficiary, adjusted for Contributions, distributions, and earnings and losses allocated thereto.

2.2 Account Balance. The total amount held in an Account of an Accountholder, as determined on the coincident or immediately preceding Accounting Date in accordance with the provisions of the Plan.

2.3 Accountholder. A Participant, Alternate Payee, or Beneficiary who has an Account under the Plan. Accountholder also includes an individual whose defined benefit accruals were converted to a lump sum and transferred to this Plan pursuant to transition provisions within the Clergy Retirement Security Program.

2.4 Accounting Date. Each business day of each calendar year and any other date upon which Contributions to, distributions from, or transfers to or from Account Balances are made or upon which Account Balances are adjusted in accordance with the provisions of the Plan.

2.5 Actuarial Equivalent or Actuarially Equivalent. Providing a benefit having the same value after adjusting for mortality and the time value of money, using generally accepted actuarial methods and assumptions, including an interest or discount rate and a mortality table, when necessary, selected by the Administrator from time to time.

2.6 Administrator. The General Board or any successor.

2.7 Adoption Agreement. An agreement executed by each Plan Sponsor and accepted by the Administrator that is a part of this Plan and is the means by which a Plan Sponsor adopts the Plan, and specifies any optional provisions that are a part of the Plan as to that Plan Sponsor.

2.8 Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions. Before-tax and/or Roth Contributions made on behalf of a Participant who has attained, or is expected, by the end of the Plan Year, to attain age 50 and who has exceeded the limits otherwise applicable under Code §402(g) and section 5.2(a), provided that such Contributions do not exceed the limits specified in section 4.2(c)(i)(B).

2.9 Aggregate Benefit. The sum of an Accountholder’s:

(a) Vested Account Balances in this Plan; plus
(b) vested account balances in all other retirement plans administered by the Administrator, if any; plus
(c) accrued benefits in all defined benefit plans administered by the Administrator, if any, converted to their Actuarial Equivalent aggregate lump sum; plus
(e) monthly benefits, if any, being received from a retirement plan administered by the Administrator, if any, converted to their Actuarial Equivalent aggregate lump sum.

2.10 Alternate Payee. A Spouse, former Spouse, child, or other dependent of a Participant entitled to receive a portion of such Participant’s Account under a QDRO.

2.11 Annual Conference. The basic body of The United Methodist Church as further described in ¶ 33 and in ¶¶ 601-657 of the Discipline.

2.12 Appointed or Appointment. Officially appointed by a Bishop to a ministry pursuant to ¶ 425 through 430 of the Discipline. The sum of two or more Appointments for one Clergyperson will be totaled and determined as full-time or part-time as reported to the Administrator.
by the Plan Sponsor. For the purposes of the Plan, in the case of a Bishop, assigned in accordance with ¶ 406 of the Discipline. Bishops will be deemed assigned on at least a half-time basis.

2.13 Automatic Contribution Escalation. [See Appendix A]

2.14 Automatic Enrollment. [See Appendix A]

2.15 Beneficiary. The person(s) (natural or otherwise), designated as set forth in section 8.12, who is receiving, or entitled to receive, a deceased Participant’s or Accountholder’s residual interest in the Plan.

2.16 Bishop. A bishop of The United Methodist Church elected by a Jurisdictional Conference in accordance with ¶ 405 of the Discipline and continuing to serve under Section III of Chapter Three of Part VI of the Discipline.

2.17 Break in Service. A period of time, beginning on the day a Clergyperson becomes a Terminated Participant or Retires, and ending (if at all) on the day he or she is reinstated into the effective Conference relationship and is Appointed (or is otherwise covered under the Plan). Taking a Leave of Absence or becoming Disabled does not begin a Break in Service.

2.18 Catch-Up Contributions. Either or both of Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions or 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions.

2.19 Church Plan. A plan qualifying under Code §414(e) or ERISA §3(33) that has not made an election under Code §410(d).

2.20 Claimant. A person who makes a claim for benefits under the Plan or who appeals the denial of such a claim, or such person’s representative.

2.21 Clergy or Clergyperson. One of the following persons:

(a) a Bishop;

(b) an Elder in Full Connection, a Deacon in Full Connection, a Provisional Member, an affiliate member within the meaning of ¶¶ 344.4, 369.1, or 586.4 of the Discipline, or an Associate Member of a Conference, but not including a Bishop;

(c) a Local Pastor of a Conference who has been previously approved by the Conference’s board of ordained ministry (as further described in ¶ 635 of the Discipline) and classified as eligible for Appointment as a full-time Local Pastor (within the meaning of ¶¶ 318 and 318.1 of the Discipline), part-time Local Pastor (within the meaning of ¶¶ 318 and 318.2 of the Discipline), or student Local Pastor (within the meaning of ¶¶ 318 and 318.3 or 318.4 of the Discipline);

(d) a Non-Jurisdictional Clergyperson, provided that such clergyperson is not then participating in a pension program of the Puerto Rico Methodist Church or the Central Conference (or Annual Conference within such Central Conference) to which such clergyperson belongs;

(e) an Other Methodist Denomination Clergyperson, provided that such clergyperson is not then participating in a pension program of the Methodist denomination to which such clergyperson belongs;

(f) an Other Denomination Clergyperson, provided that such clergyperson is not then participating in a pension program of the denomination to which such clergyperson belongs.

2.22 Code. The Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now in effect or as hereafter amended, and any regulation, ruling, or other administrative guidance issued pursuant thereto by the Internal Revenue Service.

2.23 Compensation. [See Appendix A]

2.24 Conference. Any Annual Conference, provisional annual conference (as described in ¶¶ 580-583 of the Discipline), missionary conference (as described in ¶¶ 585-588 of the Discipline) that is described in the Discipline and is located in a Jurisdictional Conference.

2.25 Conference-Elective Entity. Any extension ministry (such as an agency, a camp, or a foundation) that is on a list of extension ministries reported periodically to the Administrator by a Conference. By reporting any such extension ministry, a Conference agrees to make Contributions on behalf of all Clergypersons Appointed by that Conference’s Bishop to that extension ministry. A Conference may add extension ministries to, or remove them from, the list periodically as of a date or dates specified from time to time by the Administrator during such reporting periods as the Administrator may designate from time to time. But once an extension ministry is reported for the list, it will remain on the list until it is removed, prospectively only, by the Conference.

2.26 Conference-Responsible Unit. As provided in ¶ 344.1a)(1) of the Discipline, an Annual Conference unit within the connectional structures of United Methodism to which certain Clergy are Appointed, such as district superintendents, staff members of conference councils and boards, treasurers, Bishops’ assistants, superintendents or directors of parish development, general evangelists, and campus ministers, and for which unit the Annual Conference is responsible for provide Contributions to the Plan on behalf of such Clergy. Appointments described above that are to the Annual Conference itself (rather than a unit thereof) are also included within the term. The term also covers parallel Appointments to Conferences other than Annual Conferences.

2.27 Contribution. An amount contributed to the Plan by a Plan Sponsor or other responsible party. A Contribution may be made on behalf of a Plan Sponsor by CPP (as provided therein) or another source or entity as
long as the amount contributed is clearly being paid on behalf of the relevant Plan Sponsor.

2.28 CPP. The Comprehensive Protection Plan, a Church Welfare Benefits Plan for Clergy Associated with a Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church, as amended from time to time.

2.29 CPP Disabled or CPP Disability. Receiving disability benefits under CPP or having a condition entitling a person to disability benefits under CPP, as determined by the Administrator.

2.30 Deacon in Full Connection. A member of the Order of Deacons within the meaning of ¶¶ 306-309 of the Discipline who is a member of a Conference and not a Provisional Member.

2.31 Disabled or Disability. Any of the following with respect to a Participant or Terminated Participant:

(a) determined to be disabled by the Social Security Administration;

(b) receiving long-term disability benefits under the terms of CPP or another disability benefit plan provided by such Participant’s or Terminated Participant’s Salary-Paying Unit or Plan Sponsor;

(c) placed on Medical Leave by such Participant’s or Terminated Participant’s Conference; or

(d) in the case of a Terminated Participant who is not eligible for a Social Security Administration determination of disability, determined to be disabled by an outside professional firm selected by the Administrator, based on reasonable and consistently applied factors established by the Administrator from time to time.

2.32 Discipline. The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016, the body of church law established by General Conference, as amended and restated from time to time.

2.33 Early Retirement Date. The first day of the month coinciding with or next following the later of:

(a) the date on which a Participant or Terminated Participant attains:

(i) the age or service completion date specified in ¶ 357.2b of the Discipline; or

(ii) for a Participant who retires in accordance with ¶¶ 357.2a or 357.3 of the Discipline, or who is a Terminated Participant, age 62; or

(b) in the case of a:

(i) Participant, the date on which the Participant Retires; or

(ii) Terminated Participant, the date on which the Terminated Participant incurs a Termination of Conference Relationship or a Five-Year No Record of Appointment; provided that such date is before the Participant’s or Terminated Participant’s Normal Retirement Date.

2.34 Effective Date. January 1, 2023. Provisions with different effective dates are noted in the Plan’s text.

2.35 Elder in Full Connection. A member of the Order of Elders within the meaning of ¶¶ 306-309 of the Discipline who is a member of a Conference and not a Provisional Member.

2.36 Eligible Clergy or Eligible Clergyperson. A Clergyperson who is eligible for participation in the Plan as further described in section 3.1.

2.37 Eligible Rollover Distribution. Any distribution under the Plan that qualifies as an eligible rollover distribution under Code §402(c).

2.38 Entry Date. The first day of any calendar month after an Eligible Clergyperson satisfies the requirements of section 3.1(b).

2.39 ERISA. The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as now in effect or as hereafter amended, and any regulation, ruling, or other administrative guidance issued pursuant thereto.

2.40 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions. Before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions made under section 4.2 that a Participant with 15 years of 15-Year Catch-Up Service may make to the Plan that exceed the Code §402(g) limit provided in section 5.2(a).

2.41 15-Year Catch-Up Aggregate Sum. For any Participant with 15-Year Catch-Up Service, the sum of the following for all years since the Participant first qualified to make Contributions taken into account under Code §402(g)(7)(A)(ii) or (iii):

(a) 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions made pursuant to section 4.2(b);

(b) 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions transferred to the Plan pursuant to section 12.17; and

(c) any contributions qualifying under Code §402(g)(7)(A)(ii) or (iii) that were made to another plan at any time, to the extent known by the Administrator and/or as further specified in regulations;

2.42 15-Year Catch-Up Service. Service that a Participant must perform before he or she may become eligible to make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions. A Participant’s 15-Year Catch-Up Service includes paid time serving any Plan Sponsor or any organization controlled by or associated with The United Methodist Church (or
its predecessors), even for organizations that are not Plan Sponsors. A Break in Service will not affect the aggregate months or years of 15-Year Catch-Up Service. It is computed as provided in regulations under Code §403(b).

2.43 Five-Year No Record of Appointment. With respect to a Provisional Member, Associate Member, affiliate member within the meaning of ¶¶ 344.4, 369.1, or 586.4 of the Discipline, Deacon in Full Connection, or Local Pastor, a 60-consecutive-month period during which the Provisional Member, Associate Member, affiliate member, Deacon in Full Connection, or Local Pastor (or some combination in the case of a Clergyperson who changes classification) is not Appointed.

2.44 Gap Period. The period between the end of a Plan Year and the date that excess Contributions are refunded to a Participant.

2.45 General Agency. Any agency of The United Methodist Church that is specified in ¶¶ 701.3, 702.3, 703.1, or 703.6 of the Discipline, except for the Connectional Table (see Judicial Council Decision No. 990).

2.46 General Board. General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church, Incorporated in Illinois, d/b/a Wespath Benefits and Investments.

2.47 General Conference. The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, the highest legislative body in the denomination, as described in ¶¶ 501-511 of the Discipline.

2.48 IRA. An individual retirement account or annuity, qualified under Code §408 (other than an endowment contract).

2.49 Late Retirement Date. The first day of the month coinciding with or next following:

(a) In the case of a Participant, the Participant’s actual Retirement Date after having reached his or her Normal Retirement Date, but not later than the mandatory retirement date specified in ¶ 357.1 or ¶ 408.1 of the Discipline (if any); or

(b) In the case of a Terminated Participant, the date of the Administrator’s acceptance of the Terminated Participant’s application for benefits after having reached his or her Normal Retirement Date, but not later than his or her Required Beginning Date.

2.50 Leave of Absence. A Clergyperson’s period of absence from performing his or her ministerial duties for a Plan Sponsor:

(a) in accordance with ¶ 351 of the Discipline (relating to sabbatical leaves);

(b) in accordance with ¶ 353 of the Discipline (relating to voluntary leaves of absence);

(c) in accordance with ¶ 354 of the Discipline (relating to involuntary leaves);

(d) in accordance with ¶ 355 of the Discipline (relating to maternity or paternity leaves);

(e) in accordance with ¶ 410 of the Discipline (relating to leaves for Bishops);

(f) because of a Medical Leave;

(g) that is covered by USERRA (or applicable prior law); or

(h) to which the Clergyperson is entitled under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 or any comparable applicable state law; provided, however, that the Clergyperson Retires or returns to work for a Plan Sponsor or entity that must be aggregated with the Plan Sponsor pursuant to Code §414(b), (c), (m), or (o), within the time specified in his or her Leave of Absence (or, if applicable, within the period during which his or her re-employment rights are protected by law).

2.51 LifeStage Investment Management. [See Appendix A]

2.52 LifeStage Retirement Income. [See Appendix A]

2.53 Local Church. A United Methodist Church organization within the meaning of ¶ 201 of the Discipline.

2.54 Local Pastor. A person licensed in accordance with ¶¶ 315-320 of the Discipline.


2.56 Non-Jurisdictional Clergy or Clergyperson. A Clergyperson who is a member of:

(a) a Central Conference; or

(b) The Puerto Rico Methodist Church who is Appointed by the Bishop of a Plan Sponsor Conference in which such Clergyperson is not a member (or, where the Plan Sponsor is not supervised by a Bishop, who is covered by a Plan Sponsor’s Adoption Agreement).

2.57 Normal Retirement Date.

(a) In the case of a Participant (other than a Terminated Participant), the first day of the month coinciding with or next following the earlier of:

(i) the Participant’s 65th birthday; or

(ii) the date on which the Participant attains 40 years of service by adding:

(A) the Participant’s years of service recognized in accordance with ¶ 357.2c of the Discipline; and

(B) the Participant’s years of service, if any, assigned as a Bishop in accordance with ¶ 406 of the Discipline.

(b) In the case of a Terminated Participant, the first day of the month coinciding with or next following the Terminated Participant’s 65th birthday.

2.58 Other Denomination Clergy or Clergyperson. A Clergyperson who is a member of another denomination (within the meaning of ¶¶ 346.2 or 346.3 of the Discipline) who is Appointed by the Bishop of a Plan Sponsor
Conference in which such Clergyperson is not a member (or, where the Plan Sponsor is not supervised by a Bishop, who is covered by a Plan Sponsor’s Adoption Agreement).

2.59 Other Methodist Denomination Clergy or Clergyperson. A Clergyperson who is a member of another Methodist denomination (within the meaning of ¶ 346.1 of the Discipline), other than The Puerto Rico Methodist Church, who is Appointed by the Bishop of a Plan Sponsor Conference in which such Clergyperson is not a member (or, where the Plan Sponsor is not supervised by a Bishop, who is covered by a Plan Sponsor’s Adoption Agreement).

2.60 Participant. An Eligible Clergyperson who has become a participating Clergyperson as provided in this Plan, including such a Clergyperson who has Retired.

2.61 Participant Contributions. Contributions made pursuant to section 4.2 by a Plan Sponsor in accordance with a Participant’s Salary-Reduction Agreement or Automatic Enrollment.

2.62 Permanently Disabled. Disabled within the meaning of Code §§403(b)(11)(A) and 72(m)(7), namely, unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or to be of long-continued and indefinite duration and that can be demonstrated in such form and manner as regulations under Code §72(m)(7) may require.

2.63 Plan. The Compass Retirement Plan, as applied to all Plan Sponsors or as applied to any particular Plan Sponsor, as the context requires, including any applicable Adoption Agreements, amendments, appendices, or supplements hereto.

2.64 Plan Sponsor. Any of the entities specified in section 1.6.

2.65 Plan Sponsor Contributions. A Contribution to a Participant’s Account by a Plan Sponsor, made in accordance with section 4.1.

2.66 Plan Year. The calendar year.

2.67 Provisional Member. A person elected to provisional membership in an Annual Conference within the meaning of ¶ 324 of the Discipline; formerly called a probationary member.

2.68 QDRO. A qualified domestic relations order in accordance with Code §414(p), approved by the Administrator in accordance with section 10.12.

2.69 Remitter. A Plan Sponsor, Salary-Paying Unit, or other entity that actually remits Participant Contributions and/or Plan Sponsor Contributions to the Administrator.

2.70 Required Beginning Date. The date upon which benefits are required to commence, as defined by Code §401(a)(9)(C).

2.71 Retire or Retirement. In the case of a:
(a) Participant (other than a Bishop), to be placed in the retired relation in accordance with ¶ 357 of the Discipline or the condition of being in the retired relation;
(b) Terminated Participant, applying for a distribution on or after such Terminated Participant’s 62nd birthday; or
(c) Participant who is a Bishop, to have the status of a retired bishop in accordance with ¶¶ 408.1, 408.2, or 408.3 of the Discipline.

2.72 Retirement Date. The date on which a Participant or Terminated Participant Retires.

2.73 Rollover Account. The Account established for an Accountholder on the books and records of the Plan for the purpose of recording any funds rolled over to the Plan from or attributable to another qualified plan or IRA pursuant to section 4.6, adjusted for any applicable debits or credits attributable to such funds. Each Accountholder’s Rollover Account may include sub-Accounts for various kinds of Contributions, such as after-tax Contributions, before-tax Contributions, Roth Contributions, and Plan Sponsor (or other employer) Contributions. Alternatively, the Administrator may establish more than one separate Rollover Account for these various kinds of Contributions, each such Account being treated as a Rollover Account.

2.74 Roth Contributions. Participant Contributions made by the Plan Sponsor to the Plan in accordance with an election by a Participant to contribute a portion of his or her Compensation into the Plan under Code §402A after receipt of the Compensation for taxability purposes, which contribution may earn tax-free earnings, gains, or interest if the applicable provisions of Code §402A are complied with.

2.75 Roth Contribution Account. The Account established for an Accountholder on the books and records of the Plan for the purpose of recording any:
(a) Roth Contributions made pursuant to section 4.2(a)(i)(C);
(b) Roth rollovers made pursuant to section 4.6; and
(c) Roth Conversions made pursuant to section 4.7; adjusted for any applicable debits or credits attributable to such Contributions, rollovers or conversions. The Administrator will maintain a record of the Participant’s investment in the contract, i.e., the original Roth Contributions, unadjusted for debits or credits, that have not yet been distributed.

2.76 Roth Conversion. A Roth Conversion, also referred to as an in-plan rollover, is the conversion of the balance in an Account other than a Roth Contribution Account to the Roth Contribution Account. Such a Roth Conversion is not a Contribution, and therefore is not sub-
ject to any limits on Contributions set forth in section 5. A Roth Conversion is subject to Code §402A(c)(4) and may be accomplished pursuant to section 4.7.

2.77 Roth Qualified Distribution. A non-taxable distribution from a Roth Contribution Account. Distributions from a Roth Contribution Account will be taxable to the Participant in accordance with Code §402A and regulations issued thereunder. To be a Roth Qualified Distribution, a distribution from a Roth Contribution Account generally must be distributed on or after the later of:

(i) the first of the year in which the first Roth Contribution or Roth Conversion was made to a Participant’s Roth Contribution Account; or

(ii) when a Roth Contribution has been rolled into the Plan, the first of the year in which the first Roth contribution was made to the predecessor Roth account from which such Roth Contribution was rolled into this Plan; or

(b) the earliest date specified in Code §408A(d)(2)(A).

2.78 Salary-Paying Unit. Any one of the following units associated with The United Methodist Church:

(a) Commission on the General Conference, as specified in ¶ 511 of the Discipline;

(b) a General Agency;

(c) a Jurisdictional Conference;

(d) a Conference;

(e) a Conference board, agency, or commission;

(f) a Local Church located in a Conference; or

(g) any other entity to which a Clergyperson is appointed.

2.79 Salary-Reduction Agreement. An agreement between a Participant and a Salary Paying Unit that specifies an amount or percentage of the Participant’s Compensation that will be withheld from the Participant’s earnings and contributed by the Remitter to the Plan on behalf of the Participant as a Participant Contribution, which may be before-tax Contributions, after-tax Contributions, or Roth Contributions, as elected by the Participant.

2.80 Simplified Rule. A means of pro rata distribution of after-tax Contributions, before-tax Contributions, and debits or credits applicable thereto, specified in regulations issued under Code §72.

2.81 Spouse. The husband or wife or surviving husband or wife of an Accountholder who is legally married to such Accountholder, or was so legally married on the date of the Accountholder’s death, under the laws of the jurisdiction where the Accountholder resides or resided. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the term “Spouse” will not include common law spouses, even in states that recognize common law marriage.

2.82 Termination of Conference Relationship. A Participant ceasing to be a member of any Conference, including by reason of:

(a) being honorably located within the meaning of ¶ 358 of the Discipline;

(b) being administratively located within the meaning of ¶ 359 of the Discipline;

(c) the Participant’s withdrawal within the meaning of ¶ 360 of the Discipline;

(d) the surrender of his or her ministerial credentials within the meaning of ¶¶ 360.3 and 2719.2 of the Discipline;

(e) the surrender of his or her Local Pastor’s license within the meaning of ¶ 320 of the Discipline; or

(f) a penalty assessed by a trial court within the meaning of ¶ 2711.3 of the Discipline.

2.83 Terminated Participant.

(a) Participants. A person who has been a Participant, but who has incurred a Termination of Conference Relationship, or, in the case of a Provisional Member, Associate Member, affiliate member within the meaning of ¶¶ 344.4, 369.1, or 586.4 of the Discipline, Local Pastor, or Deacon in Full Connection (or some combination in the case of a Clergyperson who changes classification), who has incurred a Five-Year No Record of Appointment.

(b) Bishops. In the case of a former Bishop, a person who has been a Participant but who has resigned in accordance with ¶ 408.4 of the Discipline or been removed in accordance with ¶¶ 2704.1, 2711.3, or 2712 of the Discipline; provided, in either case, that such former Bishop does not return to being a non-Bishop Clergyperson (in which case termination will be based on the previous sentence of this section).

(c) Non-Jurisdictional Clergy. A Non-Jurisdictional Clergyperson who has terminated his or her membership with all Central Conferences and The Puerto Rico Methodist Church without having become a member of any Conference (or otherwise becoming covered under the Plan).

(d) Other Clergy. An Other Denomination Clergyperson or Other Methodist Denomination Clergyperson who has been classified by the Plan Sponsor he or she was serving as discontinued or having no record of Appointment.

2.84 Transitional Leave. A status for certain Clergypersons who are in-between Appointments within the meaning of ¶ 353.2c of the Discipline.

2.85 Trust. The trust or trusts, including the Pension Trust of The United Methodist Church, established to fund benefits provided under the Plan, as provided in section 1.5. The term “Trust” also includes, as applicable, any insurance contract purchased to fund benefits under the Plan.
2.86 Trustee. The UMC Benefit Board, Inc., an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, or any successor.

2.87 USERRA. The Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994, including pension benefits provided in accordance with Code §414(u). References to “USERRA” include the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 (the “HEART Act”) and service persons covered thereby, including recognition of contributions and benefits due under USERRA to Participants who are treated as though they returned to work on the day before military-related death or disability, as provided under the HEART Act.

2.88 Vested. The nonforfeitable portion of any Account, except as provided in section 7.2.

SECTION 3 - PARTICIPATION

3.1 Eligibility for Participation. [See Appendix A]

3.2 Determination of Eligibility. Upon receipt of enrollment information from the Plan Sponsor, the Administrator will accept such information as evidence of eligibility for participation in the Plan. However, the Administrator may from time to time audit such information or obtain additional information, which might result in a determination of ineligibility for a Participant or a determination of eligibility for a non-Participant. The Administrator has the final authority to determine the eligibility of any Clergyperson. Such determination will be made pursuant to the provisions of the Plan and the Adoption Agreement and will be conclusive and binding upon all persons.

3.3 Cessation and Resumption of Participation.

(a) Cessation of Participation. A Participant who receives a distribution of his entire Account Balance under the Plan and who no longer qualifies under section 3.1 will cease to be a Participant in the Plan.

(b) Reinstatement. A person described in subsection (a) who again qualifies under section 3.1 will again become a Participant entitled to Contributions.

(c) Return to Coverage. If a Participant ceases to qualify but does not receive a distribution of his entire Account Balance under the Plan and then requalifies under those sections, he or she will once again be entitled to Contributions under the Plan but will not be entitled to receive distributions under the Plan (except to the extent he or she qualifies under section 8.2), even for amounts that he or she would have been entitled to receive when he or she previously ceased to qualify under section 3.1.

(d) Transfer. A Participant who transfers from one Conference (or other Plan Sponsor) to another (or who otherwise transfers under ¶¶ 346 or 347 of the Discipline such that he or she was covered under the Plan both before and after the transfer) without a Break in Service will remain a Participant, but his or her Plan Sponsor will change from the first Conference (or other Plan Sponsor) to the second on the date that he or she is Appointed to the second.

3.4 Omission of Eligible Clergyperson. If, in any Plan Year, a Clergyperson who should have been included as a Participant in the Plan is erroneously omitted from participation and if the discovery of such omission is not made until after one or more Contributions by his or her Plan Sponsor has been made, or is due, for such Plan Year, the Plan Sponsor will correct that omission by making one or more replacement contributions, subject to any limitations under Code §415. In addition, the Plan Sponsor will contribute imputed earnings on the replacement contributions based on a fixed rate of interest or on projected earnings as established by the Administrator from case to case or time to time, credited from the due date specified by the Administrator until the Accounting Date such replacement contributions were actually credited. Moreover, the Plan Sponsor is subject to one or more administrative charge(s) under section 10.7(c).

3.5 Inclusion of Ineligible Person. If, in any Plan Year, any person who should not have been included as a Participant in the Plan is erroneously included and the discovery is not made until after one or more Contributions for the Plan Year have been made with respect to such person, any such Contributions will constitute a mistake of fact for the Plan Year in which the Contributions are made and will be returned to the Plan Sponsor (adjusted for any gains or losses) if it qualifies under section 12.3(a). Erroneous Contributions that do not qualify under section 12.3(a) will be permanently forfeited and used by the Administrator to defray administrative expenses of the Plan.

3.6 Election Not to Participate. Subject to the consent of his or her Plan Sponsor, an Eligible Clergyperson who is a student Local Pastor (within the meaning of ¶¶ 318 and 318.3 or 318.4 of the Discipline) or who is Appointed on a part-time basis may elect voluntarily not to participate in the entire Plan, or not to participate in the Plan Sponsor Contributions portion of the Plan, by written notice to the Plan Sponsor not later than 60 days after the effective date of such election, which may be made in any form acceptable to the Administrator. As the result of such an election, Contributions will not be made with respect to the electing Eligible Clergyperson while such an election is in force. The Eligible Clergyperson may revoke such an election at any time that such Clergyperson is eligible to be a Participant, but past Contributions related to periods during which the election was in force will not be earned or will be permanently forfeited. If such Clergyperson already has an Account Balance in the Plan, such election not to participate will not affect the Account Balance or Contributions already made to the
Plan or the Participant’s right to direct the investment of such Account Balance.

SECTION 4 - AMOUNT AND ALLOCATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Plan Sponsor Contributions. [See Appendix A]

4.2 Participant Contributions.

(a) Participant Contributions. On a monthly or more frequent basis, each Remitter will contribute to the appropriate Account under section 6.1 on behalf of each of its Participants who qualify under section 3.1:

(i) Salary-Reduction Agreement. The amount or percentage of such Participant’s Compensation (in an increment acceptable to the Administrator) that such Participant elects to contribute to the Plan from his or her Compensation in a Salary-Reduction Agreement, or such other election form as is acceptable to the Administrator, in one or more of the following forms:

(A) as before-tax Contributions;

(B) as after-tax Contributions; or

(C) as Roth Contributions to such Participant’s Roth Contribution Account in accordance with subsection (e) below

as specified by such Participant in such Salary-Reduction Agreement; or

(ii) Automatic Enrollment. [See Appendix A]

A Participant may change the amount or percentage of his or her Participant Contributions at any time on reasonable notice to the Administrator (including suspending and restarting such Participant Contributions) by submitting a revised Salary-Reduction Agreement or other election form acceptable to the Administrator.

[See Appendix A]

(b) 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions. In addition to the Contributions described in subsection (a) above, a Participant who qualifies may make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions in accordance with the following:

(i) Eligibility. A Participant who qualifies under section 3.1 will be deemed to make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions to the extent provided in this section (and subject to the other provisions of the Plan) if:

(A) he or she:

(I) is eligible to make before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions under subsection (a) at some time during a Plan Year for which he or she is deemed to have made 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions; and

(II) has, by the end of that Plan Year (or such further period as may be permitted under section 5.2(b)), made all of the before-tax Contributions and Roth Contributions he or she can make for that Plan Year under section 5.2(a), as limited by other provisions of the Plan; and

(B) by the first day of that Plan Year, he or she has at least 15 years of 15-Year Catch-Up Service.

(ii) Making 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions.

(A) Deemed Election. Each Participant who qualifies under paragraph (b)(i) above will be deemed to have made an election to have a portion of his or her Compensation contributed to the Plan as 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions to the extent his or her before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions exceed the limit in section 5.2(a) (i.e., the Code §402(g) limit), up to the applicable limit specified in paragraph (b)(ii)(B) below. The election to make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions is automatic and is triggered under the conditions specified in this section. A Participant may not specifically elect to make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions.

(B) Contribution Limit. 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions may be made in any dollar amount or percentage of the Participant’s Compensation, provided that 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions for any Plan Year may not exceed the least of:

(I) $3,000;

(II) $15,000 minus the Participant’s 15-Year Catch-Up Aggregate Sum; or

(III) the difference between:

(1) $5,000 times the years of service computed under paragraph (b)(i)(B) above; minus

(2) the sum of the Participant’s before-tax Contributions and Roth Contributions previously made with respect to the years of service computed under paragraph (b)(i)(B) above.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions, taken together with all other Contributions on behalf of a Participant in a Plan Year may not exceed the limits of section 5.1(a) (i.e., the Code §415(c) limit).

(C) Accounting. 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions will retain their character as before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions and will be accounted for, respectively, in an Account holder’s before-tax Contribution Account and/or Roth Contribution Account. But 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions will also be separately accounted for in each Participant’s 15-Year Catch-Up Aggregate Sum for the purpose of determining the aggregate of all 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions made for a Participant in all previous years. A Participant’s 15-Year Catch-Up Aggregate Sum will also reflect any contributions made before the Effective Date of this Plan or made outside of this Plan, to the extent known by the Administrator and/or as further specified in regulations, that may be taken into account under Code §402(g)(7)(A)(ii) or (iii).

(D) Matching Contributions. A Participant will retain any matching Contributions made on account of his or her before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions that have been deemed to be 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions.
(c) **Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions.** In addition to the Contributions described in subsection (a) above, a Participant who qualifies may make Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions in accordance with the following:

(i) **Eligibility.** A Participant who qualifies under section 3.1 will be deemed to make Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions to the extent provided in this section (and subject to the other provisions of the Plan) if:

(A) he or she:

(I) is eligible to make before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions under subsection (a) at some time during a Plan Year for which he or she is deemed to have made Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions; and

(II) has, by the end of that Plan Year (or such further period as may be permitted under section 5.2(b)), made all of the before-tax Contributions and Roth Contributions he or she can make for that Plan Year under section 5.2(a), as limited by other provisions of the Plan; and

(B) by the last day of that Plan Year, he or she is scheduled to have attained at least age 50 (without regard for whether he or she survives or remains in employment until his or her 50th birthday or the end of the Plan Year).

(ii) **Making Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions.**

(A) **Deemed Election.** Subject to the limitations of subsection (d) below, each Participant who qualifies under paragraph (b)(i) above will be deemed to have made an election to have a portion of his or her Compensation contributed to the Plan as Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions to the extent his or her before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions exceed either or both of the limits in:

(I) Section 5.2(a) (i.e., the Code §402(g) limit); or

(II) Code §415(c)(1)(A);

in either or both cases up to the applicable limit specified in paragraph (c)(ii)(B) below. The election to make Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions is automatic and is triggered under the conditions specified in this section. A Participant may not specifically elect to make Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions. Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions withheld in any Plan Year may not be made retroactive to or with respect to another Plan Year.

(B) **Contribution Limit.** Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions may be made in any dollar amount or percentage of the Participant’s Compensation, provided that Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions for any Plan Year may not exceed the limits of section 5.2(a)(iii).

(C) **Accounting.** Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions will retain their character as before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions and will be accounted for, respectively, in an Accountholder’s before-tax Contribution Account and/or Roth Contribution Account.

(D) **Matching Contributions.** A Participant will retain any matching Contributions made on account of his or her before-tax Contributions and/or Roth Contributions that have been deemed to be Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions.

(iii) **Applicability of Code Limitations.** Notwithstanding anything in the Plan to the contrary, Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions will not be taken into account under Code §§401(a)(30), 402(g), or 415(c)(1)(A) (or any provision of this Plan implementing any such provisions, such as sections 5.1(a), 5.2 (excluding section 5.2(a)(iii)), and 5.3). Further, the Plan will not be treated as failing to satisfy Code §401(a)(4), 410(b), or 416 of the Code by reason of the making of Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions.

(d) **Catch-Up Contribution Ordering.** If a Participant is deemed to make both 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions and Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions, 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions will be treated as having been made first to the extent permitted under subsection (b) above, and then Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions for any remaining Catch-Up Contributions to the extent permitted under subsection (c) above.

(e) **Roth Contributions.** Roth Contributions, if any, will be made under subsection (a)(i)(C) in accordance with the following:

(i) **Irrevocable Election.** A Participant must elect to designate certain Participant Contributions irrevocably as Roth Contributions. They may not be recharacterized later as after-tax or before-tax Contributions. A Participant may, however, prospectively change his or her election to start, stop, or change the proportion of his or her Contributions that are designated as Roth Contributions.

(ii) **Elective Deferral.** Roth Contributions will be considered elective deferrals within the meaning of Code §402(g)(3)(C).

(iii) **Roth Contribution Account.** Roth Contributions will be made to a Roth Contribution Account, which will be maintained separately from other Accounts. The Administrator will maintain a record of the Participant’s investment in the contract, i.e., the original Roth Contributions, unadjusted for debits or credits, that have not yet been distributed.

(iv) **First Roth Contribution.** To determine when a Roth Qualified Distribution occurs, the Administrator will establish and maintain a record of the earlier of:

(A) the year in which the first Roth Contribution or Roth Conversion was made to a Participant’s Roth Contribution Account; or

(B) when a Roth Contribution has been rolled into the Plan, the year in which the first Roth contribution was made to the predecessor Roth account from which such Roth Contribution was rolled into this Plan.

4.3 **Allocation and Deposit of Contributions.** All Contributions will be forwarded to the Administrator by
the Remitter as soon as possible, but in no event later than the due date specified by the Administrator. The Admin-
istrator will deposit Contributions in the Trust as soon as possible after receiving them. Each Participant’s share of Contributions will be allocated to the appropriate Account for such Participant as of the Accounting Date coinciding with or next succeeding the deposit date in the Trust.

4.4 Late Contributions. If a Remitter fails to make a Contribution to the Plan on behalf of any Participant by the due date, then the Plan Sponsor or other Remitter will make such delayed Contribution to the Plan as soon as possible thereafter, along with missed earnings on such delayed Contribution in accordance with any applicable Internal Revenue Service correction program, credited from the day after such due date until the Accounting Date such Contribution was actually credited to the Participant’s Account. The Salary-Paying Unit has the initial liability to make such late Contributions and imputed earnings to the Administrator, but if the Salary-Paying Unit fails to remit such amounts within such time as may be determined under rules adopted by the Administrator, then the Plan Sponsor must remit such amounts instead (thereby becoming entitled to collect such amounts from the Salary-Paying Unit as reimbursement). Any special services provided by the Administrator in connection with this section are subject to the additional charges provided for in section 10.7(c). If any Contributions are more than two months overdue, the Administrator may compel payment by bringing the matter to Judicial Council or by any other means the Administrator may elect to pursue.

4.5 Ineligible Participants. If a Participant ceases to qualify under section 3.1, is on an unpaid Leave of Absence (except as otherwise required under section 12.9 (relating to USERRA) or applicable law), is suspended from employment without pay, or is otherwise not earning Compensation for a month for a reason not covered under section 3.1, but has not Retired or incurred a Termination of Conference Relationship, then for any such period the Participant’s Accounts will not be credited with any Contributions.

4.6 Rollovers into the Plan.

(a) General Rule. An eligible Accountholder who qualifies under subsection (b) below may, in accordance with procedures established by the Administrator and subject to any limitations imposed under the Code, roll over to such eligible Accountholder’s Rollover Account in the Plan part or all of an Eligible Rollover Distribution received by such eligible Accountholder from a:

(i) Code §403(b)(1) annuity contract;
(ii) Code §403(b)(7) custodial account;
(iii) Code §403(b)(9) retirement income account;
(iv) Code §401(a) qualified plan (including §401(k) plans);
(v) Code §457(b) government plan;
(vi) Code §408(a) individual retirement account (but not including after-tax amounts); and
(vii) Code §408(b) individual retirement annuity (but not including after-tax amounts);

including amounts that are:

(1) before-tax contributions (and earnings thereon);
(2) after-tax contributions made to the other plan (and earnings thereon), but not including such rollovers from an IRA;

(3) Roth-type contributions (and earnings thereon) under Code §402A made to the other plan, provided that any such rollovers must be either:

(A) added to such eligible Accountholder’s Roth Contribution Account; or

(B) separately accounted for as Roth contributions in such eligible Accountholder’s Rollover Account; and

(4) Plan Sponsor or employer contributions (and earnings thereon);

provided that the Eligible Rollover Distribution is paid over to the Plan as a direct rollover or within 60 days following receipt of the Eligible Rollover Distribution by such eligible Accountholder, or such later date as may be permitted under the Code. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a rollover into the Plan will not be permitted when it is not permitted under the Code.

(b) Eligibility for Rollover. For the purpose of subsection (a) above, the term “eligible Accountholder” includes:

(i) a Participant or Terminated Participant;
(ii) a Retired Participant; and
(iii) the surviving Spouse or Alternate Payee of any Participant,

provided that the total Account balance of an Accountholder who is a Terminated Participant will be at least $5,000 upon completion of the rollover.

4.7 Roth Conversions. Roth Conversions, if any, will be available in accordance with the following:

(a) Effective Date. Roth Conversions will not be available under the Plan until such date, if any, as the Administrator chooses to implement them by means of a written rule announced to Plan Sponsors.

(b) Eligible Accountholders. Only Participants, Terminated Participants, Beneficiaries who are surviving Spouses of a Participant or Terminated Participant, and Alternate Payees who are a Spouse or former Spouse of a Participant or Terminated Participant, are eligible to make a Roth Conversion.

(c) Eligible Amounts. All amounts that are held in Accounts established for Accountholders that are not the
Roth Contributions Account, whether currently distributable or not, are eligible to be converted into the Roth Contributions Account via a Roth Conversion.

(d) Irrevocable Election. Elections to make a Roth Conversion, which will be made in a manner determined by the Administrator, are irrevocable.

(e) Applicable Rules and Policies. Roth Conversions may be subject to written rules established by the Administrator in its discretion.

SECTION 5 - LIMITS ON CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1 Limit on Annual Additions.

(a) Limitation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Plan, “annual additions,” as defined by Code §415(c)(2), which are allocated to a Participant’s Account for any limitation year (which, for the Plan, is the Plan Year) shall comply with Code §415(c) and the regulations issued thereunder, including but not limited to the special limitations for church plans under Code §415(c)(7) and the adjustments pursuant to Code §415(d), and the Plan will be construed accordingly. Such Code and regulation provisions are incorporated herein by reference, and will control over any provision in the Plan that is inconsistent therewith. To the extent that such regulations provide for any elections or alternative methods of compliance not specifically addressed in the Plan, the Administrator will have the authority to make or revoke such election or use such alternative method of compliance.

(b) Section 415 Compensation. For purposes of this section 5.1 and Code §415(c), a Participant’s compensation will be based on the definition of compensation set forth in regulations §1.415(c)-2(d)(2).

(c) Correction of Excess Annual Additions. If the amount otherwise allocable to a Participant’s Account, or with respect to a Participant in any other Code §403(b) defined contribution plan described in section 5.1(d) below, in a Plan Year would exceed the limitation set forth in section 5.1(a) above, the amount of such excess will be corrected as soon as is practicable in accordance with any applicable Internal Revenue Service correction program; or, if there is a conflict in the application of this Plan and another plan, then according to the plan with the smaller amount of plan sponsor contributions; or, if the foregoing does not correct the excess annual additions, then in accordance with a written policy established by the Administrator.

(d) Aggregation of Plans. For the purpose of this section, all Code §403(b) defined contribution plans of, and all Code §415 Compensation from, any Plan Sponsor or its affiliated entities (i.e., those that are required to be aggregated with the Plan Sponsor for purposes of Code §415(c)), whether or not such plans are terminated, are to be aggregated and/or treated as one defined contribution plan. If the limit of subsection (a) is exceeded, annual additions must be limited, more than one plan is aggregated, and the provisions of this section do not specify which plan’s annual additions will be limited, then annual additions to a plan with a smaller dollar amount of plan sponsor contributions will be limited before a plan with a larger dollar amount.

5.2 Limit on Salary-Reduction Contributions.

(a) Limitation. The total amount of before-tax Contributions and Roth Contributions made on behalf of any Participant under this Plan, plus the total amount of pretax and Roth-type elective deferrals made on behalf of the Participant under any other plan described in Code §§401(k), 402(h)(1)(B), 402A and 403(b) in any calendar year will not exceed an amount equal to the limit of paragraph (a)(i) below, as increased, if at all, by the provisions of paragraphs (a)(ii) and (iii) below.

(i) Standard Limit. The limit of this paragraph (a)(i) is $19,000 or such greater amount as may be provided under Code §402(g) for Plan Years after 2019.

Each Participant is responsible to alert the Administrator or the Plan Sponsor of any other contributions that might have been made on his or her behalf under any other such plans during such calendar year.

(ii) 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions. A Participant who qualifies under section 4.2(b), or Code §402(g)(7) or regulations thereunder, may make 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions to the extent provided in section 4.2(b), as an increase to the maximum limit of paragraph (a)(i) above.

(iii) Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions. A Participant who:

(1) qualifies under section 4.2(c) above, or Code §414(v) or regulations related thereto; and
(2) has made all 15-Year Catch-Up Contributions for which he or she is eligible under paragraph (a)(ii) above may make Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions to the extent provided in section 4.2(c), notwithstanding the limits of paragraph (a)(i) above, up to the lesser of:
(A) $6,000 as adjusted for changes in the cost of living as provided in Code §414(v)(2)(C) for years following 2019; or
(B) The Participant’s Code §415 compensation for the Plan Year, described in section 5.1(b) above, minus the sum of his or her contributions made under paragraphs (a)(i) and (ii) above.

(b) Notification and Distribution of Excess. In the case of a Participant who participates in another plan or plans or in cases where the Administrator is not aware that the Participant has exceeded the limits of subsection (a) above, if the Participant gives a notice to the Administrator
not later than April 15 of the following calendar year (or such earlier date as the Administrator may establish) that the limitation of subsection (a) above has been exceeded for any given calendar year, and specifies the amount of before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions that may be recharacterized as Age 50 Catch-Up Contributions (in the case of a Participant eligible under section 4.2(c)) or that must be distributed from the Plan to satisfy such limitation, such amount will be so recharacterized (up to the limits of section 4.2(c) and subsection (a) above) or distributed to the Participant notwithstanding any other limitation on distributions contained in this Plan. The amount required to be distributed pursuant to this section will be reduced by any amount previously distributed to satisfy Code §415(c) and will not include Gap Period earnings or losses.

(c) Distributions During Year. If the notice is received or deemed received within the calendar year for which the limitation is exceeded, the required distribution will, if possible, be made out of before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions already received and before the end of such year, and will be designated as a distribution of excess before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions.

(d) Distributions After End of Year. If the notice is received or deemed received after the end of the calendar year, or the required distribution cannot be accomplished before the end of the calendar year, the required distribution will be made not later than April 15 of the following calendar year and will include the income attributable to such distribution (as determined under subsection (e) below), but will not include Gap Period earnings or losses. The total principal amount distributed will be included in the Participant’s taxable income for the calendar year in which the excess occurred and the earnings will be taxable in the year distributed. If the required distribution cannot be made until after April 15 of the following calendar year, it will be handled in accordance with the applicable regulations.

(e) Allocation of Income. For the purpose of subsection (d) above, the Administrator may use any reasonable method of allocating income for any year, provided that such method does not violate Code §401(a)(4) (as applicable), is applied consistently to all excess distributions and Participants for the year, and is the method used to allocate income to Accounts generally.

SECTION 6 - INVESTMENTS AND PLAN ACCOUNTING

6.1 Participant Accounts. The Administrator will establish and maintain one or more Accounts, corresponding to the appropriate Contributions, on behalf of each Accountholder who is allocated any of such Contributions under the Plan or who succeeds to any such amounts. Such Accounts may include the following:

(a) Plan Sponsor Contribution Accounts, holding Plan Sponsor Contributions, may include the following:
   (i) Non-matching Contribution Account;
   (ii) Matching Contribution Account; and
   (iii) any other Plan Sponsor Contribution Accounts the Administrator may choose to establish.

   [See Appendix A]

(b) Participant Contribution Accounts may include the following:
   (i) Before-tax Contribution Account;
   (ii) After-tax Contribution Account;
   (iii) Roth Contribution Account;
   (iv) Rollover Account; and
   (v) any other Participant Contribution Accounts the Administrator may choose to establish.

   (c) Special Purpose Accounts, which may, but need not, hold some or all of the Account Balances in other Accounts, including Plan Sponsor Contribution Accounts and/or Participant Contribution Accounts.

Each Account represents the aggregate amount of Contributions attributable to that Account, adjusted for any applicable debits and credits, all in accordance with generally applicable accounting rules and procedures established by the Administrator from time to time. The maintenance of separate Account Balances will not require physical segregation of plan assets with respect to any Account. Accounts may overlap each other, such that given assets may be simultaneously classified under more than one applicable Account type. The Accounts maintained hereunder represent the Accountholders’ interests in the Plan and Trust and are intended as bookkeeping records to assist the Administrator in the administration of the Plan. The Administrator may create, aggregate, disaggregate, or discontinue any Account or Accounts, as best serves the Administrator’s convenience, provided that each Accountholder’s Account Balance is accounted for as long as such an Account Balance is due under the terms of the Plan. Any reference in the Plan to an Accountholder’s “Account(s)” or “Account Balance(s)” refers to all amounts credited to the Accounts maintained in the Accountholder’s name under the Plan unless the context otherwise requires.

6.2 Separate Fund Accounting.

(a) Manner of Accounting. To the extent the Trust is divided into separate funds, including funds established pursuant to section 6.3, the undivided interest of each Accountholder’s Account in each such fund will be determined in accordance with the accounting procedures specified in the trust agreement, investment management agreement, insurance contract, custodian agreement, or other document under which such fund is maintained.
(b) Separate Accountholder Accounts. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if any portion of the Trust is invested in a fund that permits each Accountholder’s interest in the fund to be accounted for as a separate account, all Contributions, distributions, and earnings will be accounted for as they are actually received, disbursed, or earned.

6.3 Investment of Accounts.
(a) Self-Direction. Subject to subsection (b) below, Accountholders have the right to direct the investment of their Accounts among any one or combination of such investment funds as are offered for such purpose by the Administrator from time to time. The Administrator may subject this right to reasonable rules and limitations, including the obligation to direct account balances from multiple self-directed plans in the same way, as though they were one pooled account balance. If the Administrator offers LifeStage Investment Management, Accountholders may also elect LifeStage Investment Management to direct their Account Balances in accordance with rules established by the Administrator.

(b) Mandatory and Default Investments. The Administrator will establish a written procedure to govern an Accountholder’s investments under the Plan, including specifying:
(i) a default investment fund or funds; or
(ii) that LifeStage Investment Management will invest the Accountholder’s Account Balance when the Accountholder elects not to direct the investment of his or her Account Balance or omits to direct it, as permitted under subsection (a) above. [See Appendix A]

(c) Investment Assistance. The Administrator may (but need not) offer investment assistance to some or all Accountholders that may take the form of professional advice by individuals, a computerized program (including LifeStage Investment Management), or some other means that either advises Accountholders or directs the investment of their Accounts. Such investment assistance may be offered on an opt in, opt out, or default basis, although Participants will retain the right of investment self-direction specified in subsection (a) above. If the Administrator does offer such investment assistance, neither the Administrator, nor the Trustee, nor any Plan Sponsor, nor any Salary-Paying Unit will be liable for the results of any assistance provided by such entity offering investment assistance. Each Accountholder’s sole remedy will be to exercise his or her right to direct the investment of his or her own Accounts as permitted by subsection (a) above.

(d) Direction by Administrator. In cases where an Accountholder is incapacitated in any way so as to be unable to manage his or her financial affairs (and the Administrator is given notice of such fact), or in any other appropriate circumstance, the Administrator may, but need not, direct the investment of such Accountholder’s Account, either as provided under subsection (b) above or in any other fiduciarily appropriate manner. The Administrator will not be liable to any person if it does not exercise its authority under this subsection (d) or allows the default of subsection (b) above to become effective.

SECTION 7 - VESTING AND FORFEITURE
7.1 Full Vesting. [See Appendix A]
7.2 Forfeitures. Notwithstanding section 7.1, an Accountholder may forfeit an otherwise Vested Account in the following circumstances:
(a) Missing Accountholder. The Accounts of Accountholders who cannot be located will be handled as described in section 8.6.
(b) Uncashed Check. Any Accountholder who has been issued a check for benefits due but who does not return or cash the check within a reasonable period established by the Administrator, after such reasonable notice (or in the case of very small benefit amounts, no notice) as the Administrator may determine, will forfeit such benefits. Such forfeited amounts will be used by the Administrator to defray the administrative expenses of the Plan. Uncashed checks returned to the Administrator because the payee is missing or for other reasons are not covered by this subsection.
(c) Relinquished Benefits. If a Participant relinquishes a benefit, it is forfeited. The relinquished benefit will be used by the Administrator to defray the administrative expenses of the Plan.
(d) Ineligible Person. Benefits credited to an ineligible person will be handled as described in section 3.5.
(e) Election Not to Participate. Eligible Clergy who elect not to participate in the Plan will be handled as described in section 3.6.
(f) Contributions in Excess of Limits. Contributions and earnings thereon may be forfeited in accordance with the terms of section 5.

SECTION 8 - PAYMENT OF BENEFITS
8.1 Methods of Benefit Payment.
(a) Normal Form of Payment. The normal form of payment of an Accountholder’s benefit is a cash lump-sum distribution equal to the Accountholder’s total Account Balance in the Plan valued as of the Accounting Date coincident with or immediately before such distribution. [See Appendix A]
(b) Payment in Cash Installments. To the extent a particular form of payment is not required by the Plan, an Accountholder may elect to receive his or her Account Balance in this Plan in cash installments. Such installments will be made in a series of distributions, payable annually...
or at more frequent intervals, determined in accordance with the provisions set forth below and rules issued by the Administrator in one of the following forms:

(i) payments in a specific periodic dollar amount selected by the Accountholder.

(ii) payments for a specific period of time selected by the Accountholder and computed based on the Accountholder’s Account Balance at the time the distribution is selected. But changing Account Balance levels may cause the period over which the periodic distributions are made to be shortened if the Account Balance is completely distributed before the end of the selected period. If the Account Balance is not exhausted over the period selected by the Accountholder, then such periodic distributions will end when the originally-selected period ends.

(iii) payments made pursuant to LifeStage Retirement Income, including the options that may be elected by Accountholders under that form of payment.

The periodic payments provided for above will continue until the Accountholder changes his or her distribution option (if permitted), until the terms of the form of cash installments elected provide for an end of the periodic payments, or until the Accountholder’s entire Account Balance has been distributed, whichever first occurs. Until such time, credits and debits will continue to be allocated or charged to the Account in accordance with section 6.

(c) Partial Distributions. Except as otherwise provided in the Plan, an Accountholder may elect one or more partial distributions of his or her Account Balance under the Plan.

(d) Election Procedures. Wherever the Plan provides for an Accountholder to elect a form of distribution (including the right to defer receiving a distribution), the Administrator will provide a written explanation of the different forms of distribution. Such explanation will be provided not fewer than 30 nor more than 180 days before the scheduled commencement of such benefit, or within such other period as may be provided by any applicable provision of the Code. An Accountholder who has received such explanation may waive the 30-day period and elect to have his or her benefit distributed as soon as administratively practicable.

8.2 Distributions.

(a) Small Account Balances. Except in the case of a Disabled Participant, if, at the time:

(i) a Participant qualifies for Early Retirement, Normal Retirement, or Late Retirement;

(ii) a Terminated Participant first becomes a Terminated Participant;

(iii) an Alternate Payee’s benefit is segregated pursuant to a QDRO; or

(iv) an Accountholder dies, leaving an Account Balance to a Beneficiary, such person’s Aggregate Benefit does not exceed $5,000, the entire amount of the Accountholder’s Account Balance will be distributed as a lump sum to the Accountholder as soon as administratively feasible unless the Accountholder elects a rollover under section 8.5(a) to a specified plan or IRA. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the portion of the Accountholder’s Aggregate Benefit that is being distributed from this Plan at one time is in excess of $1,000, such distribution will be rolled over in accordance with section 8.5(b) unless such Accountholder:

(1) actively elects a distribution or a rollover under section 8.5(a) to a specified plan or IRA;

(2) has attained his or her Normal Retirement Date;

(3) is a Beneficiary;

(4) is an Alternate Payee; or

(5) has attained his or her Required Beginning Date.

A Disabled Participant must consent to such distribution, which will be made in accordance with section 8.2(c).

(b) Distribution at Retirement or Termination. A Participant with an Aggregate Benefit that exceeds $5,000 who attains his or her Early, Normal, or Late Retirement Date or who undergoes a Termination of Conference Relationship, otherwise becomes a Terminated Participant, or incurs a Five-Year No Record of Appointment may elect to begin receiving the distribution of some or all of his or her Account Balance as soon as administratively feasible thereafter or he or she will be deemed to have elected to postpone receiving his or her distribution until a date not later than the latest date determined under section 8.2(d). Such distribution will be made either in the normal form of payment provided in section 8.1(a) or, if the Participant so elects, in any optional form of payment provided under section 8.1. [See Appendix A]

(c) Distribution at Disability. Subject to paragraphs (c)(i), (ii), and (iii) below, a Participant who is Disabled may elect to begin receiving the distribution of some or all of his or her Account Balance as soon as administratively feasible thereafter (subject to the limitations of sections 8.1(e) and 8.2(f)) or he or she will be deemed to have elected to postpone receiving his or her distribution until a date not later than the latest date determined under section 8.2(e). The foregoing is subject to the following:

(i) Such distribution will be made either in the normal form provided in section 8.1(a) or, if the Participant so elects, in any optional form provided by section 8.1;

(ii) In the case of a Participant’s before-tax Contribution Account or Roth Contribution Account, the Participant will be entitled to a distribution on account of disability only if he or she is Permanently Disabled;
(iii) In the case of a Participant’s Account Balance other than amounts in his or her before-tax Contribution Account or Roth Contribution Account, the Participant will be entitled to a distribution on account of disability only if he or she is Disabled; and

(iv) [See Appendix A]

(d) Delayed Distribution. A Participant who has deferred the Distribution of some or all of his or her Accounts under the Plan under subsections (b) or (c) may elect to receive some or all of his or her remaining Accounts under the Plan at any later time (subject to the limitations of sections 8.1(d) and 8.2(f), but not later than the date specified in section 8.2(e)) in any optional form provided by section 8.1, to the extent permissible under that section.

(e) Latest Commencement Date. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Plan, the latest date upon which the distribution of a Participant’s Account under the Plan may begin is the Required Beginning Date. Periodic distributions, including mandatory partial lump sum distributions, will be required thereafter as provided in section 8.4.

(f) Tax Notice. Before making any Eligible Rollover Distribution, the Administrator will furnish each Accountholder with a notice describing his or her right to a direct rollover of the distribution and the tax consequences of the distribution. Such notice will be furnished not more than 180 days nor fewer than 30 days before the recipient is entitled to receive such distribution, and no distribution will be made until 30 days after he or she has received such notice unless he or she waives such 30 day period in writing in accordance with procedures established by the Administrator.

8.3 Payments After an Accountholder’s Death.

(a) Distribution on Death. Upon the death of an Accountholder, all amounts credited to such Accountholder’s Account will be distributed to his or her Beneficiary.

(b) Proof of Death. The Administrator may require such proof of death and such evidence of the right of any person to receive payment of the value of the Account of a deceased Accountholder as the Administrator may deem appropriate. The Administrator’s determination of which person will receive payment will be conclusive.

(c) Beneficiary Designation. A Participant may designate a Beneficiary in accordance with section 8.12.

(d) Surviving Spouse. Notwithstanding a Participant’s Beneficiary designation to the contrary, if the deceased Participant’s Spouse survives him or her, the Participant’s surviving Spouse will be his or her Beneficiary and the Participant’s Account will be paid to that Spouse unless:

(i) the Spouse consents in writing after the Participant’s death, or had consented in writing before the Participant’s death, witnessed in either case by a Plan Sponsor or Administrator representative or a notary public, to the Participant’s designation of another Beneficiary; provided, however, that the Administrator need not solicit such a Spousal consent. The Spouse must consent as specified above to each change in designated Beneficiary;

(ii) the Participant is legally separated from his or her Spouse or has been abandoned (within the meaning of local law) by his or her Spouse, and, in either case, the Participant has a court order to such effect;

(iii) the Spouse disclaims the Participant’s Account, in writing in a form acceptable to the Administrator, before receiving it. The disclaimer must be of the entire benefit. The effect of such disclaimer is to treat the Spouse as if he or she had predeceased the Participant;

(iv) neither the Participant’s survivors nor the Administrator can locate the Spouse (provided, however, that the Administrator will have no obligation to search for such Spouse).

(e) Change of Beneficiary. An Accountholder may at any time revoke his or her designation of a Beneficiary or change his or her designated Beneficiary by filing written notice (in such form as may be required by the Administrator) of such revocation or change with the Administrator.

(f) Effect of Divorce. A Participant’s divorce will automatically revoke any Beneficiary designation in favor of the Participant’s Spouse made before the divorce, unless the Participant completes another Beneficiary designation in favor of the former Spouse after the divorce. Until such time as a new designation of Beneficiary is filed with the Administrator in accordance with the provisions of this section, benefits will be payable as though the former Spouse had predeceased the Participant.

8.4 Required Minimum Distributions. Distributions under this section 8 are intended to comply with the requirements of Code §401(a)(9), including but not limited to the minimum distribution incidental death benefit rule of Code §401(a)(9)(G), and the regulations issued thereunder, and will be construed accordingly. Such Code and regulation provisions are incorporated herein by this reference, and will control over any form of distribution provided in the Plan that is inconsistent therewith. To the extent that such regulations provide for any elections or alternative methods of compliance not specifically addressed in section 8, the Administrator will have the authority to make or revoke such election or use such alternative method of compliance. The requirements of this section 8.4 will take precedence over any inconsistent provisions of the Plan.

(a) Required Beginning Date. The Participant’s entire interest will be distributed, or will begin to be distributed, to the Participant no later than the Participant’s Required
Beginning Date. Unless a Participant or other Accountholder otherwise elects, a distribution at the Required Beginning Date or at the time of a later required distribution will not exceed the amount of the minimum required distribution.

(b) Elections for Death Before Required Beginning Date. If the Participant dies before a distribution to the Participant begins, the Participant's entire interest will be distributed in accordance with Code §401(a)(9)(B) and regulations. Beneficiaries who are eligible under such rules to elect to have distributions made under either the five-year rule of Code §401(a)(9)(B)(ii) or the life-expectancy rule of (B)(iii) will be deemed to have elected the life-expectancy rule, unless such Beneficiary affirmative-ly and timely elects the five-year rule.

(c) Amount of Required Minimum Distributions. The amount of required minimum distributions due for a Plan Year shall be determined in accordance with regulations §1.401(a)(9)-5 and other regulations sections cited there-in.

8.5 Direct Rollovers.

(a) Elective Rollovers. If a Participant or Terminated Participant, or the surviving Spouse or Alternate Payee of either, receives an Eligible Rollover Distribution, the Participant or Terminated Participant, or the surviving Spouse or Alternate Payee of either, has the right to direct the rollover of all or a portion of such distribution directly to an IRA, a defined contribution pension or profit-sharing trust qualified under Code §401(a), an annuity plan qualified under Code §403(a), a tax-sheltered annuity plan qualified under Code §403(b), or another "eligible retirement plan" as defined in Code §403(a), a tax-sheltered annuity or profit-sharing plan qualified under Code §403(b), or any other applicable regulations.

(b) Roth Rollovers. Any amount that is from a Roth Contribution Account must be rolled into a Roth account at the recipient plan, trust, or IRA. An Accountholder may roll some or all of his or her Account (not merely his or her Roth Contribution Account) to a Roth IRA within the meaning of Code §408A(a) by means of a direct rollover, subject to any required tax withholding on any portion of such direct rollover that is before-tax Contributions and any limitations on such Accountholder’s adjusted gross income.

(c) Auto-Rollovers. When:

(i) a distribution from this Plan to an Accountholder exceeds $1,000;

(ii) the Accountholder’s Aggregate Benefit does not exceed $5,000; and

(iii) the Accountholder:

(A) has not requested to receive the distribution;

(B) has not requested that the distribution be rolled over to another eligible retirement plan or IRA specified by the Accountholder;

(C) has not attained his or her Normal Retirement Date;

(D) is not a Beneficiary;

(E) is not an Alternate Payee; and

(F) has not attained his or her Required Beginning Date;

then the Administrator will pay the distribution in a direct rollover to an IRA designated by the Administrator and invested in an investment type designated by the Administrator for the benefit of the Accountholder. Before making such rollover, the Administrator will provide, separately or as part of the notice specified in subsection (a) above, a notice to such Accountholder stating that, absent his or her affirmative election, the distribution will be automatically rolled over to an IRA. The notice will also identify the custodian, trustee, or other issuer of the IRA.

(d) Administrative Procedures. The Administrator may adopt administrative procedures to implement direct rollovers, which may vary the time periods and minimum amounts set forth above, to the extent consistent with IRS Notice 2005-5, regulations issued under Code §401(a)(31), or any other applicable regulations.

8.6 Unclaimed Benefits. The Administrator may prescribe uniform and nondiscriminatory rules for carrying out the following provisions:

(a) If a portion (or all) of an Account remains to be distributed to an Accountholder at a time when it is due (including, but not limited to, the Required Beginning Date) and the Administrator is unable to locate the Accountholder, the Administrator will send notice of such benefit due by a certified letter with return receipt request-ed to the last known address of the Accountholder. If the Accountholder fails to contact the Administrator within 12 months (except as provided in subsection (b)), such benefit will be forfeited (except as provided in subsection (c)) and will become the benefit of, in the case of a Participant or Alternate Payee, such person’s Beneficiary, or,
in the case of a Beneficiary, the Participant’s or Alternate Payee’s successor Beneficiary (including any default Beneficiaries), except in the case where a Beneficiary defers the distribution of an Account and is permitted to name his or her own Beneficiary, and in that case, the Beneficiary’s Beneficiary. The Administrator will then send notice by certified letter as provided above to the Beneficiary or successor Beneficiary (including a default Beneficiary), and the process specified above will be repeated until the last successor Beneficiary is sent a notification.

(b) If the last successor or default Beneficiary fails to contact the Administrator within 12 months after being sent notification of a benefit due as provided in subsection (a), then the amount specified in subsection (a) will be forfeited. The Administrator will hold such forfeitures in a suspense account on behalf of the Plan Sponsor of the Accountholder to be applied against that Plan Sponsor’s next Contribution to the Plan.

(c) If, at any time before the expiration of the 12-month period described in subsection (b), an Accountholder who is or was due a benefit described in subsection (a) claims the benefit, the benefit will be paid to such Accountholder (notwithstanding any previous forfeiture) if it has not previously been paid to another Accountholder. If the 12-month period has elapsed, then such benefit will be permanently forfeited and used by the Administrator as described in subsection (b).

8.7 Payment with Respect to Incapacitated Accountholders. Whenever, in the Administrator’s opinion, a person entitled to receive any payment of a benefit under the Plan is under a legal disability (including being a minor) or is incapacitated in any way so as to be unable to manage such person’s financial affairs, the Administrator may direct the Trustee to make payments directly to the person, to the person’s legal representative (including a custodian for such person under the applicable Uniform Gifts or Transfers to Minors Act or similar legislation), or to a relative or friend of the person to be used exclusively for such person’s benefit, or apply any such payment for the benefit of the person in such manner as the Administrator deems advisable. The decision of the Administrator, in each case, will be final, binding, and conclusive upon all persons interested hereunder. The Administrator will not be obligated to see to the proper application or expenditure of any payment so made. Any benefit payment (or installment thereof) made in accordance with the provisions of this section will completely discharge the obligation for making such payment under the Plan, and the Administrator will have no further liability on account thereof.

8.8 Limitation on Liability for Distributions. All rights and benefits, including benefit and investment elections, provided to a Participant in this Plan will be subject to the rights afforded to any Alternate Payee under a QDRO. Further, a distribution to an Alternate Payee will be permitted if such distribution is authorized by a QDRO, even if the affected Participant has not incurred a Termination of Employment or attained any particular age.

8.9 Ordering of Distributions.

(a) Except where otherwise specifically required, all distributions, in-service withdrawals, and loans constituting less than an Accountholder’s entire Account Balance will be made from the Accountholder’s Accounts in the order specified in rules adopted by the Administrator in accordance with applicable regulations.

(b) The rules adopted under subsection (a) above will treat after-tax Contributions (other than those made before 1987) as having been contributed to a separate contract, within the meaning of Code §72(d)(2), with distribution priority. To the extent required by regulations, distributions of after-tax Contributions, either under the separate contact or outside of it, will be distributed according to the Simplified Rule.

8.10 In-Service Withdrawals.

(a) Non-Hardship Withdrawals. Subject to rules adopted by the Administrator regarding the form and the frequency of withdrawals, a Participant may withdraw all or any portion of the Account Balance of his or her:

(i) Participant Contribution Accounts under section 6.1(b) without demonstrating a financial hardship if such Participant:

(A) has attained the age of 59½, or
(B) in the case of:

(I) Before-tax and Roth Contribution Accounts, is Permanently Disabled; and

(II) all other Participant Contribution Accounts, is Disabled;

(C) was called to active military duty after September 11, 2001 and qualifies for a qualified reservist distribution under Code §72(t)(2)(G)(iii); or

(D) in the case of a non-reservist Participant on qualified military leave for 30 days, qualifies in accordance with USERRA/HEART Act §105(b);

(ii) Rollover Account without demonstrating a financial hardship; or

(iii) Plan Sponsor Contribution Accounts under section 6.1(a) if the Participant is Disabled. [See Appendix A]

(b) Hardship Withdrawals. A Participant who qualifies under section 3.1 (or who was so qualified and is on a Leave of Absence (including a Participant on a Transitional Leave or who is otherwise between Appointments) or who is Appointed to a Salary-Paying Unit that is not
a Plan Sponsor but who has not Retired) may receive a hardship withdrawal from his or her:

(1) Before-tax contribution Account or Roth Contribution Account (excluding any earnings attributable to before-tax Contributions or Roth Contributions as described in paragraph (iii) below);

(2) After-tax Contribution Account (including any earnings therein)

that are part of his or her Account Balance, subject to the limitations set forth below:

(i) Hardship Reasons. The Participant must demonstrate one of the following hardships:

(A) the Participant’s need to pay medical expenses (as defined in Code §213(d)) for the Participant, his or her Spouse, one of his or her dependents (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §§152(b)(1), (b)(2), or (d)(1)(B)), or the Participant’s primary designated Beneficiary;

(B) the Participant’s need to pay tuition, related educational fees, and/or room and board expenses for up to the next 12 months of post-secondary education for the Participant, his or her Spouse, one of his or her children, one of his or her dependents (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §§152(b)(1), (b)(2), or (d)(1)(B)), or the Participant’s primary designated Beneficiary;

(C) the Participant’s need to purchase a principal residence (excluding mortgage payments) for him- or herself;

(D) the Participant’s need to make payments necessary to prevent his or her eviction from his or her principal residence or to avoid foreclosure on the mortgage of that residence;

(E) the Participant’s need to pay for the repair of damage to his or her principal residence that would qualify for a casualty deduction under Code §165 (without regard for whether the damage exceeds 10% of the Participant’s adjusted gross income);

(F) the Participant’s need to pay funeral and burial expenses for the Participant’s deceased parent, Spouse, child, dependent (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §152(d)(1)(B)), or the Participant’s primary designated Beneficiary;

(G) the Participant’s need to pay expenses related to any natural disaster for which relief has been granted by the IRS, and any similar relief granted to date or in the future; or

(H) such other circumstances causing a safe harbor immediate and heavy financial need as may be determined under regulation §1.401(k)-1(d)(3)(iii)(B) or other applicable regulations.

(ii) Restrictions. A hardship withdrawal is limited to the amount reasonably necessary to satisfy the financial need described in paragraph (i) above (including the payment of all income taxes and penalties on the withdrawal).

A withdrawal will be considered reasonably necessary to satisfy a financial need if the Participant has obtained all other distributions permitted under subsection (a) above (or distributions permitted under any other plans sponsored by the Plan Sponsor) and loans permitted under section 8.11 or any other plan of the Plan Sponsor, except to the extent that obtaining such a loan would itself cause undue financial hardship. The Administrator may rely on the Participant’s written representation of the foregoing, provided that the Administrator does not have actual knowledge to the contrary.

(iii) No Earnings on Elective Deferral Contributions. A hardship withdrawal that is charged to the before-tax Contribution Account or Roth Contribution Account may not exceed the lesser of:

(A) the current aggregate balances of the Accounts, or

(B) the excess of the total amount of before-tax Contributions and Roth Contributions made to the Accounts over the total prior hardship withdrawals made from such Accounts.

Hardship withdrawals charged to other Accounts are subject only to the limitation of paragraph (iii)(A) above.

(iv) Withdrawal Procedures. A hardship withdrawal application must be made by the Participant in a form acceptable to the Administrator. The Administrator may adopt uniform and non-discriminatory procedures imposing limitations on the number, frequency, or dollar amount of hardship withdrawals pursuant to this section. Subject to the limitations of the Plan and any procedures adopted by the Administrator, withdrawals will be paid pro rata from all of the Participant’s Accounts.

(v) Treatment of Withdrawals. Except as otherwise specifically provided herein, a withdrawal will be treated as a distribution for all purposes of the Plan, except that an in-service withdrawal under this section may not be distributed in the form of cash installments.

(vi) Procedures. The Administrator may adopt procedures and rules in accordance with regulations to supplement the foregoing provisions of this subsection (b).

8.11 Hardship Loans. The Trustee may make hardship loans to:

(1) Participants who qualify under section 3.1;

(2) Participants on a Leave of Absence from a Plan Sponsor (including those on a Transitional Leave or who are otherwise between Appointments); and

(3) Retired Participants who are not Terminated Participants to the extent of the Participant’s Account Balance and in accordance with the following:

(a) Equal Availability. Loans will be made available to all eligible Participants on a reasonably equivalent basis.
(b) **Interest.** Loans will bear a reasonable rate of interest.

(c) **Security.** Loans will be adequately secured.

(d) **Amount of Loan.** The amount of any loan made pursuant to this section must be at least $1,000 per loan and (when added to the outstanding balance of all other loans made by the Plan (or any other Code §403(b) plan of the Plan Sponsor) to the Participant) will be limited in size to the lesser of:

(i) $50,000, reduced by the excess (if any) of:
   (1) the highest outstanding balance of loans from the Plan to the Participant during the one-year period ending on the day before the date on which such loan was made, over
   (2) the outstanding balance of loans from the Plan to the Participant on the date on which such loan was approved; or
   (ii) the greater of:
   (1) one-half of the Account Balance of the Participant at the time the loan is approved; or
   (2) $10,000.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the amount of the loan may not exceed the balance in the Participant’s Participant Contribution Account at the time the loan is approved.

(e) **Term.** Loans will provide for level amortization with payments to be made not less frequently than quarterly over a period not to exceed 5 years. However, loans used to acquire any dwelling unit that, within a reasonable time, is to be used (determined at the time the loan is made) as the principal residence of the Participant will provide for periodic repayment over a reasonable period of time that may not exceed 15 years.

(f) **Repayment.** Generally, loans will be repaid via electronic funds transfer in accordance with procedures established by the Administrator from time to time. In accordance with rules adopted by the Administrator, paper checks and other means of loan repayment may be accepted in the Administrator’s discretion. The failure to timely repay a loan will be an event of default.

(g) **Hardship Reasons.** The Participant must demonstrate one of the following hardships:

(i) the Participant’s need to pay medical expenses (as defined in Code §213(d)) for the Participant, his or her Spouse, or one of his or her dependents (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §§152(b)(1), (b)(2), or (d)(1)(B));

(ii) the Participant’s need to pay tuition, related educational fees, and/or room and board expenses for up to the next 12 months of post-secondary education for the Participant, his or her Spouse, one of his or her children, or one of his or her dependents (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §§152(b)(1), (b)(2), or (d)(1)(B));

(iii) the Participant’s need to purchase a residence (excluding mortgage payments) for him- or herself;

(iv) the Participant’s need to make payments necessary to prevent his or her eviction from his or her principal residence or to avoid foreclosure on the mortgage of that residence;

(v) the Participant’s need to pay for the repair of damage to his or her principal residence that would qualify for a casualty deduction under Code §165 (without regard for whether the damage exceeds 10% of the Participant’s adjusted gross income);

(vi) the Participant’s need to pay funeral and burial expenses for the Participant’s deceased parent, Spouse, child, or dependent (as defined in Code §152, without regard to §152(d)(1)(B));

(vii) the Participant’s need to pay expenses related to any disaster that has been declared by the President of the United States, the governor of any state, or the Administrator;

(viii) such other circumstances causing a safe harbor immediate and heavy financial need as may be determined under regulation §1.401(k)-1(d)(3)(iii)(B) or other applicable regulations; or

(ix) such other circumstances as may qualify under regulation §1.401(k)-1(d)(3)(iii)(A), or other applicable regulations, as an immediate and heavy financial need on the basis of all relevant facts and circumstances.

(h) **Loan Policy.** Any loans granted or renewed will be made pursuant to a written Participant loan policy prepared by the Administrator. Such loan policy must include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(i) The identity of the person or positions authorized to administer the Participant loan program;

(ii) A procedure for applying for loans;

(iii) The basis on which loans will be approved or denied;

(iv) Limitations, if any, on the types and amounts of loans offered;

(v) The procedure under the program for determining a reasonable rate of interest;

(vi) The amount of any loan origination or other fee, which may be deducted from the Participant’s Account Balance after the amount of the loan is computed;

(vii) The types of collateral that may secure a Participant loan; and

(viii) The events constituting default and the steps that will be taken to preserve Plan assets.

Such Participant loan policy will be contained in a separate written document, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the Plan. Such Participant loan policy may be modified or amended in writing by the
Adminstrator from time to time without the necessity of amending this section.

(i) Loans Outstanding. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, a Participant may have only one loan outstanding at a time.

8.12 Beneficiary Designation. A Participant may designate in writing a primary Beneficiary, or both a primary and a secondary Beneficiary, in such form as is satisfactory to the Administrator. A Beneficiary designation must be postmarked, sent by private courier, or received by the Administrator during the Participant’s lifetime to be valid. A secondary Beneficiary will receive benefits only if the primary Beneficiary predeceased the Accountholder, cannot be located, or is otherwise unavailable or ineligible. A primary or a secondary Beneficiary may be an individual, an estate, a trust, or a list of persons. If more than one person is specified as the Participant’s designated Beneficiary, each such person will take an equal share, per capita, unless the Participant clearly specifies another division. Per stirpes designations are not acceptable. The Administrator reserves the right to reject any Beneficiary designation that cannot be reasonably administered, in the Administrator’s sole discretion. Except as may otherwise be provided in the Plan, if a Participant leaves no valid Beneficiary designation or if his or her designated Beneficiary predeceases the Participant, then the Participant’s default Beneficiary will be his or her Spouse. But if the Participant is not survived by a Spouse or if one of the conditions described in sections 8.3(d)(ii)–(iv) exists, then his or her default Beneficiary will be the Participant’s estate.

(a) Beneficiary of an Accountholder: An individual other than a Participant who becomes an Accountholder and does not receive an immediate distribution of that Account may name a Beneficiary in accordance with such procedures and in such form as the Administrator may accept or require. Subject to the provisions of section, such Beneficiary will receive the Accountholder’s Account in the case of the Accountholder’s death. If an individual who becomes an Accountholder does not designate his or her own Beneficiary as permitted in this section, if a designated Beneficiary does not survive such individual, or if section 8.6 does not otherwise provide, such individual’s default Beneficiary will be such individual’s Spouse or, if there is no surviving Spouse, then the estate of such individual.

(b) Revisions. An Accountholder may revise his or her designated Beneficiary under the Plan from time to time, but the most recently designated Beneficiary will be deemed to be the Accountholder’s designated Beneficiary under the entire Plan.

(c) Preexisting Beneficiary. If a Participant or Terminated Participant does not designate a Beneficiary under this Plan on or after the Effective Date but has designated a valid beneficiary under the Clergy Retirement Security Program before the Effective Date of this Plan, then the latest of such validly designated beneficiaries will be deemed such Participant’s initial designated Beneficiary under this Plan.

8.13 Disclaimer. Any Beneficiary may disclaim any benefit or portion thereof that is due to him or her if done in writing in a form acceptable to the Administrator and if done before receiving it. The effect of a disclaimer is to treat such Beneficiary as if he or she had died before the benefit or portion was due to him or her.

8.14 Trailing Account Balances. If an Accountholder who has received a distribution of his or her entire Account Balance later receives a credit to such Account, because of a delayed Contribution, a delayed crediting of earnings, or a correction in accounting or for some other reason, the Administrator will distribute the balance in the Account to the Accountholder as soon as practicable thereafter. If the Account Balance is under $200, the Account Balance will be distributed as a lump sum to the Accountholder as soon as administratively feasible. If the Account Balance is $200 or more, it will be distributed in the same form of payment that applied to the Accountholder’s previous distribution.

8.15 Administrative Rules. All distributions, in-service withdrawals, or loans are subject to rules adopted by the Administrator, such as, but not limited to, the forms required to be submitted to request such distributions, in-service withdrawals, or loans and the frequency and minimum dollar amount of such distributions, in-service withdrawals, or loans.

SECTION 9 - ADOPTION AGREEMENTS

9.1 Completion of Adoption Agreement. Each Plan Sponsor will initially complete one or more Adoption Agreements in which the Plan Sponsor will indicate any elections that it is required or permitted to make pursuant to the provisions of the Plan.

9.2 Form of Adoption Agreement. The Adoption Agreement will be in a form prescribed by the Administrator. Different forms may be used for different Plan Sponsors. The Administrator may use more than one Adoption Agreement per Plan Sponsor covering different Clergy groups.

9.3 Acceptance of Adoption Agreement. An Adoption Agreement will not become effective until it is accepted by the Administrator. The Administrator may require the submission of an Adoption Agreement up to 31 days in advance of its effective date (but may also waive such deadline in appropriate circumstances).
SECTION 10 - PLAN ADMINISTRATION

10.1 General Fiduciary Standard of Conduct. Each fiduciary under this Plan will discharge his or her duties hereunder solely in the interest of the Accountholders and for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to the Accountholders and defraying the reasonable expenses of administering the Plan and the Trust. Each fiduciary will act with the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances then prevailing that a prudent person, acting in a like capacity and familiar with such matters, would use in the conduct of an enterprise of a like character and with like aims, in accordance with the documents and instruments governing the Plan and the Trust, insofar as such documents and instruments are consistent with this standard.

10.2 Allocation of Responsibility Among Fiduciaries. The fiduciaries will have only those specific powers, duties, responsibilities, and obligations specifically delegated to them under this Plan. Each Plan Sponsor, the Administrator, the Trustee, and any investment manager will each be a fiduciary to the extent that such entity determines benefits payable under the Plan or controls or influences the investment of the assets of the Plan. The Administrator may delegate fiduciary duties (other than the Trustee’s duties) to persons other than the fiduciaries specified in the preceding sentence, and may approve any allocation of fiduciary duties among fiduciaries. If there is more than one Trustee, they may enter into agreements among themselves with respect to the allocation of the Trustee’s responsibilities with the consent of the Administrator.

10.3 Administrator. The Administrator of the Plan is the General Board. The Administrator will be the “plan administrator” as defined in Code §414(g). The Administrator or the Plan Sponsor will furnish each Participant with a summary plan description and all other notices and other documents required by the Code or the Plan. The Administrator may resign on reasonable written notice given to the Plan Sponsors, who will then (and only then) have the right to appoint another Administrator by majority vote, with one vote for each of their Participants on the day the Administrator’s resignation was effective.

10.4 Powers, Authority, and Duties of Administrator. The primary responsibility of the Administrator is to administer the Plan for the exclusive benefit of the Accountholders, subject to the terms of the Plan. The Administrator will administer the Plan in accordance with its terms and has the sole power and discretion to construe the terms of the Plan and to determine all questions arising in connection with the administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan. Any such determination by the Administrator will be conclusive and binding upon all persons. The Administrator, in addition to all powers and authorities under common law, statutory authority, and other provisions of the Plan, has the following powers and authorities, to be exercised in the Administrator’s sole discretion:

(a) to establish procedures, correct any defect, supply any information, or reconcile any inconsistency in such manner and to such extent as may be deemed necessary or advisable to carry out the purpose of the Plan;

(b) to determine all questions relating to the eligibility of a Clergyperson to participate or remain a Participant hereunder and to receive benefits under the Plan;

(c) to compute, certify, and direct the Trustee with respect to the amount and the kind of benefits to which any Accountholder may be entitled hereunder and to prescribe procedures to be followed by Accountholders when applying for benefits;

(d) to make and publish such administrative rules or regulations relating to the Plan as are consistent with the terms hereof, and to resolve or otherwise decide matters not specifically covered by the terms and provisions of the Plan;

(e) to maintain all necessary records for the administration of the Plan;

(f) to file, or cause to be filed, all such annual reports, returns, schedules, descriptions, financial statements and other statements as may be required by any federal or state statute, agency, or authority;

(g) to obtain from the Plan Sponsors, Clergy, and Accountholders such information as may be necessary to the proper administration of the Plan;

(h) to assist any Accountholder to understand his or her rights, benefits, or elections available under the Plan;

(i) to decide the validity of any election or designation made under the Plan, and the amount, manner and time of any allocation to accounts or payment of any benefits hereunder; and to make factual determinations necessary or appropriate for such decisions or determination;

(j) to prepare and distribute information explaining the Plan;

(k) to appoint or employ advisors, including legal and actuarial counsel (who may also be counsel to the Trustee)
to render advice with regard to any responsibility of the Administrator under the Plan or to assist in the administration of the Plan;

(l) to select annuity providers to provide benefits from the Plan;

(m) to designate in writing other persons to carry out a specified part or parts of its responsibilities hereunder (including this power to designate other persons to carry out a part of such designated responsibility). Any such designation must be accepted by the designated person who will acknowledge in writing that he, she, or it is a fiduciary with respect to the Plan. Any such person may be removed by the Administrator at any time with or without cause;

(n) to adopt reasonable procedures for determining whether any order, judgment, or decree constitutes a QDRO and to notify the Participant and all Alternate Payees as to the results of its determination;

(o) to the extent permitted under the agreement establishing the Trust, to direct the Trustee with respect to the investments of the Trust;

(p) to furnish the Plan Sponsors, upon request, with such annual reports with respect to the administration of the Plan as are reasonable and appropriate;

(q) to receive, review, and keep on file (as it deems convenient and proper) reports of benefit and expense payments made by the Trustee; and

(r) to do all other acts that the Administrator deems necessary or proper to accomplish and implement its responsibilities under the Plan.

Any rule or procedure adopted by the Administrator, or any decision, ruling, or determination made by the Administrator, in good faith and in accordance with applicable fiduciary standards will be final, binding, and conclusive on all Plan Sponsors and Accountholders and all persons claiming through them. The Administrator has discretionary authority to grant or deny benefits under this Plan. Benefits under this Plan will be paid only if the Administrator decides in its discretion that the applicant is entitled to them. Rules and procedures adopted by the Administrator may vary any provision of the Plan that is administrative or ministerial in nature (including the time provided for performing any act, if not required by law), without the necessity of a formal amendment.

10.5 Records and Reports. The Administrator will keep a record of all actions taken and will keep all other books of account, records, and other data that may be necessary for proper administration of the Plan and will be responsible for supplying all information and reports to appropriate government entities, Accountholders, and others as required by law.

10.6 Duties of Each Plan Sponsor. Each Plan Sponsor will assume the following duties with respect to each Plan:

(a) to determine eligibility and enroll Eligible Clergy in the Plan within 60 days of satisfying the eligibility requirements;

(b) to maintain records of a Participant’s service;

(c) to provide the Administrator with notice within 90 days of a Participant’s Break in Service;

(d) to calculate and maintain records of a Participant’s Compensation and to provide to the Administrator upon request appropriate records reflecting such Compensation, such as W-2s;

(e) to calculate and remit Contributions to the Administrator or Trustee as provided in each Plan;

(f) to provide the Administrator with accurate employment data and other information satisfactory to the Administrator, within a reasonable time after a request by the Administrator, sufficient to enable the Administrator to discharge its duties under each Plan;

(g) to register with and report to government agencies, as appropriate;

(h) to comply with any nondiscrimination or other government testing that may be required by applicable law;

(i) to properly notify Clergypersons of their rights and obligations under each Plan (including notice of their eligibility under each Plan); and

(j) to execute an Adoption Agreement indicating any elections regarding optional Plan provisions and any other information called for by the Adoption Agreement.

10.7 Fees and Expenses. All expenses incurred by the Administrator and Trustee in connection with the administration of the Plan will be paid by the Plan, the applicable Plan, or the Trust.

(a) The Trustee has the authority to determine administrative and expense charges and the methods for applying such charges.

(b) The Trustee is authorized to deduct from the Plan’s or each Plan’s reserves, funds, contributions, and/or earnings thereon, the expenses and fees necessary or appropriate to the administration of the Plan or that Plan, including an allocable share of the Administrator’s operating expenses.

(c) The Administrator is authorized to determine a reasonable charge for providing non-routine reports and services for Plan Sponsors and Accountholders and to require the Plan Sponsor or Accountholder to pay separately for such non-routine reports and services.

10.8 Attorney Fees and Costs. The Trustee may assess, to the extent permitted by law, against the Plan’s or Trust’s assets, reasonable attorney fees and charges to reimburse the Administrator or Trustee for expenses related
to the Plan incurred by the Administrator or Trustee in responding to pleadings, retaining counsel, entering an appearance, or defending any case related to the Plan in any action at law, if the Administrator or Trustee is served with a levy, subpoena, summons, or other similar pleading by the Internal Revenue Service or by any other party, including the parties to marital litigation, in litigation or legal proceedings in which the Administrator or Trustee is not a party, or is made a party.

10.9 Delegation of Authority. The Administrator may authorize one or more of its employees, or one or more agents, to carry out its administrative duties, and may employ such counsel, auditors, and other specialists and such clerical, actuarial, and other services as it may require in carrying out the provisions of this Plan. The Administrator may rely on any certificate, notice, or direction, oral or written, purporting to have been signed or communicated on behalf of a Plan Sponsor, an Accountholder, or others that the Administrator believes to have been signed or communicated by persons authorized to act on behalf of the Plan Sponsor, Accountholder, or others, as applicable. The Administrator may also rely on any power of attorney, guardianship document, or similar document that it believes to be genuine and operative. The Administrator may request instructions in writing from a Plan Sponsor, Accountholder, or others, as applicable, on other matters, and may rely and act thereon. The Administrator may not be held responsible for any loss caused by its acting upon any notice, direction, or certification of a Plan Sponsor, an Accountholder, or others, that the Administrator reasonably believes to be genuine and communicated by an authorized person.

10.10 Indemnification by Plan Sponsors. Each Plan Sponsor will indemnify the Administrator, the Trustee, and any other person or persons to whom the Plan Sponsor, Trustee, or Administrator has delegated fiduciary or other duties under the Plan for, and hold them harmless from and against, any and all claims, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, and expenses (including reasonable attorneys’ fees and all expenses reasonably incurred in their defense if the Plan Sponsor fails to provide such defense) of whatsoever kind and nature that may be imposed on, incurred by, or asserted against them at any time by reason of such Plan Sponsor’s failure reasonably to fulfill its duties under the Plan. This provision will survive the termination of the Plan and the termination of a Plan Sponsor’s participation in the Plan as to events that occurred while the Plan Sponsor was participating in the Plan.

10.11 Claims Procedure. The following claims and appeals procedures are subject to any additional rules or procedures that the Administrator may adopt from time to time that are not inconsistent herewith:

(a) Filing of Claim. A claim for benefits under any Plan must be filed by a Claimant with the Administrator in a form supplied by the Administrator within one year after the later of:

(i) the events giving rise to the claim occurred, or
(ii) the Claimant knew or should have known of the facts or events giving rise to the claim,

or the Claimant will be deemed to have waived his or her right to make a claim or to pursue any other remedy, including filing a lawsuit. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an Accountholder is not required to apply for or begin the receipt of benefits under the Plan until his or her Required Beginning Date (except in the case of a small amount cashout). Written notice of the disposition of a claim will be sent to the Plan Sponsor and to the Claimant within 45 days after all required forms and materials related to the claim have been filed. If special circumstances require an extension of time, written notice of the extension will be furnished to the Claimant, and written notice of the disposition of a claim will be sent within an additional 90 days.

(b) Denial of Claim. If any claim for benefits under a Plan is wholly or partially denied, the Administrator will send the Claimant written notice of the denial, within the period specified in subsection (a) above, written in a manner calculated to be understood by the Claimant, setting forth the following information:

(i) the specific reason(s) for such denial;
(ii) specific reference to any pertinent Plan provision(s) on which the denial is based;
(iii) a description of any additional material or information necessary for the Claimant to perfect the claim and an explanation of why such material or information is necessary; and
(iv) an explanation of the Plan’s appeals procedures.

(c) Appeal of Denial. If a Claimant is denied benefits under (b) above, the Claimant has the right to appeal the decision within 90 days after the date of the claim denial, in accordance with the following procedures:

(i) Intermediate Appeal Procedure. The Administrator will establish an intermediate appeals procedure containing no more than a three-level process.

(ii) Final Appeal Procedure.

(A) If the Claimant wishes to appeal the denial of benefits under subsection (c)(i), the Claimant must file with the Final Appeals Committee a written appeal and supporting documents, using any form required by the Administrator for the purpose, within 90 days after the date of the denial. Such an appeal may be addressed to the Administrator or in care of the person or persons specified in the notice of denial.

(B) A timely filed appeal will be heard by the Final Appeals Committee at its next meeting, unless additional
time is needed for processing, in which case the Claimant will be so notified and the appeal will be heard at the following meeting of the Final Appeals Committee. Appeals or documents filed fewer than 30 days before the next meeting of the Final Appeals Committee will not be considered by the Final Appeals Committee except by its leave and discretion.

(C) The Claimant or a representative of the Plan Sponsor may request permission to appear personally or by teleconference before the Final Appeals Committee to present evidence with respect to the claim, subject to conditions and time limitations set by the Final Appeals Committee, but the expense for any such personal appearance must be borne by the Claimant or the Plan Sponsor.

(D) The Final Appeals Committee will decide a Claimant’s appeal, and its decision will be final. The decision will be implemented by the Administrator.

(E) The Claimant will be given written notice of the decision on appeal. If the decision is a denial, such notice will include specific reason(s) for the decision, written in a manner calculated to be understood by the Claimant, and specific reference to any pertinent Plan provision(s) on which the decision is based. Such written notice will be mailed to the claimant by the Administrator within 15 days following the decision by the Final Appeals Committee.

(iii) Appeals Committees.

(A) The Intermediate Appeals Committee is a committee appointed by the Administrator.

(B) The Final Appeals Committee of the Administrator is a committee of the Board of Directors of the General Board that is selected from time to time by that Board.

(C) Each of the Intermediate Appeals Committee and the Final Appeals Committee may develop rules and procedures to govern its own meetings and actions and the filing and decision of claim appeals by Claimants.

(D) Any failure by either appeals committee to decide a claim appeal by the deadline for such a decision will be deemed a denial of the claim. The Claimant may then proceed to the next step of the procedure.

(E) Any failure by the Claimant to appeal any claim denial by the deadline for doing so will be deemed to be a final resolution of the claim, and the Claimant will be deemed to have waived his or her right to file an appeal or a further appeal or to pursue any other remedy, including filing a lawsuit.

(d) Appeal a Condition Precedent to Mandatory Arbitration. [See Appendix A]

10.12 Qualified Domestic Relations Orders. Notwithstanding section 12.2, all or part of a Participant’s Vested benefits arising under this Plan may be transferred to one or more Alternate Payees pursuant to a court issued “qualified domestic relations order,” as that term is defined in Code §414(p).

(a) When appropriate, the Administrator will provide a Participant involved in marital litigation with information regarding the nature and value of the Participant’s benefits and will assist the Participant and the court in interpreting that information.

(b) The Administrator will maintain a written procedure to determine the qualified status of domestic relations orders and to administer distributions under such qualified orders. Such procedure will provide that during the period in which a determination is being made with respect to the qualified status of an order received by the Administrator and for 30 days thereafter:

(i) the Administrator will direct the Trustee to segregate and separately account for any sums payable to the Participant that the order requires to be paid to the Alternate Payee; and

(ii) the Participant will be prohibited from electing to receive any distribution that would compromise the rights granted to the Alternate Payee by the order, without the Alternate Payee’s written consent.

(c) Neither the Alternate Payee nor any person claiming through the Alternate Payee will have the right to transfer benefits to another Alternate Payee. For the purpose of determining eligibility to receive benefits transferred to an Alternate Payee, the Alternate Payee will have all of the rights and duties of a fully Vested Participant who has incurred a Termination of Employment, to the exclusion of any claim thereto on the part of the Participant.

(d) The Administrator may charge to the Plan its costs of handling QDROs, including, but not limited to, attorneys’ fees, litigation expenses, and a reasonable charge for its services in connection therewith.

SECTION 11 – AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION OF PLAN

[See Appendix A]

SECTION 12 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

12.1 Rules and Forms. The Administrator will have the authority and responsibility to:

(a) adopt rules, regulations, and policies for the administration of this Plan, in all matters not specifically covered by General Conference legislation or by reasonable implication; and

(b) prescribe such forms and records as needed for the administration of the Plan.

12.2 Non-Alienation of Benefits. No benefits payable at any time under the Plan will be subject in any manner
to alienation, sale, transfer, pledge, attachment, garnishment, or encumbrance of any kind, except as provided below. Any attempt to alienate, sell, transfer, assign, pledge, or otherwise encumber such benefit, whether presently or thereafter payable, will be void, except as provided below. No benefit nor any fund under the Plan will in any manner be liable for, or subject to, the debts or liabilities of any Accountholder or other person entitled to any benefit, except:

(a) as provided in section 10.12 (relating to QDROs);
(b) as provided in a levy in favor of the IRS to the extent required by regulations;
(c) to the extent required under the Mandatory Victims Restitution Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. §3663A);
(d) for the payment of retiree or Disabled Participant health plan premiums;
(e) to the extent that such Accountholder or other person has received an overpayment under the Plan or any other plan administered by the Administrator; or
(f) to the extent that such Accountholder or other person has made a voluntary and revocable assignment:
   (i) in a writing filed with, and accepted by, the Administrator;
   (ii) that is acceptable to the Administrator in its sole discretion; and
   (iii) after such assigned benefit is due and payable under the terms of the Plan, including the making of any elections and submission of any applications required of the Accountholder or other person.

12.3 Non-Reversion. All amounts contributed to a Plan by a Plan Sponsor are irrevocable contributions except to the extent provided below. The Plan Sponsors have no right, title, or interest in the assets of a Plan or the Trust and no portion of the Trust or the assets of a Plan or interest therein may at any time revert to or be repaid to the Plan Sponsors, except as otherwise provided below:

(a) If a Contribution is made to a Plan by the Plan Sponsor by a mistake of fact, then such Contribution will, to the extent permitted under regulations or applicable guidance from the Internal Revenue Service, and to the extent consistent with procedures established by the Administrator, be adjusted for any gains or losses and returned to the Plan Sponsor if:
   (i) the Plan Sponsor sends a written request for its return to the Administrator within a reasonable time after the Contribution was made;
   (ii) the Plan Sponsor documents such mistake to the satisfaction of the Administrator; and
   (iii) the Administrator has not yet distributed such Contribution (or the portion sought to be returned).

Refunds to a Plan Sponsor from an Accountholder’s Plan Account will reduce that Account accordingly.

(b) If a Contribution is made to the Plan by a Plan Sponsor that the Administrator determines within 30 days is an error or a mistake, the Administrator may refuse the payment as a Contribution to the Plan and return the payment (or an amount equal to it) to the Plan Sponsor.

12.4 Construction. The Plan and each of its provisions will be construed under, and their validity determined by, the laws of the State of Illinois, other than its laws respecting choice of law, to the extent such laws are not preempted by any federal law.

12.5 Limitation of Liability. All benefits hereunder are contingent upon, and payable solely from, the assets of the Trust, which derive from such contributions as may be received by the Trustee and the investment results of the Trustee. No financial obligations, other than those that can be met by the contributions actually received and the investment results, reduced by any of the Administrator’s or Trustee’s expenses or charges against the Trust’s assets, will be assumed by the Administrator or the Trustee. To the extent that assets of a Plan attributable to an Accountholder have been transferred to a separate dedicated trust, all benefits to which the Accountholder is entitled under that Plan will be provided only out of such trust and only to the extent the trust is adequate therefor. Further, if the Trustee segregates Trust assets by Plan within the Plan, all benefits to which an Accountholder is entitled under that Plan will be provided only out of such segregated portion of the Trust and only to the extent such segregated portion is adequate therefor. Neither the Administrator, nor the Trustee, nor their officers, employees, contractors, or agents will be personally responsible or otherwise liable for the payment of any benefits hereunder.

12.6 Alternative Dispute Resolution. If a dispute arises out of or related to the relationship between the Plan Sponsor and the Administrator or Trustee, the parties agree first to try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation through the American Arbitration Association, or another mediation/arbitration service mutually agreed upon by the parties, before resorting to arbitration. Thereafter, any remaining unresolved controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the relationship between the Plan Sponsor and the Administrator or Trustee will be settled by binding arbitration through the American Arbitration Association, or the other mediation/arbitration service mutually agreed upon by the parties.

(a) The site of the mediation and/or arbitration will be in a city mutually agreed to by the parties.

(b) The laws of the State of Illinois will apply in situations where federal law is not applicable. The applicable
rules of the selected arbitration service will apply. If the service allows the parties to choose the number of arbitrators, unless another number is mutually agreed to, any arbitration hereunder will be before three arbitrators. The award of the arbitrators, or a majority of them, will be final. Judgment upon the award rendered may be entered in any court, state or federal, having jurisdiction.

(c) The fees and costs for mediation will be borne equally by the parties. The fees and costs of arbitration will be allocated to the parties by the arbitrators.

12.7 Titles and Headings. The titles and headings of the sections of this instrument are placed herein for the convenience of reference only, and in the case of any conflicts, the text of this Plan, rather than the titles or headings, will control.

12.8 Number and Gender. Wherever used herein, the singular includes the plural and the plural includes the singular, except where the context requires otherwise. Similarly, the male includes the female and vice versa.

12.9 USERRA. Notwithstanding any provision of the Plan to the contrary, contributions, benefits, and service credit with respect to qualified military service will be provided in accordance with USERRA.

12.10 Participant, Beneficiary, and Accountholder Duties. Each person entitled to benefits under the Plan must file with the Administrator and Plan Sponsor from time to time such person’s post office address and each change of post office address. Failure to do so may result in the forfeiture of benefits otherwise due under the Plan.

12.11 Adequacy of Evidence. Evidence that is required of anyone under the Plan must be executed or presented by proper individuals or parties and may be in the form of certificates, affidavits, documents, or other information that the person acting on such evidence considers pertinent and reliable.

12.12 Notice to Other Parties. A notice mailed first class, postage prepaid, to an Accountholder at his or her last address known to the Administrator will be binding on the Accountholder for all purposes of the Plan and will be deemed given on the date on the notice or letter. A claim for benefits, beneficiary designation, or other notice mailed first class, postage prepaid, from an Accountholder to the Administrator will be deemed given on the date of the postmark. Notice may be addressed to the Administrator at the following address (or such other address as the Administrator may designate from time to time):

Administrator of the Compass Retirement PlanGeneral Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church1901 Chestnut AvenueGlenview, IL 60025-1604.

12.13 Waiver of Notice. Any notice under the Plan may be waived by the person entitled to notice. Waiver of notice in one instance, however, will not be deemed to be a waiver in a later instance.

12.14 Successors. This Plan is binding on the Plan Sponsors, and on all persons entitled to benefits hereunder, and their respective successors, heirs, and legal representatives.

12.15 Severability. If any provision of the Plan is held illegal or invalid for any reason, such illegal or invalid provision will not affect the remaining provisions of the Plan, and the Plan will be construed and enforced as though such illegal or invalid provisions had never been contained in the Plan.

12.16 Supplements. The Plan may be amended from time to time as provided in section 11 by adding one or more supplements to the Plan to address special situations not applicable to all Plan Sponsors or to all Clergypersons, Participants, Beneficiaries, or Accountholders. Any such supplement will specify the Plan Sponsors and persons covered and any special rules or benefits related to them. To the extent that any such rules or benefits are in conflict with the general provisions of the Plan, such rules or benefits will supersede the general provisions of the Plan as to the persons covered by the supplement to the extent they are in conflict with such general provisions. Except as otherwise provided in a supplement, all of the provisions of the Plan will apply to the persons covered by the supplement.

12.17 Transfer of Benefits. Notwithstanding any provision of the Plan to the contrary, for reasons of administrative convenience or flexibility, including but not limited to the distribution of small amounts, the distribution of required minimum distributions, or the availability of investment or distribution options, the Administrator may transfer Account Balances due to a Participant, an Accountholder, an Alternate Payee, or a Beneficiary from the Plan to another retirement plan administered by the Administrator, subject to the following:

(a) Defined contribution plan b benefits, and the Account Balances funding such benefits, may be transferred from one Plan Account to another Plan Account within the Plan or to another defined contribution plan administered by the Administrator.

(b) Transfers will be made only when benefits continue to be paid, or are available to be paid, from the transferee plan in the same form and amount and to the same payees as was or would have been the case under the transferor Plan.

(c) All regulations relating to transfers will be complied with, including but not limited to §1.403(b)-10(b)(3) of the regulations.
12.18 Mandatory Arbitration. [See Appendix A]

APPENDIX A – CORE BENEFIT DESIGN FEATURES OF PLAN

This Appendix A describes core benefit design features of the Plan that may be amended only by General Conference, as further described in section 11 below, if ¶ 1504.1 of the Discipline is amended by General Conference 2020 to reflect such amendment authority. If ¶ 1504.1 of the Discipline is not amended in such manner by General Conference 2020, the Plan sections below will revert to their numbered locations within the Plan document, and this Appendix A will be deleted.

1.4 Funding. * * *

(c) Contributions for Missionary Conferences. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Plan, the Alaska Missionary Conference, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Annual Conference, and the Red Bird Missionary Annual Conference will not be responsible for funding the non-matching Contributions due to their Participants under sections 4.1(a)(i) and (ii). Participants from these Conferences may still earn and receive such Contributions. To fund these non-matching Contributions, the Administrator will require additional Contributions each Plan Year from all other Plan Sponsors, with the total amount of additional Contributions being calculated by the Administrator, in an amount that is sufficient to fund all non-matching Contributions of the Conferences listed above. Responsibility for the additional Contributions will be divided among such other Plan Sponsors in proportion to the Plan Sponsor Contributions each made under the Plan in the prior Plan Year (as determined by the Administrator). Such additional Contributions will be deposited into an Account that will be debited throughout the Plan Year to fund such non-matching Contributions. Any amount remaining in the Account at the end of the Plan Year will reduce the amount of additional Contributions due for the following Plan Year.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when one of the Annual Conferences identified above merges with another Annual Conference not identified above, the funding exemption identified above will be phased out over a period not to exceed four years, in a manner determined by the Administrator.

1.6 Plan Sponsors.

(a) Each Conference is a Plan Sponsor of the Plan with respect to Participants who are:

(i) Appointed by a Bishop to:

(A) a Local Church located within that Conference;
(B) a Pastoral Charge located within that Conference;
(C) a Conference-Responsible Unit located within that Conference; or
(D) a Conference-Elective Entity approved by that Conference;

(ii) Clergy Appointed by the Bishop of that Conference who are covered by CPP and become CPP Disabled;

(iii) when elected by a Conference under its Adoption Agreement, members of that Conference who are placed on Medical Leave but not covered under paragraph (ii) above;

(iv) Non-Jurisdictional Clergy, Other Methodist Denomination Clergy, or Other Denomination Clergy Appointed by the Bishop of that Conference; or

(v) entitled to Contributions under USERRA but who last served that Conference under paragraph (i) above.

Each such Conference will complete an Adoption Agreement covering such Participants with respect to the Plan.

(b) The General Council on Finance and Administration will be a Plan Sponsor of the Plan with respect to Participants who are:

(i) Bishops;
(ii) Bishops on Medical Leave; or
(iii) Bishops entitled to Contributions under USERRA.

(c) If so elected by the Commission on the General Conference on an Adoption Agreement, the Commission on the General Conference is a Plan Sponsor of the Plan with respect to Participants who are Appointed to the Commission on the General Conference.

(d) No other entity may be a Plan Sponsor of the Plan.

2.13 Automatic Contribution Escalation. A feature under which the rate of Participant Contributions of a contributing Participant escalates annually by a selected percentage of the Participant’s Compensation (in an increment acceptable to the Administrator), upon a selected month of the year, unless the contributing Participant opts out of the feature in a form acceptable to the Administrator, or unless the contributing Participant is a member of a category of Participants that is ineligible for escalation, as defined by the Administrator from time to time. Plan Sponsors may choose the percentage rate of increase (which may not be lower than one percent per year), the month of the year in which the increase occurs, and the contribution rate at which escalation ceases. The Automatic Contribution Escalation feature is subject to any rules or procedures that the Administrator chooses to implement.

2.14 Automatic Enrollment. A feature that provides that Participants of the Plan Sponsor who are eligible for Participant Contributions under the Plan will be enrolled by the Plan Sponsor (after an appropriate notice of same to each such individual) for before-tax Contributions of a default percentage of each such Participant’s Compensation, unless any such Participant elects, in a form acceptable
to the Administrator, not to make such Participant Contributions or to change their amount or type or unless the contributing Participant is a member of a category of Participants that is ineligible for Automatic Enrollment, as defined by the Administrator from time to time.

2.23 Compensation. A Participant’s Compensation equals the sum of the following:

(a) the Participant’s annual base wages or salary paid or made available by a Plan Sponsor or Salary-Paying Unit to a Clergyperson in a Plan Year, including, at the Plan Sponsor’s election, any additional wages or salary paid to the Participant in lieu of Plan Sponsor-provided group health plan coverage, including coverage of the Participant’s family members, as determined by the Plan Sponsor. Such wages or salary will include any amount that is excluded from gross income pursuant to Code §107(2); and

(b) when a parsonage is provided to the Participant as part of his or her compensation, 35% of the amount described in subsection (a), not to exceed 35% of the annualized rate of Compensation for a Bishop, but not less than $10,000 (with such maximum and minimum being pro-rated for partial years during which a parsonage is provided).

Compensation will be determined under procedures that may be established by the Administrator. Compensation excludes, among other things, one-time or occasional payments that are not made regularly as part of a Clergyperson’s annual base wages or salary, such as expense reimbursements or bonus payments. Severance pay is also excluded from Compensation.

2.51 LifeStage Investment Management. An asset allocation and investment direction service offered by the Administrator directly or through a contractor, which provides Accountholders with an appropriate investment mix based on factors such as the Accountholder’s age and selected level of risk tolerance. This service may, in the Administrator’s discretion, be branded under a different name.

2.52 LifeStage Retirement Income. A method of payment that is either optional or mandatory, depending on the type of Accountholder and Account, which is provided by the Administrator directly or through a contractor. Under this form of payment, a series of periodic payments that may vary in amount over time are distributed from all or a portion of an Accountholder’s Account Balance, over the Accountholder’s life expectancy or the Accountholder’s and Spouse’s joint life expectancy. This method of payment may also incorporate modifications elected by the Accountholder, affirmatively or as a result of a default feature, with such modifications determined in accordance with procedures established by the Administrator. Such modifications may include the purchase of a deferred annuity from an insurance company, the receipt of Social Security bridge payments, under which increased periodic payments are made during a period of deferral of Social Security retirement payments, and the ability to receive no more than the required minimum distributions under section 8.4. The purchase of a deferred annuity with amounts from the Accountholder’s Account Balance will be made in accordance with regulations under Code section 401(a)(9). Additional administrative details of this method of payment will be determined by the Administrator, consistent with the objectives of providing installments over applicable life expectancies, in a manner that prudently balances the objectives of maximizing payments made over the expected lifetime or joint lifetimes, and minimizing longevity and investment risks. This method of payment may, in the Administrator’s discretion, be branded under a different name.

3.1 Eligibility for Participation. (a) Eligible Clergyperson. An Eligible Clergyperson is a Clergyperson:

(i) who:

(A) is Appointed full-time or, when a Plan Sponsor has so elected, is Appointed at least half-time or at least three-quarters time, and:

(I) whose Conference or Salary-Paying Unit is a Plan Sponsor under the terms of the Plan and is Appointed by the Bishop of such Plan Sponsor Conference; or

(II) who is a member of a Conference but is Appointed by the Bishop of another Plan Sponsor Conference (within the meaning of ¶ 346.1 of the Discipline); or

(B) is CPP Disabled and was Appointed full-time (unless at least half-time or at least three-quarters time was elected by the Plan Sponsor) at some time during the 24 months (excluding periods while on Leave of Absence) immediately preceding his or her grant of CPP disability benefits; or

(C) is placed on Medical Leave, but only in the case where such Clergyperson’s Plan Sponsor has elected on its Adoption Agreement to provide benefits for such Clergy, and was Appointed full-time (unless at least half-time or at least three-quarters time was elected by the Plan Sponsor) at some time during the 24 months (excluding periods while on Leave of Absence) immediately preceding the date he or she was placed on Medical Leave; or

(ii) who is a Non-Jurisdictional Clergyperson, an Other Methodist Denomination Clergyperson, an Other Denomination Clergyperson, or a Clergyperson described in subsection (a)(i)(A)(II) above and:

(A) who:

(I) develops a disability or an incapacity after having been Appointed full-time (unless at least half-time or at least three-quarters time was elected by the Plan Sponsor) at some time during the 24 months (excluding periods
while on Leave of Absence) immediately preceding the onset of his or her disability or incapacity;

(II) remains Appointed by the Bishop of the Plan Sponsor Conference (or, where the Plan Sponsor is not supervised by a Bishop, remains covered by the Plan Sponsor’s Adoption Agreement); and

(III) is not reported as discontinued or as having no record of Appointment; or

(B) who is CPP Disabled and was Appointed full-time (unless at least half-time or at least three-quarters time was elected by the Plan Sponsor) at some time during the 24 months (excluding periods while on Leave of Absence) immediately preceding his or her grant of CPP disability benefits;

but not including any Clergyperson who:

(1) is Retired, unless such person returns to an effective relationship under ¶ 357.7 of the Discipline;

(2) has incurred a Termination of Conference Relationship; or

(3) is Appointed to a General Agency.

The full-time Appointment eligibility condition (unless at least half-time or at least three-quarters time is elected by the Plan Sponsor) is satisfied (or not) solely on the basis of the Appointment level (or two or more Appointments that add to half-time, three-quarters time, or full-time). Actual time served in the Appointment is not relevant.

(b) Participation. Each Eligible Clergyperson will become a Participant on his or her Entry Date, provided that he or she satisfies all of the following requirements on the Entry Date:

(i) He or she is:

(A) an Eligible Clergyperson Appointed to a Local Church, Pastoral Charge, Conference-Responsible Unit, or Conference-Elective Entity; or

(B) a Bishop;

(ii) He or she is eligible to participate in a Church Plan; and

(iii) He or she is:

(A) receiving Compensation in connection with his or her Appointment;

(B) CPP Disabled or a Bishop on Medical Leave (but in neither of these cases is a Terminated Participant);

(C) when elected by a Conference under its Adoption Agreement, a Conference member who is placed on an Medical Leave but not covered under subsection (b)(iii)

(B) above; or

(D) entitled to participate under USERRA.

After initially becoming a Participant on the Entry Date, an Eligible Clergyperson must continue to meet the conditions in subsections (a) and (b) above to remain eligible to receive Contributions.

4.1 Plan Sponsor Contributions. For each month beginning on and after the Effective Date, Plan Sponsors will make the following Contributions on behalf of each of their Participants who qualify under section 3.1 (and continue to qualify at the end of each such month):

(a) Non-Matching Contributions. A non-matching Contribution in the following amounts:

(i) Non-Matching Percentage Contribution. A non-matching percentage Contribution of 3% of such Participant’s Compensation for such month; and

(ii) Non-Matching Flat-Dollar Contribution. A non-matching flat-dollar Contribution of $140 per month, increased annually by 2% for Plan Years after the Plan Year that begins on the Effective Date, rounded down to the nearest $5 increment (and with the annual increases being made on the unrounded amount). Such flat-dollar Contribution will be prorated for Participants who are Appointed less than full-time.

(b) Matching Contributions. A matching Contribution in an amount equal to:

(i) the portion of such Participant’s Participant Contributions under section 4.2 for the current Plan Year to date that does not exceed 4% of such Participant’s Compensation for the current Plan Year to date (doubling such Participant Contributions for any months during which matching Contributions under paragraph (ii) below are made, but only to the extent they do not exceed 4% of such Participant’s Compensation for the current Plan Year), reduced by the amount of matching Contributions made for such Participant for previous months in the current Plan Year; or

(ii) for a Participant who has become a Provisional Member, as described below, twice the amount of such Participant’s Participant Contributions under section 4.2 for the current Plan Year to date that does not exceed 2% of such Participant’s Compensation for the current Plan Year to date, reduced by the amount of matching Contributions made for such Participant for previous months in the current Plan Year.

Matching Contributions will be provided under paragraph (ii), in lieu of those provided under paragraph (i), for a Participant who has attained status as a Provisional Member, beginning with the month in which the date on which such status was attained, but not earlier than the Effective Date. Matching Contributions under paragraph (ii) will cease, and revert to those provided by paragraph (i), on the first month that follows the 10th anniversary of the date the Participant becomes a Provisional Member. This 10 year period will be extended for a Participant who incurs an unpaid Leave of Absence during such period, with the extension of time equaling the period of such leave.
(c) Disabled Participants. Contributions described in subsections (a) and (b) above will be made to Participants who are CPP Disabled or on Medical Leave only as provided in this subsection (c):

(i) Disabled Participant Eligibility. The following groups of Participants will be eligible to receive Contributions under this subsection (c):

(A) CPP Disabled Participants who are eligible under section 3.1 (and continue to qualify at the end of each month);

(B) Bishops on Medical Leave who are eligible under section 3.1 (and continue to qualify at the end of each month); and

(C) Participants on Medical Leave who are eligible under section 3.1 (and continue to qualify at the end of each month) whose Plan Sponsors have elected on their Adoption Agreements to cover such Participants.

Such Contributions for CPP Disabled Participants will be made by CPP. Contributions for Bishops on Medical Leave will be made pursuant to ¶ 410.4 of the Discipline. Contributions for Participants described in subparagraph (C) will be made by the Plan Sponsor of the Participants. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a Participant will cease to qualify for further Contributions under this subsection (c) on account of periods after he or she becomes a Terminated Participant.

(ii) Amount of Contributions. Participants eligible under section 4.1(c)(i) above will be entitled to Non-Matching Contributions and Matching Contributions:

(A) in the case of CPP Disabled Participants covered under section 4.1(c)(i)(A) above, in the amount the Participants would otherwise have received if not CPP Disabled, determined using the Participant’s Compensation as of the month immediately preceding the start of such Participant’s CPP Disability. The maximum amount of Matching Contributions will be provided to CPP Disabled Participants regardless of whether any Participant Contributions are made by such Participants under section 4.2;

(B) in the case of Bishops on Medical Leave covered under section 4.1(c)(i)(B) above, in the amount the Bishops would otherwise have received if not on Medical Leave, determined using the Bishop’s Compensation as of the month immediately preceding the start of such Medical Leave, and with Matching Contributions being provided to the extent that such Bishop makes Participant Contributions while on Medical Leave; or

(C) in the case of Participants on Medical Leave covered under section 4.1(c)(i)(C) above, in the amount elected on the Plan Sponsor’s Adoption Agreement, determined using the Participant’s Compensation as of the month immediately preceding the start of such Medical Leave, and with any Matching Contributions being provided only to the extent the Participant makes Participant Contributions while on Medical Leave, and, for all three situations above, with 3% annual imputed increases in Compensation starting with the year following the year in which such Contributions under this subsection (c) were first made,

and to the extent permitted under Code §415(c)(3) (C) (or any other applicable Code provisions) and section 5.

(iii) Period of Contributions. Contributions provided pursuant to this subsection (c) will be made from the date such Participant is eligible under subsection (c)(i) above until the earliest of:

(A) the date such Participant ceases to qualify under subsection (c)(i) above; or

(B) in the case of a CPP Disabled Participant, the date that CPP disability retirement plan contribution benefits under CPP cease.

4.2 Participant Contributions.

(a) Participant Contributions. ** *

(ii) Automatic Enrollment. If such Participant does not make an election under paragraph (a)(i) above and the Participant is a member of a category of Participants that is eligible for Automatic Enrollment, as defined by the Administrator from time to time, an amount as before-tax Contributions equal to the Participant’s Compensation multiplied by the default Contribution rate that is elected by the Plan Sponsor on its Adoption Agreement, which rate may not be less than the percentage of Participant’s Compensation that would be required to be contributed by the Participant to earn the full matching Contribution under section 4.1(b) above. ** *

A Participant’s percentage of Participant Contributions will be increased under the Automatic Contribution Escalation feature, subject to any rules and procedures established by the Administrator, based on elections of the Plan Sponsor, unless the Participant has opted out of such feature in a form acceptable to the Administrator or unless the Participant is a member of a category of Participants that is ineligible for Automatic Contribution Escalation, as defined by the Administrator from time to time. ** *

6.1 Participant Accounts. ** *

Plan Sponsor Contributions will be accounted for separately, as such amounts and any earnings thereon are subject to investment and distribution requirements if such Account is held by a Participant. ** *

6.3 Investment of Accounts. ** *

(b) Mandatory and Default Investments. ** *

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Accounts of Participants that hold Plan Sponsor Contributions and Accountholders that hold defined benefit accruals that were converted to
a lump sum and transferred to this Plan pursuant to tran-
sition provisions within the Clergy Retirement Security
Program must be invested in accordance with LifeStage
Investment Management. * * *

7.1 Full Vesting. An Accountholder’s Account in the
Plan will be fully Vested at all times, and will not be for-
feited for any reason except as provided in section 7.2.

8.1 Methods of Benefit Payment.

(a) Normal Form of Payment. * * * Notwithstanding
the foregoing, for Participants with an Account that holds
Plan Sponsor Contributions made under section 4.1, pay-
ments from such Accounts will be distributed to such Par-
ticipants pursuant to LifeStage Retirement Income, with
the following exceptions:

(i) distributions made in the event of critical or termi-
nal illness of a Participant, in accordance with procedures
established by the Administrator that may be modified
from time to time;

(ii) transfers from an Account described above that are
made pursuant to QDRO described in section 10.12; and

(iii) distributions made under section 8.2(a).

The distribution requirement and exceptions de-
scribed in the previous sentence will apply also to the
Accounts of Accountholders that hold defined benefit ac-
cruals that were converted to a lump sum and transferred
to this Plan pursuant to transition provisions within the
Clergy Retirement Security Program. * * *

8.2 Distributions. * * *

(b) Distribution at Retirement or Termination. * * *
Notwithstanding the foregoing, distributions from an Ac-
count that is subject to the distribution requirement and
exceptions listed in section 8.1(a) may not commence un-
til the Participant has attained his or her Early, Normal, or
Late Retirement Date (or the date the Accountholder has
attained such date as if he or she were a Participant).

(c) Distribution at Disability. * * *
(iv) Distributions from an Account that is subject to the
distribution requirement and exceptions listed in sec-
tion 8.1(a) may not commence until the Participant has
attained his or her Early, Normal, or Late Retirement Date
(or the date the Accountholder has attained such date as if
he or she were a Participant). * * *

8.10 In-Service Withdrawals. * * *

(a) Non-Hardship Withdrawals. * * *
(iii) * * * Notwithstanding the foregoing, distribu-
tions from an Account that is subject to the distribution
requirement and exceptions listed in section 8.1(a) may
not commence until the Participant has attained his or her
Early, Normal, or Late Retirement Date (or the date the
Accountholder has attained such date as if he or she were
a Participant), and such distributions must be made pursu-
ant to section 8.1(a). * * *

10.11 Claims Procedure. * * *
(d) Appeal a Condition Precedent to Mandatory Ar-
britration. No cause of action in civil law with respect to
any alleged violation of the terms and conditions of this
Plan may be commenced or maintained by any Claimant
or Accountholder. Any alleged violation of the terms and
conditions of the Plan may be challenged by a Claimant or
Accountholder under the mandatory arbitration provisions
set forth in section 12.18, but only after such Claimant or
Accountholder has initiated and completed the claim and
appeal process as set forth in subsections (a) and (c) above.
Any such request for arbitration must be made within 12
months of the date on the written notice of denial described
above or such right to seek arbitration will be deemed
waived; provided, however, that such 12-month limit will
apply only if it is described in such notice of denial.

11.1 Amendment.

(a) General Conference. General Conference may
amend prospectively or retroactively any or all provisions
of the Plan at any time by written instrument identified as
an amendment of the Plan, effective as of a specified date.
Such amendments will be limited, however, to the non-ad-
ministrative aspects of the core benefit design features of
the Plan that are described in this Appendix A, if ¶ 1504.1
of the Discipline is amended by General Conference 2020
to reflect such amendment authority.

(b) Administrator. The Board of Directors of the Gen-
eral Board may amend prospectively or retroactively any
or all provisions of the Plan at any time by resolution,
effective as of a specified date:

(i) to conform the Plan to any applicable law and/or
regulations promulgated thereunder;

(ii) to conform the Plan to the Discipline or changes
therein; and

(iii) to make any administrative changes to the Plan
that do not impact the level of benefits provided to Partic-
ipants, but only if:

(A) such amendment is not within the scope of Gen-
eral Conference’s amendment authority described in sub-
section (a) above; and

(B) such amendment is not prohibited by applicable
law or ruling by the Judicial Council.

11.2 Termination of Plan. General Conference may
terminate the Plan at any time in a manner and to the ex-
tent not inconsistent with applicable law. Upon termina-
tion of the Plan, the accounts of Participants will be non-
forfeitable and will be either distributed outright or held
for distribution in accordance with the terms of the Plan.
The assets remaining in the Plan after all obligations of
the Plan have been satisfied will be distributed pursuant to
action by General Conference.
12.18 Mandatory Arbitration. Individuals who become or claim to be a Participant or Accountholder in the Plan agree, by electing to make Participant Contributions, choosing not to opt out of Automatic Enrollment, receiving Plan Sponsor Contributions, or filing any form related to the Plan with the Administrator, to be bound by the mandatory arbitration provisions of this section, in consideration for the Administrator and Trustee also agreeing to be bound by such provisions. If a claim for benefits or dispute that arises out of or related to the relationship between a Claimant or Accountholder and the Administrator or Trustee is not resolved through the claims and appeals procedures of section 10.11 once such procedures are fully exhausted, the party that seeks resolution of the matter must make a written request to the other party or parties to have the matter resolved through binding arbitration. Claimants or Accountholders must make such written request within the timeframe set forth under section 10.11(d) or, for matters not involving a claim for benefits, within one year of the date that the facts giving rise to the dispute arose. If the Administrator or Trustee is making such request to a Claimant or Accountholder, the request must be made within 12 months of discovery of the facts that give rise to the dispute. Such claim for benefits or unresolved controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the relationship between a Claimant or Accountholder and the Administrator or Trustee will be settled by binding arbitration through the American Arbitration Association, or another arbitration service mutually agreed upon by the parties. The abuse of discretion standard of review will be used by the arbitrator(s) in reviewing the dispute and the Administrator’s decisions under the claims and appeals procedures of section 10.11.

(a) The site of the arbitration will be in a city mutually agreed to by the parties.

(b) The laws of the State of Illinois will apply in situations where federal law is not applicable. The applicable rules of the selected arbitration service will apply. If the service allows the parties to choose the number of arbitrators, unless another number is mutually agreed to, any arbitration hereunder will be before three arbitrators. The award of the arbitrators, or a majority of them, will be final. Judgment upon the award rendered may be entered in any court, state or federal, having jurisdiction.

(c) The fees and costs of arbitration will be allocated to the parties by the arbitrators.

Rationale:

Proposes an individual account retirement plan to replace the Clergy Retirement Security Program on January 1, 2023. A separate petition of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is being submitted to freeze the Clergy Retirement Security Program with respect to participation and new benefit accruals.

¶1504.1.

Petition Number: 20222-FA-¶1504.1; Boigeigrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Mandatory Plans and New Clergy Defined Contribution Retirement Plan

Amend ¶ 1504.1 as follows:

¶ 1504. Authorizations—The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and empowered to provide administrative, trust, and investment support to The United Methodist Church and its constituent boards, agencies, conferences, organizations, and other institutions in their efforts to provide support, relief, and assistance, and pension, welfare, and other benefits for clergy of this denomination, lay workers of the various units of the church, and their families. Subject to the provisions of ¶ 2506 herein, the general board shall perform its duties and responsibilities in the spirit of the church’s mandate for inclusiveness and racial and social justice. In particular, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the general board, directly or through any entity created by it, is authorized and empowered:

1. a) To operate, manage, and administer the mandatory benefit funds, plans, and programs established by the General Conference: (1) the Ministerial Pension Plan, amended and restated effective January 1, 2007, as the Clergy Retirement Security Program (including its legacy plan supplements, the Ministerial Pension Plan and the plan known as the Pre-82 Plan); (2) the Retirement Security Program for General Agencies of The United Methodist Church, amended and restated effective January 1, 2010, as the Retirement Plan for General Agencies (including its legacy plan supplements); and (3) the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The provisions of these mandatory benefit programs shall be incorporated by reference into the Discipline and shall have the full force of law as if printed in the Discipline.

b) To operate, manage, and administer the mandatory clergy defined contribution plan, Compass Retirement Plan, established by the General Conference effective January 1, 2023. Compass Retirement Plan shall be an account balance-based defined contribution plan with the same eligibility requirements as the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Compass Retirement Plan shall have core design features, established by the General Conference and described in Appendix A of such plan, which features
and Appendix A are incorporated by reference into the *Discipline*, and shall have the full force of law as if printed in the *Discipline*. The distinctively connectional non-administrative aspects of these core benefit design features may be amended only by the General Conference. The general board may amend administrative provisions of the plan from time to time, to the extent such amendment is not within the scope of General Conference’s reserved amendment authority, as further described in Appendix A of the plan. If for any reason any of such amendment authority of the general board described above or in the plan document is held by the Judicial Council to be unconstitutional, then that portion of the amendment authority that is ruled unconstitutional shall instead be held by the General Conference.

c) No proposal shall be made to the General Conference that changes a benefit presently in effect without first securing through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits an actuarial and legal opinion concerning the cost, legality, and other related aspects of the proposed change.

**Rationale:**

Incorporates by reference into the *Discipline* core connectional benefit design features of the new U.S. clergy retirement plan (submitted in a separate petition); provides limited amendment authority to Wespath over legal and administrative provisions. Updates other mandatory plan names and requires a Wespath legal opinion regarding proposed plan changes.

¶1504.1.

Petition Number: 20227-FA-¶1504.1; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

**Clergy Retirement Security Program Amendments**

Amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program (“CRSP”), which is incorporated by reference in ¶ 1504.1 of the *Book of Discipline, including any needed revisions to CRSP section numbering, paragraph numbering for references to the *Book of Discipline*, formatting, pagination, or Table of Contents, effective as of the close of General Conference 2020, except where another effective date is specified:

1. Amend Section A1.2 as follows:

**A1.2 History.** The Program is amended and restated as of January 1, 2017, the close of General Conference 2020, reflecting revisions approved at that General Conference 2016. This restatement date does not impact the Effective Date of the Program. This most recent restatement of the Program constitutes the official plan document for the Program. The amendments are effective as of the close of General Conference 2020, except where stated otherwise. Among other revisions, as of the Freeze Date, the Core Defined Benefit Plan is partially frozen (no new Participants and no further Credited Service on or after the Freeze Date, but continued Final Compensation and Final DAC updates) and Contributions to the Core Defined Contribution Plan will cease...

2. Amend Section A1.4(b) as follows:

(b) The Core Defined Benefit Plan and the Core Defined Contribution Plan are active Plans through the day before the Freeze Date. As of the Freeze Date, the Core Defined Benefit Plan will become partially frozen (no new Participants and no further Credited Service on or after the Freeze Date, but continued Final Compensation and Final DAC updates), and Contributions to the Core Defined Contribution Plan will cease...

3. Amend Section A1.4(c) by deleting the final sentence as follows:

Each of these four plans will be treated as a separate single plan within the meaning of Regulation §1.414(l)-1(b)(i).

4. Amend Section A1.6(c) as follows:

(c) Separate Accounts. The Administrator will maintain a separate accounting for each of the Regulation §1.414(l)-1(b)(i) plans identified in Section A1.4(c),...

5. Amend Section A1.6(d) as follows:

(d) Defined Benefit Funding. If, however, a financially distressed Plan Sponsor’s Funding Account balance drops to a level that, as determined by the Administrator, puts Participants at risk of not receiving full benefits, and/or puts other Plan Sponsors at risk of having to provide financial support to the distressed Plan Sponsor’s Funding Account, the Administrator may reduce such risks by, in its discretion, taking prudent actions that may include:

(i) authorizing debits against the Funding Accounts of all other Plan Sponsors (except any Plan Sponsor with a zero Funding Account balance); and

(ii) reducing the accrued benefits payable as annuities of Participants of the financially distressed Plan Sponsor.

If the financially distressed Plan Sponsor later makes contributions to its Funding Account, such contributions will first be allocated pro rata in the same fashion to repay amounts debited from other Plan Sponsors’ Funding Accounts, plus interest at a market rate to be determined
by the Administrator from time to time, and only thereafter to the delinquent Plan Sponsor’s separate Funding Account. If a Plan Sponsor does not have sufficient assets in its Funding Account to pay all benefits of the Consolidated DB Plan as they come due, in order to pay such benefits, the Administrator will authorize debits against the Funding Accounts of all other Plan Sponsors (except any Plan Sponsor with a zero Funding Account balance), pro rata in proportion to the Liabilities each such other Plan Sponsor has as a percentage of all Liabilities under the Consolidated DB Plan (as determined by the Administrator). If the delinquent Plan Sponsor later makes contributions to its Funding Account, such contributions will first be allocated pro rata in the same fashion to repay amounts taken from other Plan Sponsors’ Funding Accounts, plus interest at a market rate to be determined by the Administrator from time to time, and only thereafter to the delinquent Plan Sponsor’s separate Funding Account.

6. Add a new Section A2.29 as follows, renumbering current Section A2.29 and subsequent Sections:

A2.29 Compass Retirement Plan. The Compass Retirement Plan, established by General Conference 2020 and effective January 1, 2023.

7. Amend current Section A2.29, effective retroactively to January 1, 2020, as follows:

A2.30 Compensation. For Plan Years beginning after 2019, for a Participant’s Compensation equals: the sum of the following:

(a) the Participant’s annual base wages or salary paid or made available by a Plan Sponsor or Salary-Paying Unit to a Clergyperson in a Plan Year, including, at the Plan Sponsor’s election, any additional wages or salary 415 Compensation (including, in the case of a self-employed Clergyperson who is self-employed within the meaning of Code §401(c)(1)(B) but is an employee of The United Methodist Church within the meaning of Code §144(c)(5)(A)(ii)(I) and the Regulations thereunder), such Clergyperson’s 415 Compensation earned in the course of such self-employment), but excluding:

(i) any Includible Compensation earned outside of such Plan Year; and

(ii) any 415 Compensation paid to the Participant in lieu of Plan Sponsor-provided group health plan coverage, including coverage of the Participant’s family members, as determined by the Plan Sponsor in accordance with procedures that may be established by the Administrator. Such wages or salary will include any amount that is excluded from gross income pursuant to Code §107(2); and

(b) cash received from a Plan Sponsor or a Salary-Paying Unit and excluded from taxable cash salary pursuant to Code §107(2); and

(c)—when a parsonage is provided to the Participant as part of his or her compensation, 25 % of the sum of:

(i) the Participant’s 415 Compensation; and

(ii) cash excluded from taxable cash pursuant to Code §107(2) as provided in Section A2.29(b).

Compensation will be determined under procedures that may be established by the Administrator. Compensation excludes, among other things, one-time or occasional payments that are not made regularly as part of a Clergyperson’s annual base wages or salary, such as expense reimbursements or bonus payments. Severance pay is also excluded from Compensation.

8. Amend Section A2.41 as follows:

A2.41 Credited Service. Service rendered on or after January 1, 2007 and before the Freeze Date that counts toward the computation of a Participant’s Accrued Benefit as specified in Section B2.2, measured in one-day increments. Service rendered before January 1, 2007 or on or after the Freeze Date will not be counted as Credited Service.

9. Amend Section A2.44 as follows:

A2.44 Denominational Average Compensation. The average annual Compensation of Full-Time Clergypersons, which average is determined in accordance with procedures established by the Administrator. For Plan Years after 2016 beginning before the Freeze Date, Denominational Average Compensation will not include the additional type of compensation excluded: additional wages or salary paid to a Participant by a Plan Sponsor that has ceased offering group health plan coverage, in lieu of providing such excluded compensation was earned before the effective date of Section A2.29(a), (ii), i.e., January 1, 2017, coverage to the Participant and any family members, as determined by the Plan Sponsor in accordance with procedures that may be established by the Administrator. For Plan Years beginning on or after the Freeze Date, Denominational Average Compensation will equal the Denominational Average Compensation for the Plan Year immediately preceding the Freeze Date, increased annually by 2 %.

10. Amend Section A2.47 as follows:

A2.47 Discipline. The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, as amended and restated from time to time. Cited paragraphs or other subdivisions are deemed to refer to successor provisions when an amendment or restatement of the Discipline causes a change in location or citation.

11. Amend Section A2.52 as follows:

A2.52 Effective Date. The effective date of the Program is January 1, 2014. Provisions with different effec-
request for arbitration must be filed with a court of competent jurisdiction prescribed in Section A3.11(c)(ii)(E) or such cause of action—12 months of the date on the written notice of denial deemed by any Claimant, Recipient, or Accountholder. Any such cause of action for arbitration will be deemed waivered; provided, however, that such 12-month limit will apply only if it is described in such notice of denial.

15. Amend Section A4.2(e) as follows: (e) to the extent that such Accountholder, Recipient, or other person has received an overpayment under the Program or any other plan administered by the Administrator; or

16. Add a new Section A4.18 as follows: **A4.18 Mandatory Arbitration.** Individuals who become or claim to be a Participant or Accountholder in the Plan agree, by earning Accrued Benefits or receiving Plan Sponsor Contributions, or filing any form related to the Program with the Administrator, to be bound by the mandatory arbitration provisions of this Section, in consideration for the Administrator and Trustee also agreeing to be bound by such provisions. If a claim for benefits or dispute that arises out of or related to the relationship between a Claimant or Accountholder and the Administrator or Trustee is not resolved through the claims and appeals procedures of Section A3.11 once such procedures are fully exhausted, the party that seeks resolution of the matter must make a written request to the other party or parties to have the matter resolved through binding arbitration. Claimants or Accountholders must make such written request within the timeframe set forth under Section A3.11(d) or, for matters not involving a claim for benefits, within one year of the date that the facts giving rise to the dispute arose. If the Administrator or Trustee is making such request to a Claimant or Accountholder, the request must be made within 12 months of discovery of the facts that give rise to the dispute. Such claim for benefits or unresolved controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the relationship between a Claimant or Accountholder and the Administrator or Trustee will be settled by binding arbitration through the American Arbitration Association, or another arbitration service mutually agreed upon by the parties. The abuse of discretion standard of review will be used by the arbitrator(s) in reviewing the dispute and the Administrator’s decisions under the claims and appeals procedures of Section A3.11.

(a) The site of the arbitration will be in a city mutually agreed to by the parties.

(b) The laws of the State of Illinois will apply in situations where federal law is not applicable. The applicable rules of the selected arbitration service will apply. If the service allows the parties to choose the number of arbitrators, unless another number is mutually agreed to, any arbitration hereunder will be before three arbitrators. The award of the arbitrators, or a majority of them, will be final. Judgment upon the award rendered may be entered in any court, state or federal, having jurisdiction.

(c) The fees and costs of arbitration will be allocated to the parties by the arbitrators.

17. Amend Section B1.2 as follows: **B1.2 Prospective Application and Freeze Date.** No benefits may accrue to an individual under the Core Defined Benefit Plan before January 1, 2007 or on or after the Freeze Date.

18. Amend Section B2.1 by adding the following language at the end of subsection (b) as a new paragraph: Notwithstanding the foregoing, no Credited Service will be earned on or after the Freeze Date.

19. Amend Section B3.1(b) by adding the following sentence at the end of the final paragraph in the subsection: No individuals will become Participants on or after the Freeze Date.

20. Amend Section B3.2 by adding the following sentence at the end of the Section as a new paragraph: Notwithstanding the foregoing, no Entry Date may occur on or after the Freeze Date.

21. Amend Section B5.1(a) as follows:
20. Amend Section B5.1(a) as follows:

(a) $225,005,000 (or such greater amount as may be determined from time to time in accordance with Code §415(d) for calendar years ending after December 31, 2018/2013 that begin within the Plan Year, . . .

22. Amend Section B5.1(b) as follows:

(b) 100% of the Participant’s average 415 Compensation for the three consecutive calendar years (as provided in Section B5.3) in which he or she received the highest aggregate 415 Compensation. For Plan Years commencing on or after January 1, 2007, to the extent required by Code §415(b), a Participant’s 415 Compensation in excess of the limit in Code §401(a)(17) ($280,255,000 in 2019/2013, adjusted each later Plan Year . . .

23. Amend Section B5.2(b) as follows:

(b) If a Participant’s Annual Retirement Benefit is paid before the Participant attains age 62, the determination as to whether the dollar limitation set forth in Section B5.1(a) has been satisfied will be made, in accordance with Regulations under Code §415(b)(2)(C), by reducing the limitation specified in Section B5.1(a) so that such limitation (as so reduced) equals an annual benefit (beginning when such Annual Retirement Benefit begins) that is actuarially equivalent to a $225,005,000 (in 2019/2013, or as indexed thereafter) Annual Retirement Benefit beginning at the Participant’s attainment of age 62.

24. Amend Section B5.2(c) as follows:

(c) If a Participant’s Annual Retirement Benefit is paid after the Participant attains age 65, the determination as to whether the dollar limitation set forth in Section B5.1(a) has been satisfied will be made, in accordance with Regulations under Code §415(b)(2)(D), by increasing the limitation specified in Section B5.1(a) so that such limitation (as so increased) equals an annual benefit (beginning such Annual Retirement Benefit begins) that is equivalent to a $225,005,000 (in 2019/2013, or as indexed thereafter) Annual Retirement Benefit beginning at the Participant’s attainment of age 65.

25. Amend Section B6.1 by adding the following sentence to the end of the Section as a new paragraph:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no further Credited Service will accrue on or after the Freeze Date, although neither Final DAC nor Final Compensation will be frozen as of the Freeze Date.

26. Add a new Section B6.4 as follows:

**B6.4 Freeze Date Transition Rules.** Upon the Freeze Date, the Administrator may, in its discretion, apply the transition rules of this paragraph to the groups of Participants described in subsections (a) through (c) below, with priority being given to the groups in the order in which they are listed. Under the transition rules, the Administrator may convert the Accrued Benefit and Past Service Benefit of such Participants into an Actuarially Equivalent lump sum and transfer such amounts, along with the annuitizable portion of the MPP Account Balance, if any, to an Account of the Administrator’s choosing in the Compass Retirement Plan.

(a) **Terminated Participants Not Yet In Pay Status.** Participants who, as of the Freeze Date, are Terminated Participants not yet in pay status.

(b) **Less Than Five Years of Credited Service.** Participants, other than Terminated Participants or Retired Participants, who have earned fewer than five years of Credited Service as of the Freeze Date.

(c) **Retired Participants Not Yet In Pay Status.** Participants who, as of the Freeze Date, are Retired Participants not yet in pay status.

27. Amend Section B9.1(a)(ii) by deleting the following typographical error from the language:

_in Section S4.9.1(a)(ii)(B)_

28. Amend Section B9.1(b)(iv) as follows:

(iv) **Lump Sums.** Except as otherwise provided in Section B9.1(d) or (h), or in Sections B6.4 or B9.2(c), no Recipient may receive his or her benefit under this Plan in a lump sum, partial lump sum, installment form, or any other non-annuity form of payment.

29. Amend Section B9.1(h) as follows:

(h) **Mandatory Conversion of Aggregate DB Benefit.** Notwithstanding any provision of the Program to the contrary, a Participant described below who is neither Retired nor a Terminated Participant at the time of terminating his or her annual conference relationship under ¶360 of the Discipline will be treated as a Terminated Participant for purposes of determination of benefits under the entire Program. Such Participant’s Aggregate DB Benefit will be converted to an Actuarially Equivalent Account Balance, using factors corresponding to those used for determining Plan Sponsor Contributions to the Program, i.e., the assumptions determined under the Funding Policy. Such converted Aggregate DB Benefit and the Participant’s Vested Account Balances in this Program will be transferred to UMPIP, with such transferred amounts becoming subject to the terms of UMPIP. This paragraph (h) will apply to Elders in Full Connection, Deacons in Full Connection, Local Pastors, Associate Members, and Provisional Members who are neither Retired nor a Terminated Participant at the time he or she terminates his or her annual conference relationship by withdrawal, discontinuance, or revocation of credentials under ¶¶320, 327, 360, 2711.3, or other applicable paragraph of the Discipline.

30. Amend Section C1.2 as follows:

**C1.2 Prospective Application and Freeze Date.** No benefits will accrue under the Core Defined Contribution Plan before January 1, 2007 or on or after the Freeze Date.
31. Amend Section C3.1(b) by adding the following sentence to the end of the last paragraph in the Section: No individuals will become Participants on or after the Freeze Date.

32. Amend Section C3.2 by adding the following sentence to the end of the Section as a new paragraph:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, no Entry Date may occur on or after the Freeze Date.

33. Amend Section C4.1 by adding the following sentence in a new paragraph at the end of the Section:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Plan Sponsor Contributions under this Section will not be made on or after the Freeze Date.

34. Amend Section C5.1(a)(i)(A) as follows:

(A) $565,000 (in 20192013 or as indexed under Code §415(d) in later years); or

35. Amend Section C8.4(a)(ii)(B), effective January 1, 2021, as follows:

(B) If the Participant’s surviving Spouse is not the Participant’s sole Designated Beneficiary, then for deaths on or after January 1, 2021, distributions will begin to the Designated Beneficiary:

(I) if the Designated Beneficiary timely elects the Lifetime Distribution Option (not available to Beneficiaries that are estates or trusts), by December 31 of the calendar year immediately following the calendar year in which the Participant died containing the fifth anniversary of the Participant’s death, if the Designated Beneficiary timely elects this option over the Lifetime Distribution Option; or

(II) if the Designated Beneficiary does not timely elect the Lifetime Distribution Option, the five-year option described above, by December 31 of the calendar year immediately following the calendar year in which the Participant died containing the fifth anniversary of the Participant’s death;

and the Participant’s entire interest will be distributed no later than:

(III) if the Designated Beneficiary timely elects the five-year option described in (I) above, then by December 31 of the calendar year containing the fifth anniversary of the Participant’s death the Lifetime Distribution Option, then over the life of the Designated Beneficiary as provided in Section C8.4(c)(i)(A); or

(IV) if the Designated Beneficiary does not timely elect the five-year option, the Lifetime Distribution Option, then over the life of the Designated Beneficiary as provided in Section C8.4(c)(ii)(A) by December 31 of the calendar year containing the fifth anniversary of the Participant’s death.

A timely election is one made before the earlier of the two applicable deadlines.

36. Amend Section S3.4.5(g) as follows:

(g) Optional Forms of Distribution. If a married Participant elects pursuant to Section S3.4.5(c) above not to receive his or her benefit in the form of a 70% Contingent Annuity, or if an unmarried Participant elects pursuant to Section S3.4.5(c) above not to receive his or her benefit in the form of a Single-Life Annuity, the Administrator, pursuant to the election of the Participant on an Application for Benefits, will direct the Trustee to distribute, as determined and limited by rules and regulations of the Administrator, on a date specified by the Participant (which date may not be later than such Participant’s Required Beginning Date and which date must be as of the first of a month), to the Participant or to the Participant and his or her Contingent Annuitant:

(i) with respect to 65% of such Participant’s MPP Account Balance, the purchase of or providing of a lifetime (including a lifetime with years certain) annuity or joint and survivor lifetime annuity (including the disabled child annuity options described in Section B9.1(b)(iii)). However, such annuity may not be elected in any form that will guarantee, through a years-certain provision, payments over a period extending beyond either the life of the Participant (or the lives of the Participant and his or her designated Contingent Annuitant) or the life expectancy of the Participant (or the life expectancy of the Participant and his or her designated Contingent Annuitant); or

(ii) effective January 1, 2023, with respect to 65% of such Participant’s MPP Account Balance, a series of periodic payments that may vary in amount over time, over the Participant’s life expectancy or the joint life expectancy of the Participant and the Participant’s Spouse, by transferring 65% of such Participant’s MPP Account Balance to an account within the Compass Retirement Plan that is required to be distributed pursuant to LifeStage Retirement Income, as defined by that plan. Upon a date when it is administratively feasible, as determined by the Administrator, Participants may elect this optional form of distribution with respect to an amount that is less than 65% of the MPP Account Balance, with the remaining amount that makes up 65% of the MPP Account Balance distributed under either the normal form of distribution or the optional form of distribution described in (i) above, in an increment that is permitted by procedures established by the Administrator; and

(iii) with respect to the remaining 35% of such Participant’s MPP Account Balance, a one-time lump-sum payment, subject to the Participant’s right to request a direct rollover in accordance with the provisions of Section C8.5(a).

37. Amend Section S3.4.6(b)(ii)(B), effective January 1, 2021, by deleting the following language:
(H) For the purpose of Section S3.4.6(b)(ii)(A), to be excepted from the 5-year distribution requirement the election by a Beneficiary must be made no later than December 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year of the Participant’s death.

(H) An election by a Beneficiary must be in writing and will be irrevocable as of the last day of the election period stated herein:

38. Amend Section S3.4.6(b)(iii), effective January 1, 2021, as follows:

(iii) For deaths on or after January 1, 2021, in the absence of an election by the Participant or a Beneficiary, the 5-year lifetime distribution requirement option in paragraph (ii)(B) above will apply. An election to apply the 5-year distribution requirement in paragraph (ii)(A) above must be made no later than December 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year of the Participant’s death. The election must be in writing and will be irrevocable as of the last day of the election period.

Rationale:

Amends the Clergy Retirement Security Program to freeze participation and new benefit accruals beginning in 2023. Provides transition rules to the new mandatory clergy retirement plan (the Compass Retirement Plan, proposed in a separate petition), a definition of compensation that is more within the church’s control, and other updates.

§1504.1.

Petition Number: 20228-FA-§1504.1; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Comprehensive Protection Plan Amendments

Make the following changes to the Comprehensive Protection Plan, which is incorporated by reference in §1504.1 of the Book of Discipline, including any needed revisions to section numbering, formatting, pagination, or Table of Contents, effective January 1, 2021, except where another effective date is specified.

Amend Section 1.01 as follows:

The Plan. The General Conference of The United Methodist Church established a program providing certain benefits for participating clergy and their beneficiaries, effective as of January 1, 1982, that has been known as the Comprehensive Protection Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”). The Plan was initially funded in part by a transfer of assets from the Disability and Survivor Benefit Fund of the Ministers Reserve Pension Fund. Article XII of this Plan replaces the provisions of the Ministers Reserve Pension Fund relating to the Disability and Survivor Benefit Fund. Effective January 1, 1997, the Plan was amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2002 the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2005, the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2007, the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2009, the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2014, the Plan was again restated. Effective January 1, 2015, the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective January 1, 2016, the Plan was again amended and restated. Effective December 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year of the Participant’s death. The election must be in writing and will be irrevocable as of the last day of the election period.

Amend Section 2.06 as follows:

“Beneficiary” shall mean the person(s) designated as set forth in Sections 109.04 or 109.05 who is receiving, or entitled to receive, a deceased Active Participant’s, a Retired Participant’s, or a Surviving Spouse’s residual interest in the Plan which is non-forfeitable upon, and payable in the event of, such Active Participant’s, Retired Participant’s, or Surviving Spouse’s death. A Beneficiary may be one or more legal persons, namely, individual(s), trust(s), estate(s) or other legal person(s), as well as Beneficiaries described under Section 8.01(m) of the Plan.

Amend Section 2.20 as follows:

“Plan Compensation” shall mean for an Active Participant the sum of the following amounts paid by his/her Salary-Paying Unit or Plan Sponsor equals the amount of a Participant’s Compensation for a Plan Year as determined under the applicable retirement plan in which the Participant participates as determined by the Administrator:

a. the Participant’s 415 Compensation, (including, in the case of a self-employed Clergyperson, such Clergyperson’s 415 Compensation earned in the course of such self-employment), but not including any 415 Compensation paid to the Participant in lieu of Plan Sponsor provided group health plan coverage, including coverage of the Participant’s family members, as determined by the Plan Sponsor in accordance with procedures that may be established by the Administrator;

b. cash excluded from taxable cash salary pursuant to Code Section 107(2); and

c. when a parsonage is provided to the Participant as part of his or her compensation, 25% of the sum of:
(i) Participant’s 415 Compensation; and (ii) cash excluded from taxable cash salary pursuant to Code Section 107, as defined in Section 2.20b.

Amend Section 4.05 as follows:

Protection Benefit Trust. Church contributions pursuant to this Article IV shall be credited, as of the date of receipt by the Plan, to the Protection Benefit Trust. Said Trust shall be maintained and invested by the Trustee to provide for the benefits and the expenses of administration hereunder such that the Trust is for the exclusive benefit of the Participants of the Plan and their Beneficiaries of the Plan.

Amend Section 5.03d as follows:

Upon the death of an Active Participant or a Retired Participant eligible for death benefit coverage hereunder, a benefit shall be paid as follows:

(1) For an Active Participant, the benefit shall be $50,000.

(2) For a Retired Participant, if the death occurs after 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, the benefit shall be $21,800; if the death occurs prior to that, for a Participant who retired on or before December 31, 2012, the benefit shall be 30% of the Denominational Average Compensation in effect at the time of death. For a Participant who retired on or after December 31, 2013, the benefit shall be $20,400 who has retired on or before December 31, 2012, the benefit shall be 30% of the Denominational Average Compensation in effect at the time of death. For a Retired Participant, who has retired on or after January 1, 2013, the benefit shall be $20,400.

Amend Section 5.03f as follows:

Upon the death of the Spouse of an Active or Retired Participant eligible for death benefit coverage hereunder, which death occurs:

(1) after 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, a single-sum spouse death benefit equal to $15,918 shall be paid to the Participant;

(2) prior to 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, a single-sum spouse death benefit equal to 20% of the Denominational Average Compensation at the time of death shall be paid to the Participant if he or she was either Active at the time of death or retired on or before December 31, 2012; or, for a Participant who retired on or after January 1, 2013, a single-sum death benefit equal to $15,300 shall be paid to the Participant if he or she was either Active at the time of death or retired on or before December 31, 2012.

Amend 5.03h as follows:

Upon the death, before 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, of a Child of an Active Participant, deceased Active Participant, Retired Participant, or deceased Retired Participant:

(1) if the Participant survives the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,490 shall be paid to the Participant;

(2) if the Participant predeceases the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,490 shall be paid, in the following order of preference, to either:

(i) the Surviving Spouse of the deceased Participant, if the Surviving Spouse was the guardian of the Child at the time of the Child’s death, or if the deceased Child was dependent upon the Surviving Spouse; or

(ii) the guardian of the deceased Child, if any; or

(iii) the person paying the funeral expenses of the deceased Child.

Amend Section 5.03g as follows:

Upon the death, after 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, of (1) a Surviving Spouse of a deceased Active Participant or deceased Retired Participant, who retired on or before December 31, 2012, (2) a Surviving Spouse who was receiving a pension benefit from a Conference on December 31, 1981, or (3) a Surviving Spouse of a bishop elected by a Jurisdictional Conference or the Puerto Rico Methodist Church, a death benefit of $10,924 shall be payable to the Beneficiary, as follows:

For a death prior to 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, the benefit for this same group shall be a single-sum Surviving Spouse death benefit equal to 15% of the Denominational Average Compensation at the time of death, and it shall be paid to the Beneficiary. Upon the death of a Surviving Spouse of a deceased Retired Participant, who, unless the Participant had retired on or after January 1, 2013, in which case a single-sum death benefit equal to $10,200 shall be payable to the Surviving Spouse’s Beneficiary.

Amend 5.03i as follows:

Any death benefit payable to a Beneficiary shall be paid pursuant to the rules regarding Beneficiaries contained in Sections 109.04 and 109.05, as applicable.

Amend 5.03j as follows:

Upon the death, after 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, of a Child of an Active Participant, deceased Active Participant, Retired Participant, or deceased Retired Participant:

(1) if the Participant survives the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,490 shall be paid to the Participant; or

(2) if the Participant predeceases the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,490 shall be paid, in the following order of preference, to either:

(i) the Surviving Spouse of the deceased Participant, if the Surviving Spouse was the guardian of the Child at the time of the Child’s death, or if the deceased Child was dependent upon the Surviving Spouse; or

(ii) the guardian of the deceased Child, if any; or

(iii) the person paying the funeral expenses of the deceased Child.

Upon the death, before 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, of a Child...
of an Active Participant, deceased Active Participant, Retired Participant, or deceased Retired Participant, who retired on or before December 31, 2012, and such Participant is, or was at the time of his or her death, eligible for death benefit coverage hereunder, and upon the receipt of a death certificate for the Child:

(32) if the Participant survives the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to 10% of the Denominational Average Compensation at the time of death shall be paid to the Participant; or

(42) if the Participant predeceases the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to 10% of the Denominational Average Compensation at the time of death shall be paid, in the following order of preference described in (2) above, to either:

(i) the Surviving Spouse of the deceased Participant, if the Surviving Spouse was the guardian of the Child at the time of the Child’s death, or if the deceased Child was dependent upon the Surviving Spouse; or

(ii) the guardian of the deceased Child, if any; or

(iii) the person paying the funeral expenses of the deceased Child.

Upon the death, before 12:00 a.m. of the day following the close of the 2020 General Conference, of a Child of a Retired Participant or deceased Retired Participant, who retired on or after January 1, 2013, and such Participant is, or was at the time of his or her death, eligible for death benefit coverage hereunder, and upon receipt of a death certificate for the Child:

(53) if the Participant survives the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,160 shall be paid to the Participant; or

(64) if the Participant predeceases the Child, a single-sum death benefit equal to $8,160 shall be paid, in the following order of preference described in (2) above, to either:

(i) the Surviving Spouse of the deceased Participant, if the Surviving Spouse was the guardian of the Child at the time of the Child’s death, or if the deceased Child was dependent upon the Surviving Spouse; or

(ii) the guardian of the deceased Child, if any; or

(iii) the person paying the funeral expenses of the deceased Child.

Amend Section 5.03i, by increasing those amounts by no more than 2% rounded to the nearest highest $100, to reflect the rate of inflation over the four-year period as indicated by the consumer price index (CPI) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

Amend Section 5.04a as follows:

Temporary Payments and Eligibility for Disability Payments.

Temporary Payments: In cases where the application contains a doctor’s opinion that the individual is unable to perform the usual and customary duties of a United Methodist Clergy person by reason of a bodily injury, a disease, or a behavioral illness or disorder that is expected to last for at least six continuous months, monthly payments shall be effective the first day of the month beginning on or following the date of the Participant’s initial loss of income, on a temporary basis, for up to 90 days. The application remains subject to the normal process of evaluation, and may be denied upon full review, but in the meantime payments on a temporary basis will be made for up to 90 days, and if the benefit is approved, will be continued and/or paid retroactively, subject to the other provisions of the plan. Temporary payments under this section do not bear any weight in the determination of the Administrator under Section (b) below.

Eligibility for Disability Payments. An Active Participant who becomes disabled as defined in paragraph (b) below shall be entitled to a disability benefit under this Section 5.04 (and shall thereby continue to have the status of an Active Participant) under the following conditions:

Amend Section 5.04c(2) as follows:

Retirement Contribution. In addition, during the Participant’s disability, an annual allocation from the Protection Benefit Trust, made in monthly installments, shall be credited to the Participant’s defined contribution account in the applicable clergy retirement plan maintained by the Administrator in an amount equal to the Plan Sponsor’s nonmatching and matching contribution obligations with respect to the Participant, limited in aggregate to no greater than 3% of the Participant’s compensation as defined as indicated by the applicable clergy retirement plan, including any increases, imputed or otherwise, to such compensation as determined under the applicable clergy retirement plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any allocation described in this Section 5.04(c)(2) shall cease for any Participant who (i) is retired pursuant to ¶ 357.3 of the Book of Discipline or (ii) severs his or her Conference relationship by honorable location or administrative location as defined as indicated by the applicable clergy retirement plan, or terminates or has terminated his or her Conference relationship in any manner, thereby ceasing to be a member.
of the Conference as of the date of such termination. In addition, any contribution made under this Section to any plan other than the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall not exceed the amount that would have been made to the Clergy Retirement Security Program had the latter plan formula applied instead.

Amend Section 5.04c(7)(v) as follows:

For the application of the reduction described in item (iv) above, it will be assumed that the payment of imputed amounts began: (a) immediately after the date the Participant refused to apply for Social Security benefits, if the Participant has refused to apply, or (b) six months after the date the Participant’s disability was determined by the Administrator to have commenced, if the Participant has elected under Code Section 1402(e) not to be covered by Social Security. The Administrator shall begin applying the reduction described in Section 5.04c(7)(iv) above, after 12 months of disability benefit payments to the Participant, in all cases where the Participant has applied for Social Security benefits, unless the Participant has agreed to be represented by an advocacy vendor approved by the Administrator, in which case the repayment can be delayed until receipt of the Social Security payout. The application of this offset will reduce the likelihood of a retroactive award of Social Security benefits. In the event that the Administrator applies this offset and the Participant is denied benefits under the Social Security Act (for reasons other than those in clause (b), e.g., an election under Code Section 1402(c(e)), the Administrator shall make the Participant whole for this applied offset.

Amend Section 5.04c(8) as follows:

Other Income Offset. After the application of the Social Security reduction described above in Section 5.04c(7), the amount of the disability benefit payable under this Section 5.04 shall also be reduced as described below.

(a) During the first 24 months of disability, the disability benefit payable shall be reduced on a dollar-for-dollar basis when the sum of the amounts specified in items (i), (ii), (iii); and (iv) and (v) below exceeds 100% of the Plan Compensation of the Participant at the time the disability occurred, as increased annually by 3%.

(b) After the first 24 months of disability, the amount of the disability benefit payable under this Section 5.04 shall be reduced on a fifty cents on the dollar basis ($0.50) when the sum of the amounts in items (i), (ii), (iii); and (iv) and (v) below exceeds 70% of the Plan Compensation of the Participant at the time the disability occurred, as increased annually by 3%; and the amount of disability benefits payable shall be reduced on a dollar-for-dollar basis when the sum of the amounts in items (i), (ii), (iii); and (iv) and (v) exceeds 100% of Plan Compensation of the Participant at the time the disability occurred, as increased annually by 3%. The amount of this reduction shall be the amount by which the sum of items (i), (ii), (iii); and (iv) and (v) exceeds the amount described in (a) or (b) as applicable.

(i) The amount of gross income resulting from earned income of the Participant, or from payments received by the Participant that, by their nature, are a substitute for earned income. The sources of gross income are limited to: (a) compensation for services, including fees, commissions and similar items, and gross income derived from a business, as provided in section 61(a) of the Code; (b) compensation payments received from Worker’s Compensation Insurance in respect to lost earnings; (c) payments received from any branch of the United States Armed Forces, excluding veteran’s disability compensation and pension benefits; (d) payments received from any other agency of the United States Government; (e) payments received from any State of the United States, in respect to disability; and (f) disability benefits payable under this Plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Plan Administrator will not reduce a Participant’s disability benefits under this Section 5.04c(8) by amounts that a Participant receives from a Plan Sponsor in lieu of coverage in a group health plan, for the Participant or his or her family, even if such amount is considered taxable income or compensation for services.

(ii) The amount that the Participant received as retirement benefits, or the amount that the Participant’s spouse and children received as retirement benefits because of the Participant’s receipt of retirement benefits under the Social Security Act.

(iii) The amount of the reduction for Social Security disability benefits as described in Section 5.04c(7).

(iv) The above amounts (other than the disability benefits payable under this Plan) shall constitute the “Other Income Benefits” referred to below.

(v) If a Participant engages in a return to work program employment under Section 5.04f of the Plan during the time that he or she is receiving disability payments under the Plan, and is actively participating in a return to work program approved by the Administrator at that time, the earnings from such employment shall be a part of the Other Income Benefits on the following basis:

A. During the first 24 months of disability payments, only 50% of such earnings shall be included in the Other Income Benefits.

B. After the first 24 months, 100% of such earnings shall be included in the Other Income Benefits.
Amend Section 5.04c(9) as follows:

Other Disability Grants. In addition, the disability benefit payable to a Participant under this Section 5.04 shall be reduced on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the amount of any grant of disability benefits that the Participant receives from his or her Conference. In the event of any such reduction, the Administrator may reimburse the payor for the amount of the grant.

Amend Section 6.02 as follows:

Sunset of Program. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Plan, this Voluntary Transition Program will begin effective January 1, 2013 and remain in effect through December 31, 20289, at which time the Program will terminate. The Voluntary Transition Program will no longer be available as a benefit program under the Plan as of January 1, 20294. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Transition Participants who are receiving Transition Payments on December 31, 20289 shall remain eligible for Transition Benefits beyond January 1, 20294 for the appropriate number of weeks as determined by this Article. The Administrator shall have the authority to accelerate Transition Payments due after December 31, 20289 for administrative ease to a date on or before December 31, 20289.

Amend Section 6.04e as follows:

Termination and Withdrawal. The Active Participant must incur a Separation from Service and agree to surrender his or her credentials and terminate his or her membership in the Annual Conference, as soon as administratively feasible, but no later than the next following session of the Annual Conference, to be a Transition Participant. A Transition Participant may not be granted sabbatical leave under ¶ 3512 of the Book of Discipline, voluntary or involuntary leaves of absence under ¶ 3524 and ¶ 3545 of the Book of Discipline, medical leave under ¶ 3567 of the Book of Discipline, or placed on honorable location under ¶ 358 of the Book of Discipline, or administrative location under ¶ 359 of the Book of Discipline.

Amend Section 6.05d as follows:

Death Benefits Continuation. A Transition Participant shall remain eligible for the death benefits described in Section 5.03d(1) of the Plan, only for the number of weeks following the Commencement Date described in Section 6.05a equal to the number of weeks for which he or she is eligible for Transition Payments, rounded up to the next nearest whole month. Death benefits under Section 5.03d(1) payable on account of the death of a Transition Participant under this Section 6.05d shall be paid to the Spouse or Beneficiary of the Transition Participant in accordance with Section 109.04 of the Plan. Transition Participants are not eligible for any other death benefits under the Plan. The Spouse, Children, and Beneficiaries of a Transition Participant shall not be eligible for any other benefits under the Plan.

Amend Section 7.01d as follows:

Responsibilities of the Trustee. The Trustee shall have the following categories of responsibilities in addition to those responsibilities set out in Article VIII:

a. To invest, manage and control the Plan assets;

b. At the direction of the Administrator, to pay benefits required under the Plan to be paid to Participants, or, in the event of their deaths, to their Beneficiaries;

c. To maintain records of receipts and disbursements, and to furnish to the Administrator for each Plan Year a written annual report;

d. To invest the assets of the trust for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits to Participants and Beneficiaries, including taking actions under Section 8.01(m), and defraying reasonable expenses of the Plan. Such investing shall be done in accordance with investment policies that reflect the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church.

Amend Section 8.01 as follows:

Powers and Duties of the Administrator. The primary responsibility of the Administrator is to administer the Plan for the benefit of the Participants and their Beneficiaries, subject to the terms of the Plan. The Administrator shall administer the Plan in accordance with its terms and shall have the power and discretion to construe the terms of the Plan and to determine all questions arising in connection with the administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan. Any such determination by the Administrator shall be conclusive and binding upon all persons. The Administrator, in addition to all powers and authorities under common law, statutory authority, and other provisions of the Plan, shall have the following powers and authorities, to be exercised in the Administrator’s sole discretion:

m. To determine whether the Plan has funding in excess of the target reserve (“surplus”), and whether any amount of such surplus should be transferred to any defined benefit retirement plan administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for The United Methodist Church (“other plans”) under the following circumstances:

(1) if contributions to such other plans are required to be made by plan sponsors;

(2) if the transfer of such surplus in lieu of plan sponsors making some or all of the required contributions would, as a whole, benefit the Participants and Beneficiaries of CPP and the other plans to which contributions are due:
(3) if a transfer of surplus would comply with all pertinent legal and regulatory requirements; and
(4) if a transfer of surplus would be prudent under all relevant facts and circumstances.

If such a transfer is made under this paragraph, the contributions to the other plans may not exceed 100% of the non-normal cost contributions required by the other plans.

Amend Section 8.10 as follows:

**Appeal a Condition Precedent to Mandatory Arbitration**

No cause of action in civil law or equity with respect to any alleged violation of the terms and conditions of this Plan, or otherwise regarding the benefits under this Plan, shall be commenced or maintained by any claimant (or his or her representative) unless and until

Any alleged violation of the terms and conditions of this Plan may be challenged by a claimant (or a representative) under the mandatory arbitration provisions set forth in section 8.12 but only after such claimant (or the representative) has initiated and completed the process of an Appeal as set forth in Sections 8.07 to 8.09 of this Plan.

In addition, any such cause of action request for arbitration with respect to this Plan must be commenced by the claimant (or the representative) within 12 months of the date of the written notice sent by the Administrator to the claimant (or the representative) regarding the final denial of the Appeal, or such right to seek arbitration will be deemed waived. The notice sent out by the Administrator should describe this time limit.

Add Section 8.12 as follows:

Individuals who become or claim to be a Participant in the Plan agree, by filing any form related to the Plan with the Administrator, to be bound by the mandatory arbitration provisions of this section, in consideration for the Administrator and Trustee also agreeing to be bound by such provisions. If a claim for benefits or dispute that arises out of or related to the relationship between a Claimant and the Administrator or Trustee is not resolved through the claims and appeals procedures of section 8.09 once such procedures are fully exhausted, the party that seeks resolution of the matter must make a written request to the other party or parties to have the matter resolved through binding arbitration. Claimants must make such written request within the timeframe set forth under section 8.10 or, for matters not involving a claim for benefits, within one year of the date that the facts giving rise to the dispute arose. If the Administrator or Trustee is making such request to a Claimant or Participant, the request must be made within 12 months of the discovery of the facts that give rise to the dispute. Such claim for benefits or unresolved controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the relationship between the Claimant or Participant and the Administrator or Trustee will be settled by binding arbitration through the American Arbitration Association, or another arbitrations service mutually agreed upon by the parties. The abuse of discretion standard of review will be used by the arbitrator(s) in reviewing the dispute and the Administrator’s decisions under the claims and appeals procedures of sections 8.08 and 8.09.

(a) The site of the arbitration will be in a city mutually agreed to by the parties.

(b) The laws of the State of Illinois will apply in situations where federal law is not applicable. The applicable rules of the selected arbitration service will apply. If the service allows the parties to choose the number of arbitrators, unless another number is mutually agreed to, any arbitration hereunder will be before three arbitrators. The award of the arbitrators, or a majority of them, will be final. Judgment upon the award entered may be entered in any court, state or federal, having jurisdiction.

(c) The fees and costs of the arbitration will be allocated to the parties by the arbitrators.

Amend Section 10.05a as follows:

Each Surviving Spouse may designate, in such form as required by the Administrator, a primary and contingent Beneficiary who is to receive the Surviving Spouse’s interest in the Plan in the event of the Surviving Spouse’s death. In the event a Surviving Spouse’s designated primary Beneficiary is not available (for any reason such as one noted below in this Section 109.05) as of the Surviving Spouse’s death, the death benefit under Section 5.03g hereof shall be paid to the Surviving Spouse’s designated contingent Beneficiary. The designation of Beneficiary shall not be effective for any purpose unless and until it has been filed by the Surviving Spouse with the Administrator during the Surviving Spouse’s lifetime.

**Rationale:**

Harmonize all death benefits to flat dollar amounts; create a new temporary disability benefit, for applicants that submit a proper doctor’s opinion; extend the Voluntary Transition Program through 2028; permit CPP to support funding of pension plans in certain circumstances; and make various technical and administrative amendments.

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**Petition Number:** 20223-FA-¶1504.16; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.
GBPHB Institutional Investors

Amend ¶ 1504.16 as follows:

16. To receive, hold, manage, administer, and invest and reinvest, by and through its constituent corporations and other legal entities, endowment funds or other funds of an annual conference, local church, board, agency, or other unit, organization, or entity affiliated with The United Methodist Church, that have been designated for the funding of relief, support, or benefit funds, plans, or programs, and endowment funds or other funds of such units not so designated. Affiliation may include control by, association with, relation to, or sharing common religious bonds and convictions with, The United Methodist Church, which may be evidenced by, among other facts and circumstance, historical Methodist ties, Wesleyan beliefs and traditions, mission relationships, covenants, or shared communion with The United Methodist Church. The general board is encouraged to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, or funds that make a positive contribution toward the realization of the goals outlined in the Social Principles of the church; provided, however, that at no time shall any part of the principal of the endowment funds be appropriated by the general board for any other purpose. The general board shall manage such funds as a prudent investor and disclose to investors material facts relating to its investment funds; and shall annually provide to such organizations an accounting of such funds.

¶1504.2.

Petition Number: 20221-FA-¶1504.2; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Wespath Voluntary Benefit Plans

Amend ¶ 1504.2 as follows:

2. To create, amend, operate, manage, administer, and terminate nonmandatory relief, assistance, and benefit funds, plans, products, and programs for interested members, conferences, local churches, boards, agencies, institutions, and other affiliated units of The United Methodist Church, which may include organizations controlled by or associated with, or that share common religious bonds and convictions with, The United Methodist Church; affiliation may be evidenced by, among other facts and circumstances, covenants or shared communion, historical Methodist ties, or common Wesleyan beliefs and traditions.

Rationale:

Clarify General Conference’s view of “affiliation with The United Methodist Church” for benefit plans purposes securing greater protection from secular regulators drawing such lines; ensure that new emerging expressions of Methodism can rely on Wespath’s services, granting continuity/certainty to participants and plan sponsors, and the benefit of scale to all.

1504.8.

Petition Number: 20226-FA-¶1504.8; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Cost Allocation of Mandatory Plan

Amend ¶ 1504.8 as follows:

8. The general board shall have the authority to allocate the costs of the mandatory benefits plans among the annual conferences situated within the boundaries of the United States and Puerto Rico, and the costs of benefit plans of other participating plan sponsors, in accordance with the terms of the appropriate benefits plans.

a) The general board shall have authority to determine the liabilities allocated to and contributions due from each annual conference, or other participating plan sponsor, in accordance with the terms of the appropriate plan.

b) The general board shall have the authority to collect from each annual conference or other participating plan sponsors the amount required by the clearinghouse to provide benefits pursuant to the terms of the appropriate benefits plan. Each annual conference shall provide funds to meet its benefit responsibilities to clergy serving the annual conference and their spouses, as applicable, who are members of other annual conferences on the same basis as it provides pension payments for beneficiaries related directly to itself.

c) The general board is authorized and empowered to make all the rules concerning details that may be necessary to implement the foregoing.

Rationale:

Clarify that Wespath may allocate the costs of the mandatory plans (which include the Retirement Plan for General Agencies (RPGA)), to nonconference plan sponsors, to the extent applicable and appropriate under the terms of the applicable plans; remove outdated superfluous words in subparagraph b.

¶1504.20.

Petition Number: 20224-FA-¶1504.20; Boige grain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.
Central Conference Pensions

Amend ¶ 1504.20 as follows:

20. To create, administer, and encourage funding for the programs of the Central Conference Pension Initiative, in consultation with the General Council on Finance and Administration, and supported by a multi-agency task force, invest, and serve as trustee for the funds raised that support Central Conference Pensions; periodically distribute earnings to the respective pension plans; consult with central conferences regarding funding and administration of their pension plans and regarding their use of Central Conference Pension funds; and collaborate with other general agencies on opportunities to support pension programs in the central conferences.

Rationale:

Updates and modernizes the text of ¶ 1504.20, which is out-of-date; better describes Wespath’s Central Conference Pension program reflecting current duties, activities, and expectations.

¶1504.21.

Petition Number: 20225-FA-¶1504.21; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Health and Wellness Information

Amend ¶ 1504.21 as follows:

21. To support the health as wholeness of the clergy and lay workers of the denomination, and thereby mitigate the frequency and duration of disability and medical leave, by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating the group health care plan experience and data and health and wellness program information available from the denomination—submitted by annual conferences, the General Council on Finance and Administration for bishops, and general agencies. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may collaborate with annual conferences, general agencies, other plan sponsors, and academic, industry, and clinical research organizations use the collected group health care plan data and health and wellness program information to (a) suggest establishment denomination-wide benchmarks and standards; (b) identify and disseminate best practices for healthy lifestyles and health and disability costs management; (c) provide reports of data; (d) share information data and analyses with the denomination; (de) advise about health care plan designs, coverage, financial soundness, and wellness programs and initiatives; and (ef) recommend health and wellness strategies and guidelines for annual conferences, the General Council on Finance and Administration for bishops in the United States, and—general agencies, and other plan sponsors.

Rationale:

Wespath’s health and wholeness work has changed and developed since 2008; this paragraph should be updated to be less prescriptive but rather be more collaborative and advisory, and focused on cooperative research, analysis, and best practices.

¶1504.23.

Petition Number: 20218-FA-¶1504.23-G; Oskvig, Bryant - Potomac, MD, USA.

Delete 1504.23

Rationale:

The obligations of ¶ 1504.23 create a financial burden for congregations by presenting pension obligations of the annual conference on a separated commercial basis. This method for creating distribution of past pension liabilities amongst congregations is done on a model without a continuing annual conference that holds those obligations. This

¶1505.

Petition Number: 20229-FA-¶1505; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

General Agency Pension Credit

Amend ¶ 1505 as follows:

1505. General Agency Participation Pension Credit—The employees of the general agencies of The United Methodist ChurchPension for service approved for pension credit by an agency of The United Methodist Church receiving financial support from the general church funds shall be covered in the Retirement Plan for General Agencies described in ¶ 1504.1 be provided by the employing agency in uniformity with that provided by other agencies under one of the pension funds, plans, or programs administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church; provided, however, that where service has been rendered in two or more agencies, the total pension benefit shall be calculated as if all such service had been with one agency, and the final agen-
cy shall provide any additional pension benefits necessary to accomplish this; furthermore, such agencies may not make any arrangement with a life insurance company or any other entity for the purchase of annuities for the benefit of individual effective or retired employees, or take any steps to nullify, in whole or in part, the pension plans or program of The United Methodist Church by making contracts with outside parties.

Rationale:
Remove unnecessary/obsolete language regarding general agency pension credit from ¶ 1505; concepts are covered in the text of legacy defined benefit plan supplements to Retirement Plan for General Agencies. Also retitles paragraph as a result.

¶1506.

Petition Number: 20230-FA-¶1506; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Move Pension Duties and Responsibilities of Annual Conferences

Amend ¶ 1506 by deleting subparagraphs 1 through 5, 7 through 14, 16, and 18-20 and moving the content of those subparagraphs (except for the last sentence of subparagraph 18, which is deleted entirely) to be inserted as new subparagraphs 5 through 21 of ¶ 639, renumbering subparagraphs in ¶ 639 as necessary; deleting subparagraphs 15 and 17 of ¶ 1506 in their entirety; retaining subparagraph 6 of ¶ 1506; changing the title of ¶ 1506; and amending ¶ 639.5; reflected by the following:

¶ 1506. Comprehensive Benefit Funding PlansPowers, Duties, and Responsibilities of Annual Conferences

1. The annual conferences have the following powers, duties, and responsibilities with respect to clergy benefit plans administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits:
   
   (a) executing an adoption agreement, including making any optional elections; (b) enrolling clergy; (c) making contributions; (d) determining the appointment status of a clergyperson for a given period, including the classification of the clergyperson and his or her full-time or part-time status; (e) reporting on a clergyperson’s compensation; (f) determining a clergyperson’s conference relationship status, including the termination thereof; (g) determining a clergyperson’s leave of absence status; (h) reporting on any waivers of plan participation made by a clergyperson; and (i) determining the retirement status of a clergyperson, including determining how many years of service a clergyperson has earned toward the number prescribed in the Book of Discipline to qualify for retirement.

2. The annual conference, on recommendation of the conference Board of Pensions, shall determine the admissibility and validity of pre-January 1, 1982 service approved, or compensation considered, for pension credit, subject to the provisions of the Discipline and the rules and regulations of the pension and benefit funds, plans, and programs of The United Methodist Church.

3. Concerning the normal conditions for pension credit and pro-rata pension credit, the following provisions shall apply for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982, in determining approval for pension credit, eligibility for pension, and allocation of responsibility:

   a) Full Pension Credit — Full pension credit may be granted for persons not meeting some or all of the above conditions by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in the annual conference on recommendation of the conference board of pensions:

   b) Service of a local pastor prior to 1982 may be approved for pension credit only by vote of the annual conference, on recommendation of the conference board of pensions, after consultation with the district superintendents. If such credit is granted, it should be included under the Discipline question, “What other personal notation should be made?”

   c) Upon recommendation of the conference board of pensions and by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in the annual conference, pension credit may be granted to a clergy member in full connection, provisional member, or associate member of the conference on account of full-time service previously rendered as an approved local pastor or approved supply pastor to an institution, organization, or agency, which in the judgment of the annual conference rendered to it some form of service sufficient to warrant pension credit; provided, however, that such institution, organization, or agency shall accept and pay such apportionment as the conference may require.

4. If the conference board of pensions so recommends, a pension shall be payable on account of pension credit for service prior to 1982 for an ordained minister from another Christian denomination who has rendered not less than four consecutive years of full-time service with pension credit for service prior to 1982 or with full participation in the Comprehensive Protection Plan since 1981, or a combination thereof, in one annual conference while qualified under ¶ 346.2; who has attained the age of voluntary retirement for a conference clergy member.

5. The annual conference, on recommendation of the conference board of pensions, shall have the power to revise, correct, or adjust a clergyperson’s record of pension
credit as set forth in his or her service record to align such record with the *Discipline* and Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program).

Prior to the revision of such record, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may be requested to review relevant data and report its findings thereon. Such revisions, corrections, and adjustments shall be published in the journal of the annual conference in answer to Business of the Annual Conference questions and shall be reported to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits by the conference board of pensions.

6. Each annual conference shall develop, adopt, and implement a formal comprehensive funding plan or plans for funding all of its benefit obligations. The funding plan or plans shall be submitted annually to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for review and be approved annually by the annual conference, following the receipt and inclusion of a favorable written opinion from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. In addition, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall present a quadrennial report to General Conference concerning the long-term benefit liabilities of the denomination. Therefore, each annual conference shall provide to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits information periodically requested.

7. The responsibility for pension for service approved for pension credit under Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) shall rest with the annual conference in which the service was rendered; provided, however, that in the event of mergers, unions, boundary changes, or transfers of churches, such responsibility shall rest with the successor annual conference within whose geographical boundaries the charge is located.

8. Pension for service approved for pension credit by an annual conference shall be provided by the annual conference under one of the pension funds, plans, or programs administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church.

9. An annual conference may not make any arrangement with a life insurance company for the purchase of annuities for the benefit of individual effective or retired clergy or take any steps to nullify, in whole or in part, the pension plans and programs of The United Methodist Church by making contracts with outside parties.

10. Other Annual Conference Organizations—

a) Annual conferences, hereinafter called conferences, are authorized to establish, incorporate, and maintain investment funds, preachers’ aid societies, and organizations and funds of similar character, under such names, plans, rules, and regulations as they may determine, the directors of which shall be elected or otherwise designated by the conference, where permissible under the laws of the state of incorporation, and the income from which shall be applied to the support of the pension, health, and welfare benefit programs for clergy through the conference board of pensions.

b) Distributable pension, health, and welfare benefit funds from all sources shall be disbursed by or under the direction of the conference board of pensions, excepting only such funds as are otherwise restricted by specific provisions or limitations in gifts, devises, bequests, trusts, pledges, deeds, or other similar instruments, which restrictions and limitations shall be observed.

c) It shall not be permissible for any conference or permanent fund organization thereof to deprive its beneficiaries who are beneficiaries in other conferences of the privilege of sharing in the distribution of the earned income of such funds through the clearinghouse administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

d) Each conference, on recommendation of its conference board of pensions or one of the organizations mentioned in § 10 above, may select a Sunday in each year to be observed in the churches as Retired Ministers Day, in honor of the retired clergy, their spouses, and the surviving spouses of clergy in recognition of the Church’s responsibility for their support. The bishop may request each conference in the area to insert a Retired Ministers Day in its calendar.

11. A conference board of pensions may make special grants to clergy or former clergy of an annual conference who have served under appointment in that conference; or to their spouses, former spouses, surviving former spouses, or surviving dependent children (including adult dependent children). A report of such special grants shall be made annually to the annual conference.

12. Clergy members in full connection, provisional members, and associate members in an annual conference who voluntarily withdraw from the ministry of The United Methodist Church to enter the ministry of another church or denomination, on the attainment of age sixty-two and on recommendation of the conference board of pensions and a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in any annual conference in which approved service was rendered prior to January 1, 1982, or the legal successor, may be recognized and granted approved pension service rendered in that conference.

13. The responsibility for providing pension on account of service rendered prior to January 1, 1982, in a missionary conference, provisional annual conference, or former mission within the United States or Puerto Rico...
that has been approved for pension credit shall rest jointly with: (a) the missionary conference, provisional annual conference, or former mission concerned; (b) the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits with funds provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration; and (c) the General Board of Global Ministries. The revenue for pension purposes covering such service shall be provided by the aforesaid parties in accordance with such plan or plans as may be mutually agreed to by them.

14. Pension and benefit contributions are the responsibility of the Plan Sponsor for participants in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan. Unless otherwise determined by vote of the annual, missionary, or provisional conference, the treasurer of a local church or pastoral charge shall remit such contributions related to the participant’s compensation that is provided from local church funds to the Plan Sponsor. If compensation from the local church or pastoral charge is supplemented from other church sources, pension and benefit contributions related to such supplements shall be paid from that same source. If the entire compensation for a participant is from a salary-paying unit other than a local church or a pastoral charge, the unit responsible for compensation shall remit the pension and benefit contributions to the Plan Sponsor. Nothing in this paragraph shall be understood as preventing an annual, missionary, or provisional conference from raising part or all of the annual contributions for the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) or the Comprehensive Protection Plan. The compensation that is provided from local church funds to the Plan Sponsor from local church funds to the Plan Sponsor is the basic contribution base of the Comprehensive Protection Plan.

15. Effective January 1, 2007, pension contributions will be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan by an apportionment to the churches of the conference and remitting payments to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits on behalf of all the pastors covered; there is no time limit on this provision.

16. An annual conference may establish a pension support fund to be administered by the conference board of pensions. Local churches may request pension assistance from this fund when special circumstances arise that result in nonpayment of pension contributions and/or apportionments for pension and benefit purposes. The board shall remit its estimate of the amount required to the conference council on finance and administration, which shall include it in its recommendation to the conference. If the amount is approved by the conference, it shall be apportioned as an item of clergy support.

17. The annual conference board of pensions, in consultation with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, shall have the responsibility to enroll clergy of the annual conference in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan in accordance with the provisions of such plans.

18. Optional provisions contained in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and Comprehensive Protection Plan may be adopted by vote of the annual conference subsequent to the receipt of a recommendation from the conference board of pensions. Effective January 1, 2007, contributions and credited service are determined in accordance with the provisions of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program):

19. On or before December 31, 2008, each annual conference’s board of pensions or other agency authorized by the annual conference must submit a generally accepted financial valuation, such as in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standard No. 106, as amended, of its projected medical liabilities for its population covered by its employer retiree health care plan to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and must submit a similar report biennially thereafter.

20. On or before December 31, 2008, each annual conference 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 other annual conferences or general agencies. For the purpose of this paragraph, portability encompasses credit given for service outside the annual conference within the denomination to clergy and lay employees toward (a) eligibility for health care coverage in retirement and (b) accrual of annual conference subsidies toward or annual conference cost sharing of the cost of health care coverage.
compensation; \( f \) determining a clergyperson’s conference relationship status, including the termination thereof; \( g \) determining a clergyperson’s leave of absence status; \( h \) reporting on any waivers of plan participation made by a clergyperson; and \( i \) determining the retirement status of a clergyperson, including determining how many years of service a clergyperson has earned toward the number prescribed in the Book of Discipline to qualify for retirement.

6. The annual conference, on recommendation of the conference board of pensions, shall determine the admissibility and validity of pre-January 1, 1982 service approved, or compensation considered, for pension credit, subject to the provisions of the Discipline and the rules and regulations of the pension and benefit funds, plans, and programs of The United Methodist Church.

7. Concerning the normal conditions for pension credit and pro rata pension credit, the following provisions shall apply for service rendered prior to January 1, 1982, in determining approval for pension credit, eligibility for pension, and allocation of responsibility:

\( a \) Full Pension Credit—Full pension credit may be granted for persons not meeting some or all of the above conditions by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in the annual conference on recommendation of the conference board of pensions.

\( b \) Service of a local pastor prior to 1982 may be approved for pension credit only by vote of the annual conference, on recommendation of the conference board of pensions, after consultation with the district superintendents. If such credit is granted, it should be included under the Discipline question, “What other personal notation should be made?”

\( c \) Upon recommendation of the conference board of pensions and by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in the annual conference, pension credit may be granted to a clergy member in full connection, provisional member, or associate member of the conference on account of full-time service previously rendered as an approved local pastor or approved supply pastor to an institution, organization, or agency, which in the judgment of the annual conference rendered to it some form of service sufficient to warrant pension credit; provided, however, that such institution, organization, or agency shall accept and pay such appointment as the conference may require.

8. If the conference board of pensions so recommends, a pension shall be payable on account of pension credit for service prior to 1982 for an ordained minister from another Christian denomination who shall have rendered not less than four consecutive years of full-time service with pension credit for service prior to 1982 or with full participation in the Comprehensive Protection Plan since 1981, or a combination thereof, in one annual conference while qualified under \( \S \) 346.2, who has attained the age of voluntary retirement for a conference clergy member.

9. The annual conference, on recommendation of the conference board of pensions, shall have the power to revise, correct, or adjust a clergyperson’s record of pension credit as set forth in his or her service record to align such record with the Discipline and Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program).

Prior to the revision of such record, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may be requested to review relevant data and report its findings thereon. Such revisions, corrections, and adjustments shall be published in the journal of the annual conference in answer to Business of the Annual Conference questions and shall be reported to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits by the conference board of pensions.

10. The responsibility for pension for service approved for pension credit under Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) shall rest with the annual conference in which the service was rendered; provided, however, that in the event of mergers, unions, boundary changes, or transfers of churches, such responsibility shall rest with the successor annual conference within whose geographical boundaries the charge is located.

11. Pension for service approved for pension credit by an annual conference shall be provided by the annual conference under one of the pension funds, plans, or programs administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church.

12. An annual conference may not make any arrangement with a life insurance company for the purchase of annuities for the benefit of individual effective or retired clergy or take any steps to nullify, in whole or in part, the pension plans and programs of The United Methodist Church by making contracts with outside parties.

13. Other Annual Conference Organizations—\( a \) Annual conferences, hereinafter called conferences, are authorized to establish, incorporate, and maintain investment funds, preachers’ aid societies, and organizations and funds of similar character, under such names, plans, rules, and regulations as they may determine, the directors of which shall be elected or otherwise designated by the conference, where permissible under the laws of the state of incorporation, and the income from which shall be applied to the support of the pension, health, and welfare benefit programs for clergy through the conference board of pensions.
b) Distributable pension, health, and welfare benefit funds from all sources shall be disbursed by or under the direction of the conference board of pensions, excepting only such funds as are otherwise restricted by specific provisions or limitations in gifts, devises, bequests, trusts, pledges, deeds, or other similar instruments, which restrictions and limitations shall be observed.

c) It shall not be permissible for any conference or permanent fund organization thereof to deprive its beneficiaries who are beneficiaries in other conferences of the privilege of sharing in the distribution of the earned income of such funds through the clearinghouse administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

d) Each conference, on recommendation of its conference board of pensions or one of the organizations mentioned in subparagraph a above, may select a Sunday in each year to be observed in the churches as Retired Ministers Day, in honor of the retired clergy, their spouses, and the surviving spouses of clergy in recognition of the church’s responsibility for their support. The bishop may request each conference in the area to insert a Retired Ministers Day in its calendar.

14. A conference board of pensions may make special grants to clergy or former clergy of an annual conference who have served under appointment in that conference; or to their spouses, former spouses, surviving former spouses, or surviving dependent children (including adult dependent children). A report of such special grants shall be made annually to the annual conference.

15. Clergy members in full connection, provisional members, and associate members in an annual conference who voluntarily withdraw from the ministry of The United Methodist Church to enter the ministry of another church or denomination, on the attainment of age sixty-two and on recommendation of the conference board of pensions and a three-fourths vote of those present and voting in any annual conference in which approved service was rendered prior to January 1, 1982, or the legal successor, may be recognized and granted approved pension service rendered in that conference.

16. The responsibility for providing pension on account of service rendered prior to January 1, 1982, in a missionary conference, provisional annual conference, or former mission within the United States or Puerto Rico that has been approved for pension credit shall rest jointly with: (a) the missionary conference, provisional annual conference, or former mission concerned, (b) the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits with funds provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration, and (c) the General Board of Global Ministries. The revenue for pension purposes covering such service shall be provided by the aforesaid parties in accordance with such plan or plans as may be mutually agreed to by them.

17. Pension and benefit contributions are the responsibility of the Plan Sponsor for participants in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and the Comprehensive Protection Plan. Unless otherwise determined by vote of the annual, missionary, or provisional conference, the treasurer of a local church or pastoral charge shall remit such contributions related to the participant’s compensation that is provided from local church funds to the Plan Sponsor. If compensation from the local church or pastoral charge is supplemented from other church sources, pension and benefit contributions related to such supplements shall be paid from that same source. If the entire compensation for a participant is from a salary-paying unit other than a local church or a pastoral charge, the unit responsible for compensation shall remit the pension and benefit contributions to the Plan Sponsor. Nothing in this paragraph shall be understood as preventing an annual, missionary, or provisional conference from raising part or all of the annual contributions for the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) or the Comprehensive Protection Plan by an apportionment to the churches of the conference and remitting payments to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits on behalf of all the pastors covered; there is no time limit on this provision.

18. An annual conference may establish a pension support fund to be administered by the conference board of pensions. Local churches may request pension assistance from this fund when special circumstances arise that result in nonpayment of pension contributions and/or apportionments for pension and benefit purposes. The conference board of pensions shall present its estimate of the amount required to the conference council on finance and administration, which shall include it in its recommendation to the conference. If the amount is approved by the conference, it shall be apportioned as an item of clergy support.

19. Optional provisions contained in the Clergy Retirement Security Program (or any successor clergy pension or retirement plan or program) and Comprehensive Protection Plan may be adopted by vote of the annual conference subsequent to the receipt of a recommendation from the conference board of pensions.

20. On or before December 31, 2008, each annual conference’s board of pensions or other agency authorized by the annual conference must submit a generally accepted financial valuation, such as in accordance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standard No. 106, as
amended, of its projected medical liabilities for its population covered by its employer retiree health care plan to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, and must submit a similar report biennially thereafter.

21. On or before December 31, 2008, each annual conference 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 other annual conferences or general agencies. For the purpose of this paragraph, portability encompasses credit given for service outside the annual conference within the denomination to clergy and lay employees toward (a) eligibility for health care coverage in retirement and (b) accrual of annual conference subsidies toward or annual conference cost-sharing of the cost of health care coverage.

225. Reports to and Responsibilities Regarding the General Board— The conference board of pensions shall have the powers and responsibilities with respect to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits described in ¶ 1506 and shall report to the general board immediately following the session of the conference, in such form as required by the general board, the names and years of service approved for pre-1982 pension credit for each eligible person and the names and addresses of clergy who are members of funds, plans, or programs administered by the general board. . . .

Rationale:
Annual conference board of pensions powers and duties should move from ¶ 1506 (Wespath) to ¶ 639 (annual conferences)—a more intuitive Discipline location. Subparagraphs 15, 17 and part of 18 are redundant, unnecessary, or covered in plan documents. Retain Wespath-focused subparagraph 6, funding plans, and rename ¶ 1506.

¶1507.

Petition Number: 20231-FA-¶1507; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Financing Pension and Benefit Programs

Amend ¶ 1507 as follows; then move the paragraph in its entirety, deleting it from the ¶ 1500s, and inserting its content as new subparagraphs at the end of ¶ 639; renumber affected paragraphs and subparagraphs as necessary:

¶ 1507. Financing Pension and Benefit Programs—The annual conference shall be responsible for annually providing moneys in the amount necessary to meet the requirements of the pension and benefit funds, plans, and programs of the conference.

1. The conference board of pensions shall compute the amount to be apportioned annually to meet the requirements of the pension and benefit programs of the conference.

2. After consultation with the conference board of pensions, the conference council on finance and administration shall report to the annual conference the amounts computed by the conference board of pensions that are required to meet the needs of the pension, benefit, and relief programs of the conference.

3. Distributable pension funds from all sources, unless restricted by specific provisions or limitations, shall be disbursed by, or under the direction of, the conference board of pensions.

4. The conference board of pensions may accumulate a fund from the income for pension purposes in order to stabilize the pension program of the conference.

Rationale:
Provisions of annual conference responsibilities related to financing pensions and benefits currently reflected in the ¶ 1500s (Wespath paragraphs) should be move to the ¶ 600s (annual conference paragraphs), which seems an intuitive better placement of the text in the Discipline.

¶1508.

Petition Number: 20232-FA-¶1508; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Conference Pension Conflict of Interest Policies

Amend ¶ 1508 as follows; then move the amended paragraph in its entirety, deleting it from the ¶ 1500s, and inserting its content as new subparagraphs at the end of ¶ 639; renumber affected paragraphs and subparagraphs as necessary:

¶ 1508. Policies Related to Conflict of Interest and Investment Management—The following rules shall apply to the financial administration of annual conference pension and pension-related funds:

1. A member of the conference board of pensions connected or interested in any way with the securities, real estate, or other forms of investment sold to or purchased from such funds, or with an insurance program or a contract under consideration by the conference board of pensions, shall be ineligible to participate in the deliberation of the investment committee or of the conference board of pensions or to vote in connection therewith.
2. No officer or member of a conference agency handling such funds shall receive a personal commission, bonus, or remuneration, direct or indirect, in connection with the purchase or sale of any property, the loan of any money, the letting of any annuity or insurance contract, the making or acceptance of any assignment, pledge, or mortgage to secure the payment of any loan, or for the purchase or sale of any securities or other properties from or to that agency, or be eligible to obtain a loan in any amount from funds committed to the care of that agency. No investment shall be purchased from or sold to any member of the conference board of pensions or any member of the family of a member of the conference board of pensions.

3. To prevent development of any conflict of interest or preferential treatment and to preserve goodwill and confidence throughout the Church, no local church, Church-related institution, or organization thereof shall be eligible to obtain a loan in any amount from such funds.38

4. The principle of diversification of investments shall be observed, with the agency conference board of pensions encouraged to invest in institutions, companies, corporations, or funds that make a positive contribution toward the realization of the goals outlined in the Social Principles of our church, however with primary consideration given to the soundness and safety of such investments.

5. Real property may hereafter be accepted as consideration for gift annuity agreements only with the stipulation that the annuity shall not exceed the net income from the property until such property shall have been liquidated. Upon liquidation, the annuity shall be paid upon the net proceeds at the established annuity rate.

6. An annual conference agency handling such funds shall not offer higher rates of annuity than those listed in the annuity schedule approved by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

57. a) There shall be printed in the annual conference journal a list of the investments held by each agency handling such funds directly or indirectly under the control of the annual conference, or such list may be distributed directly to the members of the annual conference at their request.

b) The conference board of pensions shall require an annual audit of pension and pension-related funds setting forth the total asset value of such funds and the distribution of income from such funds from persons and organizations appointed or employed for the management of these funds.

68. The borrowing of money in any conference year by a conference corporation or organization to enable the conference board of pensions to meet the requirements of the pension and benefit programs shall be done only on authority of the conference granted by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting.

79. Depositories and Bonding— a) The conference board of pensions shall designate a bank or banks or other depository or depositories for deposit of the funds held by the board and may require a depository bond from such depository or depositories.

b) The board, through the conference council on finance and administration, shall provide a fidelity bond in suitable amount for all persons handling its funds.

Rationale:

Annual conference policies related conflicts of interest in investment management should move from the ¶ 1500s (Wespath paragraphs) to the ¶ 600s (annual conferences), which seems a more intuitive location for the Discipline text. In addition, subparagraphs 5 and 6 appear non-germane to management of pension/benefit related funds, or

¶1509.

Petition Number: 20233-FA-¶1509-G; Starnes, Thomas - Washington, DC, USA.

Disaffiliation of Local Churches at Scale

Amend, effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference, Chapter Five, Administrative Order, Section IX., by adding a new subparagraph to the end of ¶ 1509, Joint Distributing Committees, as follows:

¶ 1509.

***

5. If (a) local churches within an annual conference vote pursuant to another provision of the Discipline (e.g., ¶ 2554) to end their connectional relationship with The United Methodist Church in order to join an association of other such local churches; and (b) the local churches within an annual conference that so vote represent 60 percent (60%) or more of the total number of local churches in that conference, or of the aggregate apportionment giving in that conference, or of the total professing membership of that conference; and (c) the association of local churches that those local churches have joined or plan to join has formed a new denominational expression of Methodism, which has entered into an ecumenical agreement with The United Methodist Church under another provision of the Discipline (e.g., ¶ 2554), then in those circumstances the provisions of ¶ 1509 shall be applied to equitably allocate the assets and liabilities of the annual conference. Notwithstanding subparagraph 1, however, the membership of the joint distributing committee in this circumstance
shall be three members elected by the annual conference to represent the interests of local churches intending to withdraw from The United Methodist Church; three members elected by the local churches within the same annual conference that intend to remain in The United Methodist Church; and up to three members appointed by the applicable jurisdictional conference, or by the jurisdictional conference’s college of bishops on an ad interim basis, which may include representatives of another annual conference that may be merged with the annual conference as a result of the circumstances that trigger the application of this subparagraph. Pension liabilities of the local churches that are withdrawing from The United Methodist Church shall be handled in accordance with other provisions the Discipline that address circumstances in which groups of local churches withdraw from The United Methodist Church (e.g., ¶ 2555). As needed, the Joint Distributing Committee may address complications that may arise in allocation of pension assets and liabilities pursuant to such other provisions of the Discipline. The terms of this subparagraph shall be effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference. If any provision in this paragraph is determined to be invalid or unconstitutional, that decision will not affect the remainder of the provisions.

Rationale:

The Joint Distributing Committee process provides a familiar, efficient, and equitable way of allocating assets and liabilities, with input from affected stakeholders, in circumstances in which significant percentage of local churches within an annual conference withdraw from The United Methodist Church in order to join an association of other such

¶1509.

Petition Number: 20234-FA-¶1509; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #17—Pension Resource Allocation Formula

ADD New ¶ 1510 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. If a U.S. annual conference joins a Full Communion Expression, it shall contribute to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits the amount necessary to fully fund its obligations, as calculated herein, under the Clergy Retirement Security Program. The former annual conference’s sponsorship of and legal responsibilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall continue as a self-governing Methodist church or affiliated autonomous Methodist church. However, accruals and benefit improvements under the Clergy Retirement Security Program shall cease upon the former annual conference joining a Full Communion Expression. The sponsorship and administration of the Clergy Retirement Security Program for the former annual conference will be sequestered and treated separately from all other annual conferences that remain part of The United Methodist Church. For purposes of administering the Clergy Retirement Security Program in this manner, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and empowered to:

a) Identify which of the former annual conference’s plan participants have chosen to remain with The United Methodist Church and those who joined a Full Communion Expression based on records of service and membership of the annual conferences; non-clergy participants, e.g., surviving spouses, contingent annuitants, and alternate payees, will be deemed to remain associated with The United Methodist Church;

b) Calculate and sequester the assets of the former annual conference using the Gross Asset Percentage into two or more accounts. The total assets so sequestered shall equal the former annual conference’s total assets. A sequestered account shall be established for each Full Communion Expression having members within the geographic boundary of the former annual conference and one account for the local churches choosing to remain as a local United Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 680. The total amount of the assets in each account shall be calculated by multiplying the total assets by the Gross Asset Percentage of each Full Communion Expression. For Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, additional assets may be added to or transferred between such segregated accounts by taking into account any additional local churches that affiliate with a new expression or reaffiliate with The United Methodist Church. Such transfer shall be equal to the amount contributed by or on behalf of the local churches to the sequestered fund adjusted for any gains or losses suffered by the fund. After fiscal year 2027 the assets shall remain fixed.
c) Calculate the amount of any plan contributions required to be made by the Full Communion Expression’s annual conference and the annual conference of The United Methodist Church to satisfy liability for any defined benefit plan by using the Gross Asset Percentage formula to determine the Full Communion Expression’s annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program and The United Methodist Church’s annual conference plan sponsor contributions. The Full Communion Expression’s annual conference and The United Methodist Church’s annual conference plan contribution shall equal the annual conference’s total required contribution multiplied by the Gross Asset Percentage. The initial amount of plan contribution shall remain in effect through December 31, 2025. For Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, the contributions shall be recalculated taking into account any additional annual conferences or local churches that affiliate with a new expression or reaffiliate with The United Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 680. As of fiscal year 2027 the percentage calculation shall remain fixed; however, it is recognized that although the percentage shall remain fixed the total amount of contribution may vary. If a Full Communion Expression does not satisfy any required ongoing contributions within a reasonable time under this paragraph or the terms of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, or the Full Communion Expression elects not to or fails to satisfy its legal sponsorship of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall convert all accrued pension benefits of the Full Communion Expression’s assigned participants to an actuarially equivalent account balance, adjusted, as necessary, to take into account the former annual conference’s funding level of the Clergy Retirement Security Program. Such account balances, and all other retirement account balances, will be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may also take such actions if the Clergy Retirement Security Program is amended to require an account balance conversion for similar classes of participants, or if continuing administration for the former annual conference is no longer administratively reasonable.

d) Collaborate with the former annual conference or the Full Communion Expressions to determine how plan design changes may be requested by the former annual conference or Full Communion Expressions, and the scope and administrative reasonableness of amendments that may be made to the separate frozen part of the Clergy Retirement Security Program; and

e) Amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference to conform with this paragraph of the Book of Discipline.

3. Each Full Communion Expression annual conference shall be responsible for their pro rata share of administrative costs incurred by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits by virtue of this paragraph. Such pro rata share shall be calculated using the Gross Asset Percentage for the applicable period.

4. Pursuant to ¶ 1504 subparagraph 17 of the Book of Discipline, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is hereby authorized and empowered to collaborate with any Full Communion Expression to establish retirement security programs to be sponsored by a Full Communion Expression or its annual conferences, agencies and institutions. Such plans may be designed to be in place effective August 15, 2022.

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 a slightly

¶2500.

Petition Number: 20701-FA-¶2500; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

Pensions Matters for Disaffiliation by US Annual Conferences or Groups of Local Churches

Add a new ¶ 2555 to the Book of Discipline that reads as follows:

¶2555. Pension Obligations and Related Procedures for Disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church by U.S. Annual Conferences or Groups of Local Churches

1. Disaffiliating Church Units—Notwithstanding other paragraphs of the Book of Discipline to the contrary, if an annual conference located in a jurisdictional conference, i.e., a U.S. annual conference, or a group of local churches from a U.S. annual conference or annual conferences, disaffiliates or withdraws from, or otherwise ends or changes its connectional relationship with, The United Methodist Church or its successor ("The United Methodist Church") to form a new expression of Methodism, or join a new Wesleyan or Methodist denomination (any of which shall be referred to as a “Self-Governing Methodist Church” for purposes of this paragraph), whether through a formal process established by the Book of Discipline,
e.g., ¶ 2553, or in any other way, and the Self-Governing Methodist Church is sufficiently large enough in membership, financially viable, and sufficiently organized structurally or corporately as a convention or association of churches to continue to be a plan sponsor of a spun-off portion the Clergy Retirement Security Program, as determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (for the purposes of this paragraph, such an annual conference shall be referred to as a “Disaffiliating Conference” and such a group of local churches shall be referred to as “Transferring Local Churches”), the pension obligations under the connectional Clergy Retirement Security Program of the Disaffiliating Conference or of the Transferring Local Churches, and the pensions and accrued benefits of those individuals impacted by the disaffiliation or withdrawal, will be governed by this paragraph. Whether a group of disaffiliating local churches from one U.S. annual conference is treated as “Transferring Local Churches” or, due to the size and membership of such local churches relative to the U.S. annual conference, is treated as a “Disaffiliating Conference,” will be determined by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, as administrator and trustee, based on the facts and circumstances.

2. Determination Period—During a “determination period,” a Disaffiliating Conference or a U.S. annual conference or conferences with Transferring Local Churches must continue contributions to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to fund pension obligations as if the disaffiliation were not occurring, until the disaffiliation is final under the process established by the Book of Discipline or, if no such process is established, during a two-year period that begins, with respect to a Disaffiliating Conference, when the U.S. annual conference votes in favor of disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church and, with respect to Transferring Local Churches, when the Transferring Local Churches formally notify the impacted U.S. annual conference or conferences of such churches’ intent to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church to form or join a Self-Governing Methodist Church. With respect to a Self-Governing Methodist Church made up of both a Disaffiliating Conference and Transferring Local Churches, the two-year period will begin as of the earlier of the two dates above.

When such determination period ends, new service-based benefit accruals and individual account contributions under the Clergy Retirement Security Program will cease for participants of the Self-Governing Methodist Church, if such cessation has not already occurred under the terms of the program. The Self-Governing Methodist Church’s sponsorship of and legal responsibilities under the Clergy Retirement Security Program will continue as a self-governing Methodist church, affiliated autonomous Methodist church, or separate convention or association of churches. However, the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s sponsorship and administration will be sequestered and treated separately from all annual conferences that remain part of The United Methodist Church (it will be a “Spun-Off Plan” of the Self-Governing Methodist Church), and will not benefit from the connectional support of other plan sponsors.

3. Administration—For purposes of administering the Clergy Retirement Security Program under the terms of this paragraph, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and empowered to:

   a) During the determination period, with the assistance of the Disaffiliating Conference(s), Transferring Churches, and remaining United Methodist annual conferences, identify which active and retired clergy disaffiliate or withdraw from The United Methodist Church by becoming members of the Self-Governing Methodist Church, either through affirmative choice or by a default rule; retired clergy who are members of a Disaffiliating Conference who do not affirmatively choose to remain members of The United Methodist Church, through a request to transfer conference membership or otherwise, will be considered members of the Self-Governing Methodist Church, unless a formal disaffiliation process for U.S. annual conferences established by the General Conference or the Book of Discipline requires different treatment; with respect to active and retired clergy who are members of a U.S. annual conference that is not disaffiliating but includes Transferring Local Churches, such clergy who do not affirmatively choose to disaffiliate or withdraw and become members of the Self-Governing Methodist Church will remain members of their U.S. annual conference;

   b) During the determination period, identify all local churches that choose to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church by becoming local churches of the Self-Governing Methodist Church;

   c) Exempt active clergy who disaffiliate or withdraw from The United Methodist Church during the determination period by becoming members of the Self-Governing Methodist Church from the nondisciplinary legislation amending the Clergy Retirement Security Program enacted by General Conference 2019, which generally converts the defined benefit accruals of active clergy terminating membership in The United Methodist Church into an account balance;

   d) Exempt local churches from the withdrawal pension liability contribution requirement of ¶ 1504.23 and
¶ 2553 of the *Book of Discipline*, if the local churches are (1) units of a Disaffiliating Conference, (2) Transferring Local Churches that choose to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church by becoming a local church unit of the Self-Governing Methodist Church, or (3) local churches that choose not to remain a constituent unit of a Disaffiliating Conference but rather remain part of The United Methodist Church, *e.g.*, by transfer to a United Methodist annual conference:

c) At the end of the determination period, calculate and sequester the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s share of defined benefit plan assets and liabilities (i.e., assets and liabilities associated with the Clergy Retirement Security Program, Ministerial Pension Plan annuities, and the Pre-82 plan), in a manner deemed by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to be prudent and equitable, with such share reflecting the clergy disaffiliations in a) above; however, plan assets and liabilities attributable to clergy who do not disaffiliate under a) above with their Disaffiliating Conference will be reassigned to another annual conference in the manner prescribed by the applicable disaffiliation process established by the *Book of Discipline* or, if such a process has not been established, by the reorganization of the impacted jurisdictional conference, if applicable, or in a manner deemed by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits to be prudent and equitable;

d) Assign to the Self-Governing Methodist Church the defined benefit liabilities that relate to the clergy that disaffiliate or withdraw under a) above, as well as any liabilities that relate to inactive participants (other than retired clergy) that were the obligation of a Disaffiliating Conference; such assigned liabilities that relate to a participant whose benefits were accrued from service to multiple U.S. annual conferences will include the entire pension liability attributable to such participant; such liabilities that relate to an inactive participant (other than retired clergy) of a Disaffiliating Conference will be assigned to the Self-Governing Methodist Church only if the Disaffiliating Conference was the final U.S. annual conference for which service was performed that resulted in the accrual of some or all of such inactive participant’s pension benefits;

e) Assign to a sequestered funding account in the Spun-Off Plan of the Self-Governing Methodist Church defined benefit assets from the funding account of the Disaffiliating Conference(s) or the U.S. annual conference or conferences from which Transferring Local Churches are disaffiliating, with the amount of such assets being based on the liabilities assigned in f) above, and with such liabilities measured using factors corresponding to those used when determining annual conference plan sponsor contributions to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (“funding factors”); such assignment of defined benefit assets shall prioritize funding for inactive participants (including retired clergy), so that liabilities of all inactive participants (whether assigned to the Self-Governing Methodist Church or remaining with a U.S. annual conference) will be assigned a corresponding amount of plan assets equal to 100 percent of such liabilities, and liabilities of all active clergy will be assigned plan assets based on the funding level that remains, not to exceed 100 percent of such liabilities of active participants, and any remaining assets will be assigned proportionately to inactive participants in addition to the first 100 percent of liabilities so assigned; notwithstanding the foregoing, if a funding account from which defined benefit assets are assigned is funded at a level that is greater than 100 percent of the total pension liabilities when measured using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider (“market factors”), the first step above will assign plan assets that equal 100 percent of the liabilities of inactive participants when measured using market factors, and the second step above will be applied without the 100 percent of liabilities limitation;

h) At the end of the determination period, assess whether the disaffiliation or the assignment of defined benefit plan assets and liabilities determined above creates a material risk of a plan sponsor being unable to make future contributions; if such a risk is created, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may instead convene a joint distributing committee, under the terms of ¶ 1509, to assist and advise in the assignment of plan assets and liabilities, provided, however, that representation on the joint distributing committee in this circumstance also shall include members representing the interests of the Disaffiliating Conference or Transferring Local Churches, or both, and to the extent applicable and necessary, members representing the interests of neighboring annual conferences;

i) After the determination period, calculate the amount of any plan contributions required to be made by the Self-Governing Methodist Church in the future to its sequestered funding account, as part of its ongoing sponsorship of its Spun-Off Plan;

j) Collaborate with the Self-Governing Methodist Church to determine how plan design changes may be requested, and the scope and administrative reasonableness of amendments that may be made to the Spun-off Plan, as well as any other plans sponsored by the Self-Governing Methodist Church and administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits; and

k) Amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program effective as of the close of the 2020 General Conference
to conform to this paragraph, and establish written procedures consistent with this paragraph to administer its provisions.

4. **Alternative Payments**—Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a Self-Governing Methodist Church (which shall include a Disaffiliating Conference or Transferring Local Churches, before becoming a Self-Governing Methodist Church) notifies the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits during the determination period of its intent to terminate or decline sponsorship of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, leaving all pension obligations with The United Methodist Church, the Self-Governing Methodist Church must contribute a withdrawal liability to the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, which shall be used to fund the Clergy Retirement Security Program. If the Self-Governing Methodist Church consists of a Disaffiliating Conference, or a Disaffiliating Conference and Transferring Local Churches, the amount of the withdrawal liability shall equal the total underfunding of pension liabilities that would be assigned to the Self-Governing Methodist Church above, with such liabilities being measured using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider. If the Self-Governing Methodist Church consists solely of Transferring Local Churches, the amount of the withdrawal liability shall equal the aggregate of the Transferring Local Churches’ share of unfunded pension obligations, calculated pursuant to ¶ 1504.23. In addition, clergy disaffiliating or withdrawing from The United Methodist Church to become members of a Self-Governing Methodist Church that has indicated its intent to terminate or decline sponsorship of a Spun-Off Plan, shall have their defined benefit accruals under the Clergy Retirement Security Program converted to an account balance equivalent under the terms of the plan amendment approved by the 2019 General Conference, but only after the Self-Governing Methodist Church contributes the withdrawal liability payment described above.

5. **Failure to Support**—After the determination period, if the Self-Governing Methodist Church elects not to or fails to satisfy its responsibilities regarding sponsorship of its sequestered part of the Clergy Retirement Security Program, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized to assume control of plan sponsorship decisions (without assuming funding responsibility) regarding the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s Spun-Off Plan. If such control is assumed, the assets of the sequestered funding account of the Self-Governing Methodist Church will be prioritized in favor of inactive plan participants (including retired clergy), with liabilities for such participants being apportioned plan assets to fully fund such liabilities when measured using market factors, and the remaining assets within the sequestered funding account being apportioned to liabilities with respect to active clergy participants. If, after such funding prioritization, the funding level of liabilities for active clergy participants is below 100 percent when liabilities are measured using funding factors, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized to reduce benefit levels of such active clergy participants until such benefit liabilities are 100 percent funded when measured using funding factors. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is also authorized to, in its discretion or at the direction of the Self-Governing Methodist Church, convert all accrued pension benefits of the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s active clergy participants to actuarially equivalent account balances, adjusted, as necessary, to take into account the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s funding level with respect to active participants. Such account balances, and all other retirement account balances of the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s participants, will be transferred to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, its successor, or a similar retirement account plan administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits may also convert defined benefit accruals in such manner for any of the Self-Governing Methodist Church’s plan participants, if the Clergy Retirement Security Program is amended to require an account balance conversion for similar classes of participants, or if continuing administration for the Self-Governing Methodist Church is no longer administratively feasible.

6. **Continuing as Plan Sponsor of Benefits Plans**—In accordance with ¶ 6 and ¶ 433, The United Methodist Church believes that a U.S. annual conference or a group of local churches that forms or joins a Self-Governing Methodist Church as described above shall continue to share common religious bonds and convictions with The United Methodist Church based on shared Wesleyan theology and tradition and Methodist roots, unless the Self-Governing Methodist Church expressly resolves to the contrary. As such, a Self-Governing Methodist Church shall continue to be eligible to sponsor the Clergy Retirement Security Program under the terms of this paragraph (i.e., the Spun-Off Plan), as well as voluntary employee benefit plans through the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits under Discipline ¶ 1504.2, subject to the applicable terms and conditions of the plans. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits is authorized and directed to amend the Comprehensive Protection Plan to account for the transition of clergy participants whose eligibility ceases when they become members of a Self-Governing Methodist Church.
7. Effective Date and Severability—The terms of this paragraph shall be effective at the close of the 2020 General Conference. If any provision of this paragraph is determined to be invalid, illegal, or unconstitutional, the remainder of this paragraph shall remain in full force and effect.

Rationale:
Provides a framework for handling of plan eligibility and pension/benefit obligations in the event groups of annual conferences or of local churches disaffiliate from The UMC; such obligations and related funding will be assigned equitably and prudently, in a manner that protects clergy pensions without imposing financial hardship on disaffiliating

\[2500.\]

Petition Number: 20704-FA-\[2500-G\]; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.

Plain Grace Plan #20—Compliance with Gracious Affiliation Agreement—Release of Trust Clause as to Local Church Property

ADD NEW \[2555\] to the Discipline as follows:

As used in this paragraph, Local Church Property is that property defined by Section VI of Chapter 6 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church as it is currently in effect. A Full Communion Expression that pays a sum equal to the net missional share for each fiscal year through 2028 or which has its net missional share satisfied as a cash payment under \[2554.1\] shall be entitled to have the Trust Clause released and assigned to it for all local churches belonging to the Full Communion Expression. This paragraph hereby authorizes annual conferences, districts, and all agencies and institutions of The United Methodist Church to execute such documents as may be necessary to effect such transfer. This paragraph shall not expire on December 31, 2028.

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 \[248A\], \[431A-F\], \[467-608\], 725, 1510, and \[2553-2555\]. This paragraph provides for release

\[2501.\]

Petition Number: 20235-FA-\[2501-G\]; Hill, Adrian Juamae - Park Ridge, IL, USA.

Two Year Suspension of the Trust Clause

ACTION: Amend Book of Discipline \[2501\], adding point 4:

4. The Trust Clause shall be suspended beginning January 1, 2021, and concluding December 31, 2022, during which time, if a local congregation, by action of a duly called charge conference, chooses to withdraw from The United Methodist Church may do so without financial ramifications. This two-year suspension of the trust clause would allow a congregation, regardless of size or resources, to retain their property, including any and all financial assets or debts on said property.

Rationale:
Leviticus 25 provides a model for restoration called the Year of Jubilee, which allowed for individuals to have their property restored after indebtedness. Congregations should be free to choose for themselves to stay or go without fear of losing their church home or the resources they have accumulated. Financial obligations
¶2501.1.
Petition Number: 20236-FA-¶2501.1; Girrell, Rebecca - Lebanon, NH, USA.

Requirement of the Trust Clause in the Case of Successor Entities

Amend ¶ 2501.1 by adding a new paragraph following the first paragraph (which currently ends “from their connection with the entire worldwide Church”):

This trust requirement must be maintained by The United Methodist Church and its successor denominations, institutions, and entities. In the event that an incorporated conference, agency, or organization of the denomination withdraws from or is removed from the denomination, the responsibility to hold and administer real and personal, tangible, and intangible property will remain with the incorporated entity and its successor.

Rationale:
The Trust Clause is an essential element of the polity of The UMC, but does not anticipate or account for successor movements or denominations, which may arise as the Spirit moves the church forward.

¶2501.2.
Petition Number: 20237-FA-¶2501.2; Temple, Chappell - Sugar Land, TX, USA.

Congregational Conscience in the Trust Clause

Amend ¶ 2501.2 by substitution of the following:

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 granted by the Discipline.

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 interest of creditors and third parties only to the extent authority is granted by the Discipline. In cases where the conscience of the congregation is in irreconcilable conflict with the practices or polity of the denomination, property may be released from the trust without financial penalty by a majority vote of the congregation’s membership, confirmed by a majority vote of the annual conference, provided that the congregation’s share of unfunded pension liabilities or other conference debt be satisfied.

¶2519.
Petition Number: 20238-FA-¶2519-G; Lopez, Joseph - Seattle, WA, USA.

Building a Fully Inclusive Church

Amend ¶ 2519:

Authorization and Establishment of District Boards of Church Location and Building—There shall be in each district of an annual conference a district board of church location and building. The board shall consist of the district superintendent and a minimum of six and a maximum of nine additional persons nominated by the district superintendent in consultation with the district nominating committee, if one exists, and elected annually by the annual conference, provided that in a district of great geographical extent an additional board may be so elected. It is recommended that the membership include one-third clergy, one-third laymen, one-third laywomen, and, where possible, should be inclusive of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, economic condition, and people with disabilities. These persons shall be professing members of The United Methodist Church. The members of the board, excluding the district superintendent, shall be divided into three classes. One third shall be elected annually for a three-year term. A chairperson and a secretary shall be elected annually at the first meeting following annual conference. The board shall file a report of any actions taken with the charge conference of each local church involved, and the report so filed shall become a part of the minutes of the said conference or conferences. The board shall also make a written report to the district conference (or, if there is no district conference, to the district superintendent), and this report shall become a part of the records of that conference.

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
Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition 20705.

Petition Number: 20705-FA-NonDis-$; Angoran, Yed - Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

**Support for Communication Ministry**

Communication supports mission and ministry at all levels of the church. Excellent communication has been essential to Christianity from the beginning. Therefore, we petition to restore $7.5 million to the proposed 2021-2024 quadrennial budget for United Methodist Communications, whose funding we expect may proportionally be allocated to support communication in any future expressions of Methodism. Without proper funding, these cuts impact the ability to support communications, such as the development of conference communication infrastructures, local church communication, evangelism outreach, and communication in languages of the global church.

Petition 20719.

Petition Number: 20719-FA-NonDis; Miller, Perry - Winston-Salem, NC, USA.

**CRSP MPP Revision**

**CRSP Amendment ¶ 1504 re: Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)**

Revise the Clergy Retirement Security Program (“CRSP”), which is incorporated by reference in ¶ 1504.1 of the *Book of Discipline*, including any needed revisions to CRSP section numbering, formatting, pagination, or Table of Contents, and effective on July 1, 2020, or as soon as possible on the advice of Wespath: The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) is directed by the General Conference to amend the Clergy Retirement Security Program such that all retired, retiring, or active clergy participants who currently have an MPP account balance shall each be eligible to rollover 100% of their account balance to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (or to another eligible retirement plan). The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is a voluntary defined contribution plan maintained by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) under ¶ 1504.2. This amendment to the Ministerial Pension Plan eliminates the requirement that 65% of each accountholder’s MPP balance must be annuitized as a single or joint lifetime benefit.

**Rationale:**

Whereas MPP accountholders currently receive only 35% of their account balances like a defined contribution benefit, this amendment gives them greater financial flexibility in eliminating the 65% account balance annuity requirement. Such a revision will also free their annual conference from the long-term liabilities of sponsoring
Daily Christian Advocate

Volume 2, Section 2
Reports and Proposed Legislation

Authorized by the Commission on the General Conference.
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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):

589
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 Farriss
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
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Sent in Love
A United Methodist Understanding of the Church

Part One: Introduction

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. 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 Jersies, Pennsylvanias, 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.” 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.” 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 uncompromising 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 creaturely 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.”

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!” 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.” 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.” 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.” As the soul animates the body, “from generation to generation, the Spirit is the living continuity of the Church.”

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.”

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. 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.” Human beings are “created in the image of God, and designed to know, to love, and to enjoy [their] Creator to all eternity.” 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.

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 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.26 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.”222 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 divine 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.”

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 characterized 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.”

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. 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). 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. 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 “tradi tioned 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.

57. The historical willingness among Methodists to transgress boundaries of convention, class, and culture in pursuit of God’s gift of community illuminates 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. 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.”

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.”

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.” 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. 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.

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, 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.”

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.”

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].” 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. 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.” 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.

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. 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 today 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.

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
collection to all the churches together: What positive
steps can be taken to make common discernment possi-
ble? 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 move-
ment from its beginning. Scriptural holiness has been un-
derstood to include the renewal of persons in the image
of God, having the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and ul-
timately 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 commu-
nity 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 Meth-
odist 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 com-
munities 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 ulti-
mately 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 sin-
ful 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 “justifica-
tion,” 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, receiv-
ing 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 free-
dom,” 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 experi-
enced, 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 human-
kind in this life is perfect holiness. Wesley used a range
of images to describe Christian perfection or entire sanc-
tification, 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. These images find their ultimate expres-
sion in perfect love which is “the sum of Christian sancti-
fication,” it is “pure love filling the heart and governing
all the words and actions.” It is the Methodist convic-
tion 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 fol-
lowing 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 ex-
pected 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,” 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 acts of public witness to Christ. The church is a 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. 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).

**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.”

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.” 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?”

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 Dialogues 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 adoption 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.”)


7. MV, p.70.


11. TCV, 19.

12. Cf. TCV, 2.

13. Cf. TCV, 2.


19. Cf. TCV, 1.


22. TDL, 35.

23. HEFG, 28.

24. HEFG, 26.


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.


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.


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/..


41. Asbury/Coke, p. 65.

42. Asbury/Coke, p. 65.


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.


54. TCV, 30.


61. See for instance his Thoughts Upon Slavery and “Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions.”


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: Fortress, 2015), pp. 78-81.


Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

**¶101.**

Petition Number: 20157-FO-¶101-S-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-S-G; Maxwell, Robert Andrew - Forsyth, IN, USA.

**Petition for the Re-organization of The United Methodist Church**

Amend ¶ 101:

¶ 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 of these 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 us 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 testifies 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 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 compels us to think about God in new 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 that we attempt to maintain fidelity to the apostolic faith. At the same time, in this process, we continue to draw on the broader ecumenical Christian tradition as an expression of the history of divine grace within 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. 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.
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 reflecting 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 and 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 reflecting Christ’s life throughout the whole world.

Mission Reform C

¶122. The Process for Carrying Out Our Mission—We make disciples as 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.

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.

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 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 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 inclusiveness means the freedom for the total involvement of all persons who meet the requirements of The United Methodist Book of Discipline in the membership and leadership 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, information and communication, and to appropriate support services. Further, we must make appropriate accommodations as delineated by the United Nations’ Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and applicable World Council of Churches guidelines.

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, tribalism, and all other forms of xenophobia. By the power of Christ’s redeeming and sanctifying love, we commit ourselves 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 Constitution. By expanding the scope of the existing ¶ 140, we hope to further enshrine the principles of equal participation 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 manner:

To this end they agree to exercise fidelity in marriage and 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 harmed 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 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. In countries where the ecumenical context holds the position that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:
The UMC should follow the position of other mainstream Protestant denominations that we have ecumenical agreements with, in the context of the countries and cultures 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 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.

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 prepared themselves for servant ministry by meeting all of the requirements defined by the church, and by voluntarily committing to hold themselves accountable to and in compliance with the church’s polity and practices. Those who are certified as candidates, licensed, commissioned, 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 homosexuals are not to be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

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.


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 homosexuals 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:**

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 intention-al 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.
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 Matters, 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 con-
versations and developed a legislative proposal to move
the CT toward better global representation, updated man-
dates and a new leadership paradigm grounded in trust.
The group will continue this work into the next quadren-
nium 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 Connec-
tional 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 bud-
get according to values that could better focus the budget
missionally and help each agency maintain its core mis-
sion and continue to thrive. Our values included a holistic
focus on The UMC’s mission; agencies’ core missions;
missional priorities; emerging missional priorities; stew-
ardship; transparency; fairness and justice; and equity.
Guided by these values and equipped with a full under-
standing of the agencies’ finances, programming, prior-
ities, 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 implement-
ed 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 pre-
paring 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 orga-
nize 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 con-
nection by supporting new and improved collaboration,
bringing together the abundance of resources within The
UMC and increasing efficiency as stewards of the resourc-
es generously given. As God’s emerging work is revealed
to us, relationship building and collaboration will be espe-
cially important as we deal with the inevitable loss asso-
ciated 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*:

“It 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/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 crowd-sourcing 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.emergingmethododism.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. 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. 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.

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.

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.
ALL BELONG: Establish LGBTQI 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 Administration 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:

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:

Proposed Changes for Native American Ministries Sunday

Amend ¶ 263.6c):

¶ 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.

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**¶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.

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**¶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 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. 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.

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**¶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

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 identity 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 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.

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

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-
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

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 Council of Bishops. 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 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.

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. A Full Communion Expression is under no obligation to issue an invitation to join 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 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 Constitu-
tion.

Rationale:
This is one paragraph of the Plain Grace Plan for
multiplication of expressions that consists of the 20 to-
tal 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-G-¶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 cler-
gy shall continue to serve until such time as replacements
are appointed by the Full Communion Expression. The
Full Communion Expression shall be responsible for re-
imbursing The United Methodist Church for actual sala-
ry, benefits, and reasonable and necessary expenses paid
to bishops by The United Methodist Church until a re-
placement is appointed. Reimbursement payments shall
be made within sixty (60) days of The United Methodist
Church invoicing the Full Communion Expression. Sal-
ary, pension, and insurance payments to clergy made by
local churches of Full Communion Expressions or the an-
nual 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 confer-
ence 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 appor-
tionment 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 Ex-
pression annual conference, the Full Communion Expres-
sion annual conference shall pay to The United Methodist
Church a per diem amount to satisfy its unpaid appor-
tionment obligations for 2022 based on a per diem calcu-
tion; 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 ap-
portionment 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 an-
nual conference’s apportionments paid plus the unpaid per
diem apportionment liability) are less than the apportion-
ments 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 that the Full Communion Expression joined by its
annual 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, 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 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.

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 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 Retire-
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, 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 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 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 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 and ensuring that all components in the connection carry out their appropriate responsibilities in ways that enable The United Methodist Church and other offshoot or successor expressions of Methodism to be faithful in 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. UMCom 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 Communication, the last two of which also carry program-related responsibilities for which they are accountable to the Connectional Table.

Rationale:
This more clearly identifies UMCom 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 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. 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, 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 general 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) Episcopals 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.


**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, Remember - 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, Ciricaco - 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.

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 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 exploitative 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 of the 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.

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 jurisdictional conferences elected by the jurisdictional nomination process. 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 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.

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 $\equiv 20$ 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
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;

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.
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. Notably, 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.methodismission200.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 calling 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 perfected 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, benefitting 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, providingpastoral 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 UVMIM, or United Methodist Volunteers in Mission) benefits from the leadership of jurisdictional UVMIM 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 UMCOM to promote among conferences and local churches the range of volunteer opportunities; served ex officio on jurisdictional UVMIM governing boards and on the board of NOMADS; and supported UVMIM 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 multietnic 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
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 enterprises 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 Songhaï 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 Evaluation 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 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
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>U.S. Population (mostly from 2010 Census)</th>
<th># of UMC Churches</th>
<th># New Church Starts</th>
<th># of Ldr Training Activities</th>
<th># of Grants Received</th>
<th>Primary Annual Conference Partnerships</th>
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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 strategists 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, Gujarati, 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.

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### 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.
“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 “conflict 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.


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
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.  

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 missioner 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 Estan 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 interrelatedness 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 (accompagnment) 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
assistant, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES</th>
<th>SOURCE OF FUNDS</th>
<th>MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council of Bishops</td>
<td>Episcopal Fund</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCHA: Hispanic Caucus</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazilian Ministries</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>One elected board member from: GBOD, GBHEM, GBCS, GBGM &amp; UMCOM</td>
<td>General Agency</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Church of Puerto Rico</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members at Large</td>
<td>HLMP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Board of Global Ministries</th>
<th>$3,143,830</th>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering First-Generation H/L Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference Teams for Strategic Development</td>
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<td>Ethnic Plans Collaborative Initiatives</td>
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<td>New Places for Worship and Communal Service</td>
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<td>Global Migration and Other Social Concerns</td>
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<td>Program Coordinator Office</td>
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<td>Administrative Fees</td>
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<td>National Committee Training</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,143,830</strong></td>
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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.
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 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.
Global Ministries

**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 appropriate 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 ethic 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 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 (7) 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 ¶ 1315.1c.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:


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.

Church and Community Workers

Delete # 3104 Church and Community Workers and substitute a revised version to read as follows:

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.

R3104.
Petition Number: 20572-GM-R3104-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 result 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
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 - In-galls, 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. 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. 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. 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). 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). By 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).


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.


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/pdf/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 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-1du-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 ark[s 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 for persons 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.

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 have a congregational HIV/AIDS ministry called to the Covenant to Care Program, whose basic principle is “If you have HIV/AIDS or are the loved one of a person who has 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/55B114%5D>.

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.umcmission.org/learn-about-us/our-work/
global Ministries 713


[6.] Advocates for Youth.


[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.gbgm-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=EAIaIQobChMIIsms6hdqq4QIVEbqMCh2rugmDEAYASAABeGlkk_D_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 infection. 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/20120706prafricaantiretroviral). Yet, 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 approach 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) and the General Board of Global Ministries (See https://www.globalministries.org/special_days_aids_day_index), the General Board of Global Ministries, and the General Board of Church and Society (http://www.umc-gbs.org; http://www.umcgbs.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, and so has the number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Consequently, 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 fostered popular resentment at foreign troops and the corrupt Afghan government officials they support. More troops both foreign and Afghan has increased 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 40 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 infant mortality rates and average life expectancy is mid-40s. While each year the United States and other governments devote over $400 billion of dollars to weapons and soldiers (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 50 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 (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 Millennium 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.


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 Afghan-istan,” $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 peacemaker 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 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 without the direct participation of all in the society, including women, who represent half of the population.

ADOPTED 2012

See Social Principles, ¶ 165C.


5. World Population Prospects, see Table A.19.


**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, Lysette - 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, Thom- as - 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 devoting 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 demands 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-
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
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 SCCCM 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 SCCCM (2016 BOD ¶ 2201.3)

1. One bishop from each central and jurisdictional conference serves on the SCCCM.
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 SCCCM 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 SCCCM 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 SCCCM 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 covenant 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 SCCCM 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 Ciriac 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

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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 Savior, and which in the Apostles’ Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

¶ 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.

¶ 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

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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


¶ 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=222.1-3

¶ 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<
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.

GBOD § 219.002<

¶ 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.

GBOD § 220.001<

¶ 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.

GBOD § 222.001<

¶ 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 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.

GBOD § 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.

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 § 222.002<
¶ 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

¶ 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 conference, 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, if one is appointed, is advisory only. >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.
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 disburse 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


¶ 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: 234.004<

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: 234.003<

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-l=247.4+new; 234.6=252.6; 234.7=258.5
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters 743

Chapter Two
The Ministry of the Ordained

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.

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.

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.

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:

1. Have a personal faith in Christ and be committed to Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness.
3. Teach and model generous Christian giving with a focus on tithing as God’s standard of giving.
4. Acknowledge a call by God to give themselves completely to ordained ministry following Jesus’ pattern of love and service.
5. Communicate persuasively the Christian faith in both oral and written form.
6. Make a commitment to lead the whole church in loving service to humankind.
7. 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.
8. Be persons in whom the community can place trust and confidence.
9. 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.

10. 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 homosexuals 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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

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1. “Self-avowed practicing homosexual” is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, or clergy session that person is a practicing homosexual. Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020.
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.
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.

GBOD ¶ 308.1-4 = 369.1-2+5-6

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. 

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.

GBOD ¶ 310.1 = 313.Intro+5; +1-3


¶ 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.

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.

§ 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), 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 or jurisdictional conferences.8

§ 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.

§ 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

§ 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.

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 = 321Intro+.1-3

¶ 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 conferences. 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.

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. 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 annual conference based on at least a three-fourths majority vote of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

GBOD ¶ 321 = 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


¶ 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.

>VI: 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.

>VI: 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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 323.1=327Intro; 323.2-3=327.2; 323.4=327.3; 323.5-6=327.6-7


¶ 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. 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.

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?16

(4) Provide evidence of your willingness to relate yourself to 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.

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


¶ 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 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

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.

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.

¶ 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. Deacons and provisional deacons 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.
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


¶ 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


¶ 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 clergyperson’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)


¶ 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.

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


¶ 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.

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.
   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.
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(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


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 session 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 clergyperson 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. 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. 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.

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


¶ 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.


> 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, 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.


> VII/344.001 <

GBOD ¶ 344.1 = 354; 344.2-3=354.4-5; 344.3=new

§ 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, provision 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 = 355.1

§ 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 standing, 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 clergyperson that identifies the concerns and designs collaboratively with the clergyperson 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


§ 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.  

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.  

Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the Discipline.  

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. 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.  

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. The procedures for fair process shall be followed in an 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.  

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.  

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.  

§ 350. Withdrawal—1. Withdrawal to Unite with Another Denomination—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.  

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. 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. The effective date of withdrawal shall be the date of the letter of withdrawal.  

34. See Judicial Council Decisions 7, 165, 413, 578.  
§ 351. Re-admission to Provisional Membership—Each central conference shall establish procedures for re-admission 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 re-admission procedures shall require re-admission in the conference in which clergy membership was previously held or, in the case of re-admission for transfer to a new conference, consultation with the bishops and Boards of Ordained Ministry for each conference involved in the re-admission procedure. Jurisdictional conferences shall follow the procedures in Part VII of the Discipline.

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.

GBOD § 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

44. See Judicial Council Decision 974.
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.

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 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. 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.

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. See Judicial Council Decision 776.
Chapter Three
The Superintendency

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).

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).

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 = 403.1.1; 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<

GBOD ¶ 405.1-4 = 415.1-4; 405.5=415.6


¶ 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 itineracy.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

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.

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


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

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 misional 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 misional 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


¶ 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 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


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-
mendment 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.

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


¶ 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.

415. The Cabinet—1. 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. 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.

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.

416. Selection and Term of District Superintendents—1. Selection—District superintendents are elders in full connection appointed by the bishop in consultation with the respective committee(s) on episcopacy.

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.

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.
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<

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).


> 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).

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.

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
adoption shall be printed in the appropriate General Conference journal or equivalent.\textsuperscript{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. \textit{Methodist Churches with Concordat Agreements}—\textit{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.

\textit{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.

\textit{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 \textsection 337.2.

\textit{d)} Concordat churches, with the exception of The Methodist Church of Great Britain (see \textsection 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.

\textsection VII: ---

GBOD GC-R \textsection 422.1 = 570.2b; 421.3 = 570.3b; 421.3 = 571; 421.5 = 573+570.4b; 421.6 = 574+570.5b

\textsuperscript{15} See Judicial Council Decision 692.

\textsuperscript{16} See Judicial Council Decision 692.

\textsection 422. Ecumenical Relationships—The United Methodist Church strives toward greater Christian unity through its participation in councils of churches and/or covenantal relationships. 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. \textit{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. \textit{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. \textsection VII: 422.001<

4. Further regulations shall be organized according to the provisions in the General Conference Regulations (see GC-R \textsection 422).

GBOD \textsection 422Intro = 434Intro+434.2b; 422.1 = 434.3a; 422.2 = 434.3b+c; 422.3 = 434.2b; 422.4 = New

GBOD GC-R \textsection 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” (\textsection 403.2e).

\textsection VII: ---

GBOD GC-R \textsection 422.1-2 = 431.4; 422.3 = 442.2

\textbf{Section VII. Committee on Faith and Order}

\textsection 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.

>VI: —<
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.

¶ 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.

3. Any individual member called to testify before a legislative body to represent The United Methodist Church shall be allowed to do so by reading, without elaboration, the resolutions and positions adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church.

4. Procedures shall be according to provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 503).

¶ 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.

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. 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. Procedures shall be according to provisions in the General Conference Regulations (GC-R ¶ 503).

GBOD ¶ 503.1-3 = 501-3; 503.4 = new

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.

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.
After consultation with the Council of Bishops, the secretary of the General Conference shall issue invitations to ecumenical representatives.

GBOD GC-R ¶ 504.


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).
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

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 quadrennium 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


¶ 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.

¶ 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.


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### Section III. Central Conferences

¶ 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.

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### 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.

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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.

   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.

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.

   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).

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.

   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=543.6


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


¶ 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 § 521 = 560


**GBOD § 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.

> VII: —<

GBOD § 522 = 562


§ 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 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).
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 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!


¶ 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


¶ 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 determined 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=605.3-5; 534.6=605.4; 534.7=605.5+9; 534.8=605.8+9; 534.9=603.7+619 534.9a=607.1; 534.9b=619

Intro+1b+1c(2)+1f


¶ 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


¶ 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


¶ 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


¶ 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.

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 enrollment 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

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 communities. 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.

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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 563 = 592


¶ 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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 571.1 = 575Intro+.1-3; 571.2=575.4-5
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.
“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

§ 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 ecclesiastical 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 ¶ 702 = 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

[GBOD ¶ 711 = 1001+new]

§ 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 oneself (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 ¶ 712 = 1002

§ 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 missioners, 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 separate 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 ministry, 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 Wom-
en 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 Com-
mission 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 car-
ing 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 teach-
ings of John Wesley, who embraced the diversity of God’s
world as his parish. John Wesley and Charles Wesley es-

tablished 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

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**Section XII. Focused Ministries VI—JustPeace**

[BOD ¶¶ 2401 → GBOD ¶¶ 861ff]

¶ 861ff.

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**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

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**Section XVII. Organizational Ministries V—Connectional Table**

[BOD ¶¶ 901-907 → GBOD ¶¶ 941ff]

¶ 941ff.

Provision (Scriptural/theological grounding)

Purpose

Responsibilities/Goals

Amenability and Accountability

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**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 or 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.

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).

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 shall 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.


¶ 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.

¶ 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.

¶ 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 (¶/uni00A0 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


¶ 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 (¶/uni00A0 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, jurisdictional, 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
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

Chapter Seven
Judicial Administration

Section I. The Judicial Council

§ 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 structures 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).

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.

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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 2603 = 2602

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 con-
clusion of such session. Each of the central and jurisdic-
tional 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 Chris-
tian Advocate at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of
election, which shall be set by action of the General Con-
ference 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 member-
ship on the Judicial Council. The term of the alternates
shall be for four years.

The alternates shall be elected in the following man-
ner: From the clergy and lay nominees remaining on the
ballot after the election of the necessary number of mem-
bers 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 va-
cancy shall hold office as a member of the Judicial Coun-
cil for the unexpired term of the member whom the alter-
nate 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.

\(\text{GBOD GC-R \| 2603 = \| 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605}\)


\(\text{GBD \| 2606 = 2604}\)

2. See Judicial Council Decision 196; and Decision 3, Interim Ju-
dicial Council.

\(\text{GBD \| 2605 = 2607}\)

\(\text{GC-R \| 2605. Further Provisions on Confidentiality and Ex Parte Communication—1. While strictly observing the intent of the preceding paragraph, a member of the council to whom a case has been assigned by the president may request that the secretary secure from persons and agencies concerned directly or indirectly with the case pertinent facts, briefs, and statements shall be sent promptly by the secretary of the council to other members of the council as is deemed necessary.}\)^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 ju-
dicial 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 GC-R ¶ 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


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. 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 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

>7VI: —<

GBOD ¶ 2608 = 2609

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 GC-R ¶ 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.5

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 re-admission.

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.

§ 2702. Chargeable Offenses and the Statutes of Limitations—1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 308.1), 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 that 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. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, or diaconal minister may be brought to trial when the appropriate body recommends involuntary termination.

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;

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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 2702 = 2702

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.
13. The language beginning “including but not limited to . . . ” first appeared in the 2004 Discipline, effective January 1, 2005.
15. This offense was first listed as a separate chargeable offense in the 1996 Discipline effective April 27, 1996. See Judicial Council Decision 691.
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.

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.

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.
Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters 813


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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 2708.1 = 2708.1+new; 2708.2+3 = new


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.

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.

GBOD ¶ 2711.1 = 2716.1; 2711.2=2717.3; 2711.3+4 = new

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;


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-!-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, 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;


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;
gyzstan, 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.

¶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 adaptions 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 adaptions 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 adaptions 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 Convention (¶ 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.

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, Ciricaco - 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. Provisional 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 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. 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, 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 theology. The Council of Bishops shall include: one representative from each of the central conferences outside the United States; one representative from the World Service 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.

Establish Central Conference Higher Education Fund

Petition Number: 20209-ST-¶817-¶817; Chijika, Kongolo - Mulungwishi, DRC for Africa Association of Methodist Institutions of Higher Education.

¶817.

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 pro-
portional 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 dis-
cretion of the commission: (1) to facilitate the establish-
ment of high educational standards; (2) to improve staff
and faculty capacities; (3) to improve educational technol-
yogy and libraries; (4) to provide scholarships to develop
the future leadership of the church and world.

3. The General Board of Higher Education and Min-
istry 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 edu-
cation produces Christian servant leaders for churches,
communities, countries. Constrained budgets, underde-
veloped 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 inter-
preted 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” ap-
plies 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 Con-
ference 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 Lead-
ers 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 Confer-
ence'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 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.


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
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 Khegay, 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.
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. 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

We celebrated the retirement of the following bishops:

- **A. M. E.** – Bishop John Richard Bryant, Bishop William Phillips DeVaux, 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
Bishop Jonathan Keaton, Bishop Deborah Kiese, 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-Metho-dist 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.), Southwest 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.
- 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 of the Higher Education Committee. Dr. Luther Smith (C. M. E.) serves as coordinator for the Children in Poverty Campaign. Dr. Jeanette Bouknight (C. M. E.) served 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 Haupert-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:
  o “Methodism Demonstrating Faith in the Face of Fear” – Bishop Jonathan Holston (U. M. C.)
  o “The Response of Social Activism for Social Justice” – Dr. Raymond Sommerville (C. M. E.), former professor at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN
  o “Reclaiming Our Prophetic Voice” – Bishop McKinley Young (A. M. E.)
  o “Wesleyan Communions Responding with Next Steps in Addressing Racism” – Panel of Senior Bishops – How do we do this in our local 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.).
• 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.”

• 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, Othal Lakey.
• Bishops attending from the U. A. M. E. Church included Bishops Adolphus Scott and Charles Amos.

• Presentations were given as noted below:
  o “Building Relationships and Collaborative Ministries which Transform Communities” Bishop Staccato Powell (A. M. E. Z.)
  o “Building Relationship: The Ministry of Reconciliation among the Episcopacy” Bishop Tracey Smith Malone (U. M. C.)
  o “Pan-Methodist: An Influential Witness in the Community” Bishop C. James King (C. M. E.)
  o 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 DeVeaux – 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 – Yokners, 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
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

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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 catholicy, 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.

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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 missioners, 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. 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.\textsuperscript{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,\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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.

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**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 extensive 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

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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

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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 (particularly 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.
Independent Commissions

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 Wespath, 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 United 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:

- **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 unique and beloved children 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 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, 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, the 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 Global Ministries, 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 program-related responsibilities for which they are 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.d) 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 constituen-
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 director. 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 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 determine, 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 designated by the 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 designated 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, Bronx, NY (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, nearEnfield, Halifax County, NC (1972); Willamette Mission, near Salem, OR (1992); Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society founding site, Boston, MA (2004); Wyandot Indian Mission,
Independent Commissions


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, or 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 designation 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, 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 Chaotaqua, 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 Mutilere 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); 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 UMCom into GCFA**

For the purpose of merging the General Commission on Communication (UMCom) 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 (UMCom) 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 UMCom 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 UMCom 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 UMCom 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:


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:


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 Sharing 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, 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 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 witness 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 Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and 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 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 General 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 shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The offering shall be remitted 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 Sunday 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 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 shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund. 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 shall conduct a churchwide appeal. The observance shall be under the general supervision of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, 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 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 Archives and History and General Commission on Communication 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 program-related responsibilities for which they are 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 UMCom 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 UMCom’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:

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.

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 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. 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 and 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 conference 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.

5. It shall 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.

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 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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), United Methodist Student 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). 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 churchwide 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.

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.

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.

It may develop information, resources, databases, and services that provide channels of communication to and from all levels of the Church.

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.

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.

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).

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, Northeastern—2, South Central—3, Southeastern—3, 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 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 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 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 UMCom’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 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.

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.


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; (3) in consultation with the United Methodist Committee on Inclusiveness; (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 . . .

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 further 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—GCORR

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: 20347-IC-¶2103-G; Vetter, Molly - Los Angeles, CA, USA.

increase Central Conference Representation on COSROW

Amend ¶ 2103 as follows:

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.

¶2104.

Petition Number: 20348-IC-¶2104-G; Nelson, Muriel - Monrovia, Liberia.

COSROW Support for Central Conference Women

Amend ¶ 2103 by ADDING additional language as follows:

¶2103. Responsibility . . .
a) Jurisdictional membership . . .
b) There shall be 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 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 (¶ 2303.1b). . . .

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 Accountability—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


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 pastoral concern. If the church’s response to misconduct is not effective, there can be no true pastoral concern just as there can be no true pastoral concern without procedural justice. The dual needs of procedural justice and pastoral concern 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, ¶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.


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 ¶ 1641 (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 sexually 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
Independent Commissions

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, it now has 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 ministry 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, abuse and misconduct 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 clergyperson 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 ¶ 161J (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 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 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.

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 recommits all United Methodists to the eradication of sexual misconduct in all ministerial roles, 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, Wespath, 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 lay 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 Rican, 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 Racism systems in the United States today 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 access 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); 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% 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 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 Pew Research Center poll found that only 42 percent of American men attend church at least once a week compared to 44 percent of American women, (<http://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 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, 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 Churches 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”);


• 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” (¶ 162/I) 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” (¶ 162/I); 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.

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.

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 neurological 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 follows 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.

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 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.

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.

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.
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 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.


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

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 <https://www.umofficialresources.com/reader/9781426766213>C, F); and

WHEREAS, there are challenges faced by all children, but there are also challenges that are unique to girls; and

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 fulfill 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 fulfillment 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.


References


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


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.umsexualethics.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 Brannon 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


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.
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, 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 herein 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 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 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(c) 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 outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality, 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 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 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 professed 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, 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) 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; (g) relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of another pastor;**** (h) child abuse;**** (i) sexual abuse;**** (j) sexual misconduct**** or (k) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; or (l) racial or gender discrimination.

3. A professed 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; (f) sexual abuse; (g) sexual misconduct;* (h) child abuse; (i) harassment, including, but not limited to racial and/or sexual harassment; (j) racial or gender discrimination; or (k) 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; (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.

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: 20365-JA-¶2702.1; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, USA. 7 Similar Petitions

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

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: . . . or (l) fiscal malfeasance; or (m) domestic violence.

Additionally, a footnote shall be added to this sub-point 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 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;

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;
(ec) . . .

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 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).

¶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-

¶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 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 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.

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 clergy person for any of the offenses in ¶ 2702.1, the bishop shall appoint a clergy person 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 clergy person 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 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 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 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 clergyperson . . . 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.

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

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 or revoked 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 \( 2702.1(\text{b}) \) or \( 2702.1(\text{d}) \), 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 \( 2712.3\):

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 superintendent. 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 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.

**¶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:

§2715.8.

Petition Number: 20400-JA-§2715.8-G; Fisher, Christopher - Schuylkill, PA, USA.

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.

§2715.10.

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.

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**¶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 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 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.

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 - Lebanon, 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 the 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 consultation 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) 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 their ability to be carbon neutral and/or have net zero greenhouse gas emissions; and, when applicable, a plan and timeline 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.
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 education 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 Wespath. 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 connectional 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, Wespath 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.
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.
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 worshiping 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.
The 2016 General Conference doubled the appropriated 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 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: 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. 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:

¶ 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 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:
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.

**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 disciple-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 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 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 covenaing, 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:

d) 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-
tion 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, provincial 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, missional 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 - La- banon, 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 - La- banon, 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, 411, 412, 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 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 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
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 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 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 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 Episcopal 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 missioners 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, 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 interreligous 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.

¶(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 Fund; 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-S-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 herein 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 bishops, 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, the resulting vacancy shall be filled. However, the number of episcopal areas may temporarily 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
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**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 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 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 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 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. 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 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 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.

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).

¶ 408.3c.
Petition Number: 20666-HS-¶408.3c; Zilhaver, Robert - Uniontown, PA, USA.
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 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 missioners, 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.

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.

¶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 missioners, 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, Bishops 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. In countries where the ecumenical context does not accept practicing homosexual clergies, Bishops 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 - Lebanon, 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.

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. No elder one shall serve as district superintendent more than fourteen years. In addition, consideration 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.

¶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 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 supervising 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 ofiscopal 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.

¶422.5. 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: 20311-HS-¶422.5; Wilson, John - Pittsburgh, PA, 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 candidates. 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 Discipline. 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 Wesleyan 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.
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 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.

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-S-G; Holbrook, Frank - Martin, TN, USA.
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 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 sets limited requirements for 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.

¶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

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.

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 General Commission on Archives and History; and d) 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 mission 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 mission.

¶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 administration 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 ACEIR shall be elected by the Council of Bishops as follows:

1. The 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 each 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 ACEIR Steering Committee.

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 ACEIR shall be facilitated by the ecumenical staff officer who shall be in charge of the day-to-day work of the ACEIR. The ecumenical staff officer shall be the 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 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 officer of the Council of Bishops and one lay and one clergy member of OCUIR 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 persons 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 Ecum-
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 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 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.
   e) Report regularly and appropriately to each church.

The United Methodist membership of this commission shall be the ecumenical officer of the Council of Bishops or a designated proxy, and one layperson and one clergyperson elected 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 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.


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:

a) 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, 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 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 ¶ 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, 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 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 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 nom-
inated. 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 Educa-
tion and Ministry and the associate general secretaries of
the Divisions of Higher Education and Ordained Minis-
try 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 Glob-
al 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 nom-
inating 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 in-
tstitutions. 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. ex-
ist 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 de-
nominations in witness to United Methodism’s ecumeni-
cal relationships. . . .

b) . . .

c) As Christian institutions serving the ecumeni-
cal 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 commu-
nities, if they are to remain eligible to receive financial
support for their current operating expenses through the
Ministerial Education Fund. The General Board of High-
ger Education and Ministry shall monitor compliance with
this provision.

d) . . .

d) . . .

Rationale:

We seek good relations with our non-Christian neigh-
bors. 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 re-
ject 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 ba-
sis, 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 stu-
dents 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.

d e) . . .

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 Denomination-
al Expression of Methodism
• the number of professing members of those church-
es
• the amounts remitted to their respective annual con-
ference for payment of general apportioned funds in juris-
dictionsal 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.
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 GB-HEM 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.
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 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 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.

Be it further 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

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:
Higher Education/Superintendency

- 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

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


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.

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.

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:
   o Dialogue—initiate a churchwide conversation about the meaning of ordination;
   o Educate—Explore the deep historical and theological texture embedded in our tradition and our current practice of ministry;
   o 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.
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 SCCCM recommends to General Conference to defer until 2024 to present a draft of the General Book of Discipline.

d. Legislation submitted by the SCCCM 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 SCCCM. Both the SCCCM 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 Wespath 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 enfleshed 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 claims 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
Ordained Ministry

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 joyful 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 throughout 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—hopefuly 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 ordination 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 formation-al, 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 pre- sides 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 the image of God. 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.

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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-
Ordained Ministry

ordination, 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, 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: 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 conforms 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 offers 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 “traded” 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?
  o Advanced Course of Study (for those without an MDiv or equivalent)
  o Examination and affirmation by the Board of Ordained Ministry
  o Historic examination (Wesleyan questions) by the bishop
  o Election by the clergy session
  o Other requirements?
• How might residency processes assist in this transition?
  o 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?
  o 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?
  o Eight-year review
  o Peer review
• 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.
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 \[309.2\]e:

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. This especially impacts ethnic-minority and non-English speaking candidates.

\[310.2\]
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 [\[310.2d\] Footnote 3 . . .].

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 response 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: 20747-OM-\[310.2\]-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:

\[310.2d\] 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.
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

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 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]

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. In every case, 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 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) 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.

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 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

   b) Associate members of the annual conference; or

   c) Provisional elders commissioned by the annual conference; or

3. Deacons in full connection, seeking to qualify for ordination as an elder; or

4. 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, 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.

¶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

Responsibilities and Duties of Those Licensed for Pastoral Ministry

Delete constitutional amendments, election of delegates to general, jurisdictional, or central conferences, and
Delete 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:
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: 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.

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 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’ 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, 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; (b) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶ 635.1).

¶321.1.
Petition Number: 20438-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: 20439-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:

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 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) Elder—a candidate for ordination as an elder shall also:

1. Have 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.

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 online courses; and

2. Completion of an equivalent program of study embedded in an undergraduate degree at a 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).

c) Deacon—a candidate for ordination as a deacon shall also have:

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-approved theological school, or

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.

4. 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-
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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 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. The 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 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.
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 reaches 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 may 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; or (d) 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 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-
¶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 articulate 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:

- 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 Itineracy**

Amend ¶ 338 as follows:
Ordained Ministry

¶ 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 commitment 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 member 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: 20467-OM-¶339; Hodge, Jeffrey - Liv-  

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.

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.

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 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: 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: 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 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—

e) 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) 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 members 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 be assigned a clergy mentor by the district committee on ordained ministry in consultation with the district superintendent. Provisional members will 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.

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.

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 clergyperson by this paragraph, 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, the formal review 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 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; renumber 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.
Organize Administrative Fair Process Paragraphs

Move current ¶ 363 to the beginning of ¶ 361:

**¶ 361. 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. 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 clergyperson 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.

**¶ 361.2. 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. Allows the Accompanying Person to Be Both Elder and a Lawyer**

Amend ¶ 361.2c:

The respondent shall have a right to be accompanied . . . by a clergyperson . . . who may also be a lawyer, in accordance . . .

**Other paragraph impacted:** ¶ 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 § 361.2g—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 for 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.
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.

* * *

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 Methodist Church” under ¶ 2702.1(e); and “fiscal malfeasance” under ¶ 2702.1(l).

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 ¶ 362.3c 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 clergyperson’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
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 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. 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.
¶ 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) *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 clergyperson. 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 readmission.

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.

¶362.1e.
Petition Number: 20495-OM-¶362.1e-G; Dotson, Junius - Nashville, TN, 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
**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 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, copies of which shall be placed in the bishop’s file and shared with the complainant, refer the matter to counsel for the church as a complaint.

**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 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.