

Proceedings

Morning Proceedings for April 29

Worship

MELBA MCCALLUM (Deaconess): Please stand and join as you are able with our call to worship.

(pause)

As we gather in community, we are called to be bold in faith.

ALL: We will nurture the courageous spirit that offers new life.

MCCALLUM: When we hear the cries of a suffering people

ALL: We will love fiercely where wounds are too great to bear.

MCCALLUM: When we see our neighbors in search of sustenance

ALL: We will serve one another until all needs are met.

(music)

ANDY HILL: Let us pray.

(pause)

Gracious God you have loved us and called us as your own. We have isolated ourselves and failed to serve you and those around us. We have treated your love as if it were a finite resource instead of an overflowing fountain. Forgive us and free us, we pray, to radiate your love in our service to others. In Jesus' name.

The gospel assures us that God's love is unending. Let us show God's love with extravagance in our service to each and every person we meet, trusting that Jesus Christ, God's love never ends, and that with our service given in love, God is well pleased. Amen.

(pause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, this song we are going to sing now is all about the way we experience the goodness of God, the mightiness of God, the wonderful God of love, of God, and the love of God every day. Amen!

(music)

HEIDI CAREAGA: Lord, speak to us about our lives so that we might be faithful. Speak to us, to our hearts that we might know the cry of your heart. Free us not only to listen to what your Spirit is saying to us, but empower us to respond in a way that brings your honor and glory.

Scripture lesson I will be reading is Matthew 25:34-40, in Spanish.

(simultaneous interpretation from Spanish) “Then the king will say to those at his right, ‘Come, you are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, because I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer and tell them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” This is the word of God.

God’s word to our hearts and our lives.

ALL: Yes, and may I live this word before our world today and always.

(pause)

BISHOP KAREN P. OLIVETO: OK. Let’s get something immediately out of the way. Yes, it’s true. I am a self-avowed, practicing “MethoNerd.”

(applause)

And I know I’m not the only MethoNerd in this room or online. Amen?

(crowd response)

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the term, let me break it down for you. MethoNerd is derived from two words. “Methodist,” pertaining to or describing one who is United Methodist, and “Nerd,” a person who is extremely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about a particular subject, especially one of a specialist or niche interest. So a MethoNerd is one who possesses a strangely warmed heart and is drawn with great gusto to all things United Methodist.

(applause)

This is how much of a MethoNerd I am. When I have to go to London, Robin and I schedule our flight arrival so we can go immediately to Wesley’s Chapel for midweek prayer and tea sandwiches. I love our United Methodist archives, and I never fail to get a thrill from George Whitefield’s thumb or John Wesley’s death mask. I do drive, as every good circuit rider does, under the watchful eye of John Wesley, and, of course, when I drive, I’m singing hymns from our hymnbook “lustily and with good courage,” just as John Wesley instructed.

So tell me you’re a MethoNerd without telling me you’re a MethoNerd. I believe that General Conference is that special place of heaven on earth for MethoNerds.

(applause)

So take a look around. You are not alone. You have found your people!

(applause)

Will you pray with me? Gracious and loving God, may your Holy Spirit guide my words and inspire all our thoughts this morning. We ask humbly that you breathe on us, breath of God, and fill us with life anew that we would love what thou dost love and do what thou wouldst do. Amen.

Today's scripture is from the Gospel of Matthew. Throughout Matthew's Gospel, Jesus emphasizes to his followers the difference between earthly kingdoms and God's kingdom. I love a recent post by the United Women in Faith that explains so well why some of us in English—and I apologize if this doesn't translate well—in English some of us use "kin-dom" instead of "kingdom." Kin-dom without the "g" is one more translation of the Greek word *basileia*, that has been translated in a number of ways like "kingdom" or "reign" or "dominion." The Latina theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz proposed using "kin-dom" to reflect the kind of interconnectedness and relationship Jesus invites us into through his teachings. God desires us to live in companionship and community, into love and liberation. Now, all through the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' teachings point his followers into this deep interconnectedness with God and with one another. And had something to say about religious teachings that fracture the body.

If we look a little earlier in Matthew, go to chapter 23, we see Jesus harshly criticizing those scribes and Pharisees, those religious leaders who labored over religious law—I'm not pointing fingers here—who were meticulous in writing it down and giving pronouncements to the people about how to live. The problem was, they were more concerned with law rather than love, with regulations rather than relationships.

(applause)

This rigid adherence resulted in an "in" group and an "out" group, which broke down relationships between all those who were faithful. The legalism of the scribes and of the Pharisees distressed Jesus greatly. Eight times he wags his fingers at them, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees. Woe to you who teach about God but don't love God. Woe to you who keep some people out of the kingdom of God. Woe to you who convert people to a dead religion. Woe to you who use money as religious bribes for salvation. Woe to you who get so caught up in the minutiae of the law and fail to embody the fullness of God's law, one that includes justice and mercy.

(applause)

Jesus knows our tendency to bring to break relationship with God and others. So he makes it very clear that all the laws boil down to just two, and what are they? Love God and love others as yourself. He then gives us the perfect object lesson in today's scripture to hit home the message. Just as you did it to the least of those who are members of my family, you did it to me. Jesus makes a claim that we are to receive one another, treat one another, serve one another, love one another as if we are serving him. We need to see the *Imago Dei* image of God in each person. Not just in the people who look like us, who talk like us, who think like us, who love like us, who believe like us.

(applause)

There are no excuses for us anymore. The body of Christ is big and it is beautifully and exquisite when we embrace it in all its diverse beauty. Yet we all often question that diversity. We fail to honor the differences found in the human family and in so doing we reject Christ himself. John Wesley in his sermon on visiting the sick had much to say about the scripture and why we tend to overlook the lost,

why we overlook the lonely, why we overlook the least, why the rich overlook the poor, why the majority culture looks right past those who don't look like them.

Here's what he said. One—I which I could say it in an English accent—One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. Hence it is, according to the common observation, one part of the world doesn't know what the other part of the world suffers. Many of them don't know because they don't care to know. They keep out of the way of knowing it and then plead their voluntary ignorances as an excuse for their hardness of heart.

Amen?

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP OLIVETO: He keeps going. "Indeed, sir," said a person of large substance. "I am a very compassionate man. But to tell you the truth, I don't know anybody in the world that's in want." How did this come to pass? Why, he took care to keep out of their way. And if he fell upon them anywhere, he passed over on the other side.

I don't know anybody in want. I don't know anybody in the world who's an immigrant or a refugee. I don't know anybody in the world who's lgbtqia+. I don't know anybody in the world who's exploited. I don't know anybody—fill in the blank. Because one of our sins is every single one of us has someone we don't see.

Jesus doesn't allow our voluntary ignorances or our hardness of heart to give us a pass on loving our neighbor. Every neighbor. Especially the ones we would rather overlook. We can't be the church if we choose to overlook some members of the body of Christ. Whether a local church, whether an annual conference, and let's just name it, even an entire denomination. If we define who we are by who we are leaving out, it begs the question, Have we ever let Christ in?

(applause)

I serve the Mountain Sky Conference, which includes the states of Montana—

(cheers)

Thank you, friends. We've worked hard on that cheer.

(laughter)

It includes Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and one church in—

ALL: Idaho.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. We owe a special debt to Rev. William Wesley Van Orsdel, or Brother Van. Brother Van came to Montana in 1872 when it was very much still the wild west. Now there are lots of stories about that itinerant circuit rider Brother Van. One time he and a group of people were held up by lone gunman. When the gunman demanded money, Brother Van said, "You wouldn't rob a poor Methodist preacher, now, would you?" "Are you a Methodist preacher?" said the gunman. "I certainly am." After a few moments' pause, the robber replied, "You can lower your hands. I'm a Methodist preacher myself."

(laughter)

What set Brother Van apart was that he was willing to go where no Christian preacher had ever gone before. Seedy saloons, scrappy mining towns, Native American villages. But Brother Van didn't just preach the gospel, he built relationships with others and he made God's love visible by founding more than one hundred Methodist churches, fifty Methodist parsonages, half a dozen hospitals, a university, and a children's home. All across the state of Montana. But he didn't do it alone. He called upon deaconesses.

(applause)

He called upon deaconesses to help carry out this ministry of service to those others failed to see. Deaconesses, those Methodist laywomen of the nineteenth and twentieth century who were called to a life of Christian service, went to where the hurt was in community. To lives that were in need and established cutting-edge ministries for those the world overlooked. I give thanks to God for the deaconesses and home missionaries who will be consecrated today.

(applause)

These ones who are committed to living out their vocations in ways that seek to alleviate suffering, eradicate causes of injustice and all that robs life of dignity and worth, facilitate the development of full human potential, and share in building a global community through the church universal. Give them a hand.

(applause)

Every, every Christ follower is called to a life of service. Amen?

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP OLIVETO: John Wesley said there is no holiness but social holiness. If we love God, then we will love those who God loves. And this love will be more than lip service. It will be made visible by what we do and what we love, and that means we see and stand with those who are pushed to the margins. And make no mistake, it is this embodiment of faith that made the Methodist movement so irresistible as it spread around the globe.

MethoNerds. MethoNerds.

(cheers)

It's time for us to draw inspiration from those who went before us and reignite the flame of faith.

(applause)

To live out scripture so fully that we see Christ in all we do. This, this is our moment! This is our moment to reclaim the name United Methodist and be a witness of God around the world of God's great love for all of humankind.

(applause)

So, MethoNerds, all we who love The United Methodist Church. Are you willing to make God's love visible in all you do?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus, and the outcast, the downcast, and the cast aside?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who's old and lonely?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who is 3 and whose belly aches in hunger?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the little one who sleeps on the floor with six brothers and sisters?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the transgender person who has taken a deeply spiritual journey to claim their God-created self?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who's been orphaned, having lost both parents to AIDS?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who has no place to sleep tonight except in the steps behind your church?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who is uneducated, unskilled, unwanted, and unemployed?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the queer clergy person who has been faithful to God's call even when the church has tried to deny that call?

(applause)

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who is chased by cops, sits in jail for seven months with no charges brought and no money for bail?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Are you willing to meet and serve Jesus in the one who still clings to hope and is determined to do something?

ALL: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: So we who love The United Methodist Church, it's time for us to arise. It's time for us to stand up. It's time for us to reclaim the name. May we join Jesus in changing the world, engaging social holiness as we move our church to the margins where the hurt is, ensuring that no one is out of sight and therefore out of mind.

MethoNerds.

(cheers)

I say MethoNerds!

(cheers)

Let's do this! Amen.

(applause)

(music)

Consecration of Deaconesses and Home Missioners for Lifetime Service

MEGAN HALE (Executive for the Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner): Deaconess and home missioners are laypersons who have responded to the call of God in their lives to a lifetime of service. They have been consecrated by The United Methodist Church and commissioned to fulltime ministries of love, justice, and service. Deaconesses and home missioners, today, as throughout their history, serve in many areas of need. In places where the church has not been, was not aware it should be, or was afraid or unwilling to be. Wherever they serve and regardless of the task, deaconesses and home missioners find and represent the presence of God in the midst of those with whom they serve. Their daily task of serving and empowering is, for deaconesses and home missioners, a visible symbol of the link between the church and the world.

MCCALLUM: As we gather in unity, we are called to be bold in faith.

HALE AND CANDIDATES: We will nurture the courageous spirit that offers new life.

MCCALLUM: When we hear the cry of suffering people,

HALE AND CANDIDATES: we will love fiercely where wounds are too great to bear.

MCCALLUM: When we see our neighbors in search of substance,

HALE AND CANDIDATES: we will serve one another until all needs are met.

SALLY VONNER (North Texas, General Secretary and CEO of United Women in Faith): I present to you and all who are witnesses to this holy moment, the following candidates to be consecrated to the office of deaconess and home missioner on behalf of The United Methodist Church: Stacey Atkins, Amy

Balfour, Heidi Careaga, Shirley Durr, Connie Glover, Kaitlyn Frantz, Christopher Hamera, Andy Hill, Dono James II, Leanna Lake, Lucinda Higgs Lautz, Esther Lloyd-Stevenson, Kathryn Loomis, Anna Miger Chacha, Elizabeth Miller, Alicia Mitchell, Wanda Molock, Colleen Moskov, Amy Purdom, Marie Severing, Esina Sibanda, Lori Sluder, Karen VanMatre Smith, Barbara Sutton, Mirasol Tangunan, and Laurie Jo Upchurch.

(applause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: Friends in Christ, we rejoice that you have responded to God's calling to devote your lives to servant ministry as deaconesses and home missionaries. The call of God is profound. And our response can be no less extraordinary. What you've pledged alone with God in consecrating your lives to this service, we ask you now to proclaim publically.

BISHOP KENNETHA JO BIGHAM-TSAI: Do you sincerely believe that you have been led by the Spirit of God to boldly engage in this life-long work of love, justice, and service and to assume its responsibilities?

CANDIDATES: I do so believe

BISHOP ROBIN DEASE: Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading the holy scriptures, in mutual relationship with communities you serve and in all other means of grace available to you?

CANDIDATES: I will endeavor so to do.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Will you earnestly seek to carry forward your ministry in sincerity and love under the direction of the church.

CANDIDATES: I will, God being my helper.

SUNG-OK LEE (Deaconess): The office of deaconess and home missionary includes mutually supportive ministry as part of a covenant community. Will you accept responsibility for participation in the deaconess and home missionary community?

CANDIDATES: I will, God being my helper.

LEAH WANDERA (Deaconess): By joining the deaconess and home missionary order you will become part of the ecumenical world diaconate that reaches out in service to all parts of the earth. Do you commit to a lifetime of loving and supporting your sisters and brothers as part of the world diaconate?

CANDIDATES: I will, God being my helper.

CLARA ESTER (Deaconess): The design of the deaconess and home missionary pin is based on the pin of the Wesley diaconate of England. Let the wearing of this pin be a sign of your commitment to serve neither for gratitude nor reward but from gratitude and love.

CANDIDATES: My reward is that I may serve.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Let us pray. Most gracious God, your call comes in many and mysterious ways. As you claimed Mary as the vessel to carry your love made flesh to the world, claim these your servants with your Holy Spirit, enrich them with your grace and strengthen them for the tasks that lie ahead. May their labors glorify your holy name as they commit to ministries of love, justice, and service. Through your child Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

(music)

(applause)

BISHOP DEASE: We invite the deaconesses, home missionaries, and home missionaries in the congregation to stand as they are able.

(applause)

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Beloved in the Lord, you once stood where these now stand, answering the call of God in your hearts. We are justly grateful for the fullness of your ministry. These newly consecrated members will look to you for help and guidance as they go forth to serve with you.

HALE: Deaconesses, all deaconesses and home missionaries respond with this—deaconesses, home missionaries, and home missionaries in the congregation—respond with these words:

ALL: We welcome you into the joyful service of Christ and pledge our support to you, as we delight in serving God together.

BISHOP OLIVETO: We invite the congregation to stand as you are able. I commend to you these persons whom we have consecrated on this day into a lifetime of Christ-like service under the authority of The United Methodist Church as these deaconesses and home missionaries go forth in their ministries, let us assure them of our support.

ALL: We rejoice to recognize you as deaconesses and home missionaries of The United Methodist Church. We thank God that you have dedicated your lives to God's service. We will pray God's bold joy and love for the world upon you.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: To the church gathered here and around the world I present our new deaconesses and home missionaries, consecrated to a lifetime of Christ-like service under the authority of the church. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(applause)

(music)

BISHOP DEASE: Amen. We will see

ALL: those in need.

BISHOP DEASE: We will hear

ALL: their cries for help.

BISHOP DEASE: We will act

ALL: as God calls us to serve.

BISHOP OLIVETO: I invite you to take the hand of someone and I know we're still in COVID, kinda, so if you want to touch elbows, whatever's right for you, but you know what? When we are connected as the body of Christ there is a power present.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yes!

BISHOP OLIVETO: And the world can never be the same so may the God who calls us by name and loves us beyond measure give us grace and courage to seek out the least of all and serve them with humility and love. Amen.

ALL: Amen

(applause)

(pause)

Plenary 1

BISHOP DELORES J. WILLIAMSTON: Delegates please remain in your places as we transition here on the stage in order to begin our plenary session. This is not a break. I'll repeat: This is not a break. If you must stand at your seat in order to stretch, feel free to do so, but please do not leave the delegate area.

As soon as everyone is in place we will begin. So stay in your places, in your—take seats and as soon as everybody arrives we will begin our session.

(pause)

God is good

ALL: all the time.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: And all the time,

ALL: God is good!

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: I invite the delegates to take your seats so we can begin this morning. And as you take your seat, I want you to take a moment to breathe and silence your spirits prepare your soul, as we continue in our session this morning. I am Delores Williamston, Bishop of the Louisiana Conference of The United Methodist Church.

(applause)

And I am Black, African American, clergywoman, living and rejoicing in this season of my life. The team behind me is Bishop David Bard and Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson. I am here to serve the Lord for however long I can, to do whatever I can, to provide all of the hope that I can. Amen. I'm also here to serve Jesus Christ and to serve as your chair this morning as we move through this holy ministry of holy conferencing. So let us pause for a word of prayer before we begin.

Lord, we've come this far by faith, leaning on you, Lord. Trusting in your hope, Lord, for a brighter future. Lord, you have not failed us yet, and so, Lord, we cannot turn around. We've come too far by faith. Almighty God, we give you praise and honor this day. We thank you for all you have provided to sustain us. We ask, O God, that you lead us and guide us as we continue on our journey, first as your disciples and as those who live out their faith in The United Methodist Church. Lord, there are many things on our minds, concerns that have been left at home that just may distract us, so, Lord, help us know that you are with those who are far from us whom we dearly love. Remind us that you are with

them and you are with us. And, Lord, as this day carries on, open our hearts, our minds, and our ears to hear and to see each other. Remind us today that you are always ever-present and watching, and you know the intention of all hearts. Remind us that there is a river of joy, a river of love, peace, and hope that makes glad your city, your holy place, where you, the most high, dwell. And, Lord, send your Holy Spirit to empower us to do ministry today. Remind us of the many voices and languages among us. Remind us, most of all, that by your Spirit, we are one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry around the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Let us all say—

ALL: Amen.

At this time, the sixth plenary session of the postponed 2020 General Conference is called to order.

Monitoring Report

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: At this time, the chair invites the Re. Giovanni Arroyo, General Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race and Ms. Dawn Wiggins Hare, General Secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, to provide a monitoring report.

GIOVANNI ARROYO (Baltimore-Washington, General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race): *¡Buenos días pueblo de Dios!*

DAWN WIGGINS HARE (Alabama-West Florida, General Secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women): Good morning, friends!

ARROYO: General Secretary Arroyo, Baltimore-Washington Conference, LatinX clergyman, adult.

WIGGINS HARE: General Secretary Dawn Wiggins Hare, Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, laywoman, White older adult.

ARROYO: We trust that you have honored personal boundaries and taken time to rest and truly practice Sabbath. We continue to receive good reports of relationship building in the committees, which led to trust and facilitate holy conferencing. It is our prayer that this pattern will continue as we move fourteen committees into one legislative body this week.

WIGGINS HARE: We are transitioning into the final week of General Conference with plenary each day, interspersed with celebrations, like this morning, and opportunities, such as the upcoming elections for members of the University Senate, the Judicial Council, representatives to the boards of agencies, including the General Council on Finance and Administration, will be determined. Delegates, we all have opportunities this week to practice inclusion and equity with our nominations and with our votes. The General Conference has those opportunities, the Council of Bishops has those opportunities, the General Agencies have those opportunities. We all do, and we must continually challenge ourselves to do better. In the words of the great theologian, Dolly Parton, "Once we know better, we need to do better."

ARROYO: Some issues were raised about one of our plenaries on Saturday, and those issues are being addressed. I will provide a report on how those concerns were addressed.

WIGGINS HARE: One of the seminal tests of how we as a church value inclusion lies in the examination of power, and our further inquiry into whether we are sharing that power and policy making across the

church in an equitable manner. So, what are the questions each of us should ask to determine if we are following Dolly's advice and truly doing our best?

ARROYO: So here are a few suggestions: Are the recommendations in *The Book of Discipline* on gender diversity, ethnic diversity and laity and clergy ratios to guide the selection of persons we nominate and persons we elect? Who is nominated to be at the table? Whose voice is missing? Ponder on those questions. May the Holy Spirit (*simultaneous interpretation from Spanish*) fill this space and show us opportunities for equity.

WIGGINS HARE: —fill this space and show us opportunities for equity.

ARROYO AND WIGGINS HARE: Amen.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Thank you, Dawn and Giovanni.

Committee on Ethics

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: The next item of business is the committee on ethics. The chair recognizes Stephanie Henry to present the committee's report.

STEPHANIE HENRY (Pacific Northwest, Chair of Rules Committee): Good morning delegates, bishops, visitors, staff, and volunteers. My name is Stephanie Henry, a White laywoman from the Pacific Northwest Conference. I'm in that awkward space where I am a young adult in the central conferences, but an adult in the U.S. As a reminder, per our Plan of Organization, that Committee on Ethics is comprised of members of the Rules Committee at General Conference. The Ethics Committee received the following report from a staff member of the Office of the Secretary of the General Conference on Saturday night, April 27th:

The report stated that the Secretary's Office has received an official complaint on Friday, April 26, about an alleged violation of Rule 12 and several paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline*. The complaint named an individual who is active in leadership of the Global Methodist Church and actively maintains his membership in The United Methodist Church. The complaint questioned the legal and ethical nature of this behavior per our rule that states, "A spirit of Christian conferencing is expected."

The Office of the Secretary of the General Conference investigated the complaint. First review found no direct violation of the current rules as stated in the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order. Per our Plan of Organization, the scope of the Ethics Committee is limited to alleged rule violations. If one believes behavior violates *The Book of Discipline*, the process to bring a chargeable offense is separate, and information can be found in *The Book of Discipline* paragraph 2702.

The majority of the Ethics Committee agrees that no explicitly stated rule has been violated, yet we find the actions of this individual and others in a similar situation to be highly unethical. To use a sports analogy—not to trivialize this situation, but to hopefully provide some clarity—you may support more than one team of the same sport. You may even coach one team and support another team. It is wrong, though, to coach one team and actively try to leech or steal players from another team that you claim to support.

(*applause*)

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Hold your applause, please.

HENRY: If you are here at General Conference to actively dismantle, divide, or build mistrust in The United Methodist Church, to use Bishop Bickerton's word, "You might just be in the wrong place." Bishop, the Ethics Committee has no recommendation for action at this time. This report is for information only. Thank you.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Please hold your applause. No applause. Thank you. We have heard the report, and no action is required by the General Conference.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: The next item of business is some of our administrative committee reports. The first committee report will be presented by the Committee on Agenda and Calendar.

EMILY ALLEN (California-Nevada, Chair of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar): Thank you, Bishop. I am Emily Allen, MethoNerd. The schedule for today is presented on 2102 in today's DCA. The Committee on Agenda and Calendar recommends the following changes for the remainder of today: following my report, we will hear from the Journal Committee and the Committee on Presiding Officers. Because today is the last day to receive a report from the Committee on Courtesies and Privileges, we have moved that item to 6:00 P.M. today in order to give time for any further requests to be made.

Following the morning administrative committee reports, we will move into continuing nominations. The second afternoon plenary will bring us the Wespath new retirement plan overview before continuing with the Abundant Health Initiative report.

Bishop, I move the adoption of today's agenda with the changes I have described.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: It is moved to adopt the agenda with the changes as described. In a moment, we will open the pool so that, if you wish to speak, you may register.

The question is on adoption of the motion to adopt the agenda with the changes as described. Are you ready to vote?

(pause)

Just a second.

(pause)

Okay, we have a speaker at mic. 1.

(pause)

L Olandor Boyce, Liberia.

L OLANDOR BOYCE (Liberia): I'm Olandor Boyce, lay delegate. Liberia Annual Conference. Bishop, I have queries when it comes to the agenda. On the first line of the agenda, 6:30 to 8:00 A.M. is breakfast. And then the committees' report follow at 6:30. I'm a little bit confused as to how we will be having breakfast, and at the same time the committee be reporting. But besides that, my second point has to do with the Service on Lament, Confession, and Hope. Can I get a clarity on what this service is—especially when you talk about confession? I want to know what are we confessing about as a United

Methodist Church believing Scripture. What have we done wrong? What is confession about? Maybe somebody can clarify that. I don't know what we are confessing about. Thank you.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: We're trying to provide you some clarity. This committee is not having breakfast at that time. And I can refer the rest of your question on to the committee. Can you clear that up? Yes. Yes, please. Clear that up.

ALLEN: Absolutely. Thank you for asking for that clarification. This listing at 6:30 A.M. Committee on Agenda and Calendar is our meeting time to prepare the agenda for today and the days to come. That is not the time of our scheduled report to the plenary.

Your question about the Service of Lament, Confession, and Hope is a project, or a service, put together by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, I believe in coordination with Discipleship Ministries. It is available at 6:30 for those who are leaving directly from the plenary and 7:00, again, for those who had dinner in the Crown Ballroom before leaving for the day.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK, the chair recognizes Manuel Rodrigues, delegate from Angola, for point of order. No, excuse me, for point of query or information.

MANUEL RODRIGUES (Western Angola): (*simultaneous interpretation from Portuguese*) Good morning to all. My name is Manuel Rodrigues, lay delegate from Western Angola. He as a personal pronoun. I just needed clarification about the consent calendar. But I will go back to last Wednesday, the 24th. We had some items that were not, that have not been discussed. And I think we programmed that for the next few days. We went through 25th, 26th, 27th, and today is Monday and I don't know if we're still going to touch on the subject which interests us. Which is Item R01. Thank you.

ALLEN: Thank you for that question. I have eight years of experience as agenda chair of my annual conference session. And often people would ask me, "Has the agenda been finished yet?" And I would respond, "The agenda is not finished until it has already happened."

(*laughter*)

We have planned each day to bring those calendar items to the floor. Each day we have not yet gotten to those calendar items. All items recommended a legislative committees for adoption must be brought to the plenary body, and they are planned in our order of business for today.

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (New Mexico, Coordinator of the Calendar): Good morning. I am Susan Brumbaugh, Coordinator of the Calendar and also proud MethoNerd.

We have several consent calendars to vote on today—

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Hold on. We still need to finish voting on the agenda.

BRUMBAUGH: I'm so sorry.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: We have some persons in the pool. We have Veronique Mwayuma, mic. 4. East Congo. You just—she took her name out.

We are going to David Livingston, Great Plains. Mic. 4.

DAVID LIVINGSTON (Great Plains): David Livingston, clergy, Great Plains, White male. Bishop, if it is appropriate I'd like to amend the agenda by adding in the 4:00 session a report from the Credentialing Committee regarding the seating of delegates from the central conferences.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK, so there is an amendment before us. We need a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK, you can speak to it. Speak to it.

LIVINGSTON: Thank you. Thinking back to the action we took last week regarding the acknowledgement that we have of a number people not seated, it seem like it's time that we have fuller update on those that are absent and what progress has been made on that. And the Credentialing Committee can give that to us.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Is there any further discussion?

We will now proceed to vote. The question is on the adoption of the motion to amend by adding at 4:00 P.M. a report of the question on credentialing. Those in favor in adopting the amendment, press *one (1)*; those opposed to the amendment, press *two (2)*. You may now vote.

(pause)

There's a checkered flag over in this section here. Hold them high so they can assist you.

(pause)

We're still assisting those who need a little help with their voting device.

(pause)

I don't see anyone else. We're going to close the vote. Oh, there is a—wait. It's too late; it is now closed.

So, the results please. So 655 yes on the adoption of the amendment to the agenda; 68 no. the affirmative have it, has it, and the amendment is adopted.

[*Yes, 655; No, 68*]

There is a point of order—Excuse me. Sorry. A point of information/inquiry. Jerry Kulah, Liberia. Mic. 1. You need to state your question right away, please.

JERRY KULAH (Liberia): Good morning. I'm Jerry Kulah from Liberia. My inquiry has to do with the question asked by Olandor Boyce from Liberia. The question, in my opinion, was not adequately answer. And so the question was, this is an agenda for the entire General Conference. So if a group has a program that is included, the group name shall be included, and the content and purpose of the event clarified so that those who may be interested in coming to—

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Sir, what is your question?

KULAH: My question is, can you call the group that is having the Service for Lament, Confession, and Hope to clarify to this General Conference what is the content and purpose of this program so those

interested can choose to come. Since its happening at the time it is happening, and it is a group that is having it, but as is expressed here, and so it's for all of us.

(pause)

ALLEN: Thank you for adding clarification to part of the question that has not been answered.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: We'll get some clarification on that before the end of the day.

ALLEN: My understanding is this service is approved by the Commission on General Conference as part of the business for today. My recommendation is that the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women provide information about the content of that service to Gary Graves to include in today's announcements.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Thank you.

The chair recognizes Jethro Muyombi, South Congo. For an amendment.

JETHRO MUYOMBI (South Congo): Thank you, Bishop, for the word. My name is Jethro Muyombi, and not Muyombo. Lay from South Congo Conference. I'm a lawyer. I'm also national parliament member, or as you say here, national Congress, and deputy lay leader of my conference. Bishop, I just wanted to add to my point here, I want to say thank you for this Committee of Calendar because they are doing great job. So my point is—

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Excuse me, you were recognized to make an amendment. I need you to do the amendment.

MUYOMBI: Thank you, Bishop. My amendment is on the Calendar of Prayer. I was looking where the point for addition is, but I didn't find it. I want to add a prayer on this one to for 10:20 to 12:00, I think they are different prayer. My country, Congo, we have a fight. We pray for Israel, but I want to request we pray for Congo, also—

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: I'm going to have to interrupt you. I'm going to interrupt you. You need to state your amendment.

MUYOMBI: Thank you. I think I want to stay really in the amendment of the point of calendar. Maybe my word is not clear. I want to add where there are different prayer to add to pray for my country, Congo.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: I am going to invite you to send that to Courtesies and Privileges.

MUYOMBI: Thank you, Bishop. I will do.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Thank you.

The chair calls on Amy Lippoldt, Great Plains Conference, mic. 4.

AMY LIPPOLDT (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. Amy Lippoldt. Clergy. Great Plains Annual Conference. White woman. Adult. I move to end debate on the motion to adopt the calendar.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: It has been moved and seconded that debate be closed. This motion is not debatable. In accordance with the Rule 7.3, the chair informs the delegates that there are the following individuals currently in the pool: There are three individuals in the pool. There is a speech for. There is a speech in favor. Zero people in the—excuse me—people speeches against. Zero people proposing amendments. This motion requires a two-thirds vote. We will now proceed to vote. The question is on closing the debate. Are you ready to vote? Vote yes to end, press number *one (1)*; *two (2)*, no.

There's one checkered flag.

(pause)

Voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote. There are 686 Yes; 51 No. The motion passes. The debate is closed.

[Yes, 686; No, 51]

We will now proceed to vote. The motion requires a majority. The question is on the adoption of the agenda with the changes as described. Again, the motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the agenda with the changes as described. Those in favor, press *one (1)*. Those opposed, press *two (2)*. Voting is open now.

(pause)

There is one checkered flag in the back.

(pause)

Voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote? There are 698 in the affirmative, yes, and 34 in the negative. The agenda is adopted. Thank you very much.

[Yes, 698; No, 34]

Consent Calendar

BRUMBAUGH: So, again, I am Susan Brumbaugh, and we have several consent calendars to vote on today.

The first one is Consent Calendar A03 in yesterday's *DCA* on p. 2084. A03 begins on p. 2084. Two items were removed: Calendar Item 35 was missing part of the committee's recommended amendment, and a corrected version was published in today's *DCA*. That's Calendar Item 35 was removed. Calendar item 76 was removed from the consent calendar by request of twenty delegates. Calendar item 76, and that item appears at the very end of today's *DCA*. Bishop, I move that we accept the actions on consent calendar A03, except for the items that were removed.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar A03, except for the items that were removed. Please get your voting devices. We will now proceed to vote.

(pause)

This motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar A03, except for the items that were removed. Those in favor, press *one (1)*; those opposed, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(pause)

Voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote. There are 663 Yes; and 60 No. The consent calendar is approved, except for the items that were removed.

[Yes, 663; No, 60]

BRUMBAUGH: Our second Consent Calendar is B03 on p. 2090. B03, p. 2090. No items have been removed from this consent calendar, and it is correct as printed. Bishop, I move that we accept the actions on Consent Calendar B03.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: This motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar B03. I'll repeat that. The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar B03. Those in favor, press *one (1)*; those opposed, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(pause)

Voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote. There are 663 in the affirmative and 55 in the negative. The affirmation has it, and the motion is adopted. Consent Calendar B03 is approved.

[Yes, 663; No, 55]

BRUMBAUGH: Our final consent calendar for today is C03 on p. 2098. C03 is on p. 2098. Item 230 was removed, not by request but because it contained an invalid action. The committee's action was to refer to another legislative committee rather than to refer to a board or agency. That petition was acted on by another committee and appears on consent calendar A04 in today's DCA as Calendar Item 298. So Item 230 is removed. It should not appear on the consent calendar we are about to vote on. Bishop, I move that we accept the actions on Consent Calendar C03, except for the item that was removed.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar C03, except for the item that has been removed. Please get your voting device. We will now proceed to vote. This motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar C03, except for the item that has been removed. Those in favor, press *one (1)*. Those opposed, press *two (1)*.

(pause)

Voting is closed.

(pause)

May we see the results? There are 674 in the affirmative. 56 in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted. Consent Calendar C03 is approved.

[Yes, 674; No, 56]

BRUMBAUGH: So now we're going to move to today's DCA. And I want to offer some guidance on all the things that were printed. The committees did a lot of work. There's a, you may notice, that there's

a *DCA* deadline in every day. And so items that were received at my office after that deadline will appear in tomorrow's *DCA*. So if there's something you are expecting to see, and it's not in today's *DCA*, don't panic. It will probably be there tomorrow.

So I want to guide you through a couple of new sections. If you turn to p. 2129, that's 2129, you will see a list of petitions that each legislative committee voted not to support. There's one section organized by committee and a second section organized by petition number. You can request to have a petition in this list presented to the plenary by getting twenty delegates to sign a form called "Request to Bring a Non-Calendar Item to the Floor". Very clear, right?

You'll pick that up in room 103, and forms must be returned by 3:00 today to the same room. I'm going to repeat that again because it's new. When a committee votes not to support a petition, its gets printed in this list, and it can be brought to the floor, and it becomes a calendar item in the next day's *DCA*. And then it would be available for discussion by the body.

There's also, if you will turn back to p. 2123, that's 2123, you will see a list of petitions that were rejected in favor of another petition that the legislative committee took action on. So those, again, are rejected in favor of. According to Rule 34, these items cannot be presented to the plenary. So if you see an item in that section, you should not try to fill out a form.

And then we do have our consent calendars that appears after all of that. And they start on p. 2155. And there are three consent calendars with a lot of items on them. If you want to remove an item from a consent calendar, you can go to room 103 and ask for a form to remove an item from a consent calendar. The staff there can guide you. You get twenty signatures on that form and return it to the same room, room 103, by 3:00 today.

So there are two potential forms to fill out. One is to remove an item from a consent calendar and the other is to bring an item to the plenary. And that concludes our report.

Committee on Journal

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Thank you, Emily and Susan. The next administrative committee report is the Committee on Journal. On Journal Report, the chair recognizes the chair of the Committee on Journal, Rachel Bootes Miller.

RACHEL MILLER (West Ohio, Chair of the Committee on Journal): Thank you, Bishop. I'm Rachel Miller, an ordained deacon from the great state of Ohio.

(cheers)

And I am blessed to be living out a mission of caring for those who serve in my appointment at Wespeth in the Church Relations Team. And once, again, I bring a report from the Committee on the Journal. If you've not checked out the *DCA* website at dailychristianadvocate.org, or if you've experienced some challenges in logging in, please see our friends at the IT help desk that should be in the back of our plenary space. And they are happy to help you navigate that.

In the *DCA*, volume 5, no. 6, for today, on p. 2119, you will find a corrections to the Commission on the General Conference nominations. This concludes our report for this morning. And I thank you for the time, Bishop.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Thank you, Rachel.

(pause)

We have a point of information or inquiry from Robert Amundsen. Mic. 3—excuse me—5. Red Bird Mission, and where are you?

ROBERT AMUNDSEN (Red Bird Missionary): I'm over here, Bishop. Good morning. Robert Amundsen, Central Appalachian, formerly Red Bird Missionary Conference. Clergy. White. They say adult, but young at heart. I tried to get in before the last report. In the Consent Calendar Item No. 290, I mentioned this in our committee, there was a printing error. It makes reference to paragraph 1311 in *The Book of Discipline*, and—if you are a *Discipline* nerd like myself, you like appropriate things—that should be paragraph 1311.1.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: You had a question?

AMUNDSEN: No, I had a point of information.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Oh. OK.

AMUNDSEN: It should be paragraph 1311.1, not .11. It was also an error in the ADCA. So I just wanted to make that correction.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK. We'll point you to Susan, thank you.

AMUNDSEN: You're welcome.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK, Jerry Kuan has a point of information. Mic. 5. California-Nevada.

JEFFREY KUAN (California-Nevada): Bishop, Jeffrey Kuan, Asian American male. Older adult.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: And what is your question?

KUAN: My question is, on the non-calendared items that are not supported, will there be further action that the plenary will need to take?

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Susan Brumbaugh?

BRUMBAUGH: There will be no further action by the plenary unless someone submits a form to bring that item to the plenary floor. So that is one of the forms I talked about. If we receive a form for an item by 3:00 today with twenty valid signatures, that item will print in tomorrow's DCA and it would be available for discussion by the plenary. If I do not get a form by 3:00 today, those items will not be considered by the plenary. I hope that is helpful.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: OK. Thank you.

Committee on Presiding Officers

BISHOP WILLIAMSON: The next report is a Report on the Committee on Presiding Officers. The chair recognizes the chair of the committee, Jasmine Smothers, and Vice-Chair Audun Westad to present their report.

JASMINE SMOTHERS (North Georgia, Chair of the Committee on Presiding Officers): Good morning!

ALL: Good morning.

SMOTHERS: OK, that's Monday. We'll do better tomorrow. I'm Jasmine Rose Smothers, adult, female, African American clergy delegate from the North Georgia Conference in the United States. My pronouns are she/her. Audun Westad and I lead the Committee on Presiding Officers.

AUDUN WESTAD (Norway, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Presiding Officers): (*speaking in Norwegian*). My name is Audun Westad, and I'm the lay delegate for Norway Annual Conference. Our team of twelve people represent each central conference and each U.S. Jurisdiction. For those who are joining us for the first time this week, the Committee on Presiding Officers is tasked with selecting and notifying the presiding officers for each plenary session.

SMOTHERS: Today, we've made an adjustment to the presiding order. We welcome Bishop Delores Williamston to the chair. And we will also welcome Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, Bishop Mande Muyombo, and Bishop Frank Beard. Tomorrow, we will welcome Bishop Lanette Plambeck, Bishop Christian Alsted from the Northern Europe Central Conference, Bishop David Bard, and Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer.

WESTAD: As a reminder, please speak slowly, concisely, into the microphone and try to avoid idiomatic expressions. In doing so, you will help our presiders and translators make this plenary session more accessible for all God's children. Thank you for your cooperation with our presiding officers, and we'll see you tomorrow.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: Delegates and friends we have reached the time for a break.

(*applause*)

So we will take a recess until 10:20 A.M. We're going to stay on schedule this morning. When we resume Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball will be in the chair, and I want to thank you all, thank my triad, and thank our—the whole team up here, and so thank you for this opportunity. It has been an absolute pleasure. Amen?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Amen.

BISHOP WILLIAMSTON: As we continue to serve the Lord, go for a break. Be back at 10:20.

(*applause*)

Plenary 2

BISHOP SANDRA L. STEINER BALL: Our session this morning is called back to order, and so I'd like to say good morning to you once again. I give thanks to God for each of you and pray that each person here knows that they are God's chosen one, holy, beloved, valued, and valuable. I am Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball. I am a White female adult. My life verse is Colossians 3:12-17. I serve as the residential bishop of the West Virginia Conference.

(*cheers*)

I collaborate and share leadership with my colleague, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, as together we provide episcopal coverage for the Susquehanna Conference.

(applause)

And my home, or sending conference, is the Peninsula-Delaware Conference.

(cheers)

Backing me up today are two wonderful and gifted bishops, Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, who serves the Iowa Conference,

(cheers)

and Bishop Christian Alsted, who serves the Nordic, Baltic, Ukraine Episcopal Area.

(cheers)

As we do our work today, let me remind you of how important it is to value and respect each other. We're going to have many times when people will get up to the mic—and I just want to remind you that it's not appropriate to clap or cheer speeches made at the mic when we are in times of debate and discussion. To do so shuts down conversation, potentially cuts off relationship, and communicates that a differing point of view is less than or not valued or important. So instead, I encourage you to listen deeply, to seek to hear God's voice in the midst of all our voices, to be curious, and to pray for each one who speaks at the mic.

So let me now pray for us, and as we come to this time of prayer, and as we call on God's Holy Spirit, won't we remember those places in our world that are experiencing violence and upheaval and war—places like the Congo and Israel and the Ukraine—and in your hearts and minds you know of other places that are encountering those same experiences of violence and war—so, let us pray.

Come, Holy Spirit, on this General Conference gathering of The United Methodist Church, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, help us to put on compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience. Help us to forbear with one another, and if one has complaint against another, help us to offer forgiveness. Above all these things, help us to put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Throughout this day, help us to allow the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts, that peace to which we are indeed called. And may everything we do, in word or in deed, be done in the name of Jesus, with thankfulness to our God. Amen.

Nominations for the Commission on the General Conference

The next of item of business is nominations for the Commission of the General Conference, and the chair recognizes the General Secretary of the General Council [Conference] to provide details for our nominations and our elections. You're on this side.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): I'm over here! Hi.

BISHOP BALL: Hi, Gary.

GRAVES: Hello, Bishop. It is time for us to move to the nominations for Commission on the General Conference.

I will call your attention to two page numbers in the *DCA*. The first p. no. is 2119, 2119. You will also at the same time be looking at 2074, 2074. So this is a place where you will want to have both pages available to you. On 2119 there are two changes to the listing that you will see on 2074. The first change is to remove Emmanuel Dibu Irung Ilunga from Congo Central Conference and replace that person's name with Robert Shakikupe Kilembo of the Congo Central Conference. The second change is to remove Sylvestre Bushiri Muthoma of Congo Central Conference and replace with Michel Djonga Kasongo of the Congo Central Conference. Those are the two changes we have received from the Council of Bishops to the nominations list.

That places us completely, now, on p. 2074. So your full attention can now be on 2074. There are specific requirements to the list that we have before us. First, we must elect the minimum numbers to fit the geographical and age requirements that are part of paragraph 511.1 of *The Book of Discipline*. That paragraph requires that the voting members of the Commission shall consist of twenty-five members, as follows: one person from each U.S. jurisdiction, one person from each of the seven central conferences, one young adult, one youth, the chairperson of the host committee, and ten additional members who are allocated to reflect the proportion of membership based upon clergy and lay membership of the church. Those allocations and the proportionate designations are reflected in the list on p. 2074. Therefore, if we have nominations from the floor, if there should be one from a particular central conference, that name would be compared with the name that is already here, because we have to make sure we have the right number from that area as we get to our final election time. We will be accumulating that as we go.

One change that is different from our normal practice and is a reflection of the extended quadrennium, is that we have reached a point where those persons who are eligible to continue with the commission are nominated by the Council of Bishops because they were appointed to complete the terms of members who were no longer on the Commission on General Conference and created vacancies which were filled throughout the previous quadrennium. For those persons, they are listed in the nominations from the Council of Bishops.

We also will be placing these two groups into classes, because our class rotation needs to be reset for the Commission on General Conference. We will be nominating into the class of 2028, and then we will be nominating into the class of 2032. So we will have two sets of nominations, one for the four-year class, and another for the eight-year class. And at the future General Conference you will be able to reset the rotation for those who are in the four-year class, based upon how much eligibility they have remaining.

Bishop, I hope that has helped to set the stage for where we are, and so first we would be working with the class of 2028.

A reminder that the delegates who are able to be nominated must be seated primary delegates. Reserve delegates who are seated just for these two weeks are not eligible. They must be seated primary delegates, and we will be checking our database, and we will give you a report at the end should there be any discrepancy.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. In a moment we will accept nominations for the Commission of the General Conference. Nominations do not require a second. Based upon what was stated by the Secretary of the General Conference, when nominations are opened for the Commission on the General Conference, we

will accept nominations first for the class of 2028. We will do those nominations, and then we will close nominations for the class of 2028, and then we will then do nominations for the class of 2032. And then we will close those nominations.

Please keep in mind that the same name cannot be nominated for both of those classes. You can be nominated for one class or the other. When you provide a name for nomination, please state the person's name, their annual conference, and their annual conference [sic]. And that's all we need when you get up to the mic. No speeches, we just need for you to provide their name and their annual conference.

OK. Delegates, we are now ready to receive nominations. You may register in your device using option *seven (7)*, the other parliamentary section, to register in order to be recognized to make your nominations.

Nominations are now open for the class of 2028, and you may now register.

Mic. no. 1 has a point of information or inquiry.

DAVE NUCKOLS (Minnesota): Good day, Bishop. I'm Dave Nuckols. I'm a layperson, White, adult from Minnesota Annual Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Please speak closer to the microphone. Thank you very much, and what is your question?

NUCKOLS: My inquiry concerns the layout here where Aleze Fulbright is shown as both the nominee for secretary of General Conference and also class of '32. Is—if she is elected in to be the secretary of General Conference does that mean we have another opening in the '32? Another way to word this inquiry—I'm thinking from the North Central Jurisdiction—would we have two committee members?

BISHOP BALL: Thank you for your question. These are two separate nominations processes, and so we will complete the nominations processes for that other category separately, and the nomination for secretary designate does not apply to our work on the nominations for the General Conference Commission at this time.

NUCKOLS: So if we elect the slate that is presented here and then elect Aleze as secretary of the General Conference, would we then need to fill a slot?

BISHOP BALL: She is not—that is a separate nominating category. It is not on this particular nomination. Our general secretary can provide further clarification.

GRAVES: We are currently only at the point of listing nominations. Once that election has occurred, then we would have to address the hypothetical situation. If there are other people from the North Central Jurisdiction who are nominated from the floor, that may be another way that you can handle that at the election time. But right now we simply, if there is a vacancy that is created following the election, that would be a vacancy that would be open to the Council of Bishops for filling the vacancy.

NUCKOLS: Thank you.

GRAVES: Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you.

(pause)

Shannon Priddy, mic. 2, Indiana to make a nomination

SHANNON PRIDDY (Indiana): Thank you, Chair. My name is Shannon Priddy from Indiana. Laity, adult, White woman, she/her/hers. I nominate Bethany Amey from Greater New Jersey.

BISHOP BALL: Bethany Amey is nominated.

OK. Microphone—Jackie G. Jenkins, mic. no. 4, South Carolina. And while were waiting on her to come to the mic., also mic. 6, Ande Emmanuel, if you can be up and ready.

JACKIE G. JENKINS (South Carolina): Thank you, Bishop. I am Jackie Jenkins, South Carolina Conference, Black, American female, pronoun she and her. I nominate James Salley from South Carolina.

BISHOP BALL: OK, thank you. James Salley is nominated.

Ande Emmanuel.

ANDE EMMANUEL (Southern Nigeria): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Rev. Ande Emmanuel from southern conference of the Nigeria Episcopal Area. I rise to nominate Rev. Dr. Isa Dunah from Northern Nigeria Annual Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Dr. Isa—say the name again for me please.

EMMANUEL: Isa Dunah. Isa is spelled I-S-A. Dunah is spelled D-U-N-A-H.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you

Turning now to Thomas Lank, mic. 5. Point of inquiry.

(pause)

THOMAS LANK (Greater New Jersey): Thank you, Bishop. Tom Lank, Greater New Jersey deacon, White male. My question was regarding the 2032 slate. So I don't know if it's actually in order at this time.

BISHOP BALL: If you would come back to the mic. when we get to that to reenter to come back, we'll take your inquiry at that time. Thank you very much.

Maggie Taylor, if you could come to mic. 4, and Scott Brewer, if you could come right behind Maggie Taylor at mic. 4, we'll get your nominations.

(pause)

OK. Mic. 4.

MAGGIE TAYLOR (Tennessee): Maggie Taylor, legacy Tennessee Conference, laity, young adult. I would like to nominate Connor Prusha from the East Ohio Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Connor Prusha is nominated. Scott Brewer.

SCOTT BREWER (Great Plains): Scott Brewer, White layman from the Great Plains Conference. I nominate Lisa Maupin, lay leader from the Great Plains Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Lisa Maupin is nominated.

Alcides Martins and Lindsey Freeman, mic. 5 for Alcides Martins.

ALCIDES MARTINS (Eastern Angola): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) I nominate Jeovanni Mendes of the North West Conference of Angola.

BISHOP BALL: I need you to come back to the microphone, the translation is not clear.

MARTINS: My name is Alcides Martins of the Annual Conference of Angola West. I'm a Black man, layman, and I designate Jeovanni Mendes. Rev. Jeovanni Mendes of the East Conference Angola.

BISHOP BALL: Jeovanni Mendes is nominated.

Lindsey Freeman, mic. 1.

LINDSEY FREEMAN (Virginia): Thank you, Bishop. Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman, clergy, Virginia Annual Conference, biracial, Black, African American, White Anglo. My pronouns are she, her, and hers. I would nominate Rev. Meredith McNabb, Virginia Annual Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Meredith McNabb is nominated.

(*pause*)

I just want to remind delegates that the option for making a nomination is option no. *seven (7)*. OK, Krista—OK, there is no one in the speaker recognition pool with option no. *seven (7)*. Other parliamentary. If there are is no objection, nominations for the Commission on the General Conference for the class of 2028 will be closed.

OK, I see no objections. OK, so the nominations for the class of 2028 are closed. We will move now to the nominations for the class of 2032.

And we'll come back to Tom Lank at mic. 5 for his inquiry.

(*pause*)

LANK: Thank you, Bishop, for helping me get my steps in today.

BISHOP BALL: You're welcome.

LANK: Tom Lank, Greater New Jersey, White male, adult. My question is whether on the slate for 2032, Noel Chin should be listed as Rev. Noel Chin, in which we case we would have two clergy representatives on the slates for 2028 and 2032.

BISHOP BALL: I'll turn to our general secretary.

(*pause*)

GRAVES: The allocation that came to us was printed as it is. I will be able to look into whether that offsets the clergy-laity balance, but the clergy-laity balance is one that is—we attempt to maintain as close a balance as it is. It is not a specific requirement. It is a case where we have to have a certain number from a particular geographic area. We attempt to maintain the diversity across all types of diversity that we look at. I don't believe that this would be a requirement.

LANK: Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you very much.

Now taking nominations. Tonya Murphy at mic. 5. And Megan Walther also at mic. 5. After Tonya, Megan be ready to make your nomination. Mic. 5.

TONYA MURPHY (North Georgia): Tonya Murphy, African American female, lay, North Georgia Conference. I rise to nominate Jasmine Rose Smothers, clergy, North Georgia, Southeastern Jurisdiction.

BISHOP BALL: Can you please repeat the name one more time? I'm sorry.

MURPHY: Jasmine Rose Smothers, clergy.

BISHOP BALL: Jasmine Rose Smothers is nominated. Thank you.

Megan.

MEGAN WALTHER (Michigan): Megan Walther, clergy from Michigan, she/her pronouns. I wish to nominate Diane Brown also from Michigan, laity.

BISHOP BALL: Diane Brown is nominated.

Krysta Deede at mic. 1, and Lindsay Drake at mic. 5. Mic. 1, Krysta.

KRYSTA DEEDE (Wisconsin): Rev. Krysta Deede, Wisconsin, she/her/hers, White, female, adult. I rise to nominate Allie Scott from Wisconsin.

BISHOP BALL: Allie Scott is nominated.

Lindsay, mic. 5. Lindsay Drake, mic. 5.

LINDSAY DRAKE (Iowa): Lindsay Drake, Iowa, laity, White, my pronouns are she/her. I would like to nominate Rev. Nate Nims from Iowa.

BISHOP BALL: Reverend Nate Nims is nominated.

If we can have Jackie Jenkins at mic. 4, and Duane Dunkin, mic. 2. Jackie, we'll go to mic. 4.

JENKINS: Jackie Jenkins from the South Carolina Conference, Black African American female, pronoun she/her. I nominate Rev. Kenneth Nelson.

BISHOP BALL: Reverend Kenneth Nelson is nominated.

Mic. 2, Duane Carlisle.

(pause)

DUANE CARLISLE (Indiana): I was confused, I'm not Duane Dunkin. Duane Carlisle, Indiana Conference, clergy. I am Latinx and multiracial. My pronouns are he/him. I rise to nominate Rev. Luis Reyes from the Northern Illinois Conference, North Central Jurisdiction, to the class of 2032.

BISHOP BALL: Luis Reyes, Rev. Luis Reyes is nominated.

Artur Manuel, please go to mic. 4, and Ginford Dzimati will follow him—follow Artur Manuel.

ARTUR MANUEL (Western Angola): (*simultaneous interpretation from Portuguese*) Artur Manuel of the Annual Conference of Angola West, and I would like to remove my nomination proposal.

BISHOP BALL: Okay. Thank you very much.

Ginford Dzimati, mic. 4.

GINFORD DZIMATI (West Zimbabwe): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Ginford Dzimati, West in Zimbabwe Annual Conference. I rise to nominate Shepherd Mpemba.

BISHOP BALL: Shepherd Mpemba—

DZIMATI: Lay delegate to West Zimbabwe.

BISHOP BALL: —is nominated. Thank you.

Godelieve Manirakiza from Burundi, mic. 5, and Alfaro Santiz also mic. 5.

GODELIEVE MANIRAKIZA (Burundi): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Godelieve Manirakiza, and I nominate somebody. I did not hear the name, excuse me.

BISHOP BALL: Can you please repeat the name?

MANIRAKIZA: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Cimpaye Valentine. C-I-M-P-A-Y-E

BISHOP BALL: Cimpaye Valentine—

MANIRAKIZA: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) C-I-M-P-A-Y-E. Cimpaye Valentine.

BISHOP BALL: —is nominated.

All right. Alfaro Santiz, mic. 5.

ALEJANDRO ALFARO SANTIZ (Iowa): Alejandro Alfaro Santiz, clergy, Latinx, Iowa, he/him, adult. I rise to nominate Rev. Lydia Muñoz from Eastern Pennsylvania.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Rev. Lydia Muñoz is nominated. Thank you.

Gregory Gross if you can go to mic. 2.

(*pause*)

GREGORY GROSS (Northern Illinois): Gregory Gross, clergy, Northern Illinois, White, adult, nonbinary, queer, clergy. I rise to move to close nominations.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP BALL: OK. We will move now. It is moved that the nominations be closed. Although our Rule 31 states all motions shall be adopted by a majority vote unless it is on the list, the chair will process this motion as an equivalent to closing debate. Therefore, the chair announces that there is one speaker in the recognition pool who has selected “other parliamentary” to indicate that they wish to make a

nomination. And since the—OK. So we are moving now to a vote to end nominations. So get your devices out if you're ready to end the nominations, to close the denominations.

(laughter)

Close the nomination. Oh nominations. Nominations.

(laughter)

Please forgive me, and please forgive me those whose names that I messed up. Please forgive me for my pronunciation.

We are now voting on whether or not you are ready to close nominations. If you are ready to close nominations, please press *one (1)*. If not, please press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

And if you have problems, just wave those flags high, so you can get the help you need. I see a flag over here at the back left.

(pause)

OK. There's another one out here to the right. All right, the vote is now closed. May we have the results? 682 people have voted to close the debate—the close the nomination, and 43 have not. The motion to close prevailed.

[Yes, 682; No, 43]

(pause)

Chair recognizes our general secretary.

GRAVES: We will be operating with the staff to verify the eligibility of each of these persons to let you know that they are actually seated delegates. That review we will announce a little bit later in the session.

(pause)

BISHOP BALL: OK. The next item of business is the nominations for the office of secretary-designate of the General Conference. Paragraph 504 of *The Book of Discipline* states: "The Council of Bishops shall present a nomination from the ordained ministry or lay membership of The United Methodist Church for secretary-designate. Other nominations shall be permitted from the floor. The election, if there be two or more nominees, shall be by ballot." P. 2074 of the *Daily Christian Advocate* provides the name of the nominee from the Council of Bishops. In a moment, we will accept nominations for the office of secretary-designate of the General Conference. Nominations do not require a second. Delegates, you may now register using option *seven (7)*, "other parliamentary," to register in order to be recognized and make your nomination. Nominations are now open, and you may now register using option *seven (7)*, "other parliamentary."

OK. Microphone—Audun Westad at mic. no. 2, then Ian Urriola, please go to mic. no. 5.

AUDUN WESTAD (Norway): Bishop, Audun Westad, lay delegate, Norway Annual Conference. I'm not here to do a nomination, but I have other parliamentary inquiry. Is that in order?

BISHOP BALL: We're working on nominations now.

WESTAD: Yeah, but I was queuing in with other parliamentary inquiries.

BISHOP BALL: If you're looking for other information, then you need to go back and put option six (6), "point of info or inquiry."

WESTAD: OK. See you soon.

(laughter)

BISHOP BALL: Thank you very much. Thank you. Mic. 5. Ian Urriola.

IAN URRIOLO (Upper New York): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Ian Carlos Urriola. I am a lay, Latinx, young adult, male delegate, from the Upper New York Annual Conference. Bishop, I move to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Hold on for a minute.

(pause)

OK. We hear you want to make a request to a declaratory decision. On what matter do you want to make this request?

URRIOLA: The matter I wish to make a request on is related to the nomination pool that we just closed for the Commission on the General Conference. May I state my question, Bishop?

BISHOP BALL: Hold on, just for a moment.

URRIOLA: Absolutely.

(pause)

BISHOP BALL: Are you referring to the secretary—the nomination for the secretary-designate or the nominations for the Commission on the General Conference nominations?

URRIOLA: The nomination pool for the membership of the Commission on the General Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Let's ...

URRIOLA: Bishop, I rise to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council as to the effect and meaning of paragraph 511.1. My question is in two parts. One, in light of the fact that paragraph 511.1(b) states that the membership of the Commission on the General Conference shall come from the elected delegates of the General Conference, but 511.1—

BISHOP BALL: I just need to, I just need to interrupt you for a minute. You've asked for a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council on paragraph 511.1, and actually this motion is not debatable. We need to move to—the motion requires a one-fifth vote, which is 20 percent of the General Conference delegates.

URRIOLA: Bishop, don't I need to state what the question is for the delegates to be able to vote on what the question is?

(laughter)

BISHOP BALL: We're working together.

URRIOLA: We are.

BISHOP BALL: Yes we are. Go ahead. You may—

URRIOLA: I'll start my question over from the beginning for clarity for the translators.

BISHOP BALL: We just need you to state, not debate.

URRIOLA: I'm not debating, it's—

BISHOP BALL: We ask you to state very clearly what you're asking of the Judicial Council. So go ahead.

URRIOLA: OK. I rise to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council as to the effect and meaning of paragraph 511.1, and my question comes in two parts. The first part is, in light of the fact that paragraph 511.1.b states that the membership of the General Conference shall come from the elected delegates of the General Conference but 511.1(a) states that there shall be one youth serving on the Commission on the General Conference, how can these two sections be reconciled when no youth is elected as a delegate to the General Conference? And my second part of the question is, in light of paragraph 511.1(a), is it legal to elect a Commission on the General Conference membership that contains no youth representation?

BISHOP BALL: OK. Thank you. This is a motion for a declaratory decision. It has received a second. It's not debatable, and the motion requires a one-fifth vote, which is 20 percent of the General Conference delegates, in order to be adopted. We will now proceed to that vote. The question is on the adoption of the motion that the General Conference requests a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council on paragraph 511.1. So, pick up your devices. If you wish to ask for the declaration of a Judicial Council ruling, you'll please press *one (1)*, and if not, please press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(pause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two flags there.

BISHOP BALL: The vote—is everybody—we've got flags going over here—if we can get—

(pause)

OK. The vote is now closed. May we have the results?

You have requested—

The votes are yes, 560 votes, which is 77.13 percent; that surpasses the 20 percent that is needed. No votes, 166.

[Yes, 560; No, 166]

Thank you very much.

Just want to pause and—please we need your form. The motion for the declaratory decision, please make sure that you've filled out that form, and bring it forward to the front, to the General Secretary so we can get it all processed appropriately.

And just a pause moment for a moment as a teaching piece. We're all learning together that that motion really came at an inappropriate time because we were in the middle of nominations, but it all gets very confusing up here at times. And so let me just remind you that when we're in the middle of another action, other motions are not appropriate at the time that we're in the middle of another action. So just keep that in mind as we move forward.

We are returning to our nominations. And so, Rukang—and again these nominations are for General Secretary-Designate—for Rukang Chikomb, mic. 2. And yep, mic. 2.

RUKANG CHIKOMB (North-West Katanga): Thank you, Bishop. Rukang Chikomb, North-West Katanga Annual Conference. I rise to nominate the Rev. Dr. Laishi Bwalya for the Secretary of the General Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Rev. Laishi—

CHIKOMB: Bwalya.

BISHOP BALL: Bwalya.

CHIKOMB: Yes.

BISHOP BALL: OK, is nominated. Thank you very much. (*indecipherable*) Can you come back to the mic.? We did not catch the annual conference. Sorry.

CHIKOMB: It's OK, Bishop. Go ahead.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Which conference?

CHIKOMB: Zambia Annual Conference.

BISHOP BALL: Zambia Annual Conference. Thank you very much.

CHIKOMB: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP BALL: Appreciate it. OK. Audun Westad, mic. 2, for a point of information or inquiry.

WESTAD: Audun Westad, Norway Annual Conference, lay delegate. I'm sorry, I was trying to get out of the pool. Sorry.

(*laughter*)

BISHOP BALL: Thank you, thank you. All right.

(*pause*)

All right. OK. There's no one else in the speaker recognition pool, and so, if there's no objection, nominations for the Office of the Secretary-Designate of the General Conference will now be closed.

OK. Seeing no objections. The nominations for the Office of Secretary-Designate of the General Conference is now closed. Thank you very much for how you've worked through that nomination process.

United Women in Faith Report

We are turning now to the United Women in Faith report, and the chair recognizes our United Women in Faith.

(applause)

(pause)

(music)

SALLY VONNER (North Texas, General Secretary of United Women in Faith): *(with slideshow presentation)* Did you know United Women in Faith is life-changing? We support nearly ninety Community Centers across the U.S., and give millions to women's projects around the world. We train women leaders and transform through education. Did you know United Women in Faith is bold? With United Methodist Communications we surveyed many, many women. We listened, we learned, and we acted. We have a new online digital community, new national membership model, new podcast and webinars, and we changed our name. Did you know United Women in Faith brings the church together? Get to our website for more on Soul Care Retreats, "Mission u"s, and get-together jurisdiction events happening all over the country. And join our largest gathering: Assembly, when thousands of women come to Indianapolis in May 2026. Did you know United Women in Faith is nurturing?

(applause)

(video about Soul Care)

VONNER: At United Women in Faith, we know Soul Care is sacred. Now you know.

BETHANY AMEY (Greater New Jersey): *(with slideshow presentation and dancers)* When the church formed the racist central jurisdiction, we wrote the first charter for racial justice. When the United Nations build its headquarters in New York, we built the Church Center for the United Nations right across the street. It is our headquarters today. When enslaved people were being freed, we built colleges. We still support HBCUs Clark Atlanta University and Bennett College. And joining us today are dancers from Pfeiffer University right here in Charlotte. Let's hear it for our dancers.

(applause)

When exposure to diesel exhaust made children sick, we advocated for electric school buses and better air quality in schools. And Congress, they dedicated over \$5 billion to make it happen.

KAREN MCELFISH (Virginia): Laywomen are the backbone of the church.

DARLENE ALFRED (Central Texas): As the, *the* laywoman's organization of The United Methodist Church, our Methodist roots run deep.

MCELFISH: Women are 58 percent of The United Methodist Church. How different would our church be if we were also 58 percent of General Conference?

(applause)

ALFRED: We want a church that elects, hires, ordains, and appoints women equitably. A church that is antiracist and multicultural.

VONNER: As United Women in Faith, we believe in a bright future, and we believe that love in action can change the world. Join us.

(music)

VONNER, AMEY, MCELISH, AND ALFRED: United Women in Faith!

(applause)

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. Thank you, General Secretary Sally Vonner, and thank you, United Women in Faith.

(applause)

Calendar Items

The next item of business is our calendar items. Make sure that you have your past *Daily Christian Advocates* ready. The chair at this time recognizes Bishop Harald Rückert, Bishop Gregory Palmer, and Amy Lippoldt from the Standing Committee to present our first calendar item. Please make sure you have your past *DCAs* ready as well.

BISHOP HARALD RÜCKERT: Thank you. Friends, the report from the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters is back to General Conference eventually. We've been waiting for this time to occur for many days, and there are five more items where you have to take action on today. We did (*indecipherable*) General Conference a great job last week when we approved worldwide regionalization. It was inspiring. It was moving. It was exciting and it was motivating. But we are not yet done. What we achieved last week was step one only.

The petition around the amendment of the Constitution has to be ratified by all of our annual conferences around the globe. Which is step two. All members of the central conferences—of our *annual* conferences, the aggregate vote of two-thirds is required to get this petition into the future. If this fails, all the other petitions around worldwide regionalization also will not apply. So we have to be very intentional about its next step.

At the end of the petition around regionalization and the amendment of the Constitution it reads, The ratification process by the annual conferences for the constitutional amendment in this petition shall begin no later than thirty days after the adjournment of the postponed 2020 General Conference.

There's work for us to do in our Annual Conference, and I ask Gary Graves, Secretary of General Conference, to provide some more details before we move into our next agenda items.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop Rückert. The typical process for moving forward the constitutional amendments that are proposed is that they are passed here at General Conference by a two-thirds vote. Then the secretary's office prepares them for distribution to each of the annual conferences with a ballot that is to be returned to the Council of Bishops as they canvass the votes. The process that is used places that action not at this year's annual conference but at next year's annual conference. What you

have done with this particular piece is to designate a separate group of constitutional amendments that are now given a fast pass and the secretary will have to get those out within the first thirty days following the adjournment and then you will be processing that set at whatever annual conference session falls. Some annual conferences will have already met by the time that thirty-day clock comes out. So it would be another year as we go through unless there are special sessions. That is a piece that is yet to be worked out with the responsible party.

BISHOP RÜCKERT: Thank you.

Now we move to calendar items 18, 19, and 20. I think we will start with no. 18. Is this correct? These three petitions—these three calendar items I mentioned all relate to the continent of Africa.

No. 18 is about the number of bishops in Africa.

No. 19 is about the number of central conferences on the continent of Africa.

And no. 20 is correcting names of countries and just put in the correct names into all what we do here.

The first petition about a number of bishops you can find in the *DCA* on p. 1992. It's about creating new episcopal areas. At past General Conference there was approved to get five more bishops to Africa. But time has changed since then. So the working crew of the Standing Committee, which was closely working with our sisters and brothers in Africa, now come out to recommend not five more episcopal areas, rather than two. And then also when you look at the end of this petition there's an indication that the extension of the African comprehensive plan is going to be collaborative work between the central conferences in Africa and the Standing Committee of Central Conference Matters to prepare new proposals if needed for General Conference 2028. So this is Petition No. 18. It's before you, and if there are any question to that, my colleague Bishop Greg Palmer and Rev. Amy Lippoldt, they both were part of the working group. They are happy to answer your questions.

BISHOP BALL: It is moved to adopt Calendar Item 18.

The question is on the adoption of Calendar Item 18 located on p. 1992.

You may now register to speak. Is there any discussion?

For a speech against, mic. 2.

JETHRO MUYOMBI (South Congo): Thank you, Bishop, for the time. Before I ask my question against, I just want to understand the report correctly. If—

BISHOP BALL: I can only take a speech against at this time, because that's how you've registered. If you have a point of inquiry, you can go back and enter the pool, under no. *six (6)* for a point of inquiry.

MUYOMBI: OK, thank you.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Peggy Ward, mic. 1.

(*pause*)

I don't see Peggy coming to a mic. So, Tom Grieb, mic. 5 for a point of inquiry, information.

TOM GRIEB (Kentucky): Tom Grieb from Kentucky, White male, clergy. Just a simple question: What are the financial implications of what is before us?

BISHOP BALL: Does the Committee have an answer to that?

BISHOP RÜCKERT: The question is referring to GCFA, the Standing Committee has to deal with the content and to look at the need and the finances. We cannot decide on the finances, the Standing Committee, on our own. So GCFA has to comment to that.

BISHOP BALL: OK, is Moses Kumar in the house? And can he provide us some information? I see mic. 6.

MOSES KUMAR (Tennessee, General Secretary and Treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration): Good morning. I wanted to give some additional data for all of you. As of now, we have twenty bishops, and the giving rate for the central conferences are at the rate of 14 percent, which is about \$611,000. It is just 14-percent share from the central conferences. Due to disaffiliation and church closures, even to maintain the twenty bishops now, they have to pay a 91 percent more in order to support even the current number of twenty bishops. I also want to say, in order to fund the twenty-two bishops, then the central conferences have to increase their giving by 157 percent. Again, I wanted to reemphasize GCFA has no authority to say, to tell the number of bishops. I'm just giving the facts, that the strain and the problem of the general conferences to pay—central conferences to pay—the additional revenue would be more, and it's a fact that I want to state it here.

BISHOP BALL: OK, thank you for that information. Turning now to Emmanuel Sinzohagera from Burundi, mic. 5.

EMMANUEL SINZOHAGERA (Burundi): Thank you, Bishop, for giving me this opportunity to speak. As you said I'm Rev. Emmanuel Sinzohagera from Burundi. And I'm happy that you, we are discussing the issue of additional bishops. I'm standing here to support the work of the Standing Committee of adding two bishops in Africa. I understand that the church or even worldwide, we are going through economic issues, but also on the other hand, we need to do the work of God. Burundi Annual Conference as the mother church of East Africa Episcopal Area, we did a great job doing missions in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan. And I think it's really for this house to reconsider giving back Burundi an episcopal area. We've achieved a lot doing the work of the Lord. So, I humbly, with humility, I stand before you people of God, to request your support of giving back Burundi an annual, an episcopal area. We will highly appreciate your support for this petition. Thank you very much, my Bishop.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That was a speech for. We're turning to mic. 2, Henoc Mwenze from South-West Katanga.

(*pause*)

I think I see someone coming to the mic, yes.

HENOC MWENZE (South-West Katanga): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Thank you, Bishop, for allowing me to speak. My name is Henoc Mwenze Malenge, South-West Katanga. I'm a Secretary General of the Central Conference of the Congo. I think that I requested the floor to speak against the petition and not for the petition.

BISHOP BALL: You are in order.

MWENZE: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Thank you very much. Bishop, I would like to speak against this petition that would provide two additional episcopal areas for Africa, in general. And only one area, not as an episcopal area, but for the entire Central Conference of the Congo. This is not acceptable, considering the statistics and referring to paragraph 404 of our *Book of Discipline* that provides for the conditions and the criteria to give an additional number of bishops for an area. And when I look at South Congo and Zambia, and North Katanga, they respectively have approximately five annual conferences, at least. I find it abnormal that they are given an additional episcopal area. This is not acceptable. That is why I would like to reconsider this decision from the Standing Committee.

So, in South Congo and Zambia, an additional episcopal area would be provided; in North Katanga an additional episcopal area. I would like to add that by giving only one additional episcopal area for the entire Congo Central Conference, this would foster conflict. I do not see how episcopal areas would be able to share a geographical space to create an episcopal area, so the financial reasons that are provided are not compelling. The church possesses the money, and we need to find the resources to create two additional episcopal areas in the Congo Central Conference. In 2016, we voted for five bishops. This is something that was already voted by a General Conference. I do not understand how a Standing Committee can change the decision made by the General Conference. I still have a couple—

BISHOP BALL: OK, you have exceeded your time. Thank you very much. That was a speech against.

I am now turning to Ande Emmanuel, who is registered to amend. Please go to mic. 6.

ANDE EMMANUEL (Southern Nigeria): Bishop, my name is Rev. Ande Emmanuel, clergy delegate from the Southern Nigeria Conference. I rise to make an amendment, if this is in order.

BISHOP BALL: It is in order. What is your amendment?

EMMANUEL: My amendment is to bring back part C, which was strike out in this petition where it says, “c) The West Africa Central Conference to elect one additional bishop, bringing the total bishops to five.” Can I speak to that, Bishop?

BISHOP BALL: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP BALL: There is a second. You may speak to it.

EMMANUEL: Bishop, we are here as brothers and sisters to have this holy conferencing. And we understand that the desire for bishop has to do with missional needs, has to do with where growth is happening, and has to do with the population where it is growing. I want to say this, not because I disagree with my brothers from Africa whom this other proposal is meant for, the addition of episcopal area. But I am saying this to appeal to our conscience to look at the areas of needs that are coming up in West Africa.

It is our understanding in this General Conference that, for example, in 2016 a request to help other United Methodist episcopal areas in Nigeria was referred to the 2020 General Conference, which is holding in 2024. Beside that, I would like to share information here which would help us in this decision. We have a situation, for example, in Nigeria where this church is growing. The statistics in Nigeria have risen to over a million, and we have a group of United Methodist churches in Nigeria who have

numbered up to 400,350-something local churches and over 300 pastors that disconnected themselves from us, but this time around are willing to come back. This issues like that have necessitated that this General Conference should look at the promise or, let me say, a referral that was made in 2016 to defer additional episcopal areas in West Africa to the 2020 General Conference. I would like to call on my African brothers, not that I disagree with where this area of episcopal areas are added. But I come to you as a matter of concern to look at our brothers and sisters somewhere whom this mission is needed, and I want you to agree with this amendment.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Thank you very much. We are now on the amendment. As I look at the amendment, if section C was restored, then there would also need to be some action on some of the text beyond that, so I just want to bring that to your attention. In the *DCA* on p. 1993, we're on the amendment to restore section C, the strike-through.

We are now, in a moment, we're going to open the pool so if you wish to speak to the amendment, which is to restore the wording that has been struck through on p. 1993, section C under Calendar No. 18, you will be able to register for speaking to the amendment. The question is on the motion to amend by restoring the language in paragraph C. OK.

I see Guy Nyembo, mic. 6, North Katanga. Also is, he also has an amendment. We're on—is this an amendment to the current amendment, or is this a new amendment? We are on the amendment. Are you speaking to the amendment? Mic. 6.

GUY NYEMBO (North Katanga): (*simultaneously interpreted from French*) Thank you, Bishop. Pastor Nyembo from North Katanga. Regarding Petition 18, I suggest an amendment. The amendment would be to go from one bishop to two bishops for the Congo Central Conference. Replace number one bishop to two bishops.

BISHOP BALL: Let me stop you right there. That motion is not in order at this time. We're speaking to the amendment. We are speaking to the amendment to remove or to restore the wording under section C on p. 1993. We're on the amendment.

Okay. We're moving on to – on the amendment which is that the restoration of the language of section C on p. 1993. I'm going to call on Shepherd Mpemba from West Zimbabwe for a speech for. Mic. 4, please.

(*pause*)

SHEPHERD MPEMBA (West Zimbabwe): Shepherd Mpemba, West Zimbabwe. I rise to speak in support of restoring the original wording. The reason is there's a lot of growth in Africa, and to support that growth, we need to add more supervisory capacity. I hear that most for debate for not adding the five bishops is premised on the amount of contributions from Central Africa. It is my thinking that a lot of giving that is coming to the coffers of Central Africa Annual Conference is not being recognized. There's a lot of capacity, for instance, in my annual conference, West Zimbabwe, we have monies to build episcopacy houses, with monies to build the offices from our own resources. I believe if it means apportioning more to the General Conference coffers, I believe Africa is good capacity which has not been recognized. I thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That is a speech for. Do we have anyone who wants to speak against. I'm turning to Jethro Muyombi for mic. 2, South Congo, for an amendment. And again we are on the amendment. So it's in order if it is an amendment to this amendment.

MUYOMBI: Thank you, Bishop. I'm Jethro Muyombi, South Congo Conference. I'm on p. 1993, Petition 10, section A. My amendment concerns to request to restore what is considered there. To help the two bishops, the two new bishops in Congo. That is my amendment.

BISHOP BALL: So that amendment is not in order at this time. We are on an amendment that deals with section C. If you would like to make an amendment to section C, it would be in order. But you are proposing a different subject at this time.

MUYOMBI: OK.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Thank you very much.

(pause)

BISHOP BALL: OK. Would Delegate André Emmanuel come back to mic. 6? I want to read to you the amendment as we have it up here and want to clarify your intention.

(pause)

OK. Here is the motion that we have in writing: The motion is to restore the language in Section C, West Africa Central Conference, to elect one additional bishop, bringing the total episcopal areas to five. Recommending for a new episcopal area in Nigeria.

EMMANUEL: Absolutely, Bishop, That's the amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Hold on. I think we had one other question about that.

(pause)

BISHOP BALL: OK, just confirming. We're trying to make sure we have it clear, just stay at the mic. for a moment, please.

EMMANUEL: No problem.

(pause)

BISHOP BALL: Hold steady here, we're trying to make sure that everybody is clear. I'm going to turn to the Standing Committee on Central Conferences to clarify the interpretation for everyone for what this amendment will do.

BISHOP RÜCKERT: Bishop Palmer is happy to provide some more details.

BISHOP BALL: And please, the delegate, pay attention and make sure that this was your intention with your motion to amend.

BISHOP GREGORY PALMER: Thank you, Bishop Steiner Ball, and thank you, Bishop Rückert, and greetings to the delegates.

Our understanding as members of the Comprehensive Africa Plan Team, which is part of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, is that if this amendment is adopted and ultimately becomes part of the main motion, and should be adopted by the house, that the effect would be to take the number of new bishops for Africa from the current two to three; with one of those being designated for the West Africa Central Conference, which would, in turn, give them a total of five.

I want to assure the house, as well as the maker of the motion, that we did our work throughout this protracted quadrennium with the intention of fulfilling completely the intentions of the voting delegates to the 2016 General Conference in Portland, which did say five new bishops for Africa. And all of that work is laid out very carefully in the *ADCA* in our original report.

Subsequent to all of the challenges that the UMC has faced, some of which has been talked about here on the floor during this discussion, we attempted to work collaboratively with all of the voices that were particularly drawing attention to some contracted capacity around finances, and we got to the number of two. And so that's where these amendments that take the number down. If one looks further in Petition No. 18, as you have in our Calendar Item 18, we still anticipate that what was adopted in Portland would still prevail, and we have projected how we might get to the five over the next several years.

So, that's just some background to speak to the collaborative work, to the good faith in which we tried to operate with all of the parties, including multiple consultations with lay and clergy leaders on the continent of Africa, as well as careful work with the bishops of the continent of Africa.

But where I began is how we are interpreting the amendment. I hope that we have not sort of made it confusing from what he originally intended, but that's how we're understanding the effect of it.

BISHOP BALL: I want to turn to mic. 6, and the maker of the motion. Does that interpretation agree with what you're trying to do, increasing the number of bishops from two to three?

EMMANUEL: Well, Bishop, my intention was to stick with the two and allow our African brothers and sisters from the Central Africa Central Conference to consider stepping up for the West Africa, and the next amendment is Angola and West Angola making it an episcopal area. Thereby, leaving the number as proposed by the Standing Committee.

BISHOP BALL: Let me recognize the Secretary of the General Conference.

GRAVES: Thank you. The clarification that we were looking for is if you restore the full, complete text of C without making the change from five to three, you are not considering all of the amendments that had occurred prior to it in the paragraphs that are listed above on p. 1993. So, the amendment, if it were to be carried here, would also need changes to the numbers above before the numbers would equal the right amount. Is that correct, Bishop Palmer? At the direction that we were going? It's the simple addition of the numbers earlier in the paragraph.

BISHOP PALMER: Yes.

GRAVES: Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Hopefully that discussion helped you on where we are to be clear about the amendment. We are still on the amendment to restore Section C. We've had one speech for.

So, turning to George Howard, on mic. 3 for a point of information inquiry.

Mic. 3.

GEORGE HOWARD (West Ohio): George Howard, lay, West Ohio, White male. Bishop, I was trying to remove myself, but now that I'm here, I will go ahead and say, within the current budget that's being proposed to the General Conference by GCFA, do they not have two additional bishops in Africa included in their projected budget now?

BISHOP BALL: Yes, they do. They are included.

I'm turning to Maxwell Mironga. Mic. 4, East Zimbabwe, for a speech against. Again, we're on the amendment.

(*pause*)

MAXWELL MIRONGA (East Zimbabwe): Thank you, Bishop. Maxwell Mironga, Zimbabwe East Annual Conference, lay leader, male, lay delegate. Bishop, I'll rise to speak against the amendment. I am speaking for the first petition as it was called by the Standing Committee. I would like to respect the work which was done, and also going into the future as it was shared, that this is going to be implemented gradually. So as of now, I am supporting the additional of two bishops as stated. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: OK, thank you. That was a speech against. I'm turning to Rukung Chikomb on mic. 2 for a speech for.

(*pause*)

CHIKOMB: Thank you, Bishop. Rukung Chikomb, the North-West Katanga Annual Conference. Bishop, I am for restoring the C point. Why? I think we shouldn't go back instead of going forward. Standing Committee could have come up with an idea of saying, "How about if we give you bishop, but at least pay this (*indecipherable*) in their expenses?" Because I'm going to come back with an amendment about the point A. We are to the point where we can't support our bishops, not fully. But to make a stab, and to me, seem like Standing Committee does not even think about that. I am for restoring the point C and let think the way we can come up with what I've heard this year, the fifty-fifty, or the sixty-forty-five, and see how we can progress. That is growth. That's why I'm for restoring this C and the next amendment for A restoring will be coming.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That was a speech for, turning to André Cassule Vieira, mic. 5 from Eastern Angola for a speech against. Again, we're on the amendment. We're on the amendment.

ANDRÉ CASSULE VIEIRA (Eastern Angola): Thank you, Bishop, for the opportunity. I'm Andre Vieira from East Angola Annual Conference. It is with a big sickness that we get this information here. East Angola Annual Conference and West Angola Annual Conference to be one episcopal area. What is the reasons? Why are you doing that with us? It is not fair. East Angola Annual Conference, the bishop is retiring. It is fair for us to replace with another one, instead of sending it to Western Angola to be supervised. We are not behaving as a church. We are not behaving as brothers and sisters in Christ. I'm standing on behalf of Eastern Angola Annual Conference to replace what you are taking from us. We deserve to have elected bishop to replace Bishop Quipungo, who is retiring. Is it not fair to take a bishop, to take to

Burundi? Burundi is being supervised by one bishop, so this bishop may continue supervising Burundi. Zimbabwe has got bishop who is supervising another conference. He may continue supervising that conference. We need justice to replace Bishop Quipungo. From the beginning here, in the General Conference, the preachers has been saying, "justice, justice, justice." Now I'm asking. Behaving like this with us, which kind of justice are you doing with Eastern Angola Annual Conference? They are bishops. Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, please help us replacing, giving back what we deserve. Elect a bishop to replace Bishop Quipungo, who is retiring. Thank you very much.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. Speech against. I'm turning to—remind you no clapping, no cheering please. Let's respect one another at the mic. I'm turning to Elizabeth Schindler, mic. 5, Pacific Northwest.

ELIZABETH SCHINDLER (Pacific Northwest): How about [mic.] 6?

BISHOP BALL: [Mic.] 6, OK.

SCHINDLER: Elizabeth Schindler, Pacific Northwest, clergy, White, female, adult. I move that we close debate and vote on the amendment.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Is there a second? There is a second, so we stop at this point. The motion is whether or not you are ready to close debate on the amendment. On the amendment. So get your voting devices out. This motion is not debatable, in accordance with Rule 7.3, and the chair informs the delegates that there are the following individuals currently in the pool: two people with speeches for, zero persons with speeches against, one person proposing an amendment. And this motion will require a two-thirds vote. You're voting on whether or not you are ready to end debate. We are now proceeding to the vote, and the question is on closing debate on the amendment. So, we're ready to vote. All those in favor of closing the debate on the amendment, please press *one (1)*; those opposed to closing debate on the amendment, please press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(*pause*)

We have a flag over here.

(*pause*)

OK.

Our vote is now closed. Let us see the results. OK, you have ended debate. 674 yes; 73 no.

[*Yes, 674; No, 73*]

Continue to hold your devices. There are two-thirds in the affirmative, and so we have ended the debate on the amendment. We will now get ready to vote on the amendment itself.

BISHOP RÜCKERT: May I speak on behalf of the Standing Committee before we vote?

BISHOP BALL: Yes, I'm sorry.

BISHOP RÜCKERT: Thank you. We all feel the tension between the needs in Africa for leadership on one side and the financial resources for this on the other side; and there is a discrepancy between both. The Standing Committee tried to provide a good balance of both, acknowledging the needs and also acknowledging the financial situations.

We also do know that we are, as a church right now, going through many uncertainties, and we're not clear about what's going to happen on the continent of Africa the next few years. This we have to take under consideration.

BISHOP BALL: Bishop Rückert. OK, we need to stop you for a moment.

You need to keep your comments only to the amendment because we're still working on the entire petition.

BISHOP RÜCKERT: Yes. So, the recommendation from the Standing Committee remains, with two additional Bishops for all of Africa, and the amendment will change that. And I tried to explain it's balanced thing that we offer to the body, and we also indicate the collaborative work will go on to the General Conference 2028, and is still in mind the decision from 2016 that we may rise to eighteen bishops in Africa, but we have to be in conversation with that and evaluate what we do now for the first step for Africa.

So, I recommend to stay with what the Standing Committee has proposed.

BISHOP BALL: OK. Thank you very much. We are now moving to the vote on the amendment. The amendment is on p. 1993, and it's to restore the working in Section C.

Those who would vote in favor of the amendment, please press *one (1)*. Those who are not in favor of the amendment, please press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

(pause)

OK. I see flags over here. There's several flags over here in the back. There's some over here. There's a flag right in the front; the very front.

(pause)

OK. Has everyone voted? No? OK, we still have...

(pause)

All right, the vote is now closed. Let's see the results. OK. Yes, 195. No, 560. Which means the amendment does not prevail, and so we're back on the main motion.

[Yes, 195; No, 560]

We've had one speech for and one speech against.

(pause)

OK. So we are going to a speech for, Maxwell Mironga, mic. 4, East Zimbabwe.

(pause)

MAXWELL MIRONGA (East Zimbabwe): Thank you, Bishop. Maxwell Mironga, Zimbabwe East Annual Conference, lay delegate, male. I rise to speak for.

Bishop, we want to thank the Standing Committee for the job well done, firstly. Also, giving a bit of background. Coming out from the COVID pandemic, is the church in Zimbabwe, we have witnessed a

huge growth of membership from our area. And with this, Bishop, we see it necessary to have an additional episcopal area for the Zimbabwe area, and we are supported the two bishops to be added in the central conference. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That was a speech for.

I'm turning to a point of inquiry. André Cassule Vieira, mic. 5, Eastern Angola.

VIEIRA: Thank you, Bishop, for the wonderful opportunity. As you have said, I am André Vieira, clergy delegate from Eastern Angola Annual Conference. Bishop Quipungo in the church in Angola East is crying of what is happening here with us.

BISHOP BALL: What is your question? You registered for a point of inquiry.

VIEIRA: I registered to talk about the joining of Angola East and West to be one episcopal area. That's what I registered for.

BISHOP BALL: That is not what I called, not the action that showed up on ours, so I would have to ask you at this point to sit down and re-register for what you want to do. OK?

VIEIRA: OK. I will do that. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you very much. OK. I'm calling on Manuel Rodrigues, mic. 4, from Western Angola for a speech against.

MANUEL RODRIGUES (Western Angola): (*simultaneous interpretation from Portuguese*) Thank you, Bishop. I am Manuel Rodrigues from Western Angola. And I am addressed as he. Madame Chair, I rise to speak against Petition 26409 [20649], especially Line B, regarding the merger of two conferences of East and West Angola, thus reducing the episcopal area to a single bishop. For example, this version was a surprise to the delegation, particularly the West Angola Conference, because we have not been consulted. Nor in either of the conferences in Angola, nor in the Regional Conference. Madame Chair, our intent, clearly, is to vote against this petition. The West Angola and East Angola conferences are working on, in our churches, to increase membership to the number of churches and districts and to become a central conference, based on one of the resolutions that were approved in the Central Conference Committee.

This will delay, this petition will delay the arduous work that we have been engaging in. As Bishop José Quipungo retires, we have the opportunity to elect another bishop and to continue the work that's been ongoing in both conferences. I also understand that the GCFA is recommending a budget for the episcopal fund of 15 percent, yet we would humbly petition, ask that this be returned to the floor—

BISHOP BALL: OK, thank you very much.

RODRIGUES: —for the discussion.

BISHOP BALL: We had two speeches for and two speeches against. Two speeches for and two speeches against. We have a point of in—right now, I'm going to ask the tech team to clear the pool. And if you wish to speak, you'll need to register again. Let's clear the pool, we've got several people that have tried to pull in and out, and so we just need to clear the pool. OK we've had—you may re-register to do what you are wanting to do. I do want to call on Mark Holland on mic. 4 for an amendment.

MARK HOLLAND (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. Mark Holland, clergy, Great Plains, White male, sort of average age and height.

(laughter)

I move to strike on Section 2 on p. 1993, where it says, “Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters shall plan, organize, and implement a collaborative, comprehensive plan on numbers and boundaries of central conferences and episcopal areas in Africa....” I move to strike the remainder of that paragraph and add the following:

“...and to bring a recommendation to the next regular or special session of the General Conference, whichever comes first.” And if I have a second, I’ll speak to it.

BISHOP BALL: I did hear a second. You may speak to it.

HOLLAND: I think it, it’s painful to hear the different areas struggling over the need for episcopal areas. We know that’s true. We also know there’s great growth in Africa, and the need for episcopal leadership is high. We also know there’s a tremendous strain in the United States with COVID and disaffiliations that have led to a recommendation of a 42-percent reduction in the budget. I feel like we need to balance the budget issues with the growth in Africa, and instead of pushing this down the road four years, the bishops have already indicated their intention to call a special session in 2026. I think rather than pushing this to 2028, we should push it to the next General Conference, whichever comes first. We just saw in Eurasia, an episcopal area left the church. We don’t know in the next two years if more episcopal areas will leave. We don’t know what ratification will look like for regionalization. And in the honor of how difficult a situation we are, I recommend that we move this up because we’ll know a lot more in two years about the needs in Africa and the ability of the U.S. church to contribute to that. So that’s the reason for my motion. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: OK, thank you. Stay there for just a minute; make sure that you get the written work up to us as quickly as possible. As I understand, the amendment is on Section 2, down at—and striking from “areas in Africa,” striking all the way to the end, “and bring a recommendation to the regular or special called session of General Conference, whichever comes first.”

HOLLAND: That’s right.

BISHOP BALL: That is correct? OK, thank you very much. We are now on the amendment. If you—and we have a new pool. The pool has been cleared. It’s a new pool, so please register as to whether you wish to speak to the amendment. The amendment. OK, I’m seeing no one—I do see somebody here. Charles Boayue, mic. 5, Michigan. Speech for.

CHARLES BOAYUE (Michigan): Thank you, Bishop. Charles Boayue, Michigan. Bishop, may I speak from no. 6? Mic. 6?

BISHOP BALL: You may.

BOAYUE: Thank you. I support the amendment and everything that will follow to provide as many as bishops as episcopal areas in Africa as possible. Part of the background of why we are here, and I see some of my sisters and brothers in Africa fighting each other. Some in areas that the committee is providing episcopal leadership for in this motion, are happy; and those who are not getting are unhappy.

It's understandable. Africa is a besieged continent. People from other continents than Africa have been plundering Africa unendingly. It is a witness that is yet to be fully made. And we struggle with some of the side effects, the collateral damage of that.

African are giving people. They give a high percentage of their income to the work of God through The United Methodist Church. And their inability to fully fund the work there is not because of poor Christian stewardship. It is because their resources are being plundered even as we gather here in Charlotte. The systemic plundering of Africa has left the people to come to this General Conference asking for us to fund the primary mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This is one of the most important things we will do in Charlotte, to fund our priority. I encourage you to balance our budgetary constraints against the growth of The United Methodist Church. I know that if this was in a different continent that had the money, we wouldn't be taking all this time. Because the money would be there. And if I can appeal to rich people in The United Methodist Church, before I take my seat, in your annual conferences to step up and allow the people of Africa to help The United Methodist Church grow and transform the world. Please vote yes on this and every other step in this process to provide leadership for us in the place on earth where we are growing most. Thank you.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That was a speech for. I'm turning to Jerry Kulah, mic. 1, for a speech against.

JERRY KULAH (Liberia): Thank you very much. I am Jerry Kulah from Liberia, and first of all, I want to say everything that Dr. Boayue just said actually was part of what I wanted to say but my diversion speaks to why I am voting against this amendment. I believe we need a paradigm shift. I believe the time has come for Africa to stop stretching her hands to her sisters and brothers in America and take responsibility for her growth. Because growth comes with responsibility.

In Africa, recently we learned that our membership has grown to some six million. Today in Africa, you have a total of five million professing Christians. So we are the fastest growing. If this is the case, we should be able to take responsibility. So I vote against this amendment because I would want the five bishops to be approved, and let Africa take responsibility of supporting her own leadership. We have the resources there. Recently, research I did, my own conference was owing the GBGM a certain amount of money. We were due to pay back that money in four years. But when we galvanized the support, in two-and-one-half years, we paid back that money, and our conference is still going strong. I believe let what happened to Ivory Coast in 2004, we joined The United Methodist Church and they were told, "We don't have resources to support your bishop. Can you support a bishop for one quadrennium?" They accepted [indecipherable], and they did it. We can do it!

And so, I vote against this amendment because I believe the time has come for Africa to take responsibility of her own financial resources and support all of her own bishops with her resources based upon the assets she has. All we need to do is to utilize our assets [indecipherable] quickly and put in mechanisms that will ensure proper Christians to worship, and Africa will be able to pay her own delegates' way to come to General Conference. So I vote against this amendment. Thank you very much.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. I'm calling upon Kalaba Chali for a speech for, mic. 4. Great Plains.

KALABA CHALI (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. Kalaba Chali, from the Great Plains Conference. Zambian, Congolese, American and male. First of all I have to say the Holy Spirit is moving. I am speaking in favor but I am using the same argument from my brother, Jerry Kulah.

(laughter)

The Spirit is working when Jerry and I agree.

(laughter)

Bishop, I believe yes, the continent of Africa not only is able to pay for their own bishops, they are already doing so. How do I know? In the continent, even when a bishop has a birthday, they may receive up to fifty thousand dollars birthday gift. They can do it. I also know I travel between Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Congo. When I am in Congo, when a district superintendent goes to do a Charge Conference, they leave with a large envelope of money. The money is there and it is there now.

Lastly, we have complained about corruption in Africa. We, those who live in the United States, actually contribute to corruption in Africa. How do I know? Because when the local people in the continent, they are leaders, there is higher accountability. But when money is coming from somewhere, it is easy to disappear and there is no accountability. So to end my speech, I support this. I also support the five bishops, but going to allow African conferences to pay fully their own bishops because they can do it.

BISHOP BALL: Thank you. That's a speech for. Here's where we are. We've had two speeches for—we're speaking on the amendment. We've had two speeches for, one against. I have a motion to close the debate, but I have to check: Does anyone want to speak against? I don't see anybody who is speaking against so I am calling on Jay Brim, mic. 1, for a motion to close debate on the amendment.

JAY BRIM (Rio Texas): Bishop, I'm Jay Brim, lay delegate from Rio Texas, an older adult, male, and I move to close the debate.

BISHOP BALL: Okay we are closing the debate on the amendment. Is there a second? I see her second. Okay, it's moved and seconded. Again, this motion is not debatable in accordance with our Rule 7.3 I need to inform you that the following individuals are currently in the pool: We had two points of inquiry. Two persons with points of inquiry. That is all that was in the pool. So this motion now requires a two-thirds vote. We will now proceed to the vote on ending the debate on the amendment. Get your voting devices out. Those who wish to end the debate on the amendment, please press *one (1)*. Those who want to continue the debate, please press *two (2)*. Please vote now, and if you are having trouble with your machines, wave your flags quickly.

(pause)

OK, has everybody had a chance to vote? The vote is now closed. Show us, please share with us the vote. Yes, 706. And no, 37. You have voted to end debate on the amendment.

[Yes, 706; No, 37]

So we are moving to the amendment. The amendment is on p. 1993. It's to strike the language in that last paragraph beginning, with "with", the word right after Africa, and adding the language "and bring a recommendation to the regular or special session of the General Conference, whatever comes first." That's the amendment. Are we clear? All right.

(*pause*)

OK, we are having a bit of discussion back here.

(*pause*)

To strike the language in that very last paragraph, beginning with the word “with” to the end, “and to bring back a recommendation to the next regular or special session of the General Conference, whichever comes first”. And it applies to that paragraph.

OK. All right, so we are on the amendment. As I have stated it a couple of times now.

Please grab your device. If you support the amendment, please press *one (1)*. If you would not, please press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

(*pause*)

All right, we have a flag right here; in the front, middle. Any other flags? All right, the vote is now closed. Can we see the results?

All right. Yes, 479, and nos, 264. The amendment does pass.

[*Yes, 479; No, 264*]

And so, we are on the main motion, as it has been amended. Now, we are thirty minutes past our lunch break. And, I think that there’s some concern that the food is getting cold. So, I believe that we need to call a recess at this time for lunch. And we will be returning—let me clarify the time for which we will return.

(*pause*)

We are recessing for lunch, and we will be back in session at 1:30. We will be back at 1:30. So, we are now recessed for our lunch break. Thank you very much for working with us this morning.