

# VII. Resolutions and Petitions

## PETITIONS TO GENERAL CONFERENCE

### 1. PETITION FOR DISAFFILIATION FOR REASONS OF CONSCIENCE

#### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** New ¶2548

**General Church Budget Implications:** None

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

Add new paragraph ¶ 2548. Surrender of Charter of Local Church and Disaffiliation For Reasons Of Conscience -- A local church may surrender its charter from The United Methodist Church and disaffiliate based on the local church's declaration that it is in irreconcilable conflict for reasons of conscience with the provisions of The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline on the practice of homosexuality and the blessing of homosexual unions. Such disaffiliation shall require:

- 1) a) A minimum of 90 days of study and discernment by the congregation
- 2) b) The affirmative vote of two-thirds (66.7%) of the church's professing members present and voting at a duly called church conference
- 3) c) Other provisions of the Book of Discipline shall not be a bar to such disaffiliation

Upon such surrender and disaffiliation, the local church shall be released from the provisions of ¶ 2501 and shall retain full rights to its property and funds, provided that any debts upon such property and any other debts payable by that local church are assumed by that local church. In the event of such proposed action, the bishop, the cabinet, annual conference board of trustees, and other appropriate individuals of The United Methodist Church shall facilitate the orderly and timely administration of this process. Renumber following paragraphs from existing ¶¶ 2548-2551.

#### Rationale:

Despite efforts to preserve unity in the Church, irreconcilable differences persist regarding the practice of homosexuality. The Church needs to value the consciences of our people and provide an honorable way for those whose consciences are violated to disaffiliate without the loss of property and in a ministry-affirming way. For forty years the General Conference has consistently maintained that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. In spite of this, there are local churches and ordained ministers for whom the position taken violates their conscience. Irreconcilable differences persist diverting time and energy from our central mission.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS NOT APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 2. PETITION OF CLERGY PENSION PRESERVED

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** *Discipline* ¶ 361

**General Church Budget Implication:** No

**Global Implications:** No

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

Add new subparagraph to ¶ 361:

¶361.5. Pension Status – When an ordained member withdraws from the ordained office or from the denomination for any reason, the withdrawing clergy person shall be entitled to the full pension credit they have earned up to the time of withdrawal, including all years of service and all funds deposited in their name, whether personal contributions or funds contributed by a salary-paying unit, and including all past and future earnings and appreciation.

Rationale: This provision would reassure those who contemplate withdrawal that their pension benefit would not suffer due to withdrawal. This language codifies what is already part of the current pension plan document. The language would guard against future changes in the plan document that might deprive persons of their pension benefit.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS NOT APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 3. PETITION OF COMPLAINANT AS PARTY TO JUST RESOLUTION

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** *Discipline* ¶¶ ¶ 363.1(c), 413.3(c), 2701.5, 2706.5(c)3

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

Amend ¶¶ 363.1(c), 413.3(c), 2701.5, and 2706.5(c)3 by adding the same sentence to all four as follows:

No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and shall agree to the resolution before it may take effect. Also add ,the complainant, in ¶¶ 2701.5 and 2706.5(c)3.

¶ 363. Complaint Procedures—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. . .

c) Just Resolution—The supervisory response may include a process that seeks a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties.<sup>69</sup> If the bishop chooses to initiate a mediated attempt to produce a just resolution, then the bishop, the person filing the complaint, the respondent, and other appropriate persons shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. A process seeking a just resolution may begin at any time in the supervisory, complaint, or trial process. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and shall agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. A just resolution agreed to by all parties shall be a final disposition of the related complaint.

¶ 413. *Complaints Against Bishops*

...

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2, . . .

...

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 363.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including an agreement as to confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and shall agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process for further action consistent with the agreement.

¶ 2701.5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, the complainant, and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and shall agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

¶ 2706.5. *Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral*

c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(1) If the committee on investigation determines . . .

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.5. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, the complainant, and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. No matter where in the process a just resolution is achieved, the complainant(s) shall be a party to the resolution process and shall agree to the resolution before it may take effect. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the Disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The written statement affirming such resolution shall be given to the bishop

for further action(s) to implement the agreement, if any. If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee.

Rationale: The current practice of allowing the counsel for the church to enter into a just resolution with the respondent without the participation or agreement of the complainant is unjust and circumvents the goal of restoration of relationship. In order for justice to be done and healing to take place, the complainant must participate in the just resolution process. Otherwise, the complainant experiences the resolution as one that is imposed upon him/her and is a further victimization of the complainant.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

#### **4. PETITION ON DEFINITION OF JUST RESOLUTION**

##### **PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Discipline Paragraphs:** ¶¶ 363.1, 2701.5

**General Church Budget Implications:** None

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

Make the following revisions to ¶ 363.1.

¶ **363. Complaint Procedures**—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church ...

This review shall have as its primary purpose ...

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. 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) an apology by the respondent to the appropriate person(s) or body(ies) and a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 363.1(c) may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice and restoration. A complaint is a written and signed statement ...

The revised ¶ 363.1 would then read as follows:

¶ **363. Complaint Procedures**—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church ...

This review shall have as its primary purpose ...

A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. 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) an apology by the respondent to the appropriate person(s) or body(ies) and a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation. In appropriate situations, processes seeking a just resolution as defined in ¶ 363.1(c) may be pursued. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice and restoration.

A complaint is a written and signed statement ...

Make the following revisions to ¶ 2701.5.

## **Section II. Investigations, Trials, and Appeals**

### **FAIR PROCESS IN JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

¶ 2701. Preamble and Purpose—The judicial proceedings ...

5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. 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) an apology by the respondent to the appropriate person(s) or body(ies) and a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

The revised ¶ 2701.5 would then read:

¶ 2701. *Preamble and Purpose*—The judicial proceedings ...

5. *A Just Resolution in Judicial Proceedings*—A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties. 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) an apology by the respondent to the appropriate person(s) or body(ies) and a commitment not to repeat the action(s) that were a violation. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, age and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. During the just resolution process, the parties may be assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s), in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. Processes that seek a just resolution are encouraged at any time, including through the judicial proceedings. After the referral of a matter as a judicial complaint from counsel for the church to the committee on investigation, if a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for possible readmission.

**RATIONALE:** A just resolution must include an apology and a commitment to changed behavior in order to bring about healing and reconciliation. This language gives a minimum benchmark for honoring the complainant as well as the Discipline's requirements.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 5. PETITION ON REVISION OF EPISCOPAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraphs:** ¶¶ 413, 512, 2701.5, 2703.1, 2704.1, 2706.5, 2712

**General Church Budget Implications:** None (trials are paid for out of contingency funds)

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

Make the following revisions to ¶ 413.

¶ 413. Complaints Against Bishops—1. Episcopal leadership ...

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted to the president of the College Council of Bishops in that jurisdictional or central conference. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the College Council of Bishops. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702.9

3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2, the president and the secretary of the College Council of Bishops, or the secretary and another member of the college council if the complaint concerns the president (or the president and another member of the college if the complaint concerns the secretary), shall, within 10 days, consult the chair of the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (ICE) who shall appoint from the committee one professing member and one clergy member who are not from the same episcopal area; who are not from the episcopal area that the bishop under complaint was elected from or has been assigned to; and who are not of the same gender, who shall convene the executive committee of the ICE to carry out the supervisory process (¶ 413.3b-d).<sup>10</sup> In addition, the council president or secretary shall notify the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.

a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop, the College executive committee of the Council of Bishops, in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension, salary, housing and benefits will continue.

b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be an extension of 120 days if the supervising bishop and the two jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process the executive committee of the ICE and the respondent shall determine that an extension will be productive. There may be a second extension of 120 days by the mutual written consent of the supervisory bishop, members of the jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee appointed to the supervisory process, the complainant and the bishop under complaint.

The supervising bishop ICE executive committee chair shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within 7 days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the president (secretary) ICE chair, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching

an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See ¶ 363.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the president of the College of Bishops, or the secretary if the complaint concerns the president ICE executive committee members, complainant, and respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such assisted process, including an agreement as to what aspects of the process merit confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the person in charge of that stage of the process Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee for further action consistent with the agreement.

d) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the bishop in charge of the supervisory response president (secretary) of the Council of Bishops and the two episcopacy committee members appointed to the supervisory process (¶ 413.3) ICE executive committee and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the College Council of Bishops may shall refer the matter as an Administrative Complaint (¶ 413.3e) or a Judicial Complaint (¶ 2704.1).

e) Administrative Complaint—If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the president and or secretary of the College Council of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) shall refer the complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.<sup>11</sup> The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (¶ 408.3), disability leave (¶ 410.4), remedial measures ,other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. The provisions of ¶ 362.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

f) Judicial Complaint—When the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy deems the matter serious enough and when one or more offenses listed in ¶ 2702 are involved, the committee may refer the complaint back to the president and or secretary of the College Council of Bishops (or the two members of the college who are handling the complaint) for shall referral refer it as a judicial complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on investigation according to the provisions of ¶ 2704.1. The provisions of ¶ 362.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.

4. Any actions of the Interjurisdictional Committee or jurisdictional or central conference committee taken on a complaint shall be reported to the next session of the jurisdictional or central conference.
5. Each jurisdiction or central conference shall develop a protocol for the caring of lay, clergy and staff determined to be affected by the processing of the complaint.

The revised ¶ 413 would then read as follows:

**¶ 413. Complaints Against Bishops—1. Episcopal leadership ...**

2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall be submitted to the president of the Council of Bishops. If the complaint concerns the president, it shall be submitted to the secretary of the Council of Bishops. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702.9
3. After receiving a complaint as provided in ¶ 413.2, the president of the Council of Bishops, or the secretary of the council if the complaint concerns the president, shall, within 10 days, consult the chair of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (ICE), who shall convene the executive

committee of the ICE to carry out the supervisory process (§ 413.3b-d).<sup>10</sup> In addition, the council president or secretary shall notify the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.

- a) When deemed appropriate to protect the well-being of the complainant, the Church and/or bishop, the executive committee of the Council of Bishops, in consultation with the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy, may suspend the bishop from all episcopal responsibilities for a period not to exceed sixty days. During the suspension, salary, housing and benefits will continue.
- b) The supervisory response is pastoral and administrative and shall be directed toward a just resolution. It is not a part of any judicial process. The supervisory response should be carried out in a confidential manner and should be completed within 120 days. There may be an extension of 120 days if the executive committee of the ICE and the respondent shall determine that an extension will be productive.

The ICE executive committee chair shall regularly advise all parties of the status of the process and shall notify all parties within 7 days after a determination is made that the supervisory response will not lead to a resolution of the matter.

No verbatim record shall be made and legal counsel shall not be present, although the bishop against whom the complaint was made and the complainant both may choose another person to accompany him or her, with the right to voice. At the determination of the ICE chair, persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing may be selected to assist in the supervisory responses. Others may be consulted as well.

- c) The supervisory response may include a process seeking a just resolution in which the parties are assisted by a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) in reaching an agreement satisfactory to all parties. (See § 363.1b, c.) The appropriate persons, including the ICE executive committee members, complainant, and respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining such assisted process, including an agreement as to what aspects of the process merit confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement of resolution, including terms and conditions, shall be signed by the parties and the parties shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. Such written statement of resolution shall be given to the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee for further action consistent with the agreement.
- d) If the supervisory response results in the resolution of the matter, the president (secretary) of the Council of Bishops and the ICE executive committee and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy shall monitor the fulfillment of the terms of the resolution. If the supervisory response does not result in resolution of the matter, the president or secretary of the Council of Bishops shall refer the matter as an Administrative Complaint (§ 413.3e) or a Judicial Complaint (§ 2704.1).
- e) Administrative Complaint—If the complaint is based on allegations of incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform episcopal duties, the president or secretary of the Council of Bishops shall refer the complaint to the jurisdictional or central conference committee on episcopacy.<sup>11</sup> The committee may recommend involuntary retirement (§ 408.3), disability leave (§ 410.4), remedial measures, other appropriate action, or it may dismiss the complaint. The provisions of § 362.2 for fair process in administrative hearings shall apply to this administrative process.
- f) Judicial Complaint—When one or more offenses listed in § 2702 are involved, the president or secretary of the Council of Bishops shall refer it as a judicial complaint according to the provisions of § 2704.1.

4. Any actions of the Interjurisdictional Committee or jurisdictional or central conference committee taken on a complaint shall be reported to the next session of the jurisdictional or central conference.

5. Each jurisdiction or central conference shall develop a protocol for the caring of lay, clergy and staff determined to be affected by the processing of the complaint.

Make the following revisions to ¶ 512:

**¶ 512. *Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy***

1. There shall be an Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy elected by the General Conference consisting of one of the persons nominated by their annual conference delegations to serve on the several jurisdictional or central conference committees on episcopacy.<sup>5</sup> The committee shall meet not later than the fifth day of the conference session and at the time and place set for their convening by the president of the Council of Bishops and shall elect from their number a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The functions of this joint committee shall be to discuss the possibility of transfers of bishops across jurisdictional or central conference lines at the forthcoming jurisdictional or central conferences for residential and presidential responsibilities in the ensuing quadrennium; to administer by its executive committee the supervisory response to any complaints filed against bishops (¶ 413.3); and to review on the basis of missional needs an application from a jurisdiction which, by number of its church members as provided in ¶ 404, would experience a reduction in the number of its bishops, and recommend the number of bishops to which that jurisdiction should be entitled to the General Conference for determination by the General Conference. This provision regarding missional needs is enabling, and it is not constraining on the power of General Conference to act in the absence of a recommendation from the committee.

It shall elect an executive committee consisting of the officers named above and two clergy and two laypersons from the nominees to each jurisdictional committee, elected by that committee to conduct consultations with bishops and others interested in possible episcopal transfers. One of the persons elected from each jurisdiction shall be the chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, of the each jurisdictional or central conference committee. The executive committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson, and it shall have plenary power for the full committee between full committee sessions. It shall be responsible to the interjurisdictional committee, and in fulfillment of that responsibility and in the interest of continuity of the work of the committee, the outgoing chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, shall present a report to the newly seated committee on the previous quadrennium's work as well as recommendations on what the coming quadrennium's work might include.

The interjurisdictional committee or its executive committee may meet for any of its functions via video or phone conference or other electronic means. A record of the proceedings of the committee ...

2. A bishop may be transferred across jurisdictional or central conference lines only when that bishop has consented to such transfer and has served at least one quadrennium in or under assignment by the jurisdiction or central conference in which the bishop was elected. Such a transfer shall be concluded when the committee on episcopacy of each jurisdiction or central conference involved has approved the transfer(s) by a majority vote of those present and voting, in so far as the transfer(s) affects those jurisdictions or central conferences. (See ¶ 49, Article V.)<sup>6</sup>
3. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy shall be recognized as the official body through which cross-jurisdictional and cross-central conference transfers shall be arranged. Should a bishop request transfer, the bishop has the option to identify the receiving jurisdiction or central conference. A jurisdiction or central conference may request that a specific bishop be transferred or may indicate a willingness to accept a bishop transferring from another jurisdiction or central conference. Request for transfer from either a bishop or jurisdictional or central conference committees on episcopacy shall be received by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy by April 1 of the year preceding the year of jurisdictional or central conferences. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will arrange consultation between bishop(s) requesting transfer and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee(s) on episcopacy by January 1 of the year of jurisdictional or central conference(s). Once the jurisdictional or central conference committee(s) on episcopacy has taken

action, jurisdictional or central conference secretaries shall inform the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy not later than August 1 following jurisdictional or central conferences.<sup>7</sup>

4. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will ...

The revised ¶ 512 would then read as follows:

**¶ 512. *Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy***

1. There shall be an Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy elected by the General Conference consisting of one of the persons nominated by their annual conference delegations to serve on the several jurisdictional or central conference committees on episcopacy.<sup>5</sup> The committee shall meet not later than the fifth day of the conference session and at the time and place set for their convening by the president of the Council of Bishops and shall elect from their number a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The functions of this joint committee shall be to discuss the possibility of transfers of bishops across jurisdictional or central conference lines at the forthcoming jurisdictional or central conferences for residential and presidential responsibilities in the ensuing quadrennium; to administer by its executive committee the supervisory response to any complaints filed against bishops (¶ 413.3); and to review on the basis of missional needs an application from a jurisdiction which, by number of its church members as provided in ¶ 404, would experience a reduction in the number of its bishops, and recommend the number of bishops to which that jurisdiction should be entitled to the General Conference for determination by the General Conference. This provision regarding missional needs is enabling, and it is not constraining on the power of General Conference to act in the absence of a recommendation from the committee.

It shall elect an executive committee consisting of the officers named above and the chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, of the each jurisdictional or central conference committee. The executive committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson, and it shall have plenary power for the full committee between full committee sessions. It shall be responsible to the interjurisdictional committee, and in fulfillment of that responsibility and in the interest of continuity of the work of the committee, the outgoing chairperson, or the chairperson's designee, shall present a report to the newly seated committee on the previous quadrennium's work as well as recommendations on what the coming quadrennium's work might include.

The interjurisdictional committee or its executive committee may meet for any of its functions via video or phone conference or other electronic means. A record of the proceedings of the committee ...

2. A bishop may be transferred across jurisdictional or central conference lines only when that bishop has consented to such transfer and has served at least one quadrennium in or under assignment by the jurisdiction or central conference in which the bishop was elected. Such a transfer shall be concluded when the committee on episcopacy of each jurisdiction or central conference involved has approved the transfer(s) by a majority vote of those present and voting, in so far as the transfer(s) affects those jurisdictions or central conferences. (See ¶ 49, Article V.)<sup>6</sup>

3. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy shall be recognized as the official body through which cross-jurisdictional and cross-central conference transfers shall be arranged. Should a bishop request transfer, the bishop has the option to identify the receiving jurisdiction or central conference. A jurisdiction or central conference may request that a specific bishop be transferred or may indicate a willingness to accept a bishop transferring from another jurisdiction or central conference. Request for transfer from either a bishop or jurisdictional or central conference committees on episcopacy shall be received by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy by April 1 of the year preceding the year of jurisdictional or central conferences. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will arrange consultation between bishop(s) requesting transfer and the appropriate jurisdictional or central conference committee(s) on episcopacy by January 1 of the year of jurisdictional or central conference(s). Once the jurisdictional or central conference committee(s) on episcopacy has taken action, jurisdictional or central conference secretaries shall inform the Interjurisdictional Committee on

Episcopacy not later than August 1 following jurisdictional or central conferences.<sup>7</sup>

4. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will ...

Make the following revisions to ¶ 2703.1.

**¶ 2703. *Composition of the Committee on Investigation***

1. *When respondent is a bishop*—There shall be a global committee on investigation elected by each jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee shall elect one of its members to serve on this committee. The committee shall be as nearly as possible one-half clergy and one-half lay, with the member from each conference alternating quadrennially between clergy and lay. The secretary of the Council of Bishops shall establish the clergy/lay rotation and notify each episcopacy committee. Nominations shall be made by the College of Bishops in consultation with the jurisdictional episcopacy committee. Further nominations may be offered from the floor of the jurisdictional or central conference. The committee shall consist of seven clergy in full connection (with not more than one clergyperson from each annual conference, if possible), two lay observers, and six alternate members, five of whom shall be clergypersons in full connection (with not more than one clergyperson from each annual conference, if possible), and one of whom shall be a layperson. If additional members or alternates are needed, they may be named by the College of Bishops. Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. The committee shall be convened for its first meeting by the president of the Council of Bishops and shall elect a chairperson and organize at the jurisdictional or central conference during the month of January of the first year of the quadrennium. Seven clergy or alternates seated as Seventy-five percent of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. The global committee on investigation may meet for any of its functions via video or phone conference or other electronic means.

The revised ¶ 2703.1 would then read:

**¶ 2703. *Composition of the Committee on Investigation***

1. *When respondent is a bishop*—There shall be a global committee on investigation. Each jurisdictional or central conference episcopacy committee shall elect one of its members to serve on this committee. The committee shall be as nearly as possible one-half clergy and one-half lay, with the member from each conference alternating quadrennially between clergy and lay. The secretary of the Council of Bishops shall establish the clergy/lay rotation and notify each episcopacy committee. Committee members shall be in good standing and should be deemed of good character. The committee should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. The committee shall be convened for its first meeting by the president of the Council of Bishops and shall elect a chairperson and organize during the month of January of the first year of the quadrennium. Seventy-five percent of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. The global committee on investigation may meet for any of its functions via video or phone conference or other electronic means.

Make the following revisions to ¶ 2704.1.

**¶ 2704. *Referral of Original Complaint to Counsel for the Church, Who Shall Prepare Judicial Complaint and Supporting Material for Consideration by Committee on Investigation***

1. *When respondent is a bishop*

a) *Judicial Complaint*—A complaint based on allegations that a bishop has committed one or more of the offenses listed in ¶ 2702 shall initially be served on the president and secretary of the College Council of Bishops (or secretary, if the complaint is against the president) (¶ 413.1-2). Upon receipt of the complaint the president of the College Council of Bishops shall forthwith deliver a copy of the complaint to the respondent bishop, notify active bishops of the existence and nature of the complaint, and refer the complaint to the chair of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (ICE) for the supervisory response (¶ 413.3). Upon notification from the ICE chair that a just resolution has not

been reached, the president (secretary) shall refer the complaint to an elder in full connection within the same jurisdictional or central conference, who shall serve as counsel for the Church. Counsel for the Church shall represent the interests of the Church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint. Counsel for the Church shall have the right to choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney. The counsel for the Church shall draft and sign the complaint as a judicial complaint, forward it to the jurisdictional or central conference global committee on investigation (§ 27043.1), and represent the Church in the judicial process. The fair process provisions in § 2701 shall apply to this judicial process. The statute of limitations in § 2702.4 should be considered prior to the referral of a judicial complaint.<sup>19</sup>

b) If a written complaint is made against a bishop ...

c) If five or more two-thirds of the members of the committee on investigation present and voting so recommend, the jurisdictional committee on the episcopacy may suspend the respondent pending the conclusion of the trial process.

The revised § 2704.1 would then read:

**§ 2704.** *Referral of Original Complaint to Counsel for the Church, Who Shall Prepare Judicial Complaint and Supporting Material for Consideration by Committee on Investigation*

1. *When respondent is a bishop*

a) *Judicial Complaint*—A complaint based on allegations that a bishop has committed one or more of the offenses listed in § 2702 shall initially be served on the president of the Council of Bishops (or secretary, if the complaint is against the president) (§ 413.1-2). Upon receipt of the complaint the president of the Council of Bishops shall forthwith deliver a copy of the complaint to the respondent bishop, notify active bishops of the existence and nature of the complaint, and refer the complaint to the chair of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (ICE) for the supervisory response (§ 413.3). Upon notification from the ICE chair that a just resolution has not been reached, the president (secretary) shall refer the complaint to an elder in full connection within the same jurisdictional or central conference, who shall serve as counsel for the Church. Counsel for the Church shall represent the interests of the Church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint. Counsel for the Church shall have the right to choose one assistant counsel without voice who may be an attorney. The counsel for the Church shall draft and sign the complaint as a judicial complaint, forward it to the global committee on investigation (§ 2703.1), and represent the Church in the judicial process. The fair process provisions in § 2701 shall apply to this judicial process. The statute of limitations in § 2702.4 should be considered prior to the referral of a judicial complaint.<sup>19</sup>

b) If a written complaint is made against a bishop ...

c) If two-thirds of the members of the committee on investigation present and voting so recommend, the jurisdictional committee on the episcopacy may suspend the respondent pending the conclusion of the trial process.

Make the following revisions to § 2706.5(b)1 and 2706.5(c)1 and 2706.5(c)3.

**§ 2706.** *Committee on Investigation—Procedures*

5. *Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral*

b) Finding of reasonable grounds by committee and referral of bill of charges and specifications for trial  
(1) *When respondent is a bishop*—A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require five votes a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted shall be sent to the bishop charged, to the secretary of the jurisdictional or central conference, to the president and secretary of the College Council of Bishops, to counsel for the Church, and to the chairperson of the jurisdictional committee on the episcopacy.

c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions

(1) If the committee on investigation determines that there are no reasonable grounds for charges, it may

dismiss the judicial complaint. When deemed appropriate, it may also refer matters of concern to the proper referring Church official (to the president or secretary of the College Council of Bishops in the case of bishop, to the resident bishop in the case of a diaconal minister, or to the pastor or co-pastors in the case of layperson) for administrative or other action. Notification of these actions, should be given to the respondent, the person making the original complaint, counsel for the Church and the proper referring Church officials.

(2) If the committee on investigation determines ...

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop or the president of the Council of Bishops (if the respondent is a bishop) (or the secretary, if the respondent is the president) as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.5. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the Disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The written statement affirming such resolution shall be given to the bishop for further action(s) to implement the agreement, if any (under ¶ 413.3c and 3d if the respondent is a bishop). If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee on investigation.

The revised ¶ 2706.5 would then read:

**¶ 2706. Committee on Investigation—Procedures**

*5. Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral*

*b) Finding of reasonable grounds by committee and referral of bill of charges and specifications for trial*

(1) When respondent is a bishop—A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted shall be sent to the bishop charged, to the secretary of the jurisdictional or central conference, to the president and secretary of the Council of Bishops, to counsel for the Church, and to the chairperson of the jurisdictional committee on the episcopacy.

*c) Findings other than reasonable grounds by committee or other actions*

(1) If the committee on investigation determines that there are no reasonable grounds for charges, it may dismiss the judicial complaint. When deemed appropriate, it may also refer matters of concern to the proper referring Church official (to the president or secretary of the Council of Bishops in the case of bishop, to the resident bishop in the case of a diaconal minister, or to the pastor or co-pastors in the case of layperson) for administrative or other action. Notification of these actions, should be given to the respondent, the person making the original complaint, counsel for the Church and the proper referring Church officials.

(2) If the committee on investigation determines ...

(3) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter to the resident bishop or the president (secretary) of the Council of Bishops (if the respondent is a bishop) as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution. The bishop shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 2701.5. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church and counsel for the respondent, should enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement, affirming such resolution, including

any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the Disciplinary disclosures required for readmission. The written statement affirming such resolution shall be given to the bishop for further action(s) to implement the agreement, if any (under ¶ 413.3c and 3d if the respondent is a bishop). If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee on investigation.

Make the following revisions to ¶ 2712.

**¶ 2712. *Trial of a Bishop***

1. The president of the College Council of Bishops of the jurisdictional or central conference—or in case the person charged is the president, the secretary of the college council—shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of ¶ 2709.
2. The president of the College Council of Bishops (or in the case the person charged is the president, the secretary) may preside or designate another bishop to serve as presiding officer.
3. The trial shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709 with the pool of thirty-five or more persons to consist of clergy in full connection district superintendents named by the College of Bishops whose names are drawn by lot by the president of the Council of Bishops (or secretary if the respondent is the president) from each jurisdictional or central conference in approximately equal numbers from each episcopal area within the jurisdictional or central conference proportional to the professing membership of each conference, with a minimum of one superintendent from each jurisdiction or central conference. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, and gender diversity.
4. Counsel for the Church shall be a bishop or another clergy-person in full connection.
5. The secretary of the court shall at the conclusion ...
6. A bishop suspended from office shall have claim ...

The amended ¶ 2712 would then read as follows:

**¶ 2712. *Trial of a Bishop***

1. The president of the Council of Bishops—or in case the person charged is the president, the secretary of the council—shall proceed to convene the court under the provisions of ¶ 2709.
2. The president of the Council of Bishops (or in the case the person charged is the president, the secretary) may preside or designate another bishop to serve as presiding officer.
3. The trial shall be convened as provided in ¶ 2709 with the pool of thirty-five or more persons to consist of district superintendents whose names are drawn by lot by the president of the Council of Bishops (or secretary if the respondent is the president) from each jurisdiction or central conference in numbers proportional to the professing membership of each conference, with a minimum of one superintendent from each jurisdictional or central conference.
4. Counsel for the Church shall be a bishop or another clergy-person in full connection.
5. The secretary of the court shall at the conclusion ...
6. A bishop suspended from office shall have claim ...

**RATIONALE:**

These changes enhance the accountability of bishops and increase consistency by lodging the accountability function in the global church. They lodge all responsibility for handling complaints to clergy and laity who are not bishops, removing any conflicts of interest involved. The changes also add clarity and definition to the process.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 6. PETITION FOR MANDATORY PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF ¶ 2702.1(B)

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** *Discipline* ¶ 2711.3

**General Church Budget Implications:** None

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Rev. Dr. Bill Arnold

#### ¶ 2711. *Power of the Trial Court*

3. *Penalties - If the Trial Results in Conviction.* Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The trial court shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven members. The trial court shall have the power to remove the respondent from professing membership, terminate the conference membership and/or revoke the credentials of conference membership and/or ordination or consecration of the respondent, suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office, or to fix a lesser penalty. Except, where the conviction is for conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions, or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies under ¶ 2702.1(b) or (d), the trial court does not have the power to and may not fix a penalty less than the following:

- a) First (1st) offense – One (1) year’s suspension without pay.
- b) Second (2nd) offense - Not less than termination of conference membership and revocation of credentials of licensing, ordination, or consecration.

The penalty fixed by the trial court shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court.

**Rationale:** Assigning a penalty of less than a suspension for a first offense or less than termination of conference membership and/or revocation of conference membership and ordination or consecration in such circumstances encourages open defiance of the order and discipline of The United Methodist Church.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS NOT APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 7. PETITION ON CONFERENCE APPORTIONMENT FORMULA

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** *Discipline* ¶615

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Council on Finance & Administration of the Kentucky Annual Conference  
AMEND ¶ 615 by adding a new sentence as follows:

¶ 615. *Apportionments*—When a change to the apportionment formula or method is proposed, the council should provide for a study of the proposed change’s effects. After its study, which may include resources supplied by the General Council on Finance and Administration, the council shall recommend such formula or method to the annual conference for its action and determination which shall include the approved budgeted amounts for clergy support, administration, World Service, Conference Benevolences, and other apportioned causes (¶ 614.1-.4), the sum of which shall be apportioned to the districts, churches, or charges of the conference.<sup>61</sup> The amount apportioned to each local church for general church and conference apportionments shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the church’s income for operations, ministries, and local-church based mission projects.

**Rationale:** This makes the local church the focus of ministry to accomplish the task of making disciples. The historic and biblical concept of tithing is a level of giving forward from a church budget that would be easily explained to and accepted by the average church member. Such a cap would not preclude appeals to local churches to voluntarily support conference agencies, benevolences, and missions over and above the cap.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## 8. PETITION ON GENERAL CHURCH APPORTIONMENT FORMULA

### PETITION TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**Discipline Paragraph:** *Discipline* ¶806.1.c

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** Yes

Submitted by: Council on Finance & Administration of the Kentucky Annual Conference

AMEND ¶ 806.1.c by adding a new sentence as follows as it affects the *Fiscal Responsibilities of the General Council on Finance and Administration*:

¶ 806.1.c) It shall recommend the formulas by which all apportionments to the annual conferences shall be determined, subject to the approval of the General Conference. The recommended formula will not exceed ten percent (10%) of an annual conference’s income from the apportioned funds received from the local churches.

**Rationale:** With some annual conferences attempting to reduce the financial demands on the local church by reducing their apportionment formulas, this amendment seeks to protect the annual conference from being subject to a disproportioned amount of money (as much as 30% or more for some conferences) required by the General Conference that would hinder the work and mission of the annual conferences.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## **9. PETITION FROM THE KENTUCKY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Re: Discipline ¶ 340 (Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors)**

### **PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE**

*Sponsored by Rev. Michael Sweeney, Rev. Dr. Jim Wofford, Rev. Wayne Burt, Rev. Wayne Nichols*

RE: Revisions in *Discipline* ¶340

¶ 340.2.a.3.a in the first sentence delete “and in accordance with the laws of the state” the sentence would then read as follows: “To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the rules of The United Methodist Church.”

¶ 340.2.a.3.a add a third sentence “The pastor will not serve as a legal signatory of a state marriage license, rather the pastor of The United Methodist Church would issue a Church Covenant of Marriage Certificate and enter the marriage information into the local church data base for posterity.”

¶ 340.2.a.3.a would then read as follows: “To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor. The pastor will not serve as a legal signatory of a state marriage license; rather the pastor of The United Methodist Church would issue a Church Covenant of Marriage Certificate and enter the marriage information into the local church data base for posterity.”

**Rationale:** We affirm that marriage in the United Methodist Church should mirror the relationship between Christ and the Church. With the definition of marriage in question among various state and federal laws as well as governmental entities, the United Methodist Church needs to clarify its spiritual authority over the covenant of marriage as an ecclesiastical body. With this petition, pastors would no longer act as agents of the state for the governmental recognition of marriage. This would protect the church and pastors from liability by civil suits as legal codes continue to shift.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS NOT APPROVED TO SEND TO GENERAL CONFERENCE**

## **10. PETITION FROM THE KENTUCKY ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**Re: Addition of Discipline ¶673 (District Committee on Marital Covenants)**

### **PROPOSED PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE**

*Sponsored by Rev. Wayne Burt, Rev. Michael Sweeney, Rev. Wayne Nichols, Rev. Dr. Jim Wofford*

Re: Addition to *Discipline* within section on *The District Conference*

¶ 673. *District Committee on Marital Covenants* – There shall be a District Committee on Marital Covenants.

1. *Membership*—The committee shall be composed of no less than eight members, composed of no less than four laypersons and four clergy, including the district superintendent. There shall be at least two laywomen and two laymen. Attention needs to be given to including racial and ethnic diversity.
2. *Selection*—The members shall be selected in such a manner as may be determined by the district conference or, where there is no district conference, by the district superintendent and district lay leader. The district committee shall be authorized to co-opt persons as advisory members who have expertise in areas of special need.
3. *Purpose*—The purpose of the district committee on marital covenants is to provide resources for pastors and churches regarding marriage covenant wellness.
  - a) The committee may provide resources for premarital preparation aimed at training persons on both the relational dynamics and covenant responsibilities of Christian marriage.
  - b) The committee may provide resources that seek to strengthen existing marriages.
  - c) The committee shall provide a process for those whose marriages have been blessed and recognized by the United Methodist Church but are seeking to dissolve the marital covenant.
    - i. The primary goal of the process will be to encourage reconciliation in order to honor the covenant vows and provide healing for the relationship.
    - ii. In the regrettable circumstance where reconciliation is not deemed possible, the committee or its duly appointed representatives may examine the circumstances and grant a certificate of divorce that dissolves the recognized union by the United Methodist Church. The divorce will be recorded in the local church where the marriage was officially recognized. The committee will bear no responsibility in determining the legal division of property or parental rights. Persons who have received a certificate of divorce and no longer hold a legal status of marriage by the state or any other religious body may be remarried within the United Methodist Church.

**Rationale:**

The covenant of marriage is a gift from God. With civil laws regarding marriage in flux in both state and federal governments, this petition exercises the spiritual authority of The United Methodist Church in helping to strengthen and, when necessary, dissolve the marital covenant through the Church. This petition addresses the important issue of divorce should paragraph 340.2.a.3.a be amended for the United Methodist Church to start offering a Church Covenant of Marriage Certificate.

**ACTION: PETITION WAS WITHDRAWN**

## **RESOLUTIONS ON DISCONTINUANCE/ABANDONMENT**

### **1. CEDAR GROVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

#### **Resolution for the Discontinuation of Cedar Grove United Methodist Church**

WHEREAS, the Cedar Grove United Methodist Church of Livingston County, Kentucky, in the Madisonville District has declined in membership; and

WHEREAS, the remaining members have voted to discontinue Cedar Grove UMC at a Church Conference held on December 14, 2014, and

WHEREAS, the District Building and Locations Committee consents to the discontinuance; and

WHEREAS, District Superintendent Gene Pillow recommends that, following the discontinuation of Cedar Grove UMC, all real and personal property currently held in trust by Cedar Grove UMC be transferred pursuant to the provisions of ¶2549 of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012 Edition (“Discipline”) and Standing Rule 21 of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (“Kentucky Annual Conference”); and

WHEREAS, the Appointive Cabinet of the Kentucky Annual Conference concurs with the recommendation to discontinue said Cedar Grove UMC of the Madisonville District;

Now therefore, it is hereby RESOLVED this 24th day of February 2015 that the Cedar Grove United Methodist Church of the Madisonville District is hereby discontinued pursuant to the provisions of ¶2515 and 2549 (2) of the Discipline. The Kentucky Annual Conference Trustees are hereby authorized to assume control of all property; real, personal, tangible and intangible property of said church; and to see the real property of said church in compliance with the provisions of the Discipline and Standing Rule 21, with the proceeds from the sale of all property to be used at the discretion of the Madisonville District Superintendent and the Madisonville District Committee on Building and Location. Be it further resolved that the members of Cedar Grove UMC have the privilege of transferring their membership to the church of their choice, pursuant to ¶229 of the Discipline.

(Signed)

Lindsey Davis, Resident Bishop  
Terry Reffett, Ashland District  
Rick Bard, Bowling Green District  
Todd Love, Columbia District  
Farley Stuart, Corbin District  
Owen Dolin, Covington District  
Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District  
Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District  
James Williams, Lexington District  
Rebecca Curry, Louisville District  
Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District  
Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District  
Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District

**2. MT HEBRON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Resolution for the discontinuation of Mt. Hebron United Methodist Church**

WHEREAS, the Mt. Hebron United Methodist Church of Mercer County, Kentucky, in the Frankfort District has declined in membership; and

WHEREAS, the remaining members have voted to discontinue Mt. Hebron UMC at a Church Conference held on February 2, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Frankfort District Building and Locations Committee consents to the discontinuance; and

WHEREAS, District Superintendent Jean Hawxhurst recommends that following the discontinuation of Mt. Hebron UMC all real and personal property currently held in trust by Mt. Hebron UMC be transferred pursuant to the provisions of ¶2549 of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012 Edition (“Discipline”) and Standing Rule 21 of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (“Kentucky Annual Conference”); and

WHEREAS, the Appointive Cabinet of the Kentucky Annual Conference concurs with the recommendation to discontinue said Mt. Hebron UMC of the Frankfort District.

Now therefore, it is hereby RESOLVED this 24th day of February 2015 that the Mt. Hebron United Methodist Church of the Frankfort District is hereby discontinued pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph 2515 and 2549 (2) of the Discipline. The Kentucky Annual Conference Trustees are hereby authorized to assume control of all property; real, personal, tangible and intangible property of said church; and to sell the real property of said church in compliance with the provisions of the Discipline and Standing Rule 21, with the proceeds from the sale of all property to be used at the discretion of the Frankfort District Superintendent and the Frankfort District Committee on Building and Location. Be it further resolved that the members of Mt. Hebron UMC have the privilege of transferring their membership to the church of their choice, pursuant to ¶229 of the Discipline.

(Signed)

Lindsey Davis, Resident Bishop  
Terry Reffett, Ashland District  
Rick Bard, Bowling Green District  
Todd Love, Columbia District  
Farley Stuart, Corbin District  
Owen Dolin, Covington District  
Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District  
Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District  
James Williams, Lexington District  
Rebecca Curry, Louisville District  
Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District  
Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District  
Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District

### **3. ROSEBUD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

#### **Resolution for the discontinuation of Rosebud United Methodist Church**

WHEREAS, the Rosebud United Methodist Church of Crittenden County, Kentucky, in the Madisonville District has declined in membership; and

WHEREAS, the remaining members have voted to discontinue Rosebud UMC at a Church Conference held on December 7, 2014 and

WHEREAS, the District Building and Locations Committee consents to the discontinuance; and

WHEREAS, District Superintendent Gene Pillow recommends that, following the discontinuation of Rosebud UMC, all real and personal property currently held in trust by Rosebud UMC be transferred pursuant to the provisions of ¶2549 of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2012 Edition (“Discipline”) and Standing Rule 21 of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Inc. (“Kentucky Annual Conference”); and

WHEREAS, the Appointive Cabinet of the Kentucky Annual Conference concurs with the recommendation to discontinue said Rosebud UMC of the Madisonville District;

Now therefore, it is hereby RESOLVED this 24th day of February 2015 that the Rosebud United Methodist Church of the Madisonville District is hereby discontinued pursuant to the provisions of Paragraphs 2515 and 2549 (2) of the Discipline. The Kentucky Annual Conference Trustees are hereby authorized to assume control of all property; real, personal, tangible and intangible property of said church; and to sell the real property of said church in compliance with the provisions of the Discipline and Standing Rule 21, with the proceeds from the sale of all property to be used at the discretion of the Madisonville District Superintendent and the Madisonville District Committee on Building and Location. Be it further resolved that the members of Rosebud UMC have the privilege of transferring their membership to the church of their choice, pursuant to ¶229 of the Discipline.

(Signed)

Lindsey Davis, Resident Bishop

Terry Reffett, Ashland District

Rick Bard, Bowling Green District

Todd Love, Columbia District

Farley Stuart, Corbin District

Owen Dolin, Covington District

Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District

Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District

James Williams, Lexington District

Rebecca Curry, Louisville District

Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District

Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District

Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District

## **RESOLUTIONS ON MERGERS**

### **1. BAXTER AND HARLAN**

WHEREAS, the Baxter United Methodist Church, in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry, desires to merge with Harlan United Methodist Church in accordance with chapter 2546 of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2012).

BE IT RESOLVED by a duly called charge conference on this 4th day of January, 2015 that Baxter United Methodist Church approves a merger with Harlan United Methodist Church, as set forth in the following plan of merger:

1. The name of the new congregation shall be Harlan United Methodist Church.
2. All real and personal property of the Baxter United Methodist Church building will be transferred to the Harlan United Methodist Church.
3. The members of both churches will become members of the Harlan United Methodist Church.
4. The effective date of merger will be January 4, 2015.

### **Resolution approved by majority of members voting and present**

(Signed )

Melanie Day, Recording Secretary

January 4, 2015

Approved:

(Signed)

Farley Stuart, District Superintendent Corbin District

January 4, 2015

### **2. PLEASURE RIDGE PARK AND BETHANY**

WHEREAS, the Pleasure Ridge Park United Methodist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, has for many years been a significant life-giving and life-changing ministry to the community; and,

WHEREAS, attendance at Pleasure Ridge Park United Methodist Church has struggled through the years, and

WHEREAS, at a duly constituted church conference, Pleasure Ridge Park United Methodist Church and Bethany United Methodist Church voted on March 10, 2015 and March 26, 2015 respectively voted to merge congregations; and

WHEREAS, the District Superintendent has approved the merger; and

WHEREAS, the resident Bishop and District Superintendents of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church have approved the action proposed in this resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that Pleasure Ridge Park United Methodist Church and Bethany United Methodist congregations shall merge as set forth in the following plan of merger;

1. The name of the new congregation shall be called Bethany United Methodist Church.
2. All financial assets from Pleasure Ridge Park will be transferred to the Bethany United Methodist Church.

3. The real property of Pleasure Ridge Park shall be deeded to the Louisville District.
4. The members of both churches will become members of the Bethany United Methodist Church and the effective date of merger will be June 11, 2015.

(Signed)

Lindsey Davis, Resident Bishop  
Terry Reffett, Ashland District  
Rick Bard, Bowling Green District  
Todd Love, Columbia District  
Farley Stuart, Corbin District  
Owen Dolin, Covington District  
Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District  
Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District  
James Williams, Lexington District  
Rebecca Curry, Louisville District  
Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District  
Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District  
Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District

### **3. CITY ROAD CHAPEL AND VIRGINIA AVENUE**

WHEREAS, the City Road Chapel United Methodist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, has for many years been a significant life-giving and life-changing ministry to the community; and,

WHEREAS, attendance at City Road Chapel United Methodist Church has struggled in recent years, and

WHEREAS, at a duly constituted church conference, City Road Chapel United Methodist Church and Virginia Avenue United Methodist Church voted on Thursday, April 23rd, 2015 respectively to merge congregations; and

WHEREAS, the District Superintendent has approved the merger; and

WHEREAS, the resident Bishop and District Superintendents of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church have approved the action proposed in this resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that City Road Chapel United Methodist Church and Virginia Avenue United Methodist congregations shall merge as set forth in the following plan of merger;

1. The name of the new congregation shall be called Virginia Avenue United Methodist Church.
2. All financial assets from City Road Chapel will be transferred to the Virginia Avenue United Methodist Church.
3. The real property of City Road Chapel shall be deeded to the Louisville District.
4. The members of both churches will become members of the Virginia Avenue United Methodist Church and the effective date of merger will be June 11, 2015.

(Signed)

Lindsey Davis, Resident Bishop  
Terry Reffett, Ashland District  
Rick Bard, Bowling Green District  
Todd Love, Columbia District  
Farley Stuart, Corbin District

Owen Dolin, Covington District  
Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District  
Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District  
James Williams, Lexington District  
Rebecca Curry, Louisville District  
Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District  
Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District  
Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District

**4. BRAMMER GAP AND DENNIS CHAPEL**

WHEREAS, the Brammer Gap Chapel United Methodist Church, in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry, desires to merge with the Dennis Chapel United Methodist Church in accordance with Paragraph 2546 of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2012),

BE IT RESOLVED by a duly called Charge Conference on this 7th day of December, 2014, that Brammer Gap United Methodist Church and the Dennis Chapel United Methodist Church approves said merger. The merged congregation shall be referred to as the Dennis Chapel United Methodist Church. All real land personal property of the Brammer Gap United Methodist Church will be transferred to the Dennis Chapel United Methodist Church. The members of both churches will become members of the Dennis Chapel United Methodist Church. The effective date of the merger will be December 7, 2014.

**Resolution approved by majority of members present and voting.**

(Signed)

Lindsey David, Resident Bishop  
Terry Reffett, Ashland District  
Rick Bard, Bowling Green District  
Todd Love, Columbia District  
Farley Stuart, Corbin District  
Owen Dolin, Covington District  
Paul Brunstetter, Elizabethtown District  
Jean Hawxhurst, Frankfort District  
James Williams, Lexington District  
Rebecca Curry, Louisville District  
Eugene Pillow, Madisonville District  
Mark Gibbons, Owensboro District  
Paul Fryman, Prestonsburg District