



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L'EGLISE METHODISTE UNIE  
RECHTSHOF DER EVANGELISCH-METHODISTISCHEN KIRCHE  
CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA  
CONSEJO DE LA JUDICATURA DE LA IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA



## Petition for Declaratory Decision

This form is to be used by the Secretary of the body authorized to petition the Judicial Council for a ruling in the nature of a declaratory decision as to the constitutionality, meaning, application, or effect of (please check one):

- ☒ *The Book of Discipline 2016* or any portion thereof (§ 2610.1)  
☐ any act or legislation of a General Conference (§ 2610.1)  
☐ any proposed legislation (§ 2609.2)

Name of body authorized to make a Petition (§ 2610.2): New England Annual Conference

Date of session: June 14-16, 2018 (month/day/year) Location: Manchester, NH

Name of Secretary: John Blackadar


Address: 23 Birchdale Road City: Bow

State/Province: NH ZIP/Postal Code 03304 Country: USA

Phone: 603-494-7142 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: Secretary@neumc.org

To be reviewed (indicate paragraph number, title of legislation and/or act where applicable): Book of Discipline: paragraph 722 and/or any part of the General Conference Rules of Order

Legislation: \_\_\_\_\_ Act of General Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:   
**Secretary of the Conference/Body**

Date: June 20, 2018  
(month/day/year)

### The following must be attached:

- Text of the written Petition for Declaratory Decision as originally presented
- Minutes of proceedings (relevant portions only)
- List of names and addresses of interested parties, including e-mail
- Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)

- Eight (8) hard copies must be submitted via USPS or other delivery service to:  
Secretary of the Judicial Council, 5556 N. Sheridan Road, #610, Chicago, IL 60640, USA
- Electronic copies in both Word and PDF (with security features disabled) must be submitted to:  
secretaryjudicialcouncil@gmail.com

## **RS – 18 – 214 – REQUESTING A DECLARATORY DECISION FROM THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL**

(Submitted by Scott Campbell)

WHEREAS the New England Annual Conference has budgeted funds to send delegates and staff members to the special session of the General Conference scheduled for February of 2019, and

WHEREAS the New England Annual Conference encourages members of its churches to attend this milestone moment in the life of the UMC in order to support its delegates and interpret the outcome of the special session to the churches of the conference, and

WHEREAS the United Methodist News Service in a May 16, 2018 article estimates that registration fees for guests and observers could amount to \$200 or higher per person, and

WHEREAS the impingement of the ability of many guests and observers to attend the conference due to financial constraints thereby directly affecting the ability of the New England United Methodist Annual Conference to support its delegates and interpret the outcome of the special session to its member churches, is a matter before this annual conference in its budget, and in RS – 18 – 213, and is therefore a matter affecting the New England Annual Conference.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, we, the New England Annual Conference, request a declaratory decision regarding the following five questions:

1. Does any part of paragraph 722 and/or any part of the General Conference Rules of Order permit the requirement of mandatory registration fees for all non-delegates attending and observing the 2019 special session of General Conference?
2. Do mandatory registration fees for visitors/observers function as an unlawful economic obstruction to the openness and accountability function of being physically present to observe a General Conference and participate in the democratic processes of such a conference through the conversations that take place within the plenary hall, including those outside of the bar and/or outside of convened sessions?
3. Do mandatory registration fees for attendees of a General Conference constitute an unconstitutional violation of Division One, Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, by establishing a de/facto barrier to full inclusion based on economic condition?
4. Pursuant to paragraph 722, is the Commission on General Conference authorized to adopt a policy that would have the impact of infringing upon and substantially curtailing the spirit of paragraph 722, absent a process to amend the General Conference Rules of Order?
5. Absent any explicit authority in either the Discipline or the policies and procedures of General Conference, is the Commission on General Conference empowered to make a decision to establish registration fees for attendance at General Conference which would have the effect of curtailing the observation and participation of visitors or other attendees?

The New England Conference is an interested party in this matter by virtue of the inclusion in its budget for 2019 of funds to send delegates and observers to the special session of the General Conference and through the adoption of RS – 18 - 213. It is the intent and desire of the New England Conference to encourage as many of its members as possible to be present for this historic conversation.

## **DAILY PROCEEDINGS**

### **2018 NEW ENGLAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE VITAL CONVERSATIONS: CULTURE EPHESIANS 4:11-13**

**SATURDAY MORNING JUNE 16, 2018**

**RS-18-213 – ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE AT THE SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION** Scott Campbell moved a resolution Encouraging Attendance at the Special General Conference Session. Seconded.  
**Approved.**

**RS-18-214 – REQUESTING A DECLARATORY DECISION FROM THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL** Scott Campbell moved a resolution Requesting a Declaratory Decision from the Judicial Council. Seconded.  
**Approved by the necessary 2/3 majority.**

The above minutes are excerpted from the Daily Proceedings of the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the New England Annual Conference held June 14-18, 2018 in Manchester, New Hampshire.



John Blackadar  
Conference Secretary

Interested Parties in Decision of Law raised by Rev. Scott Campbell June 16, 2018

Rev. William Scott Campbell  
439 Paris Hill Rd., South Paris, ME 04281  
Email: [campbellwscott@aol.com](mailto:campbellwscott@aol.com)

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar  
New England Conference Center  
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Methuen, MA 01844  
Email: [bishop@neumc.org](mailto:bishop@neumc.org)

Rev. John Blackadar  
Secretary New England Conference  
23 Birchdale Rd  
Bow, NH 03304  
Email: [secretary@neumc.org](mailto:secretary@neumc.org)

**RS – 18 – 213 – ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE AT THE SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION**

(Submitted by Scott Campbell)

The New England Annual Conference urges and encourages as many members of our churches as possible to attend the Special Session of the General Conference scheduled for February of 2019 in order to support our delegates and interpret the outcome of the Special Session among our churches.