

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECISION NO. 1501

IN RE: Petition for Declaratory Decision from the 2024 General Conference on the meaning, application, and effect of ¶49.3 of the Book of Discipline.

DIGEST

Paragraph 721.2 of the Discipline defines *quadrennium* to be “deemed to be the four-year period beginning January 1 following the adjournment of the regular session of the General Conference....” Paragraph 49.3 does not permit a bishop elected less than two years to be eligible for transfer.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The General Conference during plenary session, on May 3, 2024, adopted a motion to request a declaratory decision on the meaning, application, and effect of ¶49.3 which provides that “No Bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy....” Specifically, two questions are presented: 1) what constitutes a quadrennium; and 2) are bishops elected less than two years eligible for transfer.

Jurisdiction

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction pursuant to ¶ 2610 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline*. [hereinafter the *Discipline*]

Analysis and Rationale

The Discipline itself defines the term “quadrennium”. Paragraph 721.2 provides that “Unless otherwise specified in the Discipline, the term *quadrennium* shall be deemed to be the four-year period following the adjournment of the regular session of the General Conference....” In this instance, the reference to *quadrennium* in ¶49.3 should be understood to reference the four-year period following the adjournment of the regular session of the General Conference. Consequently, bishops elected less than two years are not eligible for transfer under ¶49.3 and ¶721.2 of the Discipline.

Decision

Paragraph 721.2 of the Discipline defines *quadrennium* to be “deemed to be the four-year period beginning January 1 following the adjournment of the regular session of the General

Conference....” Paragraph 49.3 does not permit a bishop elected less than two years to be eligible for transfer.