

Bishop's Report To The Judicial Council Of The United Methodist Church

1. This is the form which the Judicial Council is required to provide for the 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. The reporting of such decisions is mandatory, whether or not they are appealed. (See ¶¶ 56, and 2609 of 2008 *The Book of Discipline*, and Judicial Council *Decision 153*, ¶ 3 under "jurisdiction.")

2. This form may also be used to report decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference. (See ¶¶ 56 and 2609 of 2008 *The Book of Discipline*, and Judicial Council *Decision 153*, ¶ 2 under "jurisdiction.")

Please check whether this report is under 1 or 2

Report of an episcopal decision made by Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer

during the session of the West Ohio Annual Conference, meeting at
Lakeside, Ohio on June 6, 20 2016.

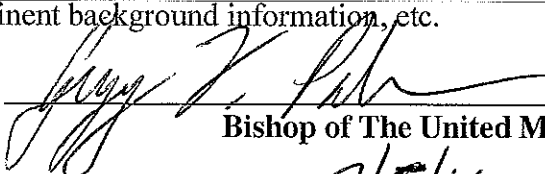
Subject: The Reverend John Edgar requested a ruling as to whether a decision by the Board
of Ordained Ministry violated certain paragraphs of The Book of Discipline.

Please attach the following relevant documents and information:

If under No. 1 - The text of the written request for decision; the decision, and, optionally, the reasoning behind it; notation of appeal, if taken; pertinent background information, etc.

If under No. 2 - The parliamentary situation; the decision, and, optionally, the reasoning behind it; transcript of the appeal taken; pertinent background information, etc.

Signed



Bishop of The United Methodist Church

Date mailed to the Secretary of the Judicial Council 7/5/16

Required copies to:

Secretary of the Judicial Council (13 Copies)

Bishop (1 Copy)

Bishop's Ruling of Law

Syllabus

1. A decision by the Board of Ordained Ministry that an appointment to an extension ministry no longer serves the missional needs of the Church does not have to follow the process in Paragraph 428 of *The Book of Discipline*, in view of the process set forth in Paragraph 344.2 of the *Discipline*.
2. Once a decision that an appointment to an extension ministry no longer serves the missional needs of the Church, a process of consultation similar to the process outlined in Paragraph 428 of *The Book of Discipline* should be followed as soon as practicable in determining a clergy person's subsequent appointment.
3. A decision by the Board of Ordained Ministry that an appointment to an extension ministry no longer serves the missional needs of the Church, standing alone, is not subject to the investigation, trial and appeal procedures set forth in Paragraph 2701 of *The Book of Discipline, et. seq.*

Request for Ruling of Law

On June 6, 2016, Reverend. John Edgar made the following request for a decision of law during the clergy session of the West Ohio Conference:

Does the decision of the Board of Ministry to not verify Rev. Laura Young's appointment to extension ministry violate any or all of the following segments of *The Book of Discipline*?

Paragraph 344, Paragraph 344.d,¹ Paragraph 428.9 which set forth aspects of the process of determining an Extension Ministry appointment and the required consultation.

As well as violating the clear intention of protecting Fair Process for Rev. Young as set forth in Paragraph 2701 and following.

¹ For the purposes of this Ruling of Law, I interpret Reverend Edgar's citation to Paragraph "344.d" of the *Discipline* as in fact intended to refer to Paragraph 344.1.d.

Ruling of Law

Initially, I note that the request for a decision of law does seek to challenge the substance of the Board of Ministry's decision or identify any specific procedural deficiencies. Therefore, I interpret Reverend Edgar's request for a ruling of law as encompassing two general procedural inquiries. First, must a decision by the Board of Ordained Ministry that an appointment to an extension ministry no longer serves the missional needs of the Church follow the consultative process set forth in Paragraph 428 of *The Book of Discipline*? I hold that it does not. Paragraph 344.2(a) of the *Discipline* provides a specific process for gathering and exchanging information concerning the missional value of an extension ministry. The Paragraph's required annual report and the opportunity to meet provide a clergy person with an extension appointment the opportunity to be heard in connection decisions regarding the missional value of an extension appointment. Ultimately, Paragraph 344.1.d of the *Discipline* vests the decision as to whether an extension ministry serves the missional needs of the Church with the relevant Board of Ministry and Bishop.

Therefore, due to the express communicative process set forth in Paragraph 344.2(a) of the *Discipline* and in view of the vague language of its Paragraph 428.9, I cannot conclude that the Board of Ordained Ministry's decision concerning missional need violated any of the cited *Discipline* paragraphs. However, once such a decision is made, I conclude that a consultative process not inconsistent with Paragraph 428.9 of *The Book of Discipline* should be followed as soon as practicable under the circumstances in connection with the affected clergy person's subsequent appointment.

With respect to the question of whether a decision by the Board of Ordained Ministry that an appointment to an extension ministry no longer serves the missional needs of the Church is subject to Paragraph 2701 of *The Book of Discipline* and related sections, I am constrained to base my ruling on the text of *The Discipline*, which I take to be the best indication of its intent. In this regard, Reverend Edgar does not provide, and I am unable to identify, a textual basis for concluding that the Board of Ministry's decision, standing alone, is subject to the investigation, trial and appeal procedures set forth Paragraph 2701 of *The Book of Discipline*. This is particularly so in light of Paragraph 344.1.d, which locates the decision as to whether an extension ministry serves the missional needs of the Church with the relevant Board of Ministry and Bishop.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gregory Vaughn Palmer, Bishop
The West Ohio Annual Conference
of the United Methodist Church

Clergy Session
June 6, 2016

John Edgar Motion

Bishop Palmer, as set forth in Paragraph 51 (Constitution Division Three, Article VII), I request that you decide the following questions of law:

Does the decision of the Board of Ministry to not verify Rev. Laura Young's appointment to extension ministry violate any or all of the following segments of *The Book of Discipline*?

Paragraph 344, Paragraph 344.d, Paragraph 428.9 which set forth aspects of the process of determining an Extension Ministry appointment and the required consultation.

As well as violating the clear intention of protecting Fair Process for Rev. Young as set forth in Paragraph 2701 and following.

Signed by: John Edgar
