



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L'EGLISE 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):

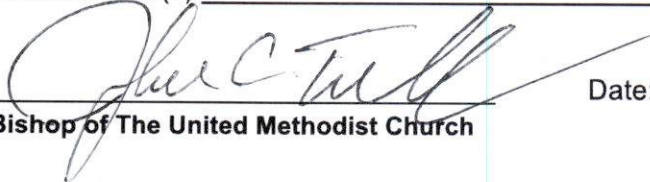
- Reporting of decisions of law made by bishops in response to questions of law submitted to them in writing during the regular business of a conference session (§ 56.3 Const. and § 2609.6 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).
- Reporting of episcopal decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference (§ 56.2 Const. and § 2609.7 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).

Name of Bishop: Bishop Julius C. Trimble
 Address: 301 Pennsylvania Pkwy, Suite 300 City: Carmel
 State/Province: IN ZIP/Postal Code 46280 Country: USA
 Phone: 317-924-1321 Fax: _____ E-mail: bishop@inumc.org
 Annual Conference: Indiana Date of session: 6/11/2022 (month/day/year)
 Question(s) of Law: _____
See attached

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

Constitution: _____ Book of Discipline: _____

Judicial Council Decision(s): _____

Signature:  Date: 7/11/2022
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.

Resolution 5

Rev. Chris Gadlage
4125 S 8th St
Terre Haute, IN 47802-4128

Ph: (810) 882-1463

Email: chris.gadlage@inumc.org

BISHOP'S DECISION OF LAW

DIGEST OF THE RULING

RE. Resolution #5 "A commitment to Grace in the Indiana Conference"

After reviewing Resolution # 5, Bishop Trimble declared that the resolution was properly before the body for consideration. "While the resolution accentuates affirmations and calls for grace, it does not make null and void any prohibition in the Book of Discipline. It doesn't change the wording or impact of the Book of Discipline." I have reviewed the request submitted by Rev. Chris Gadlage for a decision of Law.

In Conference session, Bishop Trimble acknowledged his Point of Order and heard Rev. Gadlage's claim that the resolution was more than aspirational and should be ruled out of order quoting "encouraging actions that ignore and violate the Book of Discipline." I have reviewed the various Disciplinary paragraphs and Judicial Council rulings listed in Rev. Gadlage's request.

At the time of our Annual Conference on June 11, 2022, I ruled that the resolution was properly before the body and belonged to the body for discussion and debate. I acknowledged that the Petitions and Resolutions committee was not all in agreement that this resolution was free from an interpretation that would deem it out of order. The final decision to put the resolution in the hands of the Annual Conference was the presiding Bishop's. Prior to voting, clarifying questions were asked and answered that speak to the questions Rev. Gadlage has raised.

STATEMENT OF THE BACKGROUND

Resolution #5 (attached) "... resolved that we shall support every church and clergyperson in our 13 conference who is seeking to faithfully serve God and their communities to the best of their abilities and in accordance with their deeply held, God-given convictions. We shall strive to honor and trust contextual expressions of ministry, including the decisions of clergy to choose which weddings they officiate and congregations to choose which weddings they host, so long as they are between two consenting, committed adults. We shall also embrace and encourage God's call to ministry in diverse persons and will seek to not restrict God's calling solely on the basis of a candidate's sexual orientation or gender identity. Further, we shall respect the decisions of any who feel they cannot remain a part of the Indiana Conference in light of these commitments."

Bishop's decision was made that the resolution was properly before the Annual Conference, and with a written ballot vote was passed 380 for 332 against.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF LAW

Rev. Abel asked if the application of Resolution #5 is aspirational or if it would be considered binding as it relates to anything in the Book of Discipline? Rev. Jason Rice asked, "If Resolution #5 passed, would people still be able to file charges against same-sex marriage?"

Bishop Trimble clarified that the resolution as written does not change any prohibition in the Book of Discipline or strip the rights of persons who may choose to file complaints. It also does not change in any way the conference process for handling complaints.

The author of the resolution was invited to speak about the aspirational nature in which it was written. Rev. Mary Dicken confirmed the invitational spirit in which the resolution was written. "An invitation to take a posture of grace, to allow the Holy Spirit to move in and through the Church. There is no mandate that goes against our Book of Discipline."

It is Bishop Trimble's interpretation that this resolution allowed clergy and laity to speak openly about the mission of United Methodists in Indiana as it relates to "the mission of seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the body of Christ."

This was done in a very respectful, vulnerable, grace-filled, honest, and powerful way by three persons who spoke in favor of the resolution and three who spoke against it. The first person to speak was a 14-year-old youth, Lydia Jacobson.

It is Bishop Trimble's interpretation that the resolution does not change in any way the work of District Boards of Ordained Ministry or the Conference Board of Ministry. It does not have the power to authorize or permit those listed prohibitions, nor does it restrict the rights or obligations of those listed leaders in the request for Decision of Law.

God's call to Ministry is not under the purview of a Bishop, Annual Conference, or Board of Ordained Ministry. God Calls whom God Calls.

In the United Methodist Church, that call is tested, witnessed, and affirmed beginning at the local Church, and then and only then, licensing and ordination come through the bodies of the annual Conference.

DECISION OF LAW

The specific words “shall support,” “strive to honor and trust,” and “shall also embrace and encourage,” are aspirational in nature to express ideals and opinions, which is precisely what this resolution does. Because the language of the resolution is clearly aspirational, it does not run afoul of the Book of Discipline. Indeed, Decision 1292 cited in the request for decision discusses that the term “support” as used in another resolution was aspirational and not in violation of the Book of Discipline. Further, the language “seek not to restrict God’s calling on the basis of a candidate’s sexual orientation” is close to saying it will not be considered. However, it is Bishop Trimble’s ruling that this does not violate the Book of Discipline or Decision 1341 in that a celibate person can be advanced as a candidate no matter what that person’s orientation is.

Again, after reviewing Resolution # 5, “A commitment to Grace in the Indiana Conference,” Bishop Trimble ruled that the resolution was properly before the body and belonged to the body for discussion and debate.

Bishop Julius C. Trimble

Indiana United Methodist Church



PETITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS FORM

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: **March 10, 2022**
Save this form on your computer before filling in the blanks.

IMPORTANT TO READ - GUIDELINES

- Complete one form for each petition/resolution.
- Each petition/resolution must deal with only one issue or Disciplinary paragraph or concern.
- This form has four total pages with four sections. **All sections must be completed or it will be returned to you as incomplete and may cause a delay.**
- Feel free to add additional pages if necessary. Indicate below total number of pages you are submitting. *
- Deadline: All petitions/resolutions must be received in the Indiana Conference Center by the above-referenced date.
- Please submit your form to petitions.resolutions@inumc.org or U.S. Mail to:
INUMC Petitions and Resolutions, 301 Pennsylvania Pkwy, Ste 300, Carmel IN 46280
- **It is important that you receive a confirmation email informing you that your form has been received.** If you do not receive a confirmation email, please call (317) 564-3251.
- Upon submission, all petitions/resolutions become the property of the Indiana Annual Conference.

Date: March 10, 2022 Please check one:

- I am submitting a **RESOLUTION**: A **Resolution** is any request for the Indiana Annual Conference to make a change, take an action, or recognize a formal expression of opinion on an issue. Any Indiana United Methodist lay member, pastor, group or agency may submit for consideration a resolution to the Indiana Annual Conference. Such resolutions must be submitted to the Indiana Annual Conference Secretary and the Petitions & Resolutions Team no later than ninety (90) days prior to the start of the Annual Conference session.
- I am submitting a **PETITION**: A **Petition** is any request for the General Conference to take an action ¶1507.4, alter the wording of The Book of Discipline ¶1507.2 or affirm a formal expression on an issue. Any Indiana United Methodist lay member, pastor, or agency may submit a petition directly to the General Conference or may submit their General Conference petition to the Indiana Conference asking for Indiana Conference affirmation (of the petition) with the expectation that, if affirmed (by a 2/3 majority vote), the Indiana Annual Conference secretary would forward the petition to the General Conference. All petitions must be submitted no later than ninety (90) days prior to the start of the Annual Conference session.

SECTION 1: Information of person submitting this Petition/Resolution

NAME Mary Dicken PLEASE SELECT ONE: CLERGY LAITY
 Cell Phone (812) 589-9640 Landline () n/a email address mary.dicken@inumc.org
 Address: 5457 N Illinois Street City Indianapolis State IN Zip 46208

Indiana Conference UMC membership required:
 Church at which you are a lay member or affiliated clergy Meridian Street UMC District Central
 (Click here to see District Map)

Church Mailing address: 5500 North Meridian Street City Indianapolis Zip 46208

By signing below, I confirm that I am the person submitting the petition/resolution as described in this document for review by the Indiana Annual Conference Petitions and Resolutions Team for submission to the Indiana Annual Conference Session.

* Total number of pages being submitted for this petition/resolution: 4
 Signature Mary R.W. Dicken Date March 10, 2022
 Please print name Mary R.W. Dicken

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: This is a Petition Resolution Number assigned: _____ Total # of pages _____

Name of person: Mary Dicken

Date March 10, 2022

(Use additional sheets if necessary.)

SECTION 2:

A Commitment to Grace in the Indiana Conference

Title of Petition or Resolution: _____

State the Petition or Resolution:

Whereas ¶122 of the Book of Discipline reminds us that we make disciples as we continue the mission of seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ;

And whereas in the Indiana Conference this work includes people of all ages, races, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations;

Therefore be it resolved that we shall support every church and clergy person in our conference who is seeking to faithfully serve God and their communities to the best of their abilities and in accordance with their deeply held, God-given convictions. We shall strive to honor and trust contextual expressions of ministry, including the decisions of clergy to choose which weddings they officiate and congregations to choose which weddings they host, so long as they are between two consenting, committed adults. We shall also embrace and encourage God's call to ministry in diverse persons and will seek to not restrict God's calling solely on the basis of a candidate's sexual orientation or gender identity. Further, we shall respect the decisions of any who feel they cannot remain a part of the Indiana Conference in light of these commitments.

Name of person: Mary Dicken

Date March 10, 2022

(Use additional sheets if necessary.)

SECTION 3: State below the rationale or reason for this petition/resolution.

We are called to do no harm.

With the postponement of the General Conference until 2024, we cannot wait to respond faithfully to the Gospel call of inclusion. In recent years, LGBTQ+ persons have heard a repeated refrain of, "Just hold on a little while longer, until General Conference in 2020." Then "... until General Conference in 2022." Continuing this pattern with more calls to wait for delayed inclusion and justice perpetuates harm against marginalized persons in our United Methodist Church, as well as does harm to our shared ministry and witness. Our current state is not sustainable. We must move forward in faithful, inclusive ministry now.

We are called to do all the good we can.

Since the Global Methodist Church announced its intent to launch in May 2022, and Bishop Trimble stated, in response to this news, his intent to work graciously with those who feel compelled to leave The United Methodist Church, we must also take intentional steps to shape our ministry in the Indiana Conference to do good in the wake of these developments. Just as we are making room for people of good faith and conviction to join another denomination, we must also graciously make room in our conference for those who have been historically and contemporarily excluded from full participation in the life of the church, so that we may be the church Christ calls us to be now and in the future.

We are called to stay in love with God.

Our primary focus as a church should be our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The fractious history of our denomination on questions of LGBTQ+ inclusion over the past half-century has greatly impaired our ability to stay in love with God together. For the sake of our mission, we must move forward in ministry in a way that allows for all people to respond fully and faithfully to God's call on their lives.

Name of person: Mary Dicken

Date _____

(Use additional sheets if necessary.)

SECTION 4:

Are there any financial implications for the Indiana Annual Conference?

No Yes

If yes, please state below what they may be in detail.

SECTION 5:

Please provide all necessary contact information to groups for which this petition/resolution should be forwarded to once affirmed.

This resolution should be forwarded to all members and leaders of the Indiana Conference via the Conference Journal and other standard communications used to report actions of the Annual Conference body.

R-5 A COMMITMENT TO GRACE IN THE INDIANA CONFERENCE Rule of Law Request

In accordance with Paragraphs 51 and 2609.6 of the United Methodist Book of Discipline (Discipline) and considering Judicial Council Decisions (JCD) # 886, 1201, 1292, 1340, 1343, 1344, and 1435; I respectfully ask and request a bishop's decision of law on the following questions regarding Resolution R-5 "A COMMITMENT TO GRACE IN THE INDIANA CONFERENCE", just adopted by the 2022 session of the Indiana Annual Conference:

1. Does any part of this resolution impermissibly discourage the enforcement of church law, or otherwise encourage or express support for actions that negate, ignore, or violate our church law, particularly church law prohibiting "self-avowed, practicing homosexual" clergy (Discipline ¶¶ 304.3, 2702.1.b) and "ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions" (Discipline ¶¶ 341.6, 2702.1.b)? If so, is this resolution null, void, and without effect, in whole or in part?
2. Does this resolution authorize, permit, or encourage clergy in our conference to conduct or local churches in our conference to host "ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions" or "same-sex wedding ceremonies"? If so, is all or part of this resolution null, void, and without effect, considering Discipline ¶¶ 341.6 and 2702.1.b?
3. Does this resolution prohibit, restrict, or discourage complaints from being filed, processed, valid bills of charges from being certified, or such complaints and charges potentially resulting in a church trial (after an unsuccessful effort for just resolution) and penalty for clergy who commit the chargeable offense of "performing same-sex wedding ceremonies" (Discipline ¶ 2702.1.b)? If so, is this resolution null, void, and without effect, in whole or in part?
4. Does this resolution discourage or prevent district committees on ministry or the board of ordained ministry, or the clergy session from making "the full examination and thorough inquiry into the person's fitness" (particularly Discipline ¶ 304.3) as a candidate for: (1) annual election as local pastor; (2) election to associate membership; (3) election to provisional membership; or (4) election to full conference membership in light of Discipline ¶¶ 635.2.h, 304.2, 304.3, 305, 306, 310 and JCD # 1343, 1344 or does the resolution discourage disapprovals of ministry candidates who may be otherwise qualified but who clearly do not meet the standards of Discipline ¶ 304.3? If so, is this resolution null, void, and without effect, in whole or in part?
5. Does this resolution encourage district committees on ministry or the board of ordained ministry, or the clergy session to approve ministry candidates who do NOT meet the requirement of Discipline ¶ 304.3 prohibiting the approval of any candidate who "openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, Board of Ordained Ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual; or is living in a same-sex marriage, domestic partnership or civil union, or is a person who publicly states she or he is a practicing homosexual" in light of JCD #702, 708, 722, 725, 764, 844, 984, 1020, 1341? If so, is this resolution null, void, and without effect, in whole or in part?

6. Does this resolution in any way limit or restrict the rights or obligations of the bishop, district superintendents, counsels for the church, committees on investigation, trial courts, boards of ordained ministry, or district committees on ministry in our annual conference to fully comply with and uphold Discipline ¶¶ 304.1-3, 341.6, 362, 635, 2701, 2702, 2704, 2706, and 2711? If so, is any section of the resolution null, void, and without effect?

Submitted by: Christopher S. Gadlage; Elder in Full Connection

Christopher S Gadlage

Date

Harner, Bal Harris, Robert Hayes-Bennett, Martin Hess, Norma Hillsamer, Lucia Jones, Steve Koziatek III, James Lantz, Paul Yim Kul Lee, Dennis Leinbach, Verna Lindemood, Ronald Lucas, Shirley Lyth, Gerald Machgan, William Mathys, Michael McCoy, Charles McPeck, Donald Miller, Helen Miller, Joe Miller, John Miller, Thelma Miller, Jay Morrison, Ann Newton, Harold Oechsle, Wayne Patton, L.D. Payton, Samuel Phillips, Bonnie Plybon, Barbara Pomeroy, David Popplewell, Larry Ray, Jacquie Reed, Ralph Roach, Erma Rohrer, Joyce Schaar, Diana Shock, John Shortle, Lloyd Swango, Jack Thomas, Sylvia Waltz, David Warren, Holly White, Raymond White, Frances Wollert, Eva Williams, Barbara Wilson, Patricia Wilson, Rose Woodke, Kenneth Woolsey, J. Wilbur Yates

Plenary Six, Saturday, June 11, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

9.1 Before business began, Mark Fenstermacher thanked Bishop for his leadership as congregations consider disaffiliation. He asked Bishop to share his wisdom and guidance. Bishop stated his position is not a secret as evidenced in his episcopal address. He believes discernment is the first step and encouraged those considering disaffiliation contact their Conference Superintendent and utilize the resources on the INUMC website.

9.2 Resolution 5 – A Commitment to Grace in the Indiana Conference (Dicken).

Bishop has reviewed resolution and ruled it is properly before us for the body to debate. He added the resolution accentuates but does not prohibit the BOD. A 14 year-old spoke in favor of the resolution.

Point of Order – Chris Gadlage stated he believes the resolution violated the BOD citing many paragraphs. Bishop asked for all references in writing so that he may review them.

Three individuals spoke against the resolution, and one person spoke for the resolution. Russ Abel then asked for a point of clarity asking if the intent of the resolution is that the application will be aspirational or binding. Bishop responded it is aspirational, not binding. Jason Rice requested more clarification on the enforcement of the resolution. Aleze Fulbright asked the writer of the resolution to speak to its intent. Mary Dicken stated, “the intent is invitational for us to engage with each other in a different way.” Bishop then asked Shannon Stringer to pray before calling for the vote. **Motion passed (380 for / 330 against)**

9.3 Boy Scout of America Settlement – Larry Whitehead had hoped to be able to bring a report on the resolution of the Court decision on the bankruptcy case of the Boy Scouts of America. However, the case is not yet settled. ~~To date, there have been 152 claims of abuse in some way connected to United~~ Methodist churches in Indiana. Larry concluded a desire to support the scouting ministry in our churches while assuring child protection policies and practices are in place in every church.

9.4 Protecting Our Children – Shannon Stringer shared the work of a team recently formed by Bishop Trimble for the purpose of protecting our children. The group had two assignments: 1. To review and recommend changes to the INUMC Child Protection Guidelines for all District and Conference events. The policy is available at inumc.org/protectingourchildren. 2. To develop policy and resources for churches to implement their own child protection guidelines. The expectation is that all churches will have an abuse prevention plan.

9.5 Camping Ministry – Julie Macy thanked Bishop and the Conference for their exceptional support during the past two years. She provided a history of the camping ministry beginning in 1923. There are currently seven facilities offering camping and retreats. The camps were closed in 2020 and operated at a 50% capacity in 2021. Yet, they finished 2021 with a deficit of \$65,732. The camps should be full in 2022, allowing the deficit to be overcome.

Interested Persons

Indiana Annual Conference Ruling of Law

Bishop's Ruling on Question re *Commitment to Grace* Resolution

Christine Mahon [Conf Secy] <chris.mahon901@gmail.com>,
Chris Gadlage [Asked Q] <chris.gadlage@inumc.org>,
Mary R W Dicken [Authored Resolution] <mary.dicken@inumc.org>,
Bishop Julius C Trimble [Presiding Bishop] <bishop@inumc.org>,
Darlene White [Bishop's Admin Asst] <darlene.white@inumc.org>,

Chris Mahon [Conf Secy]

Annual Conference Secretary
2601 W Chelsea Drive, Muncie, IN 47304
chris.mahon901@gmail.com

Rev. Chris Gadlage [Asked Q]

4125 S 8th Street, Terre Haute, IN 47802-4128
chris.gadlage@inumc.org

Mary R W Dicken [Authored Resolution]

Mary.dicken@inumc.org

Bishop Julius C. Trimble [Presiding Bishop]

Indiana Annual Conference
301 Pennsylvania Pkwy, Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46280
bishop@inumc.org

Ms. Darlene White

Bishop's Administrative Assistant
Indiana Annual Conference,
301 Pennsylvania Pkwy, Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46280
darlene.white@inumc.org