



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L'ÉGLISE 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: Frank J. Beard (Illinois Great Rivers Conference)

Address: PO Box 19207 City: Springfield

State/Province: IL ZIP/Postal Code 62794-9207 Country: USA

Phone: 217-529-3820 Fax: 217-529-4190 E-mail: fjbeard@igrc.org

Annual Conference: North Central Jurisdiction Date of session: 11/04/2022 (month/day/year)

Question(s) of Law: Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA People in the UMC

#### QUESTION ONE:

**Do any of the numbered provisions at the end of the resolution impermissibly negate, ignore, violate, encourage actions that are contrary to, or discourage the enforcement of Discipline Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2711, or other relevant church law? And if so, is such a provision null, void, and of no effect?**

#### QUESTION TWO:

**Does the resolution's affirmation of "abeyance" (in what is printed as item #2) contradict the Book of Discipline's requirements for complaints held in abeyance as outlined in Paragraph 362.1.g? And if so, is this resolution or any section of it null, void, and of no effect?**

#### QUESTION THREE:

**Does the passage of this resolution overrule, limit, or restrict the rights or obligations of bishops, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry to fully comply with and uphold Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 361, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2706, and 2711 of the Book of Discipline? And if so, is this resolution null, void, and of no effect?**

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

Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_ Book of Discipline: Paragraph 362.1g

Judicial Council Decision(s): Decisions # 96, 886, 1340, 1398, 1399 & 1435

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 12/05/2022

**Bishop of The United Methodist Church** (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
- List of names and addresses of interested parties
- Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)

➤ Thirteen (13) hard copies must be submitted via USPS or other delivery service to:  
**UMC Judicial Council, c/o LaNella Smith, Assistant to the J.C. Secretary,  
1215 Shady Lane, Durham, NC 27712**

➤ Electronic copies in both Word and PDF (with security features disabled) must be submitted to: [secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org](mailto:secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org).

**North Central Jurisdictional Conference**  
**November 2-5, 2022**  
**Friday Afternoon Business Session – November 4, 2022**

Business Session – *Bishop Beard, Presiding*, Bishop Palmer, Parliamentarian

Bishop Beard announced the dates for General Conference as April 23 – May 3, 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Alka Lyall of the N. Illinois Conference and Krysta Deede of the Wisconsin Conference were recognized to share a statement from the two conferences on their willingness in sharing of episcopal leadership in the future. These conferences will be prepared to bring a motion to the 2024 NCJ Conference to become one episcopal area.

A resolution on “Leading with Integrity” (which had been distributed to all delegates on Thursday) was presented by Erik Slingerland of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. The resolution was seconded, and Eric spoke to it. The resolution reads:

**Resolution: Leading with Integrity**  
**Offered to NCJ2022 consistent with offerings in all 5 US Jurisdictions**

Whereas, the vibrant future of The United Methodist Church requires deep commitment and loyal leadership at every level, and

Whereas, grounded in a sense of duty and loyalty to the mission of the church, leaders are counted on and expected to make decisions about the future of The United Methodist Church with the absolute best interest of Christ’s church at heart, and

Whereas, the selection, election, and appointment of clergy and lay leaders throughout The United Methodist Church includes the implicit understanding that leaders will ethically serve in each of their leadership roles with the utmost integrity, and

Whereas, leaders who do not intend to remain in The United Methodist Church entangle themselves in a significant conflict of interest, and

Whereas, the service of a leader whose call to discipleship is aligned with The United Methodist Church is prevented by the continued leadership of an individual who has made a private decision and/or public declaration to leave The United Methodist Church, and

Whereas, from a legal perspective, a potential conflict of interest arises within an organization when an individual, paid or volunteer, or a relative of that individual (a) stands to gain a financial benefit by personally influencing the action taken by the organization or a transaction entered into by the organization; or (b) has another interest that impairs, or could be seen to impair, the

independence or objectivity of the key individual in discharging their duties within the organization.

Therefore, be it resolved that, as we continue this period of transition, the North Central Jurisdiction calls upon every United Methodist, as a disciple of Jesus the Christ, to move forward in fairness and with integrity and goodwill to all.

Be it further resolved that the North Central Jurisdiction expresses both respect and gratitude to those who have voluntarily stepped away from positions of leadership as they journey away from membership in The United Methodist Church.

Be it further resolved that, in an effort to ensure that decisions about The United Methodist Church are made by those who are wholeheartedly committed to its future, the North Central Jurisdiction believes that only lay and clergy members who intend to remain in The United Methodist Church are appropriately eligible to serve in governance roles such as: districts, annual conferences, jurisdictional conferences, general conference; and their related committees, boards, agencies; delegations and episcopal candidates. We encourage Conference Boards of Trustees to develop codes of conduct to manage conflicts of interest that may arise around discussions of disaffiliation agreements.

Be it further resolved that the North Central Jurisdiction respectfully asks all who intend to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church to recuse themselves from governance roles annual conference, jurisdictional conference, and general conference.

Holly Grant of East Ohio Conference presented an amendment to the resolution. After it being seconded Holly spoke to the amendment. The amendment was stated as:

**Amendment:** After the first “Therefore” it would read:  
“Be it further resolved that the NCJ recognizes that its actions and leadership effect the witness of Christ’s Church, the holy catholic church. In an effort to ensure that decisions of the NCJ are made with a holy witness to our broken world and to the holy catholic church, the NCJ will aspire to lead with integrity and grace.

“Be it further resolved that the NCJ recognizes that integrity and grace is shown in allowing for free and open discussion its churches and throughout its conferences around the matter of disaffiliation and future steps. We encourage conferences to permit open discussions of disaffiliation by its clergy and laity and we encourage such permission to be incorporated in any policy developed by a conference Board of Trustees.”

**The amendment** was not approved by a vote of 28 For – 117 Against.

Suzanne Allen of the West Ohio Conference spoke against resolution.

Andy Adams of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference spoke against resolution.

Jonathan Priebe of East Ohio Conference called for the question. The Call for Question was approved.

**The Resolution** was approved as originally written by a vote of 114 For – 32 Against.

Connor Prusha requested a moment of privilege to offer prayer.

A video about Africa University was shared.

A resolution on “Supporting Formation of a U.S. Regional Conference” (distributed to all delegates on Thursday) was presented by Dee Stickley Miner and George Howard of West Ohio Conference. After receiving a second the presenters spoke to the resolution. The resolution reads:

**Resolution: Supporting Formation of a U.S. Regional Conference**

WHEREAS the seven Central Conferences and five U.S. Jurisdictions of The United Methodist Church engage in mission together in 136 countries; and

WHEREAS the connectional ties between the church in the United States and the Central Conferences are significant and vital to the continued mission and ministry of the worldwide United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level has historically impeded each region from effectively tailoring its ministry to its specific contexts; and

WHEREAS the existing structure of The United Methodist Church at the general church level diminishes our ability to be a vital and effective church and needs to be reenvisioned to achieve more fair and equitable church governance; and

WHEREAS the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference and the conversion of the Central Conferences to Regional Conferences, as outlined in the Christmas Covenant, developed by Central Conference leaders in Africa and the Philippines, would establish structural parity throughout the worldwide church; and

WHEREAS the creation of a U.S. Regional Conference, as outlined in legislation put forward by the Connectional Table will establish the governance necessary to allow each region to design ministry for its particular contexts, and thus more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

WHEREAS the North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church continues to work toward inclusion and justice for all God’s people; and

WHEREAS the North Central Jurisdiction aspires to vital, thriving, multicultural, and diverse ministries that are open to all people and can be a beacon of hope for the worldwide United Methodist Church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Central Jurisdiction supports the expressed intents of the Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table legislation, including the creation of Regional Conferences in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and the U.S., respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Central Jurisdiction recognizes and supports the leadership of our Central Conferences in the creation and furtherance of the 1 Christmas Covenant as well the Connectional Table's future visioning on behalf of our worldwide fellowship; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Central Jurisdiction urges every Annual Conference within its boundaries to support both the Christmas Covenant and Connectional Table proposals to establish a fair and equitable general church structure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Central Jurisdiction urges the Council of Bishops to expedite the process of voting on the constitutional amendments necessary to enact the regional conferences legislation, calling special sessions of annual conferences where necessary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in line with the intent of the non-disciplinary petition submitted by the Connectional Table, the North Central Jurisdiction requests the Council of Bishops to immediately appoint a 20-25 member Interim Committee on Organization for a US Regional Conference to develop and propose to the 2024 General Conference the structure and organization of a US Regional Conference. In line with the CT's legislation, this body would organize and plan for the establishment and functioning of a new United States Regional Conference comprising the current five jurisdictions of the United States. Committee membership should have a minimum of 3 members of each US jurisdiction, 3 central conference members and shall meet standards of racial and gender diversity. The Committee should recommend a structure for the US Regional Conference including considerations such as its membership, committee structure, meeting time, agency, and function.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jurisdiction Conference Secretary shall send copies of this resolution to all delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, including alternates, from the North Central Jurisdiction and to the Commission on the General Conference.

Lonnie Chafin of the Northern Illinois Conference spoke in favor of the resolution.

**The Resolution** was approved as originally written 123 For – 21 Against.

A Conversation to Understand the Impact of Homophobia, Transphobia, and Heterosexism within The U. M. Church was held. Ryan Russell and Laura Witkowski introduced the conversation which included Angie Cox sharing on Impact of Homophobia within The U. M. Church; Kiri Bereznai sharing on the Impact of Transphobia within The U. M. Church; and Mary Ann Momon sharing on the Impact of Heterosexuality within The U. M. Church.

A resolution on “Queer Delegates’ Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA+ People in The UMC” (Distributed to all delegates on Thursday) was presented by Walker Brault of the Minnesota Conference. After presenting the resolution Walker spoke to the resolution. The resolution reads:

**QUEER DELEGATES’ CALL TO CENTER JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
FOR LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> PEOPLE IN THE UMC**

Whereas, in a groundswell response to the passage of harmful legislation at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference, Annual Conferences elected queer clergy and lay persons to be General and Jurisdictional Delegates in record numbers, for the first-time empowering queer delegates to speak and act from our diverse experiences, and

Whereas, the 2019 Special Session of the United Methodist General Conference passed the Traditional Plan, which increased penalties for United Methodists clergy who are LGBTQIA+ and for clergy who support the LGBTQIA+ community through officiating their weddings, and

Whereas, in an attempt to address the divide within The United Methodist Church, an abeyance or moratorium was proposed to the General Conference, referenced below,<sup>2</sup> by the authors of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation, and

Whereas, we understand our call and responsibility as United Methodists to do good, do no harm, and stay in love with God, and

Whereas, we call straight and cisgender allies to do good by using their voice and vote to support, empower, and amplify the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community in The United Methodist Church,

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church:

1. Supports and amplifies the queer delegates’ call to justice and empowerment for the LGBTQIA+ community in our Jurisdiction, within and beyond our churches and agencies.
2. Affirms the spirit of the abeyance or moratorium as proposed to the General Conference, as referenced above, until changes can be made in The United Methodist Book of Discipline.
3. Implores our member Annual Conferences to either not pursue or resolve in an appropriately timely fashion through a non-punitive, just resolution process any complaints against clergy regarding their sexual orientation or clergy who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons.
4. Urges that as a Jurisdiction we either not pursue or resolve in an appropriately timely fashion through a non-punitive, just resolution process any complaints against Bishops regarding their sexual orientation or those who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons.

5. Supports the election of episcopal leaders who commit to upholding this resolution and who will further justice for and empowerment of LGBTQIA+ people in the annual conferences where they serve; 6. Commits to a future of The United Methodist Church where LGBTQIA+ people will be protected, affirmed, and empowered in the life and ministry of the church in our Jurisdiction, including as laity, ordained clergy, in the episcopacy, and on boards and agencies.

Bill Bronson of West Ohio Conference spoke in favor of the resolution.

Gregory Gross of Northern Illinois Conference spoke in favor of the resolution.

Carol Zaagsma of the Minnesota Conference spoke in favor of the resolution.

**The Resolution** was approved as originally written; 129 For – 23 Against.

John Lomperis of the Indiana Conference requested a bishop's decision of law on the resolution just voted upon dealing with "Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA+1 People in The UMC." The request for decision of law reads:

### **NCJ Request for Decision of Law**

In accordance with Paragraphs 51 and 2609.6 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and in light of Paragraphs 16, 27, 304, 341, 361, 362, 525, 635, 2701-2719, Judicial Council Decision #886, 1201, 1292, 1340, 1343, 1344, and 1403, and other relevant church law, I respectfully ask and request a decision on the following questions of law about the resolution recently adopted by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference on "Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA People in the UMC":

-Do any of the numbered provisions at the end of the resolution impermissibly negate, ignore, violate, encourage actions that are contrary to, or discourage the enforcement of Discipline Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2711, or other relevant church law? And if so, is such a provision null, void, and of no effect?

-Does the resolution's affirmation of "abeyance" (in what is printed as item #2) contradict the Book of Discipline's requirements for complaints held in abeyance as outlined in Paragraph 362.1.g? And if so, is this resolution or any section of it null, void, and of no effect?

-Does the passage of this resolution overrule, limit, or restrict the rights or obligations of bishops, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry to fully comply with and uphold Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 361, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2706, and 2711 of the Book of Discipline? And if so, is this resolution null, void, and of no effect?



A report from NCJ Volunteers in Mission was given by Tammy Kuntz, Executive Director of NCJ VIM (with video).

Alka Lyall of the Northern Illinois Conference requested a Point of Privilege to share a lament and celebrate how we see and treat people of color. The Lament/Celebration read:

:

**CELEBRATION, LAMENT, HOPE of the People of Color of NCJ**

Bishops, guests and delegates of the 2024 NCJ,

I stand here today with my colleagues and partners in ministry to celebrate, lament and hope! It may seem odd to do all that at the same time, but yesterday, our episcopal address reminded us that we are indeed an ODD people of God!

Bishop, we celebrate all that we have accomplished at the Jurisdictional gatherings in this week. and we lament for all the missed opportunities!

We created space for conversations around gun control, and we lament that we continue to use ableist language, such as ‘being deaf to the voice of God,’ knowing that God’s people who are deaf are unable to connect with God.

We celebrate that we have elected Rev. David Wilson as the first First Nation Bishop in our connection, and we lament that we continue the habit of tokenism- electing one person of color to the episcopal office, and then returning to “business as usual.”

We celebrate the fact that we have elected the Rev. Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez, as the first Puerto Rican Bishop in our connection, and we lament that we continue to keep close guard at our door and hearts and miss becoming the church where all have a place at the table.

We celebrate the election of Bishop Carlo Rapanut, parent of a non-binary child in one Jurisdiction, and lament at the treatment of our queer sibling in another.

We celebrate that we have begun conversations about White Christian Nationalism, and yet we lament that when the time comes- we only invite the privileged guests to the table.

We celebrate that we are moving our denomination to being a fully inclusive church, and yet we lament that we often fail to invite those often neglected.

We celebrate that we have begun our work towards becoming an antiracist church, and yet we lament that our Brown and Immigrant siblings continue to be labeled as ‘others.’

We celebrate that all delegates of color were invited to have a ‘heart to heart’ conversation with the bishops of color, which was, in fact, a blessing, and we lament that conversations like such are still needed.

Bishop, we, as people of beautiful colors and identities, celebrate all our accomplishments as a church, as we continue to strive to truly be the body of Christ.

We hope that this Jurisdiction will continue to put our dollars where we say our commitment is, so the conversation that begun at this Jurisdictional Conference among Bishops of color and delegates of color may not be a ‘one and done’ or a mere ‘check in the box,’ and neither be limited only with Bishops of color.

And we hope that we will remember to not default to the familiar Black/White binary that ignores our Brown and Immigrant siblings, and their unique challenges, when we engage in anti-racism work.

And we hope that we will be clear about the ways anti Blackness manifests itself, even in these sacred spaces

And we hope that we will remain sensitive to the fact that women of color and queer persons of color bear the burden of erasure even more so than our male counterparts. This must be remembered when planning meetings and events around anti-racism work.

After sharing the Lament/Celebration Alka made a motion that all leaders of color of the North Central Jurisdiction and the entire College of Bishops will meet at least once a year, and more as needed, to share, strategize and develop magnanimous spaces of HOPE, reconciliation, thoughtful conversations and extravagant welcome to all people of God! The motion was seconded and approved 131 For – 8 Against.

**2023-24 Budget:** Lonnie Chafin, NCJ Treasurer and delegate from Northern Illinois Conference made a motion for approval of the 2022 -24 Budget as printed on page 21 of the Advance Journal Volume #2. The motion was approved 138 For – 3 Against.

Bishop Beard offered a Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Kevin Dembinski of the Wisconsin Conference requested a moment of personal privilege to speak about sharing of call stories.

Bill Brownson of West Ohio Conference thanked the planners of this conference for allowing the discussions/conversations that have taken place during this conference.

#### **Other Business:**

Monitoring Report: Julia (Prichard) Gonzales and Jerry DeVine presented a monitoring report on the conference.

2024 NCJ Conference: Rebecca Trefz of the Dakotas Conference introduced a video welcoming the 2024 NCJ Conference to the Dakotas. The 2024 NCJ Conference will be held July 10-13, 2024 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Moment of Privilege by Bishop Trimble to give thanks to Paul White for his service as NCJ Secretary.

**Words of Thanks:**

- To Indiana Host Planning Committee lead by Karen Gould.
- Indiana Conference Event Planner, Ruth Ellen Needler.
- Marshalls and Pages.
- All who helped design, lead, and participate in the various worship experiences.
- All the volunteers who have served in any capacity.
- To Trina and Heidi from Padget Incorporate for the voting technology.
- Indiana Conference Director of Communication, Serena Acker, and all those being sure our technology needs were met – especially to Andrew Scanlon-Holmes who has led that team.
- The staff of the Grande Wayne Convention Center

**Announcements:**

- A reminder to leave your voting devices on your table.
- Consecration Service will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the morning. Please take all materials and possessions with you as there will a different room set-up for the Consecration Service.
- Consecration Service Rehearsal will take place at 8:00 p.m. this evening.

Bishop Beard closed in prayer.

*Minutes of the Friday afternoon, November 4, 2022 business session of the NCJ Conference submitted by Paul R. White, NCJ Secretary.*



**Illinois Area Office of The United Methodist Church  
Illinois Great Rivers Conference**

**Frank J. Beard**  
Resident Bishop  
[bishop@igrc.org](mailto:bishop@igrc.org)

**Janice L. Griffith**  
Executive Assistant to the Bishop  
[jgriffith@igrc.org](mailto:jgriffith@igrc.org)

**NORTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION OF THE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**DECISION OF LAW OF - BISHOP FRANK J. BEARD**

**The Resolution In Question**

On November 4, 2022, the following resolution was pending before the North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church:

**QUEER DELEGATES' CALL TO CENTER JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
FOR LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE IN THE UMC**

Resolution to the 2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference

Whereas, in a groundswell response to the passage of harmful legislation at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference, Annual Conferences elected queer clergy and lay persons to be General and Jurisdictional Delegates in record numbers, for the first-time empowering queer delegates to speak and act from our diverse experiences, and

Whereas, the 2019 Special Session of the United Methodist General Conference passed the Traditional Plan, which increased penalties for United Methodists clergy who are LGBTQIA+ and for clergy who support the LGBTQIA+ community through officiating their weddings, and

Whereas, in an attempt to address the divide within The United Methodist Church, an abeyance or moratorium was proposed to the General Conference, referenced below,<sup>2</sup> by the authors of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation, and

Whereas, we understand our call and responsibility as United Methodists to do good, do no harm, and stay in love with God, and

Whereas, we call straight and cisgender allies to do good by using their voice and vote to support, empower, and amplify the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community in The United Methodist Church,

Therefore be it resolved that the 2022 North Central Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church:

1. Supports and amplifies the queer delegates' call to justice and empowerment for the LGBTQIA+ community in our Jurisdiction, within and beyond our churches and agencies.
2. Affirms the spirit of the abeyance or moratorium as proposed to the General Conference, as referenced above, until changes can be made in The United Methodist Book of Discipline.
3. Implores our member Annual Conferences to either not pursue or resolve in an appropriately timely fashion through a non-punitive, just resolution process any complaints against clergy regarding their sexual orientation or clergy who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons.
4. Urges that as a Jurisdiction we either not pursue or resolve in an appropriately timely fashion through a non-punitive, just resolution process any complaints against Bishops regarding their sexual orientation or those who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons.
5. Supports the election of episcopal leaders who commit to upholding this resolution and who will further justice for and empowerment of LGBTQIA+ people in the annual conferences where they serve; 6. Commits to a future of The United Methodist Church where LGBTQIA+ people will be protected, affirmed, and empowered in the life and ministry of the church in our Jurisdiction, including as laity, ordained clergy, in the episcopacy, and on boards and agencies.

### **The Question of Law**

#### REQUEST FOR A DECISION OF LAW

Submitted by John Lomperis of the Indiana Conference

#### **NCJ Request for Decision of Law**

In accordance with Paragraphs 51 and 2609.6 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and in light of Paragraphs 16, 27, 304, 341, 361, 362, 525, 635, 2701-2719, Judicial Council Decision #886, 1201, 1292, 1340, 1343, 1344, and 1403, and other relevant church law, I respectfully ask and request a decision on the following questions of law about the resolution recently adopted by the North Central Jurisdictional Conference on "Queer Delegates' Call to Center Justice and Empowerment for LGBTQIA People in the UMC":

-Do any of the numbered provisions at the end of the resolution impermissibly negate, ignore, violate, encourage actions that are contrary to, or discourage the enforcement of Discipline Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2711, or other relevant church law? And if so, is such a provision null, void, and of no effect?

-Does the resolution's affirmation of "abeyance" (in what is printed as item #2) contradict the Book of Discipline's requirements for complaints held in abeyance as outlined in Paragraph 362.1.g? And if so, is this resolution or any section of it null, void, and of no effect?

-Does the passage of this resolution overrule, limit, or restrict the rights or obligations of bishops, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry to fully comply with and uphold Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 361, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2706, and 2711 of the Book of Discipline? And if so, is this resolution null, void, and of no effect?

Submitted by John Lomperis of the Indiana Conference

## **Decision of Law**

### *Authority & Jurisdiction*

I am issuing this decision of law pursuant to the authority given to me as a presiding officer in ¶51 of the 2016 Book of Discipline. The decision is made within the time prescribed by ¶2609.6 of the Discipline.

### *Ruling*

In Decision 886, the Judicial Council stated as follows:

The Discipline is the law of the Church which regulates every phase of the life and work of the Church. As such, annual conferences may not legally negate, ignore, or violate provisions of the Discipline with which they disagree, even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections to those provisions.

The foregoing standard has also been applied to resolutions passed by jurisdictional conferences. *See, e.g.*, Decision 1340. In Decision 1398, the Judicial Council characterized this standard as follows based on Decision 96: "All actions of a jurisdictional or annual conference must be faithful to and consistent with *The Discipline*."

### QUESTION ONE:

**Do any of the numbered provisions at the end of the resolution impermissibly negate, ignore, violate, encourage actions that are contrary to, or discourage the enforcement of Discipline Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2711, or other relevant church law? And if so, is such a provision null, void, and of no effect?**

The numbered provisions of the resolutions presented to and adopted by the NCJ jurisdictional conference entitled, "Queer delegates call to center justice and empowerment for lgbtqia+ people in the UMC", while presented to the conference delegates as "aspirational," do impermissibly negate, ignore, violate, encourage actions that are contrary to, or discourage the enforcement of the Book of Discipline and therefore are null, void, and of no effect.

### QUESTION TWO:

**Does the resolution's affirmation of "abeyance" (in what is printed as item #2) contradict the Book of Discipline's requirements for complaints held in abeyance as outlined in Paragraph 362.1.g? And if so, is this resolution or any section of it null, void, and of no effect?**

The resolution's call for "abeyance" does contradict the Book of Discipline's requirement for complaints held in abeyance as outlined in paragraph 362.1g and therefore is null, void, and of no effect.

### QUESTION THREE:

**Does the passage of this resolution overrule, limit, or restrict the rights or obligations of bishops, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry to fully comply with and uphold Paragraphs 304.1-3, 341.6, 361, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2706, and 2711 of the Book of Discipline? And if so, is this resolution null, void, and of no effect?**

The passage of this resolution does overrule, limit, or restrict the rights or obligations of bishops, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry to fully comply with and uphold the Book of Discipline, and therefore passage of this resolution is null, void, and of no effect?

An abeyance or moratorium was proposed to the General Conference, but the General Conference Session was not held, and delegates were not able to adopt or reject the proposal by the authors of the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation, the only provision for abeyance or moratorium are those outlined in our current 1996 Book of Discipline. Imploring such persons to “not pursue” complaints is improper and violates the Discipline and decisions of the Judicial Council, including Decisions 1399 and 1435. Therefore, that part of paragraph 3 of the resolution that implores annual conferences not to pursue complaints against clergy regarding their sexual orientation or clergy who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons is null, void and of no effect.

The part of paragraph 4 that urges a jurisdiction not to pursue complaints against bishops regarding their sexual orientation or those who officiate weddings of LGBTQIA+ persons is improper, null, void and of no effect.

Respectfully Submitted, Bishop Frank J. Beard

**0423-09**  
**North Central Jurisdiction**  
**Interested Parties**

*Updated List by the Judicial Council:*

Paul White [NCJ Sec'y, Outgoing] <paulw2800@gmail.com>,  
Diane Brown [NCJ Sec'y, Incoming] <ncjsecretary@gmail.com>,  
John Lomperis [Asked Q] <JLomperis@theird.org>,  
Walker Brault [Presented Resolution] <Walker.brault@minnesotaumc.org>,  
Bishop Frank Beard [Presiding Bishop] <bishop@igrc.org>,  
Bishop David Alan Bard [NCJ College of Bishops] <bishop@michiganumc.org>,  
Bishop Bruce Ough [COB Executive Sec'y] <bishop.ough@umc-cob.org>,

*Original List Provided To Judicial Council:*

Walker Brault  
122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 400  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-230-6146  
[Walker.brault@minnesotaumc.org](mailto:Walker.brault@minnesotaumc.org)

John S. A. Lomperis, M.Div.  
c/o IRD  
1023 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(872) 230-2149  
[jlomperis@theird.org](mailto:jlomperis@theird.org)

Bishop David Bard, President  
NCJ College of Bishops  
Michigan Episcopal Area  
1011 Northcrest Road  
Lansing, MI 48906  
517-347-4003 x 4011  
[bishop@michiganumc.org](mailto:bishop@michiganumc.org)