

SUBJECT TO FINAL EDITING

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MEMORANDUM NO. 1446

IN RE: Modification of Judicial Council Decision 1445

DIGEST

For the purpose of clarification, the Judicial Council, on its own motion, hereby modifies its ruling in Decision 1445 by replacing the current content of the Digest and Decision with the following:

In the circumstance of this case, the Council of Bishops is authorized to set the date of regular jurisdictional conferences for the election and assignment of new bishops for the limited purpose of effectuating the continuance of an episcopacy in The United Methodist Church under ¶¶ 26, 27.2, and 45 of the Constitution. This authority may be exercised notwithstanding that the General Conference has not convened since the last election of bishops in the jurisdictional conferences.

Under the exigency of three General Conference postponements and the off-schedule jurisdictional conference date of November 2-5, 2022, the September 1 assignment date in ¶406.1 and the mandatory retirement date of “August 31 next following the regular session of the jurisdictional conference” in ¶ 408.1 cannot be applied without disrupting the constitutionally mandated episcopal supervision for the Church. When it enacted those paragraphs, the General Conference neither anticipated nor made provision for a global pandemic and continuing conference delays. Therefore, to harmonize constitutional and disciplinary requirements and to meet the needs of the Church in this unprecedented situation, we hold that **January 1, 2023** shall be the effective date of: (1) **assignment** for all bishops, newly elected bishops and active bishops already serving in the jurisdictions, and (2) **mandatory retirement** for bishops whose sixty-eighth birthday has been reached on or before July 1, 2020.

With that modification, the jurisdictional conferences and other competent bodies may proceed with the business listed in ¶ 27 of the Constitution, including, but not limited to, the election, consecration, assignment, and retirement of bishops, in the usual manner prescribed by the *Discipline*. Absent General Conference action, the formula and number of bishops for each jurisdiction approved by the 2016 General Conference remain legally binding and effective until replaced by a new formula.

May 31, 2022