United Methodists Meet in St. Louis for Worldwide Conference

St. Louis: Delegates and observers from around the world will gather at the Dome at America’s Center, February 24-26, 2019, for the Special Session of the United Methodist General Conference. The General Conference is the only body that speaks officially for the 12.6 million-member church. The event will be available via live video streaming at UMC.org/live.

The day preceding the start of General Conference, February 23, has been designated as a day of preparation and prayer as a culmination of the Praying Our Way Forward initiative (see schedule here). General Conference 2019 will officially open at 7:30 a.m. Sunday, February 24, with a worship service. Preaching will be Bishop Kenneth H. Carter Jr., president of the Council of Bishops.

As the top policymaking body of the worldwide United Methodist Church, the General Conference meets every four years to determine the denomination’s future direction. The General Conference was next slated to meet in 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but the Council

### Agenda for Saturday, February 23

#### A Day of Prayer

**Twofold Prayer Focus:**
- 2019 Special Called General Conference
- Increased Effectiveness in Our Mission

**9:00 – 10:00 A.M.**
- Plenary Prayer Service
  - Theme: Surrender to God’s Purpose

**10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.**
- Experiential Prayer, guided by bishops from four different regions of the world
  - 10:00 A.M. – Europe and Eurasia
  - 10:45 A.M. – Africa
  - 11:30 A.M. – United States of America
  - 11:45 A.M. – Consecration of Prayer Room
  - 11:50 A.M. – Lunch and Conversation or Fasting and Self-Directed Prayer
  - 1:15 P.M. – Philippines
- Each segment will include:
  - Preparation for the way God will speak in each segment
  - Celebration of the places where the work of God is thriving
  - Presentation of the missional challenges in this part of the world

**2:00 – 3:30 P.M.**
- Plenary Prayer Service with Holy Communion
  - Theme: Seek God’s Will

**4:00 – 6:30 P.M.**
- Preparation/Orientation

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Prayers in various languages
- Experiential prayer including prayer stations, prayer partners, and self-guided prayer
- Seven prayer stations will be offered on the floor for delegates, bishops, and conference leaders.
- Seven identical prayer stations will be offered on the concourse level for visitors and guests.

**Prayer Stations Offered:**
1. Thanksgiving
2. Intercession
3. Wisdom and Discernment
4. Unity
5. The Kingdom of God
6. Addressing Violence
7. Humility and Compassion
of Bishops called a special session “limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based upon the recommendations of the Council of Bishops.”

The Judicial Council subsequently ruled that petitions could be filed by any organization, clergy or lay member of The United Methodist Church if the business proposed to be transacted is “in harmony” with the purpose stated in the call.

During the three-day session, 864 delegates from around the world will consider 78 legislative petitions, all of which must receive a vote in the single legislative committee. All those approved by the legislative committee must receive a plenary vote.

Plenary sessions and legislative committee meetings of the General Conference are open to the public. Guest and observer registration is required to attend the General Conference sessions. Registration desks will be located inside Entry B of the Dome at America’s Center. On-site registration opens on February 22 at 2 p.m. There is a suggested badge fee of $10 for on-site registration to offset the costs of the credentialing process. Pre-registered guests may pick up their badges at the registration desk.

Media who are covering the session can apply for credentials at the news registration desk at the Broadway Central entrance.

To assure the safety and security of attendees, security personnel will be checking for prohibited items for all persons entering the convention center through the use of wands and inspecting bags. Complimentary wi-fi access will be provided.

Simultaneous voice interpretation for delegates will be available in English, French, German, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Swahili. Non-delegate attendees needing English interpretation when other languages are being spoken can listen to translations via an FM radio (recommended) or by downloading a free app, and will need to bring their own device, as well as earbuds or headphones.

For more information, visit http://www.UMC.org/GC2019.
2019 Special Session of the General Conference Schedule

### Registration

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, February 22</td>
<td>9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Central Conference Delegate and Reserve Registration</td>
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<td>2:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 23</td>
<td>7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Sunday, February 24</td>
<td>7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.</td>
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<td>Monday, February 25</td>
<td>7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 26</td>
<td>7:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Registration (all categories)</td>
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### Saturday, February 23

**Day of Prayer**

- **9:00 – 10:00 A.M.**
  - Prayer Service
- **10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.**
  - Experiential Prayer
- **2:00 – 3:30 P.M.**
  - Prayer Service with Holy Communion
- **4:00 – 6:30 P.M.**
  - Preparation/Orientation

### Sunday, February 24

- **7:30 – 8:30 A.M.**
  - Opening Worship
- **8:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.**
  - Morning Session 1
    - Roll Call/Bar
    - Reports (Commission on the General Conference, Committee on Agenda and Calendar, Administrative Committees)
    - Break
    - Morning Session 2
    - Council of Bishops and Commission on a Way Forward Report
- **12:30 – 1:30 P.M.**
  - Lunch
- **1:30 – 6:30 P.M.**
  - Afternoon Session 1
    - Break
  - Afternoon Session 2
  - Worship
- **6:30 P.M.**
  - Adjournment

### Monday, February 25

- **8:00 – 8:20 A.M.**
  - Worship
- **8:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.**
  - Morning Session 1
    - Break
  - Morning Session 2
- **12:30 – 1:30 P.M.**
  - Lunch
- **1:30 – 6:30 P.M.**
  - Afternoon Session 1
    - Break
  - Afternoon Session 2
  - Worship
- **6:30 P.M.**
  - Adjournment

### Tuesday, February 26

- **8:00 – 8:20 A.M.**
  - Worship
- **8:20 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.**
  - Morning Session 1
    - Break
  - Morning Session 2
- **12:30 – 1:30 P.M.**
  - Lunch
- **1:30 – 6:30 P.M.**
  - Afternoon Session 1
    - Break
  - Afternoon Session 2
  - Closing Worship
- **6:30 P.M.**
  - Final Adjournment
2019 Special Session of the General Conference
Administrative Committee Membership

Committee on Agenda and Calendar
Mr. João Manuel de Graca, Africa Central Conference
Rev. Mihail Stefanov, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
Mr. Albert Tonodio Onotamba, Congo Central Conference
Rev. Anne Marie Detjen, Germany Central Conference
Rev. Christopher L. Pierson, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Lydia Muñoz, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Taavi Hollman, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
Rev. Jonathan Razon, Philippines Central Conference
Rev. Clayton Oliphint, South Central Jurisdiction
Mrs. Janie Brown-Thompson, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Mr. Easmon Ngakui, West Africa Central Conference
Ms. Emily Allen, Western Jurisdiction
Mr. S. Duncan McMillan, IV, Chair, Commission on the General Conference
Rev. Dr. A. Lynn Hill, Chair, Programming Committee, Commission on the General Conference
Dr. Susan Brumbaugh, Coordinator of the Calendar

Rev. Megan Shitama Weston, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Andrei Khen Su Kim, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
Ms. Elizabeth Lugares Caducoy, Philippines Central Conference
Ms. Sue Sullivan, South Central Jurisdiction
Mrs. Sarah Q. Nah, West Africa Central Conference
Ms. Rosie Rios, Western Jurisdiction

Committee on Credentials
Rev. Lazare Bankurunaze, Africa Central Conference
Dr. Olgiert Benedyktowicz, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
Ms. Nembe Songu Luhahi, Congo Central Conference
Mr. Steffen Landrock, Germany Central Conference
Mr. Lonnie Chafin, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Sharletta Green, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Mrs. Susanne Thaarup, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference
Ms. Evangeline Justo Cristobal, Philippines Central Conference
Ms. Kelly Carpenter, South Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Kim Ingram, Southeastern Jurisdiction
Mr. Eugene Lasme, West Africa Central Conference
Ms. Jo Ann Hayden, Western Jurisdiction

Committee on Journal
Rev. Amy Aspey, North Central Jurisdiction
Ms. Lorene Betty Wilburn, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Mr. Randy Biggerstaff, South Central Jurisdiction

Committee on Presiding Officers
Mr. Simon Mafunda, Africa Central Conference
Ms. Helene Bindl, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
Rev. Okudi Lundula Benjamin, Congo Central Conference
Ms. Christine Flick, Germany Central Conference
Rev. Judith Zabel, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Thomas Salsgiver, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Mr. Audun Westad, Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference

Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision
Rev. Dr. J. Robert Burkhart, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Melissa Drake, North Central Jurisdiction
Mr. Brian Williams, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Dr. Maidstone Mulenga, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Paul Fleck, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Ms. Dianne Wilkinson, South Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Karen Ristine, Western Jurisdiction
Mrs. Susan Hunn, Western Jurisdiction
Rev. Beth Rambikur (alternate), Western Jurisdiction
Ms. Marj Pon, Associate Publisher, Editor of Church School Publications, and Managing Editor, United Methodist Publishing House

Committee on Courtesies and Privileges
Rev. Mills Na Maliwa, Africa Central Conference
Mr. István Ambusz, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference
Mr. Marcel Mpayo Masangu, Congo Central Conference
Rev. Markus Jung, Germany Central Conference
Rev. Dr. Lillian Gallo Seagren, North Central Jurisdiction

Rev. Dr. J. Robert Burkhart, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Melissa Drake, North Central Jurisdiction
Mr. Brian Williams, North Central Jurisdiction
Rev. Dr. Maidstone Mulenga, Northeastern Jurisdiction
Rev. Paul Fleck, Northeastern Jurisdiction
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Editor's Note

The Council of Bishops’ call for the Special Session of the General Conference (April 24, 2017), the amended call (July 9, 2018), and Judicial Council Decision 1360 were published in the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate (pages 115–122). They are published again here (pages 250–257) along with the Judicial Council Decision 1366 (pages 258–260), the Petition Review Process and Legislation Prioritization Process from the Commission on the General Conference (pages 261–264), and the report of the Committee on Reference regarding which petitions are in harmony with the call (pages 265–267).
Council of Bishops' Call for the Special Session of the General Conference

Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church
100 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

April 24, 2017

To: Annual Conference Secretaries
   Heads of Delegations to the 2016 General Conference (or successors)
   Secretary of the General Conference
   Chairperson of the Commission on the General Conference

From: Bishop Bruce R. Ough, President
   Council of Bishops

Re: Special Session of the General Conference

Grace and peace to you from God, our Creator, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Council of Bishops hereby calls a special session of the General Conference per Division Two—Section II—Article II of The Constitution of The United Methodist Church (¶ 14 of The Book of Discipline (2016).

The special session of the General Conference will be held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri.

The purpose of this Special Session of the General Conference shall be limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.

According to Article II of The Constitution (¶ 14 of The Book of Discipline 2016), this Special Session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the 2016 General Conference or their lawful successors, except when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election.

The Secretary of the General Conference will be in communication with annual conference secretaries regarding updated delegate information, seating of reserve delegates, and the issuance of new certificates of election for annual conferences choosing to hold a new election.

The Commission on the General Conference and the Business Manager of the General Conference will develop and forward additional information regarding the logistics of the Special Session of General Conference at the appropriate time.

The Council of Bishops encourages the entire church to continue in deep, unceasing prayer for Holy Spirit breakthroughs for the Commission on a Way Forward and the Special Session of General Conference.
Amended Call for the Special Session of the General Conference

Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church
100 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

July 9, 2018

To: Annual Conference Secretaries
Heads of Delegations to the 2016 General Conference (or successors)
Secretary of the General Conference
Chairperson of the Commission on the General Conference

From: Bishop Kenneth Carter, President
Council of Bishops

Re: Amended Call for Special Session of the General Conference

Grace and peace to you from God, our Creator, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Out of a great sense of caution and the desire to help delegates to the Special Session of General Conference 2019 do their best work, the Council of Bishops hereby issues an amended call of a special session of the General Conference per Division Two - Section II - Article II of The Constitution of The United Methodist Church (¶ 14 of The Book of Discipline, 2016).

This amended call is issued in response to footnote 6 of Judicial Council Decision 1360 handed down on May 25, 2018. A copy of Decision 1360 is attached hereto.

The Council of Bishops and the Commission on a Way Forward have worked collaboratively regarding the report to the General Conference. Because the Council of Bishops seeks to honor the work of the Commission on a Way Forward and because the focus must be what is best for The United Methodist Church, the Council of Bishops has determined that issuing an amended call is the best way forward.

The purpose of this Special Session of the General Conference shall be limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based upon recommendations of the Council of Bishops.

The information below was included in the original call letter dated April 24, 2017. It remains a part of the call and is included for information since these steps are already in process per the original call letter.

The Special Session of the General Conference will be held February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri.

According to Article II of The Constitution (¶ 14 of The Book of Discipline, 2016), this special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the 2016 General Conference or their lawful successors, except when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election.
The Secretary of the General Conference will be in communication with annual conference secretaries regarding updated delegate information, seating of reserve delegates, and the issuance of new certificates of election for annual conferences choosing to hold a new election.

The Commission on the General Conference and the Business Manager of the General Conference will develop and forward additional information regarding the logistics of the Special Session of General Conference at the appropriate time.

The Council of Bishops encourages the entire church to continue in deep, unceasing prayer for Holy Spirit breakthroughs for the Special Session of General Conference.

Below is the referenced footnote #6 from the Judicial Council Decision 1360.

6 The undertaking of a “complete examination” of the subject of human sexuality presupposes that there will be some kind of report, document or study which supports the “possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality,” which, in turn, presupposes that the Commission (not the Council of Bishops) will put forth legislation to fix the problem. The special called General Conference is to consider “their work,” i.e., whatever the Commission desires to put before General Conference in terms of its “complete examination.”

However, in passing, we note that the question here is whether a special commission created by the General Conference can report to a body other than the General Conference. Specifically, is the Commission on a Way Forward amenable to the General Conference or the Council of Bishops, and can it present its findings and report to the General Conference through the Council? See JCD 424.

There is nothing in the proceedings of the 2016 General Conference suggesting that the Commission on a Way Forward was supposed to submit its recommendations to the Council of Bishops. Similarly, there is no evidence in the legislative debate prior to the vote on the motion indicating that the Council of Bishops would develop specific legislative proposals based on the recommendations of the Commission and present them to the called special session of the General Conference.

The language of An Offering strongly suggests that “the work” of the Commission on a Way Forward, and only this body, is the rationale for calling a special session of the General Conference.
Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church
Decision No. 1360

IN RE: Petition for Declaratory Decision from the Council of Bishops regarding the meaning, application and effect of ¶ 14 in relation to ¶ 507 of The Book of Discipline, 2016.

Digest

The purpose of the special session of the General Conference 2019 stated in the Bishops’ call is limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward. Petitions to the Special Session of the General Conference 2019 may be filed by any organization, clergy member and lay member of The United Methodist Church as long as the business proposed to be transacted in such petition is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call. It is the obligation of the General Conference to determine, in the first instance, through its committees, officers and presiders, acting in accordance with the Discipline and the rules and procedures of the General Conference, whether any such petition is “in harmony.” However, business not in harmony with the purpose as stated in the call is not permitted unless the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted. See ¶ 14.

Statement of Facts

The 2016 General Conference was facing what was described as an onslaught of 56 distinct legislative petitions proposing scores of distinct “solutions” to the quadrennial debate over human sexuality issues that have dominated General Conference sessions for nearly a half century.1

On Tuesday, May 16, 2016, on behalf of the Council of Bishops, President Bruce Ough brought a special message to the General Conference:

Even as we call for unity of the church, I come before you today to confess that we ourselves as a Council of Bishops are not fully united. And this work, this work of maintaining the unity of the church begins at home and we know it. We are therefore not advancing or advocating any plan of separation or reorganiza-

1. See Daily Christian Advocate (DCA) Vol. 4, No. 1 at 1709, listing all of the human sexuality petitions that the 2016 General Conference had been slated to consider before voting to refer the entire issue to the Council of Bishops and its Commission on a Way Forward.

zation of the denomination. We clearly understand and respect the constitutional prerogative of this body to propose and act on legislation. It is our job to preside. And as presiders, we are committed to enabling this body, by the grace of God, to perform your legislative function. At the same time, we remain open to new and innovative ways to be in unity. We will remain in dialogue with one another and others about how God may be leading us to explore new beginnings, new expressions, perhaps even new structures for our United Methodist mission and witness.2

Later during that session, Delegate Mark Holland made the following motion:

Bishop, I would like to offer a nonbinding resolution for the 2016 General Conference to respectfully ask the bishops of our church to convene today in order to offer a nonbinding recommendation back to this body tomorrow morning as to how the church might move forward around the issue of human sexuality, and, if I have a second, I’ll speak to it.3

Holland’s motion and his remarks were followed by statements by Delegates Tom Berlin, Sergey Kim, Jerry Paye-Manflor Kulah, Adam Hamilton, and Richard-Christian Hoffman. The presiding bishop, Janice Huie, interpreted the motion as a motion to refer the matter to the Council of Bishops and called for the vote accordingly. The vote was 428-364 in favor of referral.4

In response to the referral from General Conference, the Council of Bishops offered a recommendation, which it called “An Offering for a Way Forward” (“An Offering”).5 The operative language in that document said the following:

We recommend that (i) the General Conference defer all votes on human sexuality and (ii) refer this entire subject to a special Commission, named by the Council of Bishops, (iii) to develop a complete examination and (iv) possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality.

* * * *

2. DCA Vol. 4 No. 8, page 2459.
3. DCA Vol. 4 No. 8, pages 2476-2477.
4. DCA Vol. 4 No. 8, page 2478.
5. DCA Vol. 4 No. 9, page 2488.
We commit to maintain an ongoing dialogue with this commission as they do their work, including clear objectives and outcomes. (v) Should they complete their work in time for a called General Conference, then (vi) we will call a two- to three-day gathering before the 2020 General Conference.

Motions by Adam Hamilton and Chap Temple concerning An Offering failed. Delegate George Howard then stepped forward and made this motion:

I would move that we accept the report from the Council of Bishops, and we act on the steps that they have proposed to move The United Methodist Church forward. I believe we’ve asked our leaders to lead. I believe that they have attempted to put forward in a very short time, a way that would allow us to move forward with dignity that would honor and respect the diversity of our leaders and the diversity of this body. That they hold the totality before them of who we are as The United Methodist Church. That they hold in their hearts as our shepherds, the leadership responsibility, and they can put this together. They can name the team that they would respect and that we would be able to stand behind. I think we’re ready. I think we’re ready to move forward. This is an action. This is not postponing anything. This is allowing us to move forward with a plan that will keep The United Methodist Church united.

6. The undertaking of a “complete examination” of the subject of human sexuality presupposes that there will be some kind of report, document or study which supports the “possible revision of every paragraph in our Book of Discipline regarding human sexuality,” which, in turn, presupposes that the Commission (not the Council of Bishops) will put forth legislation to fix the problem. The special called General Conference is to consider “their work,” i.e., whatever the Commission desires to put before General Conference in terms of its “complete examination.”

However, in passing, we note that the question here is whether a special commission created by the General Conference can report to a body other than the General Conference. Specifically, is the Commission on a Way Forward amenable to the General Conference or the Council of Bishops, and can it present its findings and report to the General Conference through the Council? See JCD 424.

There is nothing in the proceedings of the 2016 General Conference suggesting that the Commission on a Way Forward was supposed to submit its recommendations to the Council of Bishops. Similarly, there is no evidence in the legislative debate prior to the vote on the motion indicating that the Council of Bishops would develop specific legislative proposals based on the recommendations of the Commission and present them to the called special session of the General Conference.

The language of An Offering strongly suggests that “the work” of the Commission on a Way Forward, and only this body, is the rationale for calling a special session of the General Conference.

After discussion, including procedural inquiries, Bishop McAlilly called for the vote with the following statement:

We’re ready to vote on the recommendation. This is a recommendation from the Council of Bishops that is before us. . . Alright. We have 428 to favor, against 405. The recommendation prevails. Thank you very much.

On October 24, 2016, the Council of Bishops named thirty-two persons to serve on the Commission on the Way Forward (“CWF”), which included eight bishops as members and three bishops as moderators.

On April 24, 2017, the Council of Bishops issued its call for a special General Conference and stated the purpose as follows:

The purpose of this special session of the General Conference shall be limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.

On February 28, 2018, the Executive Session Minutes (select portion) of the Council of Bishops stated that the council voted to seek a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council “to clarify whether petitions will be accepted prior to the Special Session of General Conference 2019.” An ADDENDUM to those minutes stated as follows: BY CONSENT TO ACTION WITHOUT FORMAL MEETING, the full Council of Bishops approved by email ballot, the submission to the Judicial Council of a request for a declaratory decision regarding ¶ 14 in relation to ¶ 507 of The Book of Discipline, 2016.

On April 9, 2018, Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey forwarded the Bishops’ request for a declaratory decision to the Secretary of the Judicial Council along with a request that the council schedule a called session to take up the request.

The request for a declaratory decision (minus the lagniappe) is as follows:

If petitions are in harmony with the restricted purpose stated in the Council of Bishops’ call . . . as determined by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference, . . . may organizations of the United Methodist Church, clergy members and lay members submit petitions to the special General Conference session . . . that are not consistent with the “report of the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward” . . . ?

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7. DCA Vol.4 No. 10, page 2680.
8. The unedited question posed by the bishops reads as follows:

Jurisdiction

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction pursuant to ¶ 2610 of The Book of Discipline, 2016.9

Analysis and Rationale

The answer to the question posed in the Bishops’ request is Yes and No. Yes, petitions may be filed, but No, petitions must not be inconsistent with the purpose stated in the call.

The purpose of the Special Session of the General Conference 2019 stated in the Bishops’ call, is limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.

Paragraph 507 of The Book of Discipline, 2016 permits any organization, clergy member or lay member of The United Methodist Church to file a petition to General Conference if it meets the criteria set forth therein. It makes no distinction as to whether such petitions are to a regular or special session of General Conference.

Division Two, Section II, Article II of the Constitution (¶ 14) does not place any restriction on the filing of petitions to a special session of the General Conference as long as the business proposed to be undertaken in such petition is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call. Therefore, petitions which are in harmony with any business which may be proposed in the Bishops’ Report are allowed.

Ruling

The purpose of the special General Conference 2019 stated in the Bishops’ call is limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward. Petitions to the Special General Conference 2019 may be filed by any organization, clergy member and lay member of The United Methodist Church as long as the business proposed to be transacted in such petition is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call. It is the obligation of the General Conference to determine, in the first instance, through its committees, officers, and presiders, acting in accordance with the Discipline and the rules and procedures of the General Conference, whether any such petition is “in harmony.” However, business not in harmony with the purpose as stated in the call is not permitted unless the General Conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted. See ¶ 14.

Deanell Tacha recused herself and did not participate in any of the proceedings related to this decision.

First Lay Alternate, Warren Plowden, participated in this decision.

May 24, 2018

Concur In Part, Dissent In Part

Although I concur with my colleagues on some points, I write separately because I believe that the scope and application of the law is a bit more narrow than that of the majority. For the purpose of clarity hereunder, I will restate only a few of the salient facts along with the controlling Disciplinary provisions:

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church authorizes special sessions of the General Conference in ¶ 14 as follows:

¶ 14. Article II.—The General Conference shall meet in the month of April or May once in four years at such time and in such place as shall be determined by the General Conference or by its duly authorized committees.

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 or their lawful successors, except that when a particular annual conference or missionary conference [Amended 1976] shall prefer to have a new election it may do so [see JCD 221, 226, 228, 238, 302]. 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 [see JCD 227]. [Emphasis added]

The 2016 General Conference requested and authorized the Council of Bishops to call a special session of the General Conference pursuant to the anticipated creation and work of a “Commission On A Way Forward.”

The Bishops’ subsequent Call to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference states:

The purpose of this special session of the General Conference shall be limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward.

Thereafter, a request for a Declaratory Decision was made by the Council of Bishops as follows:

If petitions are in harmony with the restricted purpose stated in the Council of Bishops’ call on April 24, 2017 as determined by a two-thirds vote of the General Conference and if the petitions are postmarked or received by July 8, 2018, may organizations of the United Methodist Church, clergy members, and lay members submit petitions to the special General Conference session called for February 23-26, 2019, that are not consistent with the “report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward” as stated in the call?

In answering the question, I believe that it is more helpful to be direct and exacting when possible. Thus, given that:

1. the call to the special session has already issued; and

2. the purpose specified in the call is “limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Council of Bishops based on the recommendations of the Commission on a Way Forward”; and

3. the Constitution limits a special session’s business to the purpose stated in the call

It, therefore, follows that the 2019 special session of General Conference will not be receiving petitions because its purpose is limited to the report emanating from the work of the Commission on a Way Forward.

Although there are aspects of this process that blur the boundaries of roles and authority of the Episcopacy (executive branch) and the General Conference (legislative branch), upon a thorough review of the transcripts of the daily proceedings for Tuesday, May 17, and Wednesday, May 18, and Friday, May 20, and especially after a careful viewing of the archived live feed (videos) of each of those plenary sessions, it is evident that this unique request for this unusual quasi-participatory role of the Episcopacy, was initiated by the General Conference delegates.

On Tuesday morning, in response to increasing expressions of mounting anxiety and pain stemming from informal discussions, briefings, and media coverage about potential imminent schism within the denomination, a pastoral message of unity and hope was offered to the body by the Council of Bishops. DCA pp 2458-2459.

On Tuesday afternoon the Bishop’s pastoral message from the morning session was specifically referenced by General Conference delegates while making motions and engaging in debate, and at times, literally pleading for the Council of Bishops help and guidance.

The maker of the first motion stated:

... I would like to offer a nonbinding resolution for the 2016 General Conference to respectfully ask the bishops of our church to convene today in order to offer a nonbinding recommendation back to this body tomorrow morning as to how the church might move forward around the issue of human sexuality, and, if I have a second, I’ll speak to it. . . .

Bishop, I appreciated the heart that Bishop Ough shared with us today and the dilemma that the bishops face of being divided around these issues. I think now, more than ever, we need the leadership of our temporal and spiritual leaders to move into Holy Conferencing and model for this body how a divided body moves forward for the good. There’s a lot of talk about church splitting. There’s a lot of talk about what that’s gonna look like. There’s a lot of energy around petitions that are coming in the next few days that could be
potentially explosive, and I think if we would offer our invitation to the bishops—they are not bound by us, the bishops could say no, and we are not bound by the work of the bishops, we could ignore what they say—but it would be beneficial, I believe, if we could hear from those who have been consecrated for leadership in our church about what a way forward might look like and empower their leadership to come back in the morning. I would suggest they could convene today. Except for the presiding officers, the bishops do not have a role in the legislative process and could use this good time to prayerfully and thoughtfully model Holy Conferencing for the rest of us. I think it’s time to do something new that’s gonna allow us to move forward hopefully and respectfully with one another. I hear their call for unity, and a call for unity without a path towards unity is not gonna get us there. Thank you. [DCA pp 2476-2477].

The delegate that spoke next offered the following:

…I’m a pastor in the Virginia Annual Conference. Bishop, this morning Bishop Ough said that at General Conference, the role of the bishop was to preside. Quite frankly, Bishop, we think it’s your role to lead. We would like— (applause) [t]he council to lead. We have— … A very difficult, we have a very difficult and painful situation, and in various ways many people are experiencing great pain around, especially, the issues of human sexuality. We would like for your leadership, and if you could bring us some concrete proposal, which might include a called General Conference, which is within your authority, I think it would be a blessing to the body and to the church. Thank you. [DCA p 2477].

Then, three speakers later, another motion and plea:

…Thank you, Bishop. We are in a stuck place at this General Conference. We, in theory, could find ourselves leaving on Friday, still stuck and wounded. You are our leaders. You are our spiritual leaders. I concur with Mark Holland, with Tom Berlin. We need you. It would be so helpful for us for you to come together prayerfully to consider what might be a way for us to move forward as a church, and, again, that’s nonbinding. You are making recommendations as our spiritual leaders across the world to help us in moving forward as a denomination, and I concur with Tom’s suggestion that could include, you have the right to call, a special General Conference to focus on this particular issue of how do we find, how do we reorder our lives so that we have a chance to move forward, whatever that looks like. We need you. We need your help. We need you to spend time contemplating this, praying about this as I know you already have, and then coming back to us with a suggestion for how we move forward so we don’t leave Friday, like we did four years ago, having accomplished very little and finding ourselves still stuck as a denomination. I’m pleading with you. Please help us. [DCA pp 2477-2478].

Thus, the context, impetus, and initial speeches that lead to the General Conference action authorizing the work and that which is to culminate with the 2019 Special Session of General Conference.

In keeping with actions and debate which then followed these initial motions, I am reluctant to go beyond the narrow scope of the question presented for a Declaratory Decision in light of the dynamics of this unusual General Conference action which might fairly be perceived as having been an organic response by the General Conference delegates to the dynamics surrounding the delegates of the 2016 General Conference.

Assuming that the Commission’s work and proposals will be incorporated into the report that will be made to the 2019 Special Session of General Conference, and likewise assuming that the Commission will be present and fully participating in the presentation of the report, particularly as it relates the Commission’s process, work, and findings, then under those circumstances the concerns raised in the majority opinion concerning the General Conference and Episcopacy roles and authority ought to be allayed.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Capen

May 24, 2018
Editor’s Note: The “Digest of Case” and “Statement of Facts” from Judicial Council Decision No. 1366 regarding the constitutionality of three sets of legislative petitions known as the One Church Plan, Connectional Conference Plan, and Traditional Plan are printed below for your reference. The full decision, including the “Jurisdiction” and “Analysis and Rationale” sections, is available online at http://cdnfiles.umc.org/Website_Properties/JCD_1366_(Docket_No._1018-12).pdf

SUBJECT TO FINAL EDITING

Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church
Decision No. 1366

IN RE: Petition for Declaratory Decision from the Council of Bishops regarding the constitutionality of three sets of legislative petitions known as the One Church Plan, Connectional Conference Plan, and Traditional Plan.

Digest of Case

The Judicial Council has 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 but lacks the authority to scrutinize proposed constitutional amendments under ¶ 2609.2. To trigger jurisdiction and be properly before the Judicial Council, a petition for declaratory decision must contain proposed legislation that prima facie requires no constitutional amendment(s) for implementation and can be tested directly against the constitutional provisions in effect at the time of filing. The Connectional Conference Plan contains proposed constitutional changes and does not pass this jurisdictional test. The One Church Plan and the Traditional Plan meet those criteria to be properly before the Judicial Council. The task of the Judicial Council is to pass upon the constitutionality of the legislative petitions without expressing an opinion as to their merits or expediency. It is up to the General Conference to determine the wisdom of each plan.

With respect to the One Church Plan, the Judicial Council makes the following ruling:

As a primary principle in any organizational structure of The United Methodist Church, connectionalism denotes a vital web of interactive relationships—multi-leveled, global in scope, and local in thrust—that permits contextualization and differentiation on account of geographical, social, and cultural variations and makes room for diversity of beliefs and theological perspectives but does not require uniformity of moral-ethical standards regarding ordination, marriage, and human sexuality. Full legislative power of the General Conference includes the authority to adopt a uniform, standardized, or a non-uniform, differentiated theological statement. Our Constitution commands not that all church policies enacted by the General Conference be uniform but that all uniform church policies be enacted by the General Conference. It assigns the legislative function to set standards related to certification, commissioning, ordination, and marriage to the General Conference and the administrative responsibility for applying them to the annual conferences, local churches, and pastors within their missional contexts. The legislative branch of the Church is constitutionally free to set the standards for entrance into the ministry wherever and whenever it sees fit. Regardless of where that threshold may be at any given time, the annual conference may enact additional requirements that are not in conflict with the letter or intent of the minimum standards set by the General Conference.

Petition 1 is constitutional.
Petition 2 is constitutional.
Petition 3 is constitutional.
Petition 4 is constitutional, except for the second sentence:

Similarly, clergy who cannot in good conscience continue to serve a particular church based on unresolved disagreements over same-sex marriage as communicated by the pastor and Staff-Parish Relations Committee to the district superintendent, shall be reassigned.

This part violates the separation of powers, is contrary to ¶ 33 and, therefore, unconstitutional.

Petition 5 is constitutional.
Petition 6 is constitutional.
Petition 7 is constitutional.
Petition 8 is constitutional, except for the sentence:

The bishop may choose to seek the non-binding advice of an annual conference session on standards relating to human sexuality for ordination to inform the Board of Ordained Ministry in its work.
This part is in conflict with ¶ 54 and is unconstitutional.

- Petition 9 is constitutional.
- Petition 10 is constitutional.
- Petition 11 is constitutional.
- Petition 12 is constitutional
- Petition 13 is constitutional, except for the second sentence:

  Provided, however, that any clergy session of an annual conference that votes on such matters shall not, without the consent of the presiding bishop, take up any subsequent motion on that issue during any called or special session of annual conference held within 30 full calendar months from the date of such vote regardless of the outcome.

This part infringes upon an annual conference’s reserved rights under ¶ 33 and is unconstitutional.

- Petition 14 is constitutional.
- Petition 15 is constitutional.
- Petition 16 is constitutional.
- Petition 17 is constitutional.

With respect to the Traditional Plan, the Judicial Council makes the following decision:

Impartiality and independence of decision-making bodies are the hallmarks of due process and bedrock principles of procedural justice in our constitutional polity. No process can be fair and equitable if the body bringing the complaint is also empowered to determine its merits. The fundamental right to fair and due process of an accused bishop is denied when the complainants are also among those tasked with reviewing and making the final decision. The Council of Bishops was not designed to function as an inquisitional court responsible for enforcing doctrinal purity among its members.

As a tenet of United Methodist constitutionalism, the principle of legality means that all individuals and entities are equally bound by Church law, which shall be applied fairly and without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition. It forbids selective or partial enforcement of Church law at all levels of the connection and demands that the Book of Discipline in its entirety be followed without distinction. All decisions and actions by official bodies and their representatives must be based on and limited by the Constitution and the Discipline. Individuals must be informed with specificity and clarity as to what is prescribed and proscribed by Church law. No person or body can be required to act contrary to Church law or prohibited from engaging in lawful conduct. No person can be punished for actions and conduct that are permitted or required by Church law. Clergy persons whose credentials and conference membership are at stake have the right to know what to expect when they choose a course of action or take a particular stance on ordination, marriage, and human sexuality. To pass constitutional muster, any proposed legislation affecting clergy rights must define with sufficient clarity and specificity the standards to guide future actions of all concerned persons and entities.

Under the principle of legality, the General Conference can prescribe or proscribe a particular conduct but cannot contradict itself by prescribing prohibited conduct or prohibiting prescribed conduct. It can require bishops, annual conferences, nominees, and members of boards of ordained ministry to certify or declare that they will uphold the Discipline in its entirety and impose sanctions in case of non-compliance. But it may not choose standards related to ordination, marriage, and human sexuality over other provisions of the Discipline for enhanced application and certification. The General Conference has the authority to require that the board of ordained ministry conduct a careful and thorough examination to ascertain if an individual meets all disciplinary requirements and certify that such an examination has occurred. But it cannot reduce the scope of the board examination to one aspect only and unfairly single out one particular group of candidates (self-avowed practicing homosexuals) for disqualification. Marriage and sexuality are but two among numerous standards candidates must meet to be commissioned or ordained; other criteria include, for example, being committed to social justice, racial and gender equality, and personal and financial integrity, that all should be part of a careful and thorough examination.

- Petition 1 is constitutional.
- Petitions 2, 3, and 4 deny a bishop’s right to fair and due process guaranteed in ¶¶ 20, 58 and are unconstitutional.

- Petition 5 is constitutional.

- Petitions 6, 7, 8, and 9 violate the principle of legality and are unconstitutional.

- Petition 10:
  - ¶ 2801.1-7 violate the principle of legality and are unconstitutional;
  - ¶ 2801.8, the first sentence:
    - Clergy who find themselves for reasons of conscience unable to live within the boundaries of ¶ 304.3, 341.6, 613.19, and 2702.1a-b are encouraged to transfer to a self-governing church formed under this paragraph.
  - is unconstitutionally vague and violates the principle of legality;
  - ¶ 2801.9 is constitutional;
  - ¶¶ 2801.10-12 and the “local churches” reference in ¶ 2801.13 are in conflict with ¶ 41 and unconstitutional;
• ¶ 2801.14-23 are constitutional.
Petition 11 is constitutional.
Petition 12 is constitutional.
Petition 13 is constitutional.
Petition 14, the second sentence:

In cases where the respondent acknowledges action(s) that are a clear violation of the provisions of the Discipline, a just resolution shall include, but not be limited to, a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation.

violates ¶¶ 20, 58 and is unconstitutional.
Petition 15 is constitutional.
Petition 16 is constitutional.
Petition 17 is constitutional insofar as it refers to self-governing Methodist churches formed by annual conferences under the provisions of proposed ¶ 2801.9.

Statement of Facts

On July 10, 2018, the Council of Bishops [hereinafter COB] submitted a request asking the Judicial Council to rule “on the constitutionality of the three plans submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference.” The Petition for Declaratory Decision, including cover letter, judicial form, the request, and five exhibits, totaled 230 pages.

In addition, four interested parties and fourteen amici curiae filed 28 briefs. The relevant parts of the COB request read:

The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church (“the Council”) respectfully requests the Judicial Council to issue a declaratory decision on the constitutionality of three sets of petitions submitted by various members of the Commission on a Way Forward, one set relating to the One Church Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A (“One Church Plan Petitions”), the next relating to the Connectional Conference Plan attached hereto as Exhibit B (“Connectional Conference Plan Petitions”), and another relating to the Traditional Plan attached hereto as Exhibit C (“Traditional Plan Petitions”). Attached hereto as Exhibit D for informational purposes is the entire report of the Commission on a Way Forward.

[...]

The Council requests the following declaratory decisions:

(1) Is the proposed legislation known as the One Church Plan constitutional?

(2) If any petition included within the proposed legislation known as the One Church Plan is not constitutional, may the other proposed petitions constituting the One Church Plan be enacted without violating the constitution?

(3) Do any of the petitions comprising the proposed legislation known as the One Church Plan violate other provisions of the 2016 Book of Discipline?

(4) Is the proposed legislation known as the Connectional Conference Plan constitutional?

(5) If any petition included within the proposed legislation known as the Connectional Conference Plan is not constitutional, may the other proposed petitions constituting the Connectional Conference Plan be enacted without violating the constitution?

(6) Do any of the petitions comprising the proposed legislation known as the Connectional Conference Plan violate other provisions of the 2016 Book of Discipline?

(7) Is the proposed legislation known as the Traditional Plan constitutional?

(8) If any petition included in the proposed legislation known as the Traditional Plan is not constitutional, may the other proposed petitions constituting the Traditional Plan be enacted without violating the constitution?

(9) Do any of the petitions comprising the proposed legislation known as the Traditional Plan violate other provisions of the 2016 Book of Discipline?

An oral hearing was conducted on October 23, 2018 at the Placid Hotel in Zurich, Switzerland. Appearing on behalf of the COB were Bishops Kenneth H. Carter and Cynthia Fierro Harvey and William Waddell, Esq., and on behalf of the Commission on the Way Forward [hereinafter COWF], Rev. Thomas Berlin for the One Church Plan, Patricia Miller for the Connectional Conference Plan, and Rev. Thomas Lambrecht for the Traditional Plan. Amici curiae Rev. Keith Boyette and Thomas Starnes, Esq. requested and were granted privilege to speak at the oral hearing.

Ruben Reyes was absent. Warren Plowden, first lay alternate, participated in this decision. Beth Capen participated fully in the deliberation of this matter. Kent Fulton, Second Lay Alternate, cast the vote.

October 26, 2018

1 Cover Letter of Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, President Designate COB, of July 10, 2018.
Commission on the General Conference
Determines Petition Process

Nashville, Tenn.: The Commission on the General Conference has outlined a process for determining if petitions submitted to the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference are in harmony with the Council of Bishops’ amended call to the session, which states that the purpose of the special session “shall be limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based upon the recommendations of the Council of Bishops.”

The Judicial Council ruled that petitions may be filed by an organization or lay/clergy member as long as the business proposed to be transacted is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call. According to Decision 1360, “It is the obligation of the General Conference to determine, in the first instance, through its committees, officers and presiders, acting in accordance with The Discipline and the rules and procedures of the General Conference, whether any such petition is ‘in harmony.’”

The Commission on a Way Forward has submitted 48 petitions. Seventy-nine additional petitions were submitted, of which 18 have been found to be invalid due to errors in formatting or failure to meet other requirements. The 61 remaining petitions are still being reviewed to determine validity in formatting. These determinations will all be reviewed by the Committee on Reference, in accordance with the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order of the General Conference.

In designing a process for consideration by the Commission on the General Conference to carry out the Judicial Council’s ruling, the executive committee of the Commission on the General Conference worked with a design team for the 2019 Special Session, which met in Charlotte, N.C., August 18–19 to discuss plans for the event. The design team includes the executive committee of the Commission on the General Conference, representatives of the Council of Bishops and the Commission on a Way Forward, and a representative of the 2019 Special Session hospitality team. The design team is providing recommendations, but only the Commission itself is authorized to make decisions.

The executive committee prepared a recommended process for determining whether petitions are in harmony with the call to the special session. This process was presented to the full membership of the Commission on the General Conference for approval and received an affirmative vote. The process is as follows:

The Secretary of the General Conference and the Petitions Secretary will review petitions that were submitted to make sure the format adheres to the instructions for petition submission, as well as the Plan of Organizations and Rules of Order and requirements in the Book of Discipline.

All valid petitions will be printed in the Advance edition of the Daily Christian Advocate; however, the petitions submitted by organizations and individuals other than the Commission on a Way Forward will still have to be reviewed by the Committee on Reference to determine if they are in harmony with the call to the special session. If the petition is not found to be in harmony, it will be withdrawn. The actions of the Committee on Reference will be reported in the first daily edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.

During the design team meeting, the group also discussed the idea of offering a covenant for delegates, inspired by the accountability covenant that members of the Commission on a Way Forward adopted to guide them in their work together.

Also on the agenda was discussion of ideas to help provide a tone and an environment that will help delegates to do their best work and ways to integrate prayer and worship into the process. The day preceding the start of General Conference, February 23, has been designated as a day of preparation and prayer as a culmination of the Praying Our Way Forward initiative.
Steps for Petition Review

Petitions from the Commission on a Way Forward

Petitions from the Commission on a Way Forward are received and submitted to the Judicial Council for review of constitutionality (Docket 1018-12). They are printed in the Advance edition of the Daily Christian Advocate as submitted.

Petitions from Other Eligible Submitters

FIRST

Per Judicial Council Decision 1360, a petition from any other eligible submitter is received. The Secretary of the General Conference and Petitions Secretary review the petition for valid format according to the Petition Submission Instructions, Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, and Disciplinary requirements.

THEN

Valid petitions are printed in the Advance edition of the Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA) and are subject to review by the Committee on Reference (COR) [Plan of Organization – Section VII.A.7] as to whether or not they are in harmony with the call to the special session. If the COR finds the petition to be in harmony, it is assigned to the appropriate legislative committee for action. If the COR finds it is not in harmony, it is withdrawn.

THEN

The COR reports its actions to the Conference in the first daily edition of the Daily Christian Advocate.

Advance Legislative Research Panel

As per Section VII B of the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, the Advance Legislative Research Panel (ALRP) will receive the petitions after being compiled by Disciplinary paragraphs 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 related paragraph, decision, or memoranda shall be recorded with each petition.
Process Developed to Prioritize Legislative Committee Work at Special Session

Nashville, Tennessee: The Commission on the General Conference has devised a process for determining the order in which legislative proposals will be considered by the single legislative committee during the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference.

Petitions that compose a plan will be considered together as one unit. Petitions that are not part of a plan will be considered individually. On the first official day of the session, February 24, plans and petitions will be listed one at a time on the video screens in numerical order by petition number(s). Delegates will then be able to indicate whether they consider each a high priority or a low priority by pressing either 1 or 2 on their voting device.

New voting devices using smartcard technology will make voting simpler and more secure. Each delegate will have a smartcard, which can be used only once. On-screen prompts give delegates easy instructions to direct them on what to do, how they are voting, and to confirm receipt of the vote.

Each plan or petition will be listed in order of the High Priority percentage. Results of the ranking will not be shown until completion of the process for all plans and petitions. At that time, the outcome of all the rankings will be projected, with all plans and petitions listed by percentage.

Legislative committee officers will prioritize the plans and petitions in order according to the percentages listed and the Legislative Committee will perfect them in that order. All petitions must receive a vote in legislative committee.

Items will be brought to the floor of the legislative committee for perfection and a committee vote in order according to the prioritization. Items receiving an affirmative vote in legislative committee will be placed on the appropriate calendar and brought to the floor of the plenary session for further debate and a vote according to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order. All petitions approved by a legislative committee must have a vote by the plenary session.

The General Conference Committee on Reference has determined that 78 petitions submitted for consideration by the 2019 General Conference are in harmony with the purpose of the special session.
Plan for Prioritization of Legislative Committee Process
2019 Special Session of the General Conference

In accordance with Rule 36.1 (ADCA page 56)

- Plans and petitions will be listed one at a time on the video screens in Petition Number order. Petitions that compose a plan will be considered together as one unit. Petitions that are not part of a plan will be considered individually. Example:

| Plan | Petitions 90000-91111
ADCA Pages #000-000 |
|------|---------------------|
| or   | Petition 94444
Title
ADCA Page #000 |
| Please press 1 or 2 when instructed. |

- Delegates will press 1 or 2 on the keypad as each plan or petition is shown.
  - 1 = High Priority
  - 2 = Low Priority

- Results will not be shown for each round until all rounds have been completed.

- Following the completion of all rounds, each plan or petition will be shown with Priority percentages shown.

| Plan | Petitions 90000-91111
ADCA Pages #000-000 |
|------|---------------------|
| or   | Petition 94444
Title
ADCA Page #000 |
| High (1) – 71% |
| Low (2) – 29% |

- Plans and petitions will be listed in order of the High Priority percentage. In the example above, the ___ Plan would be listed with a 71% High Priority indicator and Petition 94444 would be listed with a 39% High Priority indicator.

- Legislative Committee officers will prioritize the plans and petitions in order according to the percentages listed and the Legislative Committee will perfect them in that order.

Prioritization

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| Petition 95555
Title
ADCA Page #000 |
| High (1) – 58% |
| Low (2) – 42% |

| Plan #9 – 67% |
| Petition 94444
Title
ADCA Page #000 |
| High (1) – 39% |
| Low (2) – 61% |

| Plan #17 – 52% |
| Petition 94444
Title
ADCA Page #000 |
| High (1) – 39% |
| Low (2) – 61% |

- Items will be brought to the floor of the legislative committee for perfection and a committee vote in order according to the prioritization. *(Reminder: Items may be voted with non-support in favor of perfecting another Plan or Petition.)*

- Items receiving an affirmative vote in legislative committee will be placed on the appropriate calendar and brought to the floor of the plenary session for further debate and a vote according to the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order.
**Seventy-eight Legislative Petitions Headed for St. Louis**

Dallas, Texas: The General Conference Committee on Reference has determined that 78 petitions submitted for consideration by the 2019 General Conference are in harmony with the purpose of the special session to be held February 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis, Missouri.

All those petitions must receive a vote in legislative committee, according to a 2016 provision in the Book of Discipline, and all those approved by legislative committee must receive a plenary vote. The Commission on the General Conference previously has decided there will be a single legislative committee.

The Committee on Reference’s report, which lists the petitions determined to be in harmony and which were not, is available online and will be published in the Daily Christian Advocate.

Last May, the Judicial Council ruled in Decision 1360 that petitions could be filed by any organization, clergy or lay member of The United Methodist Church if the business proposed to be transacted is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call for the special session, which is “limited to receiving and acting upon a report from the Commission on a Way Forward based upon recommendations of the Council of Bishops.”

The Commission on the General Conference tasked the Committee on Reference with the responsibility for deciding whether petitions meet that standard. The reference committee met January 11-12 in Irving, Texas, to review all of the legislation in advance of the special session.

“To my understanding, it’s the first time the committee has met outside of General Conference,” said the Rev. Chuck Savage, committee chairperson. Savage said they thought about how the committee’s work might create a template or a precedent should a similar situation happen in the future.

In total, 133 legislative petitions were submitted, 48 of which came from the Commission on a Way Forward (COWF). Of the 85 pieces of legislation brought forward by other petitioners, 34 were preliminarily determined to be invalid by the Secretary of the General Conference and the Petitions Secretary due to formatting or other issues. The Committee on Reference subsequently reviewed those determinations and declared those petitions were indeed invalid.

The committee ruled that all petitions included with the COWF report are in harmony. There was a unanimous vote to review the remaining 51 petitions to determine whether they should be included.

The committee established criteria to guide their determinations about whether a petition is “in harmony” or not.

To be considered in harmony, at least one of the following criteria must be met: the petition was submitted by the COWF; the content of the petition directly addresses inclusion or exclusion of LGBTQ persons; or the content of the petition seeks to correct or perfect COWF plans for the continuing existence of The United Methodist Church.

The process the committee utilized was to divide petitions into two groups: those that address disciplinary paragraphs included in the petitions submitted by the COWF and those that address other paragraphs or create new paragraphs.

Committee members independently reviewed petitions that addressed paragraphs that were already opened and brought forth for discussion any they believed did not meet the criteria. Petitions in the second category were considered individually to see if they met criteria that would deem them eligible for inclusion. One additional petition was found to be invalid during this review.

Of the 50 remaining valid petitions submitted by petitioners other than the COWF, 30 were determined to be in harmony and 20 were not.

The Committee on Reference is an administrative committee of the General Conference whose members are elected delegates (one clergy and one layperson from each central conference and jurisdiction). Of the committee’s 24 members, 19 were present.

Rev. Savage expressed appreciation for the way the committee worked together. “Among a group of people with many differing opinions, everyone was able to set aside their personal viewpoints and objectively evaluate each petition.”
## Committee on Reference Decisions Regarding Harmony

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A petition is considered in harmony if it meets at least one of the following criteria: the petition was submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward; the content of the petition directly addresses the inclusion or exclusion of LGBTQ persons; or the content of the petition seeks to correct or perfect Commission on a Way Forward plans for the continuing existence of The United Methodist Church.
Committee on Reference Evaluation Process

ESTABLISHED CRITERIA
A petition is considered to be in harmony if it meets at least one of the following:

- Submitted by Commission on a Way Forward (COWF)
- Content directly addresses the inclusion or exclusion of LGBTQ persons
- Content seeks to correct or perfect COWF plans for the continuing existence of The United Methodist Church

SUBMITTED PETITIONS

Is the petition valid?

No → INVALID

Yes →

Was the petition submitted by the Commission on a Way Forward (COWF)?

Yes →

Does the petition address a paragraph not opened by COWF petitions?

Yes → Committee evaluates petition

Does the petition meet established criteria?

Yes → IN HARMONY

No → NOT IN HARMONY

No →

Committee members independently review petition against established criteria

Does the petition meet established criteria?

Yes → NOT IN HARMONY

No → Lifted for discussion
2016 Legislative Committee Officers

The following individuals served as Legislative Committee officers during the 2016 General Conference, having received training and experience at that time. As requested by the Commission on the General Conference, they have indicated a willingness to serve as an officer of the one Legislative Committee during the 2019 Special Session. In addition, they have submitted a biographical sketch and attended a mandatory refresher course focused on the parliamentary processes specific to the 2019 Special Session.

Served as Legislative Committee Chair

William (Bill) Allen, Upper New York, Chair, Conferences

Qualifications for Legislative Committee Chair for the 2019 GC:
• I chaired the 2016 GC Conferences Committee that included 3 sub-committees and over 100 pieces of legislation. We specifically dealt with plans around the organization of Jurisdictions and Annual Conferences.
• I am head of the UNY delegation in 2019, I was head delegate in 2016, and I was a reserve delegate in 2012.
• I co-chaired the Upper New York Human Sexuality Task Force for 4 years.
• I have chaired a District Committee of Ordained Ministry for over 10 years.

Cornelia A. (Connie) Clark, Tennessee, Chair, General Administration

Cornelia A. (Connie) Clark is a lay delegate from the Tennessee Annual Conference USA. She is a Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court and member at First United Methodist Church in Franklin, Tennessee.

Connie’s experience in parliamentary leadership includes:
• Chief Justice, Tennessee Supreme Court
• UM General Conference Delegate (2012, 2016)
• Chair, General Administration Committee (2016)
• Chair, Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals (2012–2016) (heard appeal from church trial)
• Chair, UM Publishing House Board of Directors (2016–present)

Connie has presided over difficult discussions in complicated situations. She successfully balances fair opportunities for open communication by all with adherence to procedural rules.

Joseph Harris, Oklahoma, Chair, Independent Commissions

I have served as a full delegate to 7 General Conferences and 8 Jurisdictional Conferences. I have chaired 2 legislative committees (both Independent Commissions) and been vice chair of one (Church and Society). Chaired 2 sub committees. I served as Chair of the Boundaries Committee (SCJ). I serve as conference secretary in charge of balloting for General and Jurisdictional Conference elections in Oklahoma (12 years). I have served as Vice-Chair for Commission on Religion and Race, vice-chair of trustees for Church and Society, and General Secretary for United Methodist Men. Currently serve as assistant to Bishop and Communication’s Director Oklahoma Conference.

Kimberly Reisman, Indiana, Chair, Judicial Administration

Rev. Dr. Kimberly Reisman is an elder in the United Methodist Church and Executive Director of World Methodist Evangelism, a ministry that equips the global Methodist/Wesleyan family of Christians for the work of evangelism.

Kim has been a delegate to three General Conferences (2008, 2012, 2016). She serves on the Standing Committee for Central Conference Matters, chairing one of the one of the working groups responsible for creating the General Book of Discipline. Kim chaired the Judicial Administration legislative committee in 2016 and has chaired a variety of international meetings in her work with World Methodist Evangelism and the World Methodist Council.

Served as Legislative Committee Vice Chair

Bwalya Laishi, Zambia, Vice Chair, Discipleship

My name is Bwalya Laishi, a male clergy from the South Congo/Zambia Episcopal area.

I am a PhD, holder in Biblical Studies, Old Testament.

I am a lecturer in various universities within my country and outside.

I am a former District Superintendent.

I served as chairperson of the Conference Board of
Ordained Ministry in the Zambia Annual Conference for a period of about ten (10) years.

I served as a chairperson of the legislative committee on Discipleship at the 2012 General Conference, held in Tampa, Florida.

I served as member of the Connectional Table representing the Congo Central Conference from 2013 to 2016.

Sergei Nikolaev, Central Russia, Vice Chair, Ministry and Higher Education/Superintendency

Rev. Dr. Sergei Nikolaev is an ordained elder in the Central Russia Conference. He holds a Ph.D. in Christian Tradition from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. He serves as the President of the Moscow Seminary and an E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism. He has served as a delegate to the last three General Conferences. He was twice elected as the vice chair for his legislative committee. Additionally, through the years, he has served on the GBHEM Board, the IAMSCU Board, the Committee on Central Conference Affairs, the Committee on Faith and Order, the Central Conference Theological Education Fund, and the General Conference Committee on Reference.

Lillian Gallo Seagren, Iowa, Vice Chair, Independent Commissions

Rev. Dr. Lilian Gallo Seagren, an Elder and Full Member in the Iowa Annual Conference, is currently serving her 7th year as Conference Superintendent. She was 6th elected Clergy for the 2012 General Conference and 1st elected Clergy for the 2016 General Conference. Lilian was elected Assistant Facilitator of one of the Legislative Committees in 2016.

Her General Church past involvement included serving as Board of Director of The General Board of Global Ministries and UMCOR (2008–2012); Board of Director of The Commission on Status and Role of Women (2012–2016); and Board Member for the National Association of Filipino American United Methodists (2016–2019).

Served as Legislative Committee Secretary

Joseph F. DiPaolo, Eastern Pennsylvania, Secretary, Ministry and Higher Education/Superintendency

Joseph F. DiPaolo is a clergy member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, and lead pastor of First UMC of Lancaster, an active urban congregation, where he manages a staff of more than 20 persons. Since his appointment to First UMC in 2015, DiPaolo began a feeding ministry, which currently serves free breakfasts to 150 persons per day, Monday to Friday; and successfully led a capital campaign to relieve $2 million in lingering debt. A delegate to six Jurisdictional and two General Conferences, he also serves on the Commission on the General Conference and the General Commission on Archives and History.

Carleen Fogle-Miller, Florida, Secretary, Faith and Order

A lifelong United Methodist, lay member of the Florida Annual Conference, and three-time General Conference delegate, Carlene served as secretary for the Faith and Order Committee at GC2016, chair of the Board Governance Committee for GCSRW during the 2012-2016 quadrennium, and has been shadowing the Parliamentarian at Annual Conference since 2017. She holds degrees from University of Mississippi (J.D. ’15), Florida Southern College (B.A. ‘13), and is currently at Candler School of Theology at Emory University (MDiv ’21), with the ultimate goal of attaining a PhD in Ethics relating to the intersection of Church and Law.

Shayla Jordan, Great Plains, Secretary, Discipleship

Shayla Jordan is in her first year in seminary at Perkins School of Theology University in Dallas, Texas, where she is pursuing a dual master’s degree in Divinity and Higher Educational Leadership. She currently holds various leadership roles within the UMC such as the young adult representative from the South-Central Jurisdiction to the Division on Ministries with Youth People, the U.S. voting representative to the European Youth and Children’s Council, and a voting delegate to the World Methodist Council. At General Conference 2016 Shayla served as the Discipleship Committee secretary and is interested in continuing serving the church in this way.

Rebekah (Beckie) Sweet, Upper New York, Secretary, Judicial Administration

• UM Elder currently serving Kenmore UMC in the Upper NY Conference;
• Serving under episcopal appointment since 1982, including DS.
• Conference leadership has included: Commission on Religion & Race; Board of Ordained Ministry, Equitable Compensation, CFA, Christian Ed Committee, Communications Committee, CCYM, among many others.
• Community leadership has included: Kenmore Village Improvement Society; Gouverneur HS Basketball scorekeeper; Wayne Co. Prison Ministry; Chenango Co. Hospice Board.
• Served as secretary for the Judicial Administration Legislative Committee at GC2016; Extended Cabinet Secretary 5 years; and secretary for many organizations and group meetings.
Errata in the ADCA

The following are errors in the French edition of the Advance Daily Christian Advocate, with the corrections printed in the final column.

If you discover other errors in any edition of the ADCA or DCA, please contact Brian Sigmon, DCA Editor, at bsigmon@umpublishing.org.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Colonne gauche ou droite</th>
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<th>Ligne(s) au sein du paragraphe</th>
<th>Erreur (texte tel que publié)</th>
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<td>Humilité. Nous pratiquerons notre fidélité</td>
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<td>… notre compréhension de la mission de Dieu est toujours partielle (c-à-d incomplète)</td>
<td>… notre compréhension de la mission de Dieu est toujours partielle</td>
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<td>Les églises locales ne seront pas tenues de</td>
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<td>C) Mariage— Nous affirmons le caractère sacré</td>
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<td>G) Sexualité des êtres humains</td>
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General Commission on the Status and Role of Women Monitoring Report

Gender is everywhere, but we seldom notice it. When my young daughter brought a paper home from Sunday school, she and I looked at it together, as we often did. I wanted to hear more about what she was learning. But the picture caught my eye for another reason. It was a cartoon-like drawing of a bunch of children in biblical times, all of whom looked like boys to me. I asked my daughter if she saw herself in that picture; that is, did she see any girls in the scene? She rolled her eyes, took a closer look at the picture, and said firmly, “There are girls there. Don’t worry mom; everyone looked the same back then.” Maybe she was right. The kids depicted were wearing long robe-like garments and sandals, and all had curly hair showing around the edges of their head coverings. But I was not so sure, and as the mom of a girl child, I wanted to be sure my daughter “saw” herself in the biblical story.

Looking out across the plenary of the upcoming General Conference, it will be tempting to say the same thing—don’t worry, there are women out there. And there are, but only 306 out of 864 delegates, a disappointing 36% in a denomination made up of just over 57% women. It is a bit more complicated since half of the delegates are clergy and among clergy in the U.S., only 28% are women. By that measure, clergywomen are well represented, since women make up 29% of the clergy delegates. Laywomen are not as well represented, with women making up only 43% of the lay delegates. That means that even if all of the women participate in the General Conference discussion equivalent to their proportion of the delegates, they will still not represent the many women’s voices in the larger church.

That gender imbalance is unevenly distributed across the Church. That is, 43% of the delegates from the US Jurisdictions are women, but the Philippines include only 30% women, Europe sent only 28%, and from Africa, there are only 24% women delegates. Most shocking is this fact: there are five annual conference delegations that include no women at all. While each annual conference elects its own delegates, and each one has to decide how best to represent its membership, it is simply unacceptable to send single-gender delegations. Of course, there were also annual conferences that elected women to half or more of their seats, but in the end, there were far fewer of them (35.6%) producing the overall imbalance of 36% women.

It is too late to change the makeup of the delegations, but it is not too late to make sure gender balance is achieved in other ways while we are here. We can make sure that women are recognized to speak by the presiding bishop, that they are invited and encouraged to speak by others in their delegations, that women’s speeches are not interrupted or cut short, as compared to those by men. We can make sure women are not discounted as angry, or whining, or mean, or any of the myriad ways women in leadership are described as problematic.

Gender is hard NOT to notice these days, but clearly, we have not done enough in The United Methodist Church. Let’s make this General Conference as gender aware as possible, despite the challenges posed by the imbalance in the delegates. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will be monitoring for gender inclusion, and we hope to report that you’re doing a great job.
In his treatise about the nature of Christian community, *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers a challenging thought, inviting a deeper sense of our gathering of this called 2019 Special Session in St. Louis:

The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.

All who gather here are aware of the singular and substantive importance of this moment. This moment in time invites, perhaps requires, the gathered body to be fully present in the here and now, present to one’s interior self, to the self in each other, and to the Holy Spirit who permeates our lives individually and collectively during our time together. Self-awareness and self-monitoring as spiritual and relational disciplines are difficult and often deep work yet essential if we are to move beyond debate into true dialogue.

Our *Book of Discipline* reminds us that “Our theological task is contextual and incarnational” (¶105, p. 82). As we gather here, we come as a multi-contextual and multicultural community. What will the “incarnational” expression of being the gathered followers of Jesus Christ look like from inside this body? How might that differ from culture to culture and context to context?

Understanding one’s own culture and those of others and the ability to worship, work, and live effectively and in harmony with diverse persons are critical to those called to follow Christ. It is central to being able to dialogue and discern together.

At the close of the 2016 General Conference in Portland, as the gathered global community prepared to “go forth,” we posed several self-monitoring questions in the hope of preparing for this special session of General Conference:

- How will you/we prepare ourselves well to engage relationally well when we next gather?
- How do we avoid getting stuck in current or past patterns of discussion and debate and move more fully into dialogue?
- How do we acknowledge the collective communities of which each of us is a part when we gather, while seeking to relate to the individual identity we each bring to the gathering?
- What interior examination might we each need to do in order to see the dignity of each other, and in humility, recognize the Christ in one another?

As we enter this day of prayer, preparing for dialogue and discernment, we encourage shifting these into a type of affirmation of engagement, a sort of Code of Mindfulness:

- I will listen for and look for the Christ in each person I am with each day.
- I will pause, breathe deeply, and release before moving forward, when I feel I am stuck.
- I will seek to be fully present to each person I am in conversation with, including in my listening to them.

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**Reserve Delegate Seating**

While there is not a separate area designated for reserve delegates to sit, it is recommended that reserve delegates sit between sections 132 and 136 for easiest access to the plenary floor.
Parliamentary Guidelines

One of the purposes of General Conference is to do the business and ministry of the church. Using the principles of parliamentary procedure, delegates discuss important issues and decide which is essential to the continuing ministry of the church. The following are useful for delegate participation:

United Methodist Church Book of Discipline—Constitution, rules and procedures to manage the church and facilitate conferences, including General Conference.


Rules of Order used by each General Conference—special procedures specifically for General Conference.

A speaker recognition and voting system, which provides an orderly way for delegates to discuss issues and make legislative proposals for General Conference action.

Delegates should familiarize themselves with the principles in this guide and the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Parliamentary Principles

The basic principles of parliamentary procedure help to provide the following:

**Fairness:** No person or view should have a decided advantage or disadvantage in addressing issues properly before the General Conference.

**Clarity:** The procedures used by the Conference should help clarify the precise issues under discussion and the precise proposals being decided in a vote.

**Efficiency:** Given the large number of delegates and the size of the agenda, parliamentary principles should help the Conference move through its agenda at an efficient, but not excessively hasty, pace.

**Protection of Minority Opinions:** A majority vote decides most issues. However, a two-thirds vote is required sometimes. For example, matters that affect the rights of the delegates (such as closing debate) or that change the basic principles that govern the church (such as amending UMC's Constitution).

The basic parliamentary authority for General Conference is the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order supplemented by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition), except where it conflicts with the UMC's Plan of Organization and Rules of Order or Book of Discipline. Specific actions are defined later in this guide.

Debate and Motions

**Moving a Motion:** After you have proposed a motion the chair will call for a second. After the chair recognizes the second, you will be recognized to speak to your motion if it is debatable.

**Amendments:** Provide the General Conference Secretary a written copy of any proposal to change a motion. Doing this ahead of time helps the translation team and allows projection of the text. This helps all delegates understand your idea. However, presenting a written copy does not guarantee you will be recognized. It is the responsibility of the delegate to get the floor.

**Rules of Alternates:** Delegates may register to speak for or against a proposal. The chair usually will alternate between those wishing to speak “for” and those wishing to speak “against.”

**Close Debate (Previous Question):** After there have been at least two speeches for and two speeches against a proposal, any delegate may move to close debate on the current proposal. If the delegates adopt the motion to close debate, the matter then is voted on without further discussion. Such a motion will prevail only if at least two-thirds of the delegates voting wish to close debate.

Responsible Participation

Effective General Conference business meetings require delegates to cooperate. Flexibility, patience, and consideration for others allow the legislative process to run smoothly and be fair for all.

Delegates cannot know their specific position in the speaking pool. To give an equal chance for each delegate who wishes to speak, the speaking pool is used by the Presiding Officers. The legislative communications system is designed so no delegates are systematically disadvantaged.

Several delegates may be registered to speak to a main proposal when an amendment is made. When a motion to amend has been made and seconded, a new speaking queue is opened, and the chair will call on people who are registered to speak to the amendment.

Those registered to speak to the main motion will need to register again should the main motion return to the floor for more debate.

The chair recognizes delegates for the purpose they have registered. Delegates recognized for motions of precedence, such as points of order, will be recognized in preference to those wishing to speak or ask a question.
Delegates may not use motions of parliamentary precedence to speak to the substance of a motion or to ask rhetorical questions.

The Speaker Recognition and Voting System

The chair receives information about delegates wishing to get the floor through the speaker recognition and voting system. This computerized system transfers and coordinates information to the presiding officer indicating the individual’s name, which microphone the individual will use, what conference the individual is from, the individual’s gender, and whether the individual is laity or clergy. The system is designed to be orderly and fair.

How to Use the Speaker Recognition and Voting System

- Become familiar with the list of parliamentary actions in this guide. When you wish to get the floor, take your voting device and scroll to the number of the action you wish to take.
- You may not register to speak on any item until the chair announces the item, it receives a second and has been stated by the Chair. The Presiding Officer will signal to the Conference when it is time to register to speak or make another parliamentary motion.
- You cannot tell you place in the pool, so be patient. You may be called upon or you may not, depending on how many wish to speak to a particular matter.
- If you have questions about how the speaker recognition and voting system works and how to use it effectively, please ask your delegation leader for help.
- At times, large numbers of delegates try to seek the floor at the same time and so you will not know when (or if) you will be called to speak. Please be patient while waiting.
- Stay in your seat until the chair recognizes you. If the Conference disposes of the matter you wish to speak about before you are recognized, you will not be called to speak.
- If the action you wish to take has parliamentary priority (such as a point of order) the system will alert the chair, but unless the point is about an infraction the rules by the current speaker, generally you will not be recognized until the current speaker has finished. This is to help the oral interpreters.
- When the chair calls your name, speak directly into the microphone. Begin by giving your name and jurisdiction.

Parliamentary Deliberations in an International Assembly

Be aware that when you speak before the assembly, your words are interpreted simultaneously. It is very important that you speak clearly and slowly. Take a breath after each sentence and silently count to three. This will allow interpreters to keep up with what you are saying and will give all delegates a chance to understand your view. Because of time limits on speeches, it is tempting to quickly say as much as possible. If you speak too fast, the chair will interrupt you and ask you to slow down. It is far more effective to think carefully about how to express your thoughts briefly and clearly.

Technical language, culture-specific references, slang and humor do not translate well. If interpreters need to explain your words besides interpreting them, your speech will be less effective.

Speaking Guidelines for Plenary and Committee Sessions at General Conference

- Speak at a slow deliberate pace. Pause 3 seconds between each sentence.
- Write the message out that you want to share. For example: “Bishop, I rise to speak in favor of this motion.” (Pause 3 seconds) “This is because I grew up in an area that is also very much in favor.” (Pause 3 seconds) …etc…
- Speak in short, simple sentences.
  - Sentences with several commas and more than one topic are too complex.
  - Keep the ideas simple for clarity.
- Pronounce your words carefully and clearly.
- Use common words; avoid specialized terms.
  - For example, if you are an accountant and are speaking to delegates that are not accountants-- please use words that they will understand.
  - Many people do not understand deeply theological terms, thus making it difficult to follow complex theological discussions.
- Avoid idioms or figures of speech.
  - For example, “clear as a bell,” “thick as thieves”
- Slang, jargon, technical terms, and culture-specific expressions do not translate well.
  - For example, “pony up”, “parking lot”, “silo”, “hitting a home run”, “elephant in the room”, “blue line”, “in the black or in the red”, “piggyback”…
The reason that they do not translate well is that each individual expression represents several sentences or even paragraphs of explanation. By the time that the explanation is given, the interpreter will have missed several sentences and the train of thought.

- References to current entertainment, movies, popular actors, fashion, action characters, etc., are understood within limited national experience. It is best not to use them.
- Jokes do not translate well and often cannot be translated, so it is best to avoid them.
  - Many jokes are culture-bound and do not have clear meaning in other cultures.
  - Jokes isolate members of the assembly who cannot understand the joke.

- If you choose to refer to your nation’s history, please give information about it. Those who are from other countries will not know your country’s history. Please avoid double negatives in a sentence. For example: “He was not unwise in his action.” Say instead: “He was wise in his action.”
- Seasonal terms such as “winter”, “summer”, etc., have different meanings around the world. Use the name of the month or months instead.
  If in doubt…leave it out.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary Actions</th>
<th>Requires Second</th>
<th>Debatable</th>
<th>Amendable</th>
<th>Vote Required</th>
<th>May Be Reconsidered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Speak FOR the proposal</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Speak AGAINST the proposal</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Amend (Change a Motion)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If applied to a debatable proposal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This changes the proposal being discussed by the Conference. Be sure to state exactly what is to be inserted, struck out, or substituted with precise wording. It helps if written copy is filed with the secretary in advance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Close Debate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3rds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This stops debate and calls for an immediate vote. The chair is justified in ruling it out of order until a diversity of viewpoints has been well expressed. When the discussion begins to be repetitive, offering this motion can be helpful. It can apply to the pending motion or to a series of pending motions. You should specify what you wish the motion to close debate to apply to.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Point of Order</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chair rules</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is proper if you think business is progressing contrary to: a. Parliamentary rules of the Conference; b. Church Constitution; c. Normal standards of courtesy</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Appeal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If applied to a debatable issue</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you think the chair has ruled mistakenly on a point of order, you can appeal to the Conference. This is the only time the chair has the right to speak in debate.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Suspend the Rules</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3rds</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you think parliamentary or administrative rules of the Conference interfere with the progress of business, you can move to suspend the rules. Examples might be to change the time of the meeting, suspend the rule of alternates, or give an honored person the floor. Bylaws or church law cannot be suspended.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Reconsider/Other Parliamentary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Same as original</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brings before the assembly a motion that previously was acted on. Can be moved only by a person who previously voted on the prevailing side. Can be raised only once on a particular item, but anytime during the conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other parliamentary actions not listed.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speaker Recognition Device

Use these numbers to register:

1. Speak For
2. Speak Against
3. Amend (Change a Motion)
4. Close Debate (Previous Question)
5. Point of Order
6. Appeal the Chair’s Decision
7. Suspend the Rules
8. Reconsider/Other Parliamentary Action