



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



Report by Bishop on Decision of Law

This form is to be used for (please check one):

- ☐ Reporting of decisions of law made by bishops in response to questions of law submitted to them in writing during the regular business of a conference session (§ 56.3 Const. and ¶ 2609.6 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).
- ☐ Reporting of episcopal decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference (§ 56.2 Const. and ¶ 2609.7 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).

Name of Bishop: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Annual Conference: _____ Date of session: _____ (month/day/year)

Question(s) of Law: _____

Authorities Cited (indicate paragraph or decision number where applicable):

Constitution: _____ Book of Discipline: _____

Judicial Council Decision(s): _____

Signature: _____

Bishop of The United Methodist Church

Date: _____

(month/day/year)

The following must be attached:

- Decision of Law, including facts, rationale and ruling
 - Text of the written request for decision
 - Minutes of annual conference proceedings (relevant portions only)
 - List of names and addresses of interested parties
 - 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

ORIGINAL TURNED IN REQUEST

May 21, 2018

Decision of Law

I am requesting a Decision of Law regarding the “Church Superconferences” on the Conference calendar at the end of the Pre-conference journal and paragraph 246.4 of the Book of Discipline, 2016 edition which states:

4. The district superintendent shall fix the time of meetings of the charge conference. The Charge conference shall determine the place of meeting, (boldface and italics added).

In light of this provision of the Discipline and the fact tat there have been NO votes by charge/church conferences to locate their conferences anywhere but at their own local church, while including district programs funding, is it permissible to schedule “Church Superconferences” at other locations?

Submitted by:

C Reed S. Pogue
Lay Member
West Side (Millville) United Methodist Church
Delaware Bay District
Greater NJ Annual Conference

4:00pm

The United Methodist Church of Great New Jersey

Decision of Law Request May 21, 2018

"Church Superconferences" on the Conference Calendar

John R. Schol, Bishop

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On May 21, 2018, during the presentation of the 2019 Greater New Jersey Conference budget, and before a vote was taken, Creed Pogue, a lay member of the annual conference asked for the following ruling of law:

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At the Annual Conference there was no consideration or discussions of charge conferences, church conferences or "Superconferences" (a term not found in the calendar identified by Mr. Pogue or in the Book of Discipline), during the Annual Conference session. Mr. Pogue referred to an information hand out entitled "Year-At-A-Glance that listed 2018-2019 GNJ Key Dates & Deadlines" that was included in the pre-conference journal when he requested his ruling of law. No locations of events were given in this advertisement.

JURISDICTION

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction pursuant to Par. 2609.6.

ANALYSIS

The request is moot and hypothetical because charge or church conferences or "Superconferences" were not part of the agenda, business, legislation or discussion of the annual conference session. Also while a calendar of key dates was published as part of the pre-conference journal, it was informational and not germane to the regular business, considerations or discussions of the annual conference session and was included in the pre-conference journal along with other advertisements, Ocean Grove speakers and dates, general information about the conference web address and office address, award recipients and other printed material that were not listed in the agenda or discussed during annual conference session. Additionally, Mr. Pogue raises a concern about locations of "Superconferences" and locations were not listed for church conferences or any of the activities listed on the calendar. "The Judicial Council has repeatedly held that questions of law must be germane to the regular business, considerations or discussions

of the Annual Conference. The question must state the connection to a specific action taken or to be taken or it must be raised during the deliberation of a specific issue or matter upon which the conference takes action. Questions that do not meet these criteria are moot and hypothetical and shall not be decided. Decisions 33, 396, 651, 746, 747, 762, 763, 799, and 903." -Judicial Council Decision 1001.

However, if the Judicial Council determines that there is a connection to the business of the annual conference session and that I should rule on this request for a Decision of Law and that it was therefore not moot and hypothetical, then I rule that Par. 246.10 directs the answer to the Question of Law by stating: "A joint charge conference for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the district superintendent may determine."

Submitted by: John R. Schol, Bishop

APPENDIX 1 – Text of Decision of Law – submitted by Mr. Creed Pogue on May 21, 2018.

May 21, 2018

Decision of Law

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Submitted by:

Creed S. Pogue
Lay Member
West Side (Millville) United Methodist Church
Delaware Bay District
Greater NJ Annual Conference

4:00pm



APPENDIX II

UNITED METHODISTS OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

2018 - 2019 GNJ Key Dates & Deadlines

*Dates are subject to change. Please continue to check the GNJ Digest and specific district resources for further events and information.

MAY, 2018

Fri.	4	Annual Conference hotel registration deadline	Beverly Karlovich
Sat.	5	Transition Workshop (new appointments only)	Regional Team
Tue.	8	Northern Shore Clergy Gathering	Deborah Sidorakis
Tue.	15	Clergy Evaluation deadline	Soomin Lee
Sun. - Tue.	20-22	Annual Conference	Beverly Karlovich
Mon.	21	Coaching registration opens	Diana Picurro
Mon.	28	Memorial Day	MRC closed
Thur.	31	Raritan Valley Clergy Gathering	Deborah Sidorakis

JUNE, 2018

Fri.	1	2017 Fund Balance Report deadline	Regional Team
		Coaching registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Sat.	2	Lay Servant Graduation	Beverly Karlovich
Sat.	30	Quarterly check-ins due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

JULY, 2018

Sun.	1	Church conference forms available online	Regional Team
Wed.	4	Independence Day	MRC closed

AUGUST, 2018

Wed.	1	Fall 2018 PaCE registration opens	Diana Picurro
Mon.	27	Coaching registration opens	Diana Picurro

SEPTEMBER, 2018

Mon.	3	Labor Day	MRC closed
Sat.	8	Communities of Hope commissioning	CMT
Mon.	10	Coaching registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Thur.	13	Bishop's Day on the Central Region: Raritan Valley, Northern Shore & Capital	Deborah Sidorakis
Sat.	15	Fall 2018 PaCE registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Wed. - Thur.	19-20	Bishop's Day on the Southern Region	Jennifer Creran
Fri. - Sun.	28-30	IGNITE	Beverly Karlovich
Sun.	30	Quarterly check-ins due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

OCTOBER, 2018

Mon.	1	Spring 2018 PaCE grant application deadline	Diana Picurro
Fri.	5	Congregational Development Grant applications due	CMT
Sat.	6	Laity Leadership Academy	Diana Picurro
		Skylands District Church Conferences: Session 1	Krystina Michalopoulos
Sat.	13	Gateway North District Church Conferences: Session 1	Krystina Michalopoulos
Tue.	16	Northern Shore Clergy Gathering	Deborah Sidorakis
Wed.	17	Raritan Valley Clergy Gathering	Deborah Sidorakis
		Central Region Stewardship Initiative	Deborah Sidorakis
Thur.	18	Capital District Clergy Gathering	Deborah Sidorakis
Sat.	20	Gateway South District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Sat.	27	Palisades District Church Conferences (English)	Krystina Michalopoulos
		Northern Shore Workshop	Deborah Sidorakis
Sun.	28	Palisades District Church Conferences (Korean)	Krystina Michalopoulos



YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

2018 - 2019 GNJ Key Dates & Deadlines

*Dates are subject to change. Please continue to check the GNJ Digest and specific district resources for further events and information.

NOVEMBER, 2018

Thur.	1 -	Health Benefits open	Alexa Taylor
Thur.	15	enrollment	
Sat.	3	Gateway North District Church Conferences: Session 2	Krystina Michalopoulos
		Cape Atlantic District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Sun.	4	Skylands District Church Conferences: Session 2	Krystina Michalopoulos
Mon. - Wed.	12-14	Bishop's Convocation	Soomin Lee
Sat.	17	Central Region Super Saturday Church Conferences: Raritan Valley, Northern Shore & Capital	Deborah Sidorakis
		Delaware Bay District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Thur. - Sun.	22-25	Thanksgiving	MRC closed
Tue. - Wed.	27-28	Bishop's Day on the Northern Region	Krystina Michalopoulos
Fri.	30	Laity Academy grant application deadline	Diana Picurro

DECEMBER, 2018

Sat.	1	Fall 2018 PaCE registration opens	Diana Picurro
Tue.	4	Year-End Statistical Training: Northern Region	Krystina Michalopoulos
Wed.	5	Year-End Statistical Training: Central Region	Deborah Sidorakis
Thur.	6	Year-End Statistical Training: Southern Region	Jennifer Creran
Mon. - Tue.	24-25	Christmas	MRC closed
Sun.	30	Quarterly check-in's due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

NEED INFORMATION?

Start with the GNJ Regional Team

Northern Region Districts: Gateway North, Palisades & Skylands

Central Region Districts: Capital, Northern Shore & Raritan Valley

Southern Region Districts: Cape Atlantic, Delaware Bay & Gateway South

JANUARY, 2019

Tue.	1	New Year's Day	MRC closed
Tue.	15	Workers Compensation Audit Due	Alexa Taylor
Mon.	21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	MRC closed
Thur.	31	Ezra Statistical Reports Due	Jessica Storer

FEBRUARY, 2019

Fri. - Sat.	8-9	Local Pastor Licensing School	Beverly Karlovich
Mon.	18	President's Day	MRC closed

MARCH, 2019

Fri.	1	Pre-Retirement Seminar	Alexa Taylor
Wed.	6	Ash Wednesday	
Fri. - Sat.	8-9	Local Pastor Licensing School	Beverly Karlovich

APRIL, 2019

Fri. - Sat.	5-6	Local Pastor Licensing School	Beverly Karlovich
Fri. - Mon.	19-22	Good Friday through Easter Monday	MRC closed

MAY, 2019

Sun. - Tue.	19-21	Annual Conference	Beverly Karlovich
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THE GNJ STAFF IS HERE TO HELP

Contact your Regional Admin with your questions.

Krystina Michalopoulos | Northern Region Districts:

Gateway North, Palisades & Skylands

Email: NorthernRegion@gnjumc.org or **Call:** 732.359.1075

Deborah Sidorakis | Central Region Districts:

Capital, Northern Shore & Raritan Valley

Email: CentralRegion@gnjumc.org or **Call:** 732.359.1070

Jennifer Creran | Southern Region Districts:

Cape Atlantic, Delaware Bay & Gateway South

Email: SouthernRegion@gnjumc.org or **Call:** 732.359.1080

APPENDIX III

GNJ 2018 Annual Conference Session Monday, May 21, 2018 – 1:45 PM

Opening Video

The session began with a video about IGNITE ministries for youth, showing scenes from 2017 and presenting the theme for 2018.

Opening Prayer

Charlotte Jansky from the Red Bank UMC opened the session with prayer.

Leadership Address

Bishop Schol invited Rev. Hector Burgos, Director of Connectional Ministries, forward to lead the Leadership address. Burgos introduced the presenters: Rev. Sang Won Doh, Rosa Williams and Rev. Iraida Ruiz de Porras

Rev. Burgos discussed the growth GNJ has made in the five years since setting ambitious goals. We set out to grow from having 14% vital congregations to 41%. We now have 32% of our congregations considered highly vital, making disciples of Christ for the world. He stated that there have been more than fifty new faith communities started as well. Rev. Burgos then spoke of several new ministries that have been started in some of the churches in GNJ.

Rev. Burgos shared statistics of how 67% of worshipers are in small groups and that 55% are participating in hands-on-missions. He praised God for doing wonders, stating that more of the local church budget is being spent on mission and that GNJ has raised \$5.5 million to support Imagine No Malaria, Sandy recovery work and local church mission projects. \$17.7 million was raised for Sandy recovery through A Future With Hope and \$15.3 million was spent in mission, a 5% increase from when we started our strategic plan.

Rev. Burgos shared how miracles are everywhere, giving examples such as 150 congregations having participated in Team Vital and the new bilingual ministry, Nueva Esperanza, which was started at the Morristown UMC. He praised God because more than 1200 students participated in the IGNITE weekend last year and the GNJ Board of Church and Society created an Immigration Task Force to educate congregations on the issue of immigration. Rev. Burgos celebrated that GNJ raised over \$450,000 towards relief efforts for those impacted by recent natural disasters and that through our Esperanza for Puerto Rico initiative, with the participation of over 150 congregations, more than 65,000 pounds of supplies were sent to Puerto Rico and over \$250,000 has been raised for rebuilding efforts.

Rev. Iraida Ruiz de Porras spoke about the bold and renewed Next Generation initiative for youth leaders. She announced two new campus ministries, one at Drew University, the other at Rutgers New Brunswick campus. She celebrated that our camping ministry at the Pineland Center in Mt. Misery is coming back to life and that the Global Board of Discipleship will be launching the Cultivate Initiative which will provide young people vocational discernment opportunities.

Rosa Williams updated the conference on the progress that has been made towards implementing and integrating intercultural competence. She spoke about the cultural/cross racial training that had taken place in the fall, how this Spring, a component on celebrating diversity was added to the transition workshops and how the Board of Ordained Ministry is working with the General Commission on Race and Religion to assess the level of competency of the board and draft an action plan. Williams told of how the cabinet and staff will begin work on intercultural competence as well as how we are building the leadership capacity to begin the next phase to work with clergy and congregations. She offered a special word of thanks to Rev. Nicole Caldwell Gross and Rev. Juel Nelson who have been leading this initiative.

Rev. Sang Won Doh celebrated the amazing things God is doing and affirmed the new strategic plan that will guide our ministry over the next five years. He explained that his plan builds on the progress we have made, leverages what we have learned, seeks to address the core challenges impacting our ministries, praised it for being a plan that focuses less on numbers and more on shifting ways of being, thinking and acting, and recognizes that transformational leadership within congregations is crucial to fulfilling our mission of making disciples. He encouraged every clergy and all laity to be a part of the plan through their congregations.

Rev. Doh stated that a goal of the strategic plan was to equip 100 clergy and 100 laity leaders who make disciples who make disciples. In order to accomplish this, Rev. Doh explained what shifts must occur over the next five years. We will shift from mostly serving our members to having a missional focus; shift from being single cultural congregations to multicultural congregations; from sharing information through workshops to interacting with and experiencing content to form leaders, and from maintaining buildings to repurposing buildings for regenerative mission. Rev. Doh believes these shifts will allow GNJ to focus on mission, to grow and be more adaptive to challenges and will allow us to be better stewards of the resources available.

Rev. Burgos shared ways to accomplish the new strategic plan. Focus will be on building new faith communities, resourcing our leaders to grow in intercultural competence and focusing on the Next Gen ministries. He listed the resources available to help congregations and leaders that are ready to become vital and more like Christ: Laity Leadership Academy, Coaching, PACE groups, Mosaic Ministries, Clergy Leadership Development Initiative, Team Vital, and Communities of Hope. He encouraged every leader and congregation to use these resources so as the Spirit calls GNJ, we can engage in new possibilities with courage.

Rev. Burgos thanks the conference for the service they do in their communities to witness the love of Jesus Christ.

Bishop John Schol thanked the GNJ leadership team and staff for all they do to witness to the healing and transformative power and love of Jesus Christ in communities and the world.

Offering

An offering was taken for the Miracles Everywhere campaign. Bishop Schol explained how the offering would be used.

LEGISLATION**Constitutional Amendment - 1**

Bishop John Schol informed the conference that we needed to revote on the Constitutional Amendment listed on page ten in the Conference Addendum.

Lynn Caterson, Conference Chancellor, explained the reason why there is a need to revote on the Constitutional Amendment – 1 and read what had originally been voted on which was incorrect wording.

Tom Lank read the correct language to help the body understand what the members would be voting on at this time.

Rev. Wiley instructed the body on who could vote and how to vote.

Bishop Schol led the body through the voting process.

The votes were collected for counting.

Miracles Everywhere Campaign Case Statement

Judy Colorado moved for the approval the Miracles Everywhere Campaign resolution.

Bishop Hector Ortiz shared about the work of the United Methodist Church in Puerto Rico after last year's hurricane season. He spoke of the devastation caused by the hurricanes that hit the island and how the United Methodist Church has been helping and serving people in their communities.

Judy Colorado thanked Bishop Ortiz for his work.

Video

A video about Puerto Rico and UMCOR's involvement there since the hurricanes was shown.

Colorado introduced Bishop Mande Muyombo from Tanzania in the North Katanga region of Africa. She explained that the Miracles Everywhere campaign will build new connections there.

Bishop Muyombo spoke about how he opposes legislation against women and he provided an update on ministry that was happening in his conference. He also spoke of the need for new congregations, new ministers, programs for the youth and health care services in his conference area.

Colorado thanked Bishop Muyombo. She then introduced Bishop Schol.

Bishop Schol addressed the body, first explaining that although his wife Beverly could not join him today, she is committed to this mission campaign. He explained their conversation about their finances and how they committed to pledging \$42,500 to the Miracles Everywhere Campaign.

Colorado moved to approve the Miracles Everywhere Campaign.

Amendment

Rev. Jessica Brendler Nautly moved for the approval of an amendment to line 15 on page 62 in the preconference journal. She moved to add: "Promote gender equality and justice through education." The motion passed.

The motion for the full legislation passed.

Bishop Muyombo praised GNJ for amendment calling it timely and necessary. Bishop Schol reminded the body that many the conferences in the US failed to pass the amendment as well.

Missional Partnership and the United Methodist Church of Tanzania/ Missional Partnership between the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico and the United Methodist Church

Rev. Sang Won Doh moved for the approval of both the Missional Partnership between The Methodist Church of Puerto Rico and the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey and the Missional Partnership between The United Methodist Church of Tanzania and The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey. The motion passed.

The official documents were signed by Bishop Schol, Bishop Ortiz and Bishop Muyombo.

Nehemiah Properties, Inc. Statement of Relationship

Rev. Clifford Still moved the approval of the Nehemiah Properties, Inc. Statement of Relationship resolution.

Amendment

Gynchang Sin moved for the approval of an amendment requiring adding to line 11 on page 31, "GNJ expects that Nehemiah property Inc. will follow best practices and not hire individuals of immediate family of GNJUMC leadership or trustees of Nehemiah property Inc. Immediate family herein includes but not limited to spouse, grandparent, parent, grandchild, child, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece by blood adopted half, step or marriage domicile partner and domicile relatives." The motion passed.

Amendment

Creed Pogue moved for the approval for an amendment to the resolution to state, “It is understood that no church would participate in the Nehemiah Properties, Inc.’s services without a vote of a church conference presided by their District Superintendent.” This would be added after line 14 on page 31. The motion passed.

The motion for the full legislation passed.

Conference 5 Year Projected Budget Analysis

Judy Colorado presented the 5-Year Projected Budget Analysis report and moved for its adoption.

Decision of Law

Creed Pogue requested a decision of law regarding the “Church Superconferences”:

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Bishop Schol explained that he has thirty days to review and make his ruling and then it will be sent to the Judicial Council who will review the bishop’s ruling and make their ruling.

The Budget Motion was voted upon and approved.

Shared Ministry Apportionment Formula 2019

Judy Colorado moved for the adoption of the Shared Ministry Apportionment Formula 2019 resolution. The motion passed.

Pension and Health Benefits

Rev. Bill Wilson moved to adopt the Pension and Health Benefits Recommendations resolution. The motion passed.

2018 Health Insurance Guidelines

Rev. Wilson made a motion to adopt the 2018 Health Insurance Guidelines resolution. The motion passed.

Clergy Equitable Compensation 2019

Rev. Christine Day made the motion to approve the Clergy Equitable Compensation for 2019 resolution. The motion passed.

Standards for Parsonages

Rev. Day made a motion to approve the Standards for Parsonage resolution. The motion passed.

Closure of Johnsonburg United Methodist Church

Rev. Steven Bechtold, Superintendent of the Skylands District, made a motion for the approval of the Closure of Johnsonburg UMC resolution. The motion passed.

Closure of Billingsport United Methodist Church

Rev. Bethke, District Superintendent of the Gateway South District, made a motion to approve the resolution to close the Billingsport UMC. The motion passed.

Bishop Schol offered a prayer for the congregations of Johnsonburg and Billingsport UMC's.

Historic Sites

Rev. John Callanan made a motion to approve the three resolutions acknowledging Kingwood, Clarksboro Evangelical, and the Union City Emmanuel UMC's as historical sites. The motion passed.

Bishop Schol expressed thanks for Rev. Callanan's leadership and work he does as chairperson of the Archives and History Committee.

Announcements

Rev. Wiley made the necessary announcements.

Closing Prayer

Moselle Jules from the Haddonfield United Methodist Church closed the session in prayer.

Appendix IV

The United Methodist Church of Great New Jersey
Decision of Law Request May 21, 2018
"Church Super conferences" on the Conference Calendar
John R. Schol, Bishop

Interested Parties

Mr. Creed Pogue
169 Cumberland Ave
Estell Manor, NJ 08319-1715
creed.pogue@gmail.com

Rev. Myrna Bethke
Dean of Cabinet
205 Jumping Brook Road
Neptune, NJ 07753
mbethke@gnjumc.org

Rev. David E. Willey III – GNJ Conference Secretary
205 Jumping Brook Road
Neptune, NJ 07753
Conferencesecretary@gnjumc.org