

Proceedings

Morning Proceedings for May 2

Worship

DOO SIK (DAVID) KIM (Global Missionary): Good morning, everyone. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us arise as we worship together our Lord. Please join me in Call to Worship.

Elohim, you have called us out of our everyday life to gather together as a church, not just in our local community, but as your entire creation, with the assurance that you will be with us always.

ALL: Shape us to be your people.

KIM: El Olam, you have called us out of our comfort to go to all the corners of the earth.

ALL: Shape us to be your people.

KIM: Yahweh, you have used us despite our shortcomings and failures and expanded our community to be a place where all your children can belong.

ALL: Shape us to be your people.

ALL: Immanuel, come to us, be with us, empower us to worship you with all we are and all we bring. In the name of El Shaddai, we pray. Amen.

(music)

(applause)

ROLAND FERNANDES (General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministry and UMCOR): Please be seated. What a joy to welcome you this morning as we celebrate the commissioning of new United Methodist missionaries. Any such service of commissioning is a special occasion, and it is particularly momentous when it takes place at General Conference. The General Conference represents so many geographical regions and cultural expressions of our shared faith in a global community. It can give us a taste of the intercultural connectionalism that is The United Methodist Church at its best. Thank you for being part of this significant moment for these individuals, for the General Board of Global Ministries and for the whole church.

Also, welcome to those joining us via internet live streaming. We know that friends, family, and church members around the world are watching, praying for, and supporting our missionary candidates. And thank you, Bishop Estrella, for being our morning preacher.

I deeply believe that mission is first and foremost the mission of God—*missio Dei*. The triune God sends the church in mission just as God the Creator sent Jesus. The Christian practice of sending missionaries began with Jesus, as described in scripture at the end of the Gospels of Matthew and John and the start of the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus' instructions to make disciples and to be witnesses for him are invitations to all Christians. We are all called to be part of God's mission.

Yet at the same time, we also recognize that some people experience a special calling to long-term, full-time missionary service. The apostle Paul is a biblical exemplar who models missionary service for those who come after him. Yet we know that Paul was not unique in his service as a missionary in the early church: Peter, Barnabas, Junia, and Timothy, among many others, were also referred to as apostles or missionaries. Since the early church, missionary service has taken many different forms, from the monastic missionaries of medieval Europe to the Moravian settlements of missionary communities in the eighteenth century to missionary families sent out by the early Western mission boards to single women, who made up the majority of missionaries at the beginning of the twentieth century.

This double understanding of the missionary call—as one that applies to all Christians and one that is experienced in a special way by certain individuals—is deeply embedded in our United Methodist heritage. Methodism as a whole has always been a missionary movement, as early Methodists were eager to tell others. Yet Methodist founder John Wesley and the early British Methodists also commissioned particular individuals as missionaries for North America. This combination of collective and individual responses to God’s calling to mission has carried Methodism around the world, a fact represented in this hall by United Methodist delegates from many countries and representatives and friends from partner Methodist churches worldwide.

The Act of Commissioning publicly affirms the call of Christ and the positive responses of these faithful sisters and brothers to serve as United Methodist Global Missionaries on behalf of the Christian community. Unfortunately six of our missionaries listed in the booklets could not be with us because of visa challenges. Please be with them as they join us in spirit. Please also join us today during the morning break to meet the missionaries being commissioned at the Global Ministries space in the exhibition area. We as United Methodists know it is our blessing and our responsibility to partner in mission with them as they go forth into the world to share God’s grace. Thanks be to God.

JUDY CHUNG (Executive Director of Missionary Service for the General Board of Global Ministries): The United Methodist Church has a long and faithful witness of sending people into mission service as our response to God’s call to go forth into the world to share God’s grace with all people.

Throughout history, Christian mission is challenging and perilous. These missionaries have come to say yes to God’s call in their lives. They join two hundred missionaries who have also said yes and are ready to be sent as partners with God in the transformation of the world. And the challenges of Christian Mission continues as some of our missionaries were unable to be present in person due to visas. All of these persons will be commissioned at a later date. I lift up all those who have said yes to God in such a time as this.

The anchor cross has been used as a symbol of faith and hope for believer since the early days of the Christian faith. Hebrews 6:19 offer the same image and teaches us that the hope we have in Jesus is a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

As we send our missionaries into God’s mission today, we will present them with this anchor cross as a symbol of our faith and our hope. To remind all of us the call to mission within and beyond our native lands and communities. To remind us to be rooted in our faith in Christ in love for one another as we continue in our journeys. To remind our missionaries that they are participants in God’s mission, anchored in Christ’s saving love and commissioned by The United Methodist Church. May God’s grace and peace be with you in your journey. Amen.

MAMEI SOMBO LANSANA (Global Missionary): Will you pray with me? When we remember whose we are, we know who we are. And when we know who we are, we understand what we are to do: Follow God's plan. Here are our instructions.

(speaking in Krio)

Join me as we respond.

ALL: Having been commanded to go make disciples, we recommit ourselves to making disciples in the name of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Be with us on our journey. Amen.

(music)

(applause)

BISHOP RUBY-NELL ESTRELLA (Manila Episcopal Area): OK, can you see me now?

(speaking in Tagalog)

A blessed morning, beautiful people called United Methodists. I am Ruby-Nell Estrella, serving in the Manila Episcopal Area of the Philippines Central Conference.

(applause)

And I can't believe I am sharing God's word to you, in this General Conference. But it's not about me. It's all about our faithful God who has been working in amazing ways in this holy gathering. Glory to God. Please join me in prayer in my heart language.

(simultaneous interpretation from Tagalog) Thank you for your continuous movement and presence in historic conference. We ask that you continue to speak to us in the providing of your holy word through the Holy Spirit. Continue to nurture us, guide us, rebuke us, direct us, enable us to fulfill your glorious call as your church. In the sweet name of our Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Our church in Tangos, Navotas was one of the oldest United Methodist churches in the Philippines. It started in 1900 when cousins Juan and Pedro Pasqual were converted to Christ in an evangelistic crusade in Malabon, a nearby town. They immediately shared their newfound faith to their families in Tangos by holding Bible studies, and later on they started worship services in a makeshift storehouse. Many were converted as they experienced the transforming love of Christ that made a difference in their lives. My grandfather was a Roman Catholic, and his family persecuted him when he became a United Methodist, a Methodist, but they were not able to keep him from sharing his faith in Christ.

These stories are repeated in the history of the United Methodist churches in different parts of the world as the word of God is preached by converts, missionaries, and ordinary people who share their faith and witness to the redeeming love of Christ. Ordinary people empowered by the Holy Spirit who heeded Christ's call to go and make disciples of all nations.

When the disciples saw Jesus for the last time in Galilee, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Even when Jesus appeared to them several times after his resurrection, the disciples are still fearful and doubtful about what the future holds. Just like many of the United Methodists since 2019 when the General Conference last convened, many of us are anxious about what will happen to our beloved

church. Even when we have always experienced the risen Christ manifesting himself in loving ways with deed and through our denomination. Even in our very own lives, we are still doubting.

When some of the disciples doubted, I guess they just wanted to know what's going to happen next. Don't we have the same questions in our minds? In our limited understanding—in their limited understanding of who this risen Christ is, they are still unaware of the whole redemption story, and so they doubted. Now, church, we know the whole redemption story. We know the whole Bible that tells us everything we need to know about Jesus, even when there are people who are accusing us that we no longer believe in the Bible and we no longer believe in Jesus as God and Savior. We always have to explain to them that we cannot change our doctrine.

During our United Methodist Youth Fellowship days in the Philippines not so long ago, we have a UMYF medley about Jesus, and the song goes, "Let's talk about Jesus, the Prince of Peace is he, the Lord of lords supreme, through all eternity. He said, I am the way, the truth. I am the life. Let's talk about Jesus more and more. Isn't he wonderful, wonderful, wonderful? Isn't Jesus my Lord wonderful? Eyes have seen, ears have heard, it's recorded in God's word. Isn't Jesus my Lord wonderful?"

This beautiful medley speaks of our faith in Jesus, our wonderful redeemer. This is the same Jesus who told the disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." He is practically saying, "Know that I am God, the mighty God, wonderful counselor, prince of peace. Do not be afraid. Do not doubt. I am sending you to go and make disciples of all nations."

"Go" denotes movement from one place to another. While the Greek word is a present participle, better translated "as you go," the same meaning invites us to continue the movement. We are not to remain in the mountain looking at Jesus like the first disciples with all their doubts as he ascends to the heavens. The disciples returned to Jerusalem from Mt. Olives as they await the coming of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost they were transformed into powerful and courageous witnesses of the risen Christ as they received the Holy Spirit, ushering in a spiritual movement that spread in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Fellow United Methodists, this is a very historical General Conference, and it will end tomorrow, and I'm sure we don't want to stay here much longer, do you?

(laughter)

You all want to go home. It is our ardent desire and prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to move The United Methodist Church, ready to take hold of the new things that God is doing in our lives and in the continuing history of the church. And therefore in our going forward, let us continue the spiritual movement by the power of the Holy Spirit, witnessing to the risen Christ to this broken world.

(applause)

In our going forward as a church, let us leave behind all our doubts and fears. Let us shake off the self-limiting attitudes, the labels we have attached on one another. Let us get out of the silos we have created and break down the walls we have built between us.

(applause)

Let us put behind us the false narratives and the lies that have trapped us into hurtful debates and theological discourses. In our going forward, let us remember the glorious heritage of our faith, of John Wesley and the early Methodists. They encountered opposition and persecution from the religious

leaders of the church, yet they persisted in seriously preaching the living God's love, grace, and compassion, serving the lost, the least, and the last and the lonely people of their time. When being accused of breaking the law of the church, he took upon the whole world as his parish. Following the witness of the early Christians who went through sufferings and persecution as they followed Jesus, the Methodists kept proclaiming the unconditional love of God to all the people regardless of their economic status, gender, and race. They boldly and courageously tell others about Jesus, serving the poor, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, establishing homes for the orphans, and other works of mercy as they live out the love of Christ in their communities torn by oppressive systems and injustice.

The movement continues in our churches around the world midst controversies, conflicts, schism, and disaffiliation. The spirit of Christ is upon us even when we are hurting and sorely wounded in the process of being church. We find healing as we go about the mission entrusted to us, to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to liberate the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

As disciples of Christ are baptized and taught to be obedient to Christ's teaching, they cannot keep their faith to themselves, they cannot help but share to others the amazing word of God in their lives. And so in our going forward, let us make disciples of Christ who are deeply rooted in their faith, strongly committed to the ministries of the church, and passionate in reaching out to those who need God the most.

We will be commissioning our United Methodist missionaries who will be sent in different parts of the world, to bear witness to God's presence in ministries of teaching, preaching, healing, and social justice. In places where we cannot go and serve, these missionaries will go for us, becoming the hands, feet, and hearts of Christ in this lost, broken world, bringing hope, compassion, and peace.

In our going forward together as a church, know that God is with us. As Jesus promised, I am with you always to the end of the age. Wherever you sent, beloved missionaries, Christ goes with you, empowering you, walking alongside you. No matter what the future holds, let us remain confident that this church will overcome even the fiercest storm with God at the helm of this denomination.

(applause)

Know that God whom we serve is the God who loves unconditionally, whose grace and compassion reaches out to all kinds of people. In our going forward, know that God is the God who is always on the move doing new things in many different ways. The God who is beyond our comprehension and understanding, the God who will always journey with us together as we commit our lives to be faithful disciples of Christ ready go forward in the movement to transform the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Maestro Arnel De Pano, the conference lay leader of the Quezon City Annual Conference, has composed a beautiful song for the 2024 Annual Conference session entitled (*speaking in Tagalog*), "We Will Transform the World.

United Methodist siblings in Christ and global missionaries, it is my prayer that you will find inspiration in this song in our going forward.

The song says, *(speaking in Tagalog)*, We are called to be disciples, *(speaking in Tagalog)* to go forth in a world that is waiting; *(speaking in Tagalog)* salvation is our desire and we want to proclaim the gospel; *(speaking in Tagalog)* To know the risen Christ, *(speaking in Tagalog)* even when we have different understanding; *(speaking in Tagalog)* it brings us so much pain and conflicts; *(speaking in Tagalog)* it is by love that we will be set free and we will be bound by the grace of God; *(speaking in Tagalog)* we will continue in the task that he entrusted to us.

And the chorus says, *(speaking in Tagalog)* We will transform the world *(speaking in Tagalog)* by the love of Christ; *(speaking in Tagalog)* we will start where we are and we will look forward; *(speaking in Tagalog)* with love in our hearts we will transform the world. *(speaking in Tagalog)* Amen.

(applause)

(music)

(applause)

Missionary Commissioning

BISHOP ESTRELLA: Children of God, rejoice that you have chosen to devote this time in your lives to Christian mission. The call of God is always profound, and our response can be no less extraordinary. In the varied ministries in which the Holy Spirit will lead you, you will testify to the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus.

Such a vocation confers a great privilege; it also lays upon you a solemn responsibility. What you have pledged alone with God in consecrating your lives to this service, we ask you to repeat publicly.

Do you sincerely believe that you have been led by the Spirit of God to engage in this work and to assume its responsibilities? If so, say, "I do."

CANDIDATES: I do.

BISHOP ESTRELLA: Will you be diligent in prayer, in the reading of the holy scriptures, in such studies as will increase your skills and abilities for this life in mission? If so, say, "I will."

CANDIDATES: I will.

BISHOP ESTRELLA: Will you earnestly seek to carry forward your ministry in sincerity and in love, cooperating willingly with your co-workers, under the direction of the church? If so, say, "I will, the Lord being my helper."

CANDIDATES: I will, the Lord being my helper.

BISHOP ESTRELLA: Let us pray. Almighty God, source of all mercies, endow these persons with your Holy Spirit, enrich them with your grace, and strengthen them for the tasks which lie ahead; that in all their works begun, continued, and ended in you, they may glorify your holy name, and advance the coming of your Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Amen.

(music)

Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson: To all assembled, I commend to you these persons whom we have commissioned on this day into a lifetime of Christ-like service under the authority of The United Methodist Church. In this holy moment, we too are called to a renewed consecration of our lives to Christ. As these our missionaries go forth upon their ministries, let us assure them of our support by word, gift, and deed. I invite you to stand.

ALL: We rejoice to recognize you as missionaries of The United Methodist Church. We will sustain you with our prayers, support your mission service, and strive together to minister to the needs of all creation.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson: To the church gathered here and around the world, I present our new missionaries, commissioned to service on behalf of The United Methodist Church. Thanks be to God.

(applause)

PEDRO ZAVALA (Global Missionary): Will you join me as we commit ourselves to the calling of God and to each other saying in the words John Wesley:

ALL: I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with who you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you, or set aside for you, praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven. Amen

(music)

(applause)

BISHOP ESTRELLA: Blessings. It is by your sacrifice we are saved. It is in your Spirit we are sent. It is through your strength we are sustained. Be at peace, knowing that God is in the sojourning. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

(music)

Plenary 1

BISHOP KENNETHA BIGHAM-TSAI: Let's prepare to get started. If we can begin to settle ourselves. Good morning. The ninth plenary session of the postponed 2020 General Conference is called to order. Grace and peace to us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am Bishop Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, an African American, female adult, and I have the joy of serving the Iowa Episcopal Area.

(applause)

I am so grateful for all of you and the work you've done at this General Conference. I'm also grateful for my colleagues who are leading with me as we preside over this session. I am joined by Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, bishop of the West Virginia Episcopal Area, and with Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, the Susquehanna area. Also with me is Bishop Christian Alsted, bishop of the Northern Baltic and Ukraine Episcopal areas.

Friends, I have said of myself that my mother taught me how to preach by teaching me a love for words. I love the words of scripture and the words of poetry, and what we have done these last days at this General Conference defies description without resort to the words of scripture and poetry. So I offer this morning as we begin some words first from the book of Isaiah 61:1-4 and I invite you to open your hands or put yourself in a posture to receive these words for yourself.

“The Lord God’s spirit is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. God has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release for captives, and liberation for prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and a day of vindication for our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for Zion’s mourners, to give them a crown in place of ashes, oil of joy in place of mourning, a mantle of praise in place of discouragement. They will be called Oaks of Righteousness, planted by the Lord to glorify God. They will rebuild the ancient ruins; they will restore formerly deserted places; they will renew ruined cities, places deserted in generations past.”

And now to these words of poetry, one of my favorite poems by US poet named Wendell Berry. And this poem is called *The Vision*. And as I share it, think of the vision that you have for our church.

“If we will have the wisdom to survive,
to stand like slow-growing trees
on a ruined place, renewing, enriching it,
if we will make our seasons welcome here,
asking not too much of earth or heaven,
then a long time after we are dead
the lives our lives prepare will live
here, their houses strongly placed
upon the valley sides, fields and gardens
rich in the windows. The river will run
clear, as we never know it,
and over it, birdsong like a canopy.
On the levels of the hills will be
green meadows, stock bells in noon shade.
On the steps where greed and ignorance cut down
the old forest, an old forest will stand,
its rich leaf-fall drifting on its roots.
The veins of forgotten springs will have opened.
Families will be singing in the fields.
In their voices they will hear a music
risen out of the ground. They will take
nothing from the ground they will not return,
whatever the grief at parting. Memory,
native to this valley, will spread over it
like a grove, and memory will grow
into legend, legend into song, song
into sacrament. The abundance of this place,
the songs of its people and its birds,
will be health and wisdom and indwelling

light. This is no paradisaal dream.
Its hardship is its possibility.”

Join me in prayer.

O God, let your Spirit fall upon us. Anoint us to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted. O, to take even from our own heads the ashes of mourning and to place upon ourselves the oil of joy. And O God, as what we do here in our lives as we live them here prepare for the lives that will come, let us do our work with joy that the song of this church may rise from the ground as sacrament. May the words of all of our mouths in this deliberation and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Monitoring Report

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: At this time the chair invites Judge Dawn Wiggins Hare, General Secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and Reverend Dr. Giovanni Arroyo, General Secretary of the Commission on Religion and Race, to provide a monitoring report.

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

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

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

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

WIGGINS HARE: To begin our report this morning, we want to pause and celebrate. You did good work! Very good work yesterday in our journey towards full inclusion. You indeed set the table wider and pulled up some extra chairs at God’s table, not ours, for persons and voices that have been silenced too long. Good job, church.

(applause)

ARROYO: Yesterday there were many opportunities, but the one we featured as a challenge was the elections of persons who would lead and hold positions of power for the next four years. By our actions, it is evident that time was taken to examine the list of nominees and to vote carefully. Although we do not have the racial-ethnic data confirmed yet to fully complete this chart, we wanted to share with you, what you have done with your elections.

WIGGINS HARE: So far.

ARROYO: So here we go. 53.8 percent females. 46.2 percent males. At that was the University Senate, Judicial Council, and the General Conference secretary-elect. You’ve done good work. Very good work, and we still have more work to do today.

WIGGINS HARE: Now, for the update on speakers from the dais and speakers from the floor. Before I share the numbers, let’s pause. I want you to have a bit of self-reflection and self-examination. How well do you think you did? During the discussions yesterday, the breakdown of speakers from the dais

revealed: men, 53.1 percent; female, 46.9 percent. The church continued to follow a pattern on the speakers from the floor: men, 61.3 percent; female, 33.9 percent; and non-binary, 4.8 percent. For some beautiful charts, you can refer to the GCORR and GCSRW reports in the *DCA* this morning. But let's consider that a challenge, and not make it a pattern.

ARROYO: I would also report to the body this morning, conversations regarding concerns lifted up about plenary presidencies which have occurred. We continue to notice that those conversations are ongoing, and we are grateful for the openness of those conversations. But we continue to invite each and every one of us to be respectful of each other even when we have different perspectives. So the question is, what is our opportunity this day? There's more legislation to carefully examine, and there are remaining elections to occur. Again, we invite each of us to take time to pause and ask the following questions. Is the slate of nominees inclusive and representative of God's amazing quilt of diverse persons and voices? Whose voice is missing in this position of power and policy-making for the future?

WIGGINS HARE: Church, morning has broken. Feel the sunlight from heaven.

ARROYO: Like the first dawn, may you go forth and do your work.

WIGGINS HARE AND ARROYO: Amen.

(applause)

Missional Bicentennial

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you for your report. Thank you. The next item is Mission Bicentennial report. The chair recognizes General Secretary of Global Ministries and UMCOR, Roland Fernandes, along with his team from Global Ministries, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, Carmen Vianese, Karen Lissa Goodwin, and Eric Kulumba to present the report.

(video playing)

ROLAND FERNANDES (General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministry and UMCOR): Good morning. I am Roland Fernandes, General Secretary of Global Ministries and UMCOR. Asian American, adult male.

2020 marked two hundred years since the 1820 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church approved the formation of the first denomination-wide missionary society in American Methodism. The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest forerunner of Global Ministries. Of course we are now in 2024, and so we have more than two centuries of mission history to celebrate. Looking back on these two-hundred-plus years, we have come to appreciate how the United Methodist mission is essential to our self-understanding. At Global Ministries, we are honored to be the visible manifestation of that missionary spirit and to serve the church by connecting the church in mission and elevating human suffering. It's all of us together, joining in *missio Dei*, God's mission in the world.

Global Ministries does not own mission. Mission belongs to God, and we are, all of us, called to take part in it. Global Ministries supports United Methodists around the world. As we live out *The Book of Discipline's* invitation to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, bring the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel.

A current strategy and plan emphasizes four priority areas: missionary service, evangelism and church revitalization, global health, and humanitarian relief and recovery. Over three hundred missionaries now serve approximately sixty-five countries around the world. Evangelists and church leaders throughout our connection are supported in their work and their ongoing leadership development. Global Ministries resources nearly two hundred hospitals and health centers. When humanitarian needs become clear, UMCOR staff, partners, and volunteers respond to immediate needs and provide long term relief and development assistance. It's these relationships built over two hundred throughout the global connection and with sister denominations and ecumenical partners, Global Ministries will come near to connect the church and the world in mission that transcends barriers of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and nationality.

CARMEN VIANESE (Upper New York, Board Member and Treasurer, General Board of Global Ministries and UMCOR): Good morning, siblings. I am Carmen Vianese. I am a board member and the treasurer for Global Ministries and UMCOR. I am an adult, White, woman, laity from the Upper New York Annual Conference, pronouns she/her.

As Nathan Bangs and other leading Methodists formed the Missionary Society, some thought such an organization was unnecessary, believing mission was embedded in the very structure of Methodism. Yet, it was exactly because the whole system of Methodism is a missionary system, that there was a need for an organization that could foster relationships, organize resources, and respond quickly as the Spirit called the church to mission in new places and new forms. Bangs and his coworkers presented their plans to the General Conference in 1820. Bishop McKendree, the third bishop of the church, commended the Missionary Society in his opening address. The Committee on Missions reported, "Methodism itself is the missionary system. Yield the missionary spirit, and you yield the very life blood of the cause". Persuaded by this logic, General Conference overwhelmingly voted to recognize the Missionary Society as a General Agency of the church. There have been many organizational changes since then, including a long connection to United Women in Faith. But the focus throughout has remained on connecting the church in God's mission. Over two hundred years, thousands have served the church as missionaries, near and far. Their service has brought hope and healing in the world, and their legacy of mission service continues to this very day.

(pause)

KAREN LISSA GOODWIN (Global Ministries Missionary): Ann Wilkins was an important figure in our mission history. Originally from New York, she was the first woman to be sent out on her own as a missionary of the Missionary Society. She served as an educational missionary in Liberia where she founded the Millsburg Female Academy, the first Methodist girls' school outside of England, in North America. Recognizing God's grace for all people, Ann was the first missionary to work with both the American Liberian settlers and native Liberians at her school. She was a woman of deep faith and dedicate for service. She served in mission for twenty years, making her one of the longest-serving missionaries of her generation.

My name is Karen Lissa Gooden. I am a White Woman. I am a Global Ministry Missionary from Brazil assigned to Angola, where I will serve as vice general director at the Methodist Mission School. Ann Wilkins is my predecessor in mission, and it is my pleasure to carry her educational mission work in our church's mission future.

(applause)

ERIC KALUMBA (Global Ministries Missionary): *(simultaneous interpretation from French)* One of the Methodist missionaries, the best known of his time, is E. Stanley Jones. Jones was an American who served in India. Jones was known for his reasonable, sensible approach in interactions with people of other religions, for his understanding of the importance of presenting the Christian faith in a manner that it was brought into local context, and for his friendship with Ghandi and other Indian leaders. Jones was, at the same time, an evangelist and an ecumenist, and his spiritual writings have helped many people in the world to better understand and to follow Christ.

I am Eric Kalumba, and I'm a missionary with Global Ministries, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and I am being sent to Madagascar to plant churches. E. Stanley Jones is my predecessor in mission, and I am very happy to follow in his footsteps the mission of evangelism for the future missionary work of our church.

(applause)

BISHOP HEE-SOO JUNG: I am Bishop Hee-Soo Jung. Bishop in Wisconsin Conference, the President of the Global Ministries. As you can hear from their story, our mission heritage is not just about the past. The United Methodist Mission flourishes today and will continue well into the future. Commissioning service we had this morning is a sign the United Methodist continues in mission.

I will invite you to stand when I call you who are involved in mission. If you have ever served as a missionary, church and community workers, Global Mission Fellow, US-2, or mission intern, please stand up and remain standing.

(applause)

If you ever served as mission volunteer on a United Methodist volunteer mission, VIM, team, or on another short-term mission beyond your own local church setting, please stand and remain standing. Yes!

(applause)

If you ever participated in a local mission project through your congregation, please stand and remain standing.

(applause)

You see, we are all connected in mission. John Wesley, our forefather said, "The world is my parish." Will you say again, "The world is our parish."

ALL: The world is our parish.

As we move into a new century of Methodist mission, I pray that we will, all of us, continue to faithfully answer the call to serve with humility in God's mission. I pray that in relationship with God and mutuality with neighbors and the word, we will share the best of our talents, our treasures, and our prayers, and our time, and passions. I pray that our long-standing and evolving relationship will flourish. And I pray that our faith in the Spirit of the living God will strengthen our resolve to continue to be in mission together. Will you give hands to God to answer that? Amen. Amen. Amen.

(applause)

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you so much for that report. I want to take a moment and recognize—it's already been said, and I think it's been said many times that this has been an historic General Conference, a momentous General Conference. We moved towards greater inclusion for all people over the last couple of days.

We also made a decision yesterday to address some of the harm that has happened to the people of Hawaii and, to, by next General Conference, craft an apology. So, I want to ask delegate Monalisa Tuitahi, if she could make her way—if you are in the house, Monalisa, if you would make your way to a microphone, and I see you there at mic. 4. And would you pray for this action that we've taken, especially as it relates to Hawaii and as it relates to the ways in which we have moved forward as a more inclusive church.

MONALISA TUITAHI (California-Pacific): Thank you, Bishop. May I ask that Ms. Allison, who is a delegate from California-Pacific—both of us have ties to Hawaii, although we are not native Hawaiian, but Hawaii is the home of both of our hearts. So, if you will allow us, we will use the words of Queen Liliuokalani, from whom Hawaii was taken in 1893. And so we will use her words this day on the floor of General Conference this day. Please allow us.

ALLISON MARK (California-Pacific): *(speaking in Hawaiian)* Your loving mercy is in heaven, and your truth so perfect.

TUITAHI: *(speaking in Hawaiian)* The remorse I feel for my people while imprisoned from within those walls, though, are my light, my glory, my support. Though our Lord bring us health, we need thy protection, and peace be our portion now and forever more. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: The next item business is some of our administrative committee reports. The first committee report will be submitted by the Committee on Agenda and Calendar. The chair recognizes the chair of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar, Emily Allen, and the coordinator of calendar, Susan Brumbaugh, to present their report. As they approach the microphone, please get your voting devices ready.

Also, the chair asks the tech team to clear the speaker recognition pool that still appears from yesterday. And I think it is already clear. There is one person in the speaker recognition pool, and we're going to come back to that after the report. So please put your name back in. Thank you.

EMILY ALLEN (California-Pacific, Chair of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar): Thank you, Bishop. And I appreciated the extra time—I got a note and was quickly editing my script while also listening attentively to my sisters from California-Pacific Annual Conference. So thank you for that.

The schedule for today is printed on p. 2258 in today's *DCA*. That's p. 2258. The Committee on Agenda and Calendar has one change to make to today's agenda. We will move the recognition of Judicial Council members to tomorrow. For informational purposes, in the second morning plenary, our calendar

items in conference business will begin with the remainder of our elections. Bishop, I move the adoption of today's agenda with the change I described.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: It is moved to adopt the agenda with the changes as described. In a moment we will open the pool, so if you wish to speak you may register. The question is on the adoption of the motion to adopt the agenda with the changes as described. You may now register to speak. Is there any discussion?

Looks like you are ready to go. We will now proceed to vote. The motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the agenda with the changes as described. Let's get our voting devices ready.

Those in favor please press *one (1)*; those opposed, please press *two (2)*. You may vote now. And I see a checkered flag right here if we can get some help. Oh it looks like that is being cared for.

(pause)

Are there any other flags? If you have a flag raise it high so that we can see it, this is a large hall. Right here in section B. Help there. Make sure we get a good start with our voting devices this morning.

(pause)

All right. Have all voted who wish to do so? Looks like we've cared for everyone. voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote, please. You have adopted the agenda 97.62 percent, 698 votes, to 17, 2.38 percent. You have adopted the agenda.

[Yes, 698; No, 17]

ALLEN: Thank you. After we vote on today's consent calendar, we will have thirty-three remaining calendar items before us. Twenty-four of which we are required to take action on under *Book of Discipline* paragraph 507.10. Thank you in advance for your hard work.

Consent Calendar

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (New Mexico, Coordinator of the Calendar): I'm Susan Brumbaugh, coordinator of the calendar. Delegate from the New Mexico Annual Conference, White, straight, adult, cisgender female. We have just one small consent calendar to vote on today. Consent Calendar B06 is on p. 2251. B06, p. 2251. That consent calendar is correct as printed. Bishop, I move that we accept the action on Consent Calendar B06 as printed.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar B06, except for any items removed. As printed, sorry.

BRUMBAUGH: That's OK.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Please get your voting devices ready. This motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the Consent Calendar B06 as printed. Those in favor, press *one (1)*; those opposed, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

All right have all voted? Give a couple more minutes.

Have all voted who wish to do so? Voting is now closed. Can we have the results, please. You have adopted Consent Calendar B06 as printed. 655 votes yes; 57 no. 91.99 percent in the affirmative. You're doing good work.

[Yes, 655; No, 57]

BRUMBAUGH: There's one more item we need to address today. On Tuesday morning this week, we voted to accept the actions on Consent Calendar B04. There was an item on that consent calendar with an amendment that only had a portion of its text published. I'm going to give you the page number in each of the languages, and then I will give you the calendar item number. For the English and French translations, it's on p. 2176. English is 2176. For the Portuguese translation, it's p. 2175. Portuguese is 2175. And the Kiswahili translation 2181. Kiswahili is 2181. On that page, you will find Calendar Item 426. Item 426. You can see part of the amendment that was published, and then there's a statement describing where the rest of the amended text can be found. Because that additional text was not published, the plenary voted on an incomplete resolution that cannot be published in the *Book of Resolutions* as it was acted on. Bishop we could use your guidance on how to proceed.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you. Friends, we cannot leave that item where it is. Given that it is incoherent as it currently is, it needs to go back to Agenda and Calendar for them to make a correction. So I'm going to suggest and rule that this goes back to Agenda and Calendar, it comes from the consent calendar, goes back to you for correction, and then brought back to the body, printed in the *DCA*, and brought back to the body for consideration. All right.

Let's move onto the next item.

All right, before we go—actually, can you give me a moment? Before we go to the next report, I want to recognize Elizabeth Brick that came to the pool before for other parliamentary. Elizabeth, are you there? And where are you?

ELIZABETH BRICK (California-Nevada): I am at mic. 5, Bishop. Thank you for the recognition.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you.

BRICK: I'm Elizabeth Brick, clergy from California-Nevada. I am a White, adult, gay, cisgender woman, and my pronouns are she and hers. I rise to request a reconsideration under Rule 32 to reconsider a matter I voted on in favor of in the Ordained Ministry legislative section. We recognized that our intent might not provide the opportunity we intended for all, especially those who had their credentials or charges against them removed.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Right. Elizabeth please do not get into the details—

BRICK: Yes, sorry.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: —of argument but tell us why you want to reconsider.

BRICK: Because we would like to edit the current language that we have submitted. I would like to edit that to create process by which we might achieve our goal.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: OK and you have mentioned Rule 32, which allows for reconsideration, but what we would be considering is whether or not to reconsider.

BRICK: Yes.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: OK. So can you very briefly describe without going into the details?

BRICK: What we created made a statement that people could come back but did not describe how they could come back.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Hold on one second. I need to confer.

All right, Elizabeth. I'm sorry here, but I need you to state the calendar item that you are lifting for reconsideration. Thank you. You have stated the rule. But state the calendar item.

BRICK: It is Calendar Item 247 on p. 2100 of the *DCA*.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: I need a second from the body to continue. All right, we've got a second. Now you can proceed.

BRICK: I move to amend by substitution. I think ...does that require a vote before I read the paragraph?

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: We need to first vote on reconsideration.

BRICK: Yes. I think I've spoken to why. I would like to, quite out of order, but I've already said it. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you. Is there any other discussion on the move to reconsider Item 247?

I see Dawn Taylor-Storm for a speech for reconsideration.

DAWN TAYLOR-STORM (Eastern Pennsylvania): Dawn Taylor-Storm, Eastern Pennsylvania, clergy, she/her pronouns, adult, White, female.

I rise to speak in favor of reconsideration. Friends, yesterday was a day of rejoicing but also one in which we need to acknowledge repentance. And so this vote for reconsideration allows us to do less harm in the future reinstatement of clergy who have been defrocked. We want to provide a process that will not take three years but will enable people who are a part of the body of Christ to be reconnected with us in communion. So I asked you to please support the motion for reconsideration. Thank you.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: All right, I don't see anyone else in the speaker pool. It looks like you might be ready to vote. The motion requires a majority vote, the question is on the motion to reconsider the vote on Calendar Item 247.

Those in favor of reconsidering the vote, press *one* (1). Those opposed, press *two* (2). You may vote now.

(*pause*)

Have all voted who wish to do so? Do I see any flags?

Flag over here. All right, any others? All right, I don't see any other flags. The voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote? 438 to 268, 62.04 percent, you have voted to reconsider.

[Yes, 438; No, 268]

BRICK: Thank you.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: The question now is on the motion, the Calendar Motion 247. Is there discussion?

(pause)

All right. Can Delegate Brick come back to the mic?

BRICK: Thank you, yes.

I move to amend our petition by substituting the following language.

And I'll give it a second, our interpreters have a copy of this, as does the secretary. It is a little bit long, so bear with us.

The substitute legislation would read: Persons who have been terminated, surrendered, or have had their membership and license for ministry revoked by an annual conference, or by one of its legal predecessors, due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or for celebrating a same-gender wedding or union, may have their orders and membership reinstated through the following:

1. The former clergy person prior to May 15, 2025, shall request in writing to the chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry and bishop to have their full membership, provisional membership, or license for ministry reinstated and their ordination or consecration certificate returned in the annual conference in which they previously held membership or through which they were licensed or its legal successor.
2. The Board of Ordained Ministry, shall approve the request by two-thirds vote and recommend to the clergy session the reinstatement of the former clergyperson.
3. The clergy session may approve reinstatement of the former clergyperson by a two-thirds vote. A two-thirds affirmative vote shall reinstate the clergyperson immediately, and the individual may receive an appointment; either at interim if one is available, or in the next appointment cycle if reinstatement is less than 120 days prior to the new appointment year. If these three occur, the individual shall be reinstated and given membership and ordination certificates and is a member at the status of their previous membership—full member, provisional member, local pastor—with all the rights and privileges of that membership. They shall also receive an ordination or provisional certificate equal to the certificate that the individual surrendered. If a Board of Ordained Ministry or a clergy session does not reinstate an individual because of conscience, an individual may request or the bishop may request that the individual may be reviewed by another annual conference. In such an instance, if additional time is needed to make this second request, the request period may be extended from May 1, 2025 to November 15, 2025.

This legislation shall take effect immediately following the 2020 General Conference—postponed General Conference.

Bishop, if I have a second, I will speak to it.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: You have a second. Could you hold on a second. Does the secretary have a copy of that?

BRICK: I submitted one about four days ago.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of General Conference): As the secretary, I am not sure where that was submitted. But it is not on my desk and it is not on my computer right now. And anything of this length is very difficult to process without people having it in print. So, I think, Bishop, we do have to have that in consideration.

BRICK: Thank you, I have handed one to a page.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: OK, Delegate Brick, it has been moved and seconded to substitute the Calendar Item 247 with the text you have read and provided. Therefore we will process this and get it in writing and put this on the agenda for tomorrow. So can you bring that substitute motion to the secretary so that we can make sure that we get it before the delegates in a way that they can process it and so it can also be translated.

BRICK: It is already done, Bishop. I have handed it to a page. Thank you.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you, then.

Committee on Journal

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: The next item of business is some of our Administrative Committee reports. The next administrative committee report is the Committee on Journal report. The chair recognizes the chair of the Committee on Journal, Rachel Miller.

RACHEL MILLER (West Ohio, Chair of the Committee on Journal): Thank you, Bishop. I am Rachel Miller, an Ordained Deacon from Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in the West Ohio Conference, where my husband, Dennis, serves as pastor. And just like many of your congregations, my home church is praying for each one of you this morning.

As for our report from the Committee on the Journal, the errata can be found on p. 2258 of today's *DCA*, May 2, volume 5, no. 9. I am thrilled to share that we only have one correction to report from the *DCA*, volume 5, no. 8, p. 2250. Additional nominations for the Commission on the General Conference, we left off a last name for a candidate. Dave Uriel should be listed as "Dave Uriel Rombaoa." This concludes our report for this morning.

Committee on Presiding Officers

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you. The next report is the report of Committee of 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): *Magandang umaga po!*

(applause)

That's "Good Morning" in Filipino, and our Filipino friends near where we are sitting taught me that this morning. So, thank you! Good morning!

ALL: Good morning!

SMOTHERS: Yes! This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. My name is Rev. Jasmine Rose Smothers. I am clergy, African American, female, an adult delegate from the North Georgia Conference in the United States. My pronouns are she/her.

Audun Westad and I have the privilege of leading the Committee on Presiding Officers.

AUDUN WESTAD (Norway, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Presiding Officers): Good morning! My name is Audun Westad. I am a lay delegate from the Norway Annual Conference. So (*speaking in German*). Dear friends, we want to thank the Bishops Lewis, Saenz, Hauptert-Johnson, and Harvey for leading us through a truly historic day yesterday.

(*applause*)

SMOTHERS: We are excited about today's leadership and look forward to your partnership with our presiding officers so that we can make our way through the remaining legislations and reports.

Tomorrow, we will welcome Bishop Cynthia Moore-KoiKoi from the Northeastern Jurisdiction, Bishop Karen Oliveto from the Western Jurisdiction, Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer from the Northcentral [Jurisdiction], and our new Council of Bishops President, Bishop Tracey Smith Malone from the Northcentral Jurisdiction to close us out.

WESTAD: So, dear friends, remember to speak slowly, concisely, respectfully, and directly into the microphone as we do our work today, and do our cooperation with each other and with the presiding officers. Thank you, and we'll see again you tomorrow.

(*applause*)

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you for that report. All right, we do have someone in the pool for a point of information/a point of inquiry. Anthony Dioh at mic. 1.

ANTHONY DIOH (Liberia): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Anthony Dioh from the Liberia Annual Conference. Bishop, there is a new something I am observing at this General Conference, and that is clergy, delegates introducing themselves and saying their pronouns. May I know what the meaning of this new introduction and the rationale? Thank you.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: I'm going to ask one of our folks from monitoring to come and share because they have asked us to give specific information about ourselves as we come forward, and, of course, people have the choice as to how people identify themselves. Monitoring team, would either Judge Wiggins Hare or—mic. 4. Judge Wiggins Hare, General Secretary of COSROW.

WIGGINS HARE: Thank you, Bishop. And thank you for the opportunity to answer the question.

The rules of the General Conference require that when you approach a microphone for the record, you have your name, the annual conference that you serve—from which you're elected, and your status as either lay or clergy. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Religion and Race are charged, under *The Book of Discipline*, with collecting data and challenging the church for full inclusion.

We have asked you to, voluntarily, include identifying information because it is not included in your registration for General Conference. But, if you voluntarily include that identifying information, it raises

the standard of our work and keeps us from making assumptions. So, that has been our voluntary request to lift up the quality of our work.

Perhaps in the future it could be included in registration, and that would be helpful to our work and to the body. I trust that that is sufficient, Bishop.

BISHOP BIGHAM-TSAI: Thank you, General Secretary. Friends, the time for the next order of the day has arrived. The order of the day is a break. Delegates and friends, we have reached the time where we are going to take a little time away, and then resume. And when we resume, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett—

(applause)

—will be our presiding officer. And I want to thank you, first of all, for your patience and your grace as I have sat in this seat for the first time.

(applause)

And thank you so much for the good work that you are doing. You are living into a new way of being church. God bless you. We will recess until 10:22 A.M.

Plenary 2

BISHOP DEBRA WALLACE-PADGETT: Called back to order. The session is now called back to order. I am Debra Wallace-Padgett, a White female, who before becoming a bishop served for thirty years in ministry in the Kentucky Conference.

(cheers)

Nearly twelve year ago, upon being elected as a bishop, I had the privilege of being assigned to the North Alabama Conference, where I am currently serving. In 2021 the Holston Conference was added to my responsibilities, and I continue to serve there, as well. And I want you to know that it is truly a joy to serve the churches and the clergy and the laity of these two amazing conferences.

I stand in awe at the opportunity to serve Jesus Christ, the church, and world through United Methodism. God's prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace are pillars in my life. The past few years have not been easy for any of us, have they? And I won't even start to name the reasons why because they vary from person to person. But it has been a challenging time. Yet there have been so many blessings along the way. And I know that if the floor was open for people to share the blessings that they have and are experiencing that come from our God, there would be many.

A scripture verse that I have turned to many times in recent years is from Romans 15:13. I hope it speaks to you, whatever your life situation, background, theological perspective, blessings, and challenges.

Here's how the verse goes: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

Will you say that with me?

May the God of hope

ALL: May the God of hope

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: fill you with all joy and peace

ALL: fill you with all joy and peace

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: in believing

ALL: in believing

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: so that you may abound in hope

ALL: so that you may abound in hope

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: by the power of the Holy Spirit.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Let us pray together. God, you have extended hope to unlikely persons throughout the ages. People like Abraham and Sarah, the prophet Deborah—or the prophetess Deborah—and the prophet Jeremiah, and so many others. And then you sent the greatest manifestation of hope this world has ever known through Jesus Christ your son. God, this body of delegates, bishops, and observers believe in forgiveness, new life, mercy, and justice made possible through Christ. Thank you for your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to know your presence and abound with hope. In the strong name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

I want to also introduce my backup bishops for this morning. You've seen them on the platform already. They are excellent presiders, Bishop David Bard and Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey. And having the opportunity to collaborate with them, if needed, is truly a gift. So this body has already done a lot of work, and we have more to do. So, are you ready?

All right! Let's go!

We're going to continue the elections process. You did very well at that yesterday. You became quicker and quicker and more and more adept as the afternoon wore on. And so, I'm confident that we will move through these in good fashion. You'll see on the platform Laura Jaquith Bartlett. She was here yesterday as well. She is the person who has shepherded the nominating process for us, so she will be very, very helpful to us.

Election of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: So, let's turn now to the nominees for the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. And this is found on pp. 2079 and 2080 of the *DCA*. 2-0-7-9 and 2-0-8-0 of the *DCA*. And please if you will also note the correction on p. 2195, adding the name of Gary Weaver, a clergyperson from the Northeastern Jurisdiction. This is a yes or no vote to approve all the names as they are printed. And so the ballot is now open, and you see the names on the screen. Please vote now.

(pause)

And this is a yes or no vote. So please vote yes or no.

(pause)

OK, it looks like we're finished for the most part. We still have some votes coming in.

(pause)

And I'm not seeing any checkered flags, so everyone's voting devices appear to be working.

(pause)

And votes are continuing to arrive here on the screen.

(pause)

Yes or no.

(pause)

It looks like we've received all the votes, so the ballot is now closed, and I would ask that the results be shown on the screen. OK. You have elected the members of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. And the total number of votes was 670. 641 yes; 29 no. That's 95.67 percent yes, and 4.33 percent no.

[Yes, 641; No, 29]

(pause)

So we're going to confer right here for just a moment. Take deep breaths.

(pause)

OK. I'm going to ask the secretary to clarify for you a question that came from the floor related to this ballot that we just took.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): Thank you, Bishop. As you look on p. 2079—2079—which is where you were instructed to look before we took the ballot, you will find that the last name on the laity list on p. 2079 is Mele Maka of the Western Jurisdiction. As the voting device slides were being prepared, Mele's name was inadvertently left off the slide, but because she is properly nominated and on p. 2079, I believe, Bishop, we—you would include that was a valid ballot in an election for Mele Maka.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Yes, that was a valid ballot.

Election of the Commission on the General Conference

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Now we're going to turn to the election of members of the Commission on General Conference. The names are printed on 2196 and 2197 of the *DCA*, as well as additional names on p. 2250. We will again use majority voting, but these votes are going to be a little bit different. The member of the commission is populated by specific positions. Because the *Discipline* directed us to take nominations from the floor, which we did earlier this week, it means that for some of these positions the number of nominees is greater than the number of persons who can hold the position, so we will be doing a series of ballots to determine which person on that particular ballot is elected to that particular position.

And because we've not been able to elect members of the commission since 2016, we are working with two classes, the class of 2028 and the class of 2032. So, for each of these ballots, you will be voting for just one name. We'll begin with the position for the West Africa Central Conference, class of 2028. You will vote for one name. The ballot is open. Please vote now. For how many names?

ALL: One.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results.

346 votes were needed to elect out of 690 ballots cast. There has been an election. Isa Dunah has been elected.

[Isa Dunah elected, 472 votes]

(applause)

OK, thank you. And next is the position for the North Central Jurisdictional Conference, the class of 2028. You'll vote for one name. The ballot is now open. Please vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results on the screen.

You can see there was 681 ballots cast. Needed for election were 341. There has been an election. Andrew Call is elected for the North Central Jurisdictional Conference position, class of 2028.

[Andy Call elected, 507 votes]

And thank you for holding your applause. That's really helpful.

Next is the position for the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, class of 2028. You'll vote for one name. The ballot is open. Please vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed, and we ask that the results be shown.

678 ballots were cast. 340 were needed to elect. There has been an election: Dawn Taylor-Storm with the Northeastern Jurisdiction, class of 2028.

[Dawn Taylor-Storm elected, 481 votes]

Now before we continue, we have someone at mic. 3. Will you please state your name?

ANDY CALL (East Ohio): I will. Good morning, Bishop. Andy Call, East Ohio Conference, clergy, White, adult, cisgendered male, he/him. I rise to a point of inquiry. I believe that on the previous ballot Connor Prusha was listed incorrectly; he is in fact from the North Central Jurisdiction but he should be in the classification of young adult according to *Discipline* paragraph 511.1. We have a separate category for young adult.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: So will you get closer to mic.? We were able to hear some of what you said but not all of it.

CALL: Yes, thank you, Bishop. On the previous ballot. Sorry, you're not able to hear, so I'll just pause.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Ok, come just a little closer.

CALL: We can hear it loudly here; you just can't hear at your speaker.

(laughter)

GRAVES: It's a statement for the audio team: our monitors—the audio monitors are not picking up the floor mic. at this point.

CALL: Can you hear me now, Bishop?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Yes, that's much better. Thank you.

CALL: Excellent, thank you. Andy Call, clergy, East Ohio. I believe on the previous ballot, the name of Connor Prusha was misclassified. He is a young adult from the North Central Jurisdiction, and according to paragraph 511.1, the commission shall include a young adult. I believe that is a separate category, Bishop.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK, let me turn here and confer.

Thank you for that clarification. He was not nominated as a young adult. He was nominated for the North Central Jurisdiction. Thank you for your inquiry, though. Let's move now to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference, class of 2028. You will vote for one name. The ballot is now open. Please vote now for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results on the screen. You can see that there were 686 ballots cast; 344 votes needed to elect. There has been an election: Ra'Gene DeAndre Johnson, with 466 votes, has been elected to the Commission on the General Conference for the South Central Jurisdiction, class of 2028.

[DeAndre Johnson elected, 466 votes]

Next is the position for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, class of 2028, and again, you'll vote for one name. The ballot is now open. Please vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results. 690 ballots were cast; 346 votes were needed to elect. There has been an election: Ellen Beasley has been elected to the General Conference Commission for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, class of 2028, with 525 votes.

[Ellen Beasley elected, 525 votes]

And now I'm going to turn to the conference secretary for a point of clarification about some questions that have come this direction.

GRAVES: For those of you who are watching the listing, especially on p. 2196, for the ballot that we just completed, the Southeastern Jurisdictional position for the class of 2028, you will note that there were only two names on that ballot, yet Jim Salley is listed on that page. We had received a word from Jim this morning that he had wished to withdraw his name, and so we didn't want there to be any confusion. We had taken that action, and we wanted to inform the body, in case there were questions.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much. So next is the position for the youth member of the commission, class of 2028. These names are printed on p. 2250 of the *DCA*. As we take this action, we do remind you that none of these nominees are seated delegates, and that there are still multiple understandings of the application of the Judicial Council decision regarding that fact; therefore, the chair acknowledges this as we proceed.

And so the ballot is now open. Vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results. OK, there were 800—or 696 ballots cast, and we need 349 to elect, so there has not been an election. We will need a moment for the voting devices to reset and then we will take another ballot.

(pause)

So we are ready? We're not quite ready, OK.

(pause)

So we're gonna continue, and we're going to vote again for the position of youth member of the commission, class of 2028. This ballot is now open. Please vote for one.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results.

(pause)

There has been an election.

(applause)

We ask that you hold your applause.

There were 698 ballots cast. 350 needed to elect. Elect. Landon Balmos-Ruddock was elected with 353 votes.

[Landon Balmos-Ruddock elected, 353 votes]

Next is the position for the North Central Jurisdictional Conference, class of 3032. 2032.

(laughter)

3032 is a little distance, right? *(indecipherable)* 2032. And so we're now moving to the class of 30—or 2032.

(laughter)

You'll vote for one name. The ballot is open. Please vote now for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please share the results on the screen.

There's been an election. 690 ballots were cast; 346 were needed to elect. Luis Reyes-Rosario has been elected with 361 votes.

[Luis Reyes-Rosario elected, 361 votes]

Let's move now. Excuse me, just one moment.

(pause)

OK, we see a couple of delegates that are asking to be recognized. And so let's hear at mic. 2 what you have to share.

SAMUEL COLE (Liberia): Thank you Bishop. I'm Samuel Cole from Liberia. Just a point of inquiry and information, Bishop. According to paragraph 511.1 on the membership. My concern have to do with the class of 2028. There we say the voting members of the commission shall be elected by the General Conference and shall consist of twenty-five member as follow: one person from each year's jurisdiction. One person from each of the seven central conferences. So we look to the class of 2028 for central conferences, those that were elected is that only have five persons that was elected. And the rules says seven. Moreover, there we have one young adult and for the class of 2028, there is no young adult elected. Will there be nomination accepted from the floor to elect a young adult delegate to that position and will there nomination be from the floor to accept the two additional central conferences nomination?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Okay. Thank you for that question.

(pause)

I'm gonna turn to our conference secretary for a response. Thank you.

COLE: Thank you, Bishop.

GRAVES: Thank you, those are accurate numbers but they are not numbers that are applied to each class. They are applied to the overall total membership of twenty-five members. The five that are designated in the class of 2028, the other two positions that you are asking about from the other central conferences are allotted in the class of 2032. So collectively, both classes together have to meet the requirements that you stated, including the fact that there is only one young adult position and that one young adult position has been designated into the class of 2032. There is not an additional young adult category for the class of 2028.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you for your question. And thank you for that clarification. OK, over here, mic. 2. Please state your name.

SALLY HAYNES (Missouri): Sally Haynes, clergy. Missouri. Woman. Adult. I'm making a request that the ballot be open for no more than sixty seconds, trusting that we are ready to vote when it's time and move on to other business.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you, and I appreciate that request. However, we need to make sure that everyone has voice, and it takes a while, even after people have voted for it to all be processed. So I appreciate your request, but I'm going to rule that as not feasible.

OK, let's move on. Now we're ready to look at the position for the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference, class of 2032. You'll vote for one name. The ballot is open. Please vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is closed. Please list the results on the screen. There's been an election. 704 ballots were cast. 353 were needed to elect. And Lydia Muñoz received 418.

[Lydia Muñoz elected, 418 votes]

We're going to now move to the position for the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, class of 2032. You'll vote for one name. The ballot is open. Please vote for one name.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed. Please show the results on the screen. There has been an election. And thank you for holding your applause. There were 707 ballots cast; 354 were needed for election, Jasmine Rose Smothers received 460 votes and has been elected to the class of 2032.

[Jasmine Rose Smothers elected, 460 votes]

You have just one more ballot for the Commission on the General Conference. You can applaud for that if you want.

(applause)

This will be a single ballot to approve all of the remaining nominations for the Commission. These were printed on pp. 2196 and 2197 of the *DCA*, but you can see them all together on the screen. This ballot simply asks you to approve the remaining nominees with a yes or no vote. The ballot is open. Please vote yes or no to approve the remaining nominees.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed, and I invite you to receive the information as it is presented on the screen. And so your General Conference Commission has been elected, and in these remaining votes you can see that there were 671, yes; and 11, no. Will you please express your appreciation to the General Conference members of the commission?

[Yes, 671; No, 11]

(applause)

Now I'm going to turn to our General Conference secretary to provide some further clarification about the commission.

GRAVES: We also wanted to remind you that there is a person who will be named as a voting member of the commission who is the local host committee chairperson, and until it is announced where that will be and that person is selected, that will sit as a vacant seat awaiting that appointment. Also on p. 2074, Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey is listed. That is not an elected position, that's a report from the Council of Bishops as to the bishop who is appointed as the liaison to sit as the ex-officio member of the Commission. And so we just wanted you to have those two pieces of information for the record.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you for that.

Election of General Boards and Agencies

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: And we have one more election. On pp. 2198–2200 of the *DCA* you will find the names for this final election we'll be taking this morning. These are nominations for General Boards and Agencies. The ballot allows for a single Yes or No vote to approve all names of Boards and Agencies as they are printed on pp. 2198–2200. The ballot is now open. Please vote Yes or No.

(pause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Point of information, Madame Chair.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: The rules of order do not allow a ballot to be interrupted, so you'll need to sit down and then register to be recognized. Thank you.

(pause)

So let me again say, the pool will be open after the ballot is completed, and for those who want to be recognized, you will need to register at that point with your devices. And we will continue to recognize people in the way we have in the past after the elections have been completed.

(pause)

The ballot is now closed, and please show the results on the screen. So the General Boards and Agency nominees have been elected. 96 percent, 650 votes yes for those persons. Thank you very much.

[Yes, 650; No, 27]

We've done great work this morning with the nominations. I appreciate each of you and the patience you have shown, and the grace that we are showing to each other throughout this process in the plenary. So, thank you very much. And now we're going to turn to some business items, but first before we do that, we have some people in the speaker pool, and all of them are asking for a point of info inquiry, so let's start with Mark Stephenson, mic. 4 please.

MARK STEPHENSON (California-Pacific): Good morning, Bishop.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Good morning.

STEPHENSON: Mark Stephenson, lay member from the California-Pacific Annual Conference, he/him/his, White, adult, male. In the spirit of inclusion that has been urged by GCORR and COSROW reports all week—

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: May I ask you what your point of inquiry is? No speeches please, just ask your question.

STEPHENSON: Yes. I would like to know how does the slate that has been elected upon align with the disciplinary recommendations of this board as it relates to racial and gender inclusion, specific to GCFA?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you. That's a very good question. Yes, let me ask if the General Secretaries of GCOR and of COSROW have a response to that, and if not, then we will ask them to analyze that and bring a report to the body later while we're here. OK? So I'm looking out for—OK, thank you. Judge Wiggins Hare is coming to mic. 4. And Dr. Giovanni Arroyo is coming as well. And if you do not have that information in this moment, then we will certainly recognize you later, but go ahead. Share with us what you know.

DAWN WIGGINS HARE (Alabama-West Florida, General Secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women): Bishop, thank you. We do have the names in the book, and I believe there was a substitute list, of the gender and the race or ethnicity is not specifically identified, so we would ask for just a few moments to gather that information so that we can be as accurate as possible in our report to the body.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Very good. Thank you. And so, just let us know when you're ready, and we will recognize you.

WIGGINS HARE: Thank you.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much. OK. We have a point of inquiry by Amie Stewart. Amie, if you would come to mic. 2 please.

AMIE STEWART (North Carolina): Amie Stewart, White, female, clergy from North Carolina. I have a question about the petitions that were pulled yesterday, the four. I was wondering if the names of the signatories would be published somewhere, as they have with other petitions?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you for that question. I'm going to turn to the general secretary—to the general secretary to give us that answer. General Conference Secretary?

GRAVES: Who is going to turn to the coordinator of the calendar, who is going to give me an update on—

(pause)

—because you chose to change the words from *consent calendar* to a *bundled set of petitions*—that process for listing those twenty names was not something that was done overnight—we will be able to access that, and we can give you the choice of either reading the lists of the names for the four items that were lifted, or we can print those overnight, and they would be in tomorrow's *DCA*. So those are the two options that we can offer.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much. And now we have another point of inquiry from Terry Walton, and if you will go to mic. 5, please.

TERRY WALTON (North Georgia): Is mic. 6 OK, Bishop?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Mic. 6 is just fine.

WALTON: Thank you, Bishop. Terry Walton, clergy, adult, male, older adult, he/him/his. I have a question on behalf of local pastors. When, do you have a sense, we will be addressing Petition No. 552 on voting rights for full-time and part-time local pastors?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: So let me turn to the coordinator at the calendar to respond to that. I know we discussed it some in the breakfast meeting this morning, but the Coordinator can give more specific information.

WALTON: Thank you. I meant to say Calendar Item 552, if I misspoke.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Calendar Item 552.

(pause)

GRAVES: As we received the report from the Committee on the Agenda and Calendar with projected orders of the items that are included to be covered before we adjourn tomorrow, this is Item No. 26 on the list.

WALTON: Do we have an idea of—we just don't know—it's just not something that's going to fall of the table, is it?

GRAVES: Everything that we are required to vote on by paragraph 507:10–11, will be cared for. The question as to how long it takes to get there really depends upon the floor action and the timing for every item between now and then.

WALTON: Thank you.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you for your inquiry. I'm going to turn now to Charles Boayue for a point of info and inquiry, mic. 5. Or 6.

CHARLES BOAYUE (Michigan): Thank you, Bishop. Charles Boayue, Michigan Conference. My inquiry is on the vote we just took on the Council of Bishops nominations to General Agencies and Boards of The United Methodist Church. I see in the list of those elected, references to "Africa Region." Two questions: Is there such a thing as "Africa Region" or "Philippines Region" at this General Conference, or is this an aspiration toward the ratification of constitutional amendments? Second, is the reference to "Africa Region," if it is not to the future—because Africa will not have one region by the action of the General Conference this time—is it an attempt to bundle up all of the central conferences in Africa and give them limited representation on the General Agencies of the church? One example might be on the General Council on Finance and Administration, we have from the jurisdictions of the United States an overwhelming number of persons elected from one country as compared to just three from the rest of the world. I'm not calling for us to un-do our action—

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK, I'm going to ask you to stop. You've asked your inquiry, and I'm going to turn to our secretary, Rev. Gary Graves, to respond. So this is a time for questions but not speeches. So thank you. Yes?

GRAVES: There are multiple places in which there is a reference to one person being named from Africa, one from the Philippines and one from Europe and Eurasia, and so those would be individual listings within each of the boards and agencies and the requirements that are called for by *The Discipline*.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much for your inquiry, and now I'm going to turn to Yeabu Kamara for a point of information or inquiry.

(*pause*)

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK. That person must have decided that they did not have any more questions. So—wait just a moment.

(*pause*)

YEABU KAMARA (Sierra Leone): Hello?

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Hello. Now I see you. Yes. Please go ahead. At mic. 5.

KAMARA: I am Yeabu Kamara from the Annual Conference of Sierra Leone. And from Rotifunk, where you had a lot of missionaries. And I am a God-made she. My question is, are we rewriting, you see, The United Methodist Church rewriting the Bible?

(*pause*)

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: I'm going to take that as a rhetorical question. So thank you very much. And I'm going to move on to Manuel Rodrigues. Mic. 4. Manuel?

MANUEL RODRIGUES (Western Angola): *Bom dia*, Bishop.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Yes. There you are.

RODRIGUES: (*simultaneous translation from Portuguese*) Good morning, Bishop. Once again, I am Manuel Rodrigues, layperson from West Angola Annual Conference. I'm a young adult. My pronouns is he. My intervention, Bishop, has to do with what we are doing here. Yesterday, we have approved group of items, including some that I will specify. 548 and others. The issue is, these are the petitions. Petitions are not inclusive to many regions beyond America. Such as Asia, Philippines, and others. And so I want to know—

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you, thank you. Will you ask your question?

RODRIGUES: (*simultaneous translation from Portuguese*) I have not made my question, Bishop. I'm now to bring the question. Once approved, the regionalization that allows for the regions of The United Methodist Church can deliberate on their issues, the question is when and how will this petitions be implemented? Furthermore, how are we... are we still going to create a globally United Methodist Church *Book of Discipline*. Thank you.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK. Thank you very much for your question. And we did pass regionalization by a large margin here in the General Conference session. That's step one. Step two is for it to go back to our annual conferences and for the lay and clergy members of the annual conference to vote. That requires a two-thirds aggregate vote. It will likely be 2026 before we have all that information. If it is approved by a two-thirds majority aggregate vote, then regionalization will be a part of who we are. So thank you for your point of enquiry.

And now I turn to Arnaldo Estrella, mic. 2, please for a point of info and inquiry.

ARNALDO ESTRELLA (Northwest Mindanao Philippines): Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm Arnaldo Estrella from Northwest Mindanao Philippines Annual Conference. Clergy delegate. Male. My pronouns are he, his, and him. I rise to rectify the elected name of the Board, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry representing the Philippines. The name, it's printed in our *Daily Christian Advocate* p. 2191. The name "Rodal Acdul" should "Rodel Acdal".

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much, and if you'll bring that information here to the front and that would be really helpful. Have a page deliver it here. Thank you, very much.

ESTRELLA: Thank you.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK, we have another point of info/inquiry by Bill Brownson, mic. 3.

BILL BROWNSON (West Ohio): So very sorry. I didn't realize I was still in the pool.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: OK. Thank you. Then we have one more point of info/inquiry. And then we're going to need to move to another matter and take our lunch break. And so I would ask L Olandor Boyce to go to mic. 1. Thank you. L Olandor Boyce.

L OLANDOR BOYCE (Liberia): Bishop, yesterday, we had a potential consent calendar bundle on our list. Four items were removed, and I want to know when those items be brought back on the floor for discussion? And, secondly, I requested a declaratory decision yesterday, and I also want to know when it will be brought back on the floor. In terms of the judicial council ruling. Thank you.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you very much. And I will turn to our secretary to respond to both of those.

GRAVES: As far as the request for declaratory decision, we issue that to the Judicial Council and provide any of the items that have been requested. They go into deliberations, and when they have reached a decision, they will issue it to us. We do not have a timeline as to when that will occur. It will occur when it is finished. We do, what was the other part of the question? When will we get to the items? We will follow the agenda and calendar listing and they will be coming to give us a report and tell us as each action goes. The person in the chair will be guiding that.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: Thank you, very much.

Announcements

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: And now I am going to recognize, again, the secretary of the General Conference, Gary Graves, to provide any announcements.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. Our first item is to let you know that the Cokesbury store that is part of our exhibit hall in Hall A will be closing tomorrow, Friday, at 1:30 P.M. so that they can start the process of packaging everything up that you haven't yet purchased. I don't know if there's a sale, but you can find out if you head over to the Cokesbury store between now and then. They will be closing tomorrow at 1:30 P.M.

Today, during lunch, we will be having our Holy Communion service at the prayer room E222. And the leaders for today are Bishop Delores Williamston and Bishop Carcaño.

We do want lift up to you an important announcement for us with our grouping. We have pages and marshals who have been serving with us for time immemorial. They have been bringing things to you. They have been answering when you wave your black-and-white checkered fans. They have been making sure that we get to the right places. They do everything. Those pages and marshals are volunteers who have not only given their time and energy, but who have also covered own full cost of coming to General Conference and participating during these two weeks. Today is when you can say thank you to them as you help them with those expenses. You are invited to express your appreciation through a love offering that will be available to you at the exit doors when you depart for the lunch recess. And if you don't have anything with you and you want to get it to them, we will still take it afterwards.

For those who were just elected to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and for those outgoing members, you will be having lunch today in the Richardson Ballroom A and B, which is directly above us. And before we move any further, I would like to ask Bishop Rückert to come and recognize some of our members.

BISHOP HARALD RÜCKERT: (*speaking in German*) Good morning, Bishop Harald Rückert, Germany Central Conference, still. It is a deep desire for me to stand here, again, not to present any petitions but to say thank you to the members of the outgoing Standing Committee. The members of the outgoing Standing Committee were working for eight years, now. And they did a tremendous amount of work during this time. Most of the work has been presented to us during this General Conference. The Africa Comprehensive Plan, the accompanying of Eurasia on an amicable way out of The United Methodist Church, and all of the work around *The General Book of Discipline*. Thank you for your expertise and commitment and your engagement in these very important and serious matters. And lastly, there was a tremendous work around this worldwide regionalization. And it was always in the Standing Committee a spirit of collaboration between regions of our church around the globe, and it was also the spirit of collaboration with other groups in our church.

Therefore, especially, the petitions around worldwide regionalization, they were combined or they tried to combine and bring together the work that already has been done in the Standing Committee. The tremendous work that has been done on the Connectional Table. And the work that has been done from the Christmas Covenant people. And so, more than the petitions that have been brought to you at General Conference, I think the spirit of collaboration was so important. And also, we have decided many of those petitions and approved them. But we have to keep the spirit of collaboration. So once again, I want to thank all of you on the Standing Committee, those outgoing members.

I would like to thank all the people on the Connectional Table that have collaborated with the Standing Committee. And all those people from the Christmas Covenant that have also engaged.

Let us continue to work together, collaboratively in order to move our church forward into a future where all people are included, and we really become a worldwide church. Again, thank you Standing Committee members. And, as you heard, you are invited to join us when we have our organizational meeting right at this lunch time. Again, thank you so much. Goodbye.

BISHOP WALLACE-PADGETT: And thank you very much. We appreciate all of your work and leadership, Bishop. I want to express my appreciation to each of you for the opportunity to serve as your presiding

officer this morning. You have been gracious. You've been kind. We have accomplished work, and I am grateful for you.

I want to again thank my backup team with Bishop Bard and Bishop Fierro Harvey. They both are tremendous leaders in our church. So friends, and delegates, we have reached the time for a recess. We will take a recess until 1:30 P.M. When we resume, Bishop David Graves will be in the chair. Go in God's peace.