

# Proceedings

Afternoon Proceedings for May 3

## Plenary 1

BISHOP GREGORY V. PALMER: Brother Trapp and team, we are grateful. And if it hadn't been for the Lord standing by all of us, where would we be?

Friends, it's great to see you this afternoon, and as you are making your way to a seated position, especially if you're a delegate, if I could invite you to just cease your conversations so that we can get underway.

I'm Gregory Vaughn Palmer, and I currently serve as the resident bishop in the West Ohio Conference.

*(cheers)*

And amen. And, but I got friends all over the place. And I've been to other conferences, so I've seen a lot of places and seen a lot of faces. So it's been, and it's been a wonderful ride and I hope it will continue as I continue to journey into the next, the next season.

I'd like to say in advance a word of gratitude to Bishops Merrill and Fairley, respectively of the Louisville and Little Rock areas. I put that in reverse order. But Bishop Merrill is in Arkansas and Bishop Fairley in the Louisville area. And we formed or were formed into a triad at the beginning of this work. And at least one of them said, Well, do you need me this afternoon? And I said I'm going home with same date I came with. So bear with me this afternoon and I'm grateful for them and grateful for all of the colleagues who've preceded me and for the one who will succeed me in the chair this afternoon.

Now I want to say we need to work thoughtfully, together. I'm gonna work with you 'cause I don't have any choice. Because I already work for you. Have I got any witnesses in the house? If you're a bishop in The United Methodist Church, you work for the people of The United Methodist Church. But I do want to throw a seed out—I need you to work with me and I will help you and you'll help—we'll help one another to move this along, not slavishly but thoughtfully. And I have asked of our leadership in our Secretary of General Conference, Pastor Graves, is the 6:30 thing at all amendable or revocable, and it is not. But here's what I did ask: I said, Is there any penalty for finishing early? Let me say that one more—you weren't listening—yeah, Is there any, any penalty if this house finished before 6:30?

ALL: No!

BISHOP PALMER: I'm just, I'm just a sower and I went out and I'm scattering seeds, generously. There is no condemnation or penalty if you finish ahead of schedule and under budget. Amen?

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP PALMER: Amen. The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

BISHOP PALMER: In these moments of God, grant that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts, that they might indeed find acceptance in thy sight, O Thou who art our rock and redeemer. Let every believing heart say amen.

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, very much.

## Recognition of Staff and Volunteers

I think our first order this afternoon is to tend to some recognition and we want to recognize the General Conference staff and the Local Host Committee. And so I want to turn to the Rev. Pastor Gary Graves, who has now for eight years been the Secretary of the General Conference. And I want you to first join me in giving your expression of appreciation to Pastor Graves.

*(applause)*

BISHOP PALMER: And Brother Gary is going to be partnered with the business manager of the General Conference. Sara, how long have you been the business manager? Twelve? Twelve years? Twelve years. Our sister in Christ, Sara Hotchkiss.

*(applause)*

And together they will guide us in appropriate recognition for others who have served.

SARA HOTCHKISS (Business Manager of the General Conference): I am Sara Hotchkiss. My pronouns are she/her/hers. Female, White, lay. And just an adult. Born and raised in the state of Iowa—

*(cheers)*

Yea! And now I'm in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference.

*(cheers)*

I am honored to be your business manager of the General Conference. Welcome to the last day of the postponed 2020 General Conference. Yea—I think we need to celebrate this.

*(cheers)*

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): And the regular 2024 General Conference. It's multipurpose!

*(laughter)*

HOTCHKISS: Yes. So we're here to celebrate the people that have helped plan 2020, 2021, 2022, and, finally, 2024.

GRAVES: Before we thank all the teams here in Charlotte, we do need to take a moment and dial back history to thank the Minnesota and Dakotas Local Host Committee.

*(applause)*

They were chaired by Jim Haun and Becky Boland. Jim and Becky, along with Bishop Ough, Bishop Bard as they prepared for many years, stood with us and made adjustments as we had postponement after

postponement after redrawing after postponements all the way through the pandemic and the years that followed. So we do want to thank them for all of the work they have done on our behalf.

HOTCHKISS: I want to say a thank you, and also bring up my Western North Carolina and North Carolina Joint Host Team Leads, Wanda Musgrave and Trish Archer. They also have shared in leadership with Nicole Jones, Emily Ennis, Bishop Carter, and Bishop Shelton. Thank you all for the amazing work and with the short time period to show radical hospitality. What an amazing team you put together and those that said yes to be at the airport, the hotels, and the convention centers. I want to bring Wanda and Trish up, please.

*(applause)*

TRISH ARCHER (North Carolina, Co-Chair of the Local Host Team): We want to invite our team to come up and be here.

*(applause)*

Red aprons!

*(applause)*

I'm Trish Archer, clergy, the North Carolina Annual Conference. White, female. My pronouns are she/her/hers.

Serving as the chairs of the local host team has been an incredible experience for Wanda and me. The lead team co-chairs, Emily Ennis and Nicole Jones, and all of these area coordinators have provided excellent leadership to guide, train, and manage over a thousand people serving at General Conference. We would like to thank this wonderful team that gave of their time, their energy, their leadership gifts in preparation for General Conference and also while here in Charlotte.

WANDA MUSGRAVE (Western North Carolina, Co-Chair of the Local Host Team): I'm Wanda Musgrave, a White female, very experienced adult.

*(laughter)*

I want to thank everyone who worked to volunteer a shift or multiple shifts. We want to thank those that are still here to the very end and those that have made their way back home safely.

As a native Charlottean, I hope you have enjoyed what I call my beautiful city. It has been an honor and a pleasure to have you here with us during General Conference. Trish and I and our entire team hope that each of you have experienced the hospitality of the North Carolina United Methodists. But, most importantly, we hope you have felt the love of Christ through the smiling faces of each person who wore a fabulous red apron at General Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: We want to share our thanks with the city of Charlotte CRVA—the Charlotte Regional Visitors Association—and the Visit Charlotte team, along with all of their staff members who have worked countless hours and the staff in all of our hotels, restaurants, and convention center who have worked to make this feel like home away home while you've been gone from home so long.

They have provided us places to meet, beds in which to sleep, even if we weren't there long enough for it really to matter, and food to sustain us throughout this monumental General Conference.

HOTCHKISS: I want to say a thank you to the Commission on the General Conference. Please stand if you are able. If you served on the commission this quadrennium.

*(applause)*

This has not been an easy eight-year quadrennium. And for those who also served four years prior, that's an additional four years.

The loss of commission members that passed and those that left us through this time of turmoil in our church. We grieve the losses of so many we have come to call friends. Thank you to Stephanie Henry for leading us through the Rules and the Ethics committee. And if you served on that—and, Stephanie, come on up—and please stand if you are able if you also have served on the Rules Committee and the Ethics Committee.

Let's give a big thanks for Stephanie.

*(applause)*

And I'm gonna call Lynn Hill up, as well. Lynn has served on the Commission on General Conference for three hundred and fifty-five years.

*(laughter)*

I think he said that he was here with John Wesley. So—

GRAVES: And he told him how long he could talk.

HOTCHKISS: Yes. So, Lynn has served as the Program Committee chair for twelve years. In addition, he serves on the Committee on Agenda and Calendar. So thank you two for being here, working with our team, and, Lynn, it is almost time to go home. Thank you.

*(applause)*

Thank you to the officers of the Commission who all serve as delegates. Kim Simpson. Wow, what amazing, amazing work. Thank you, Kim.

*(applause)*

Rev. Mujinga Kashala, thank you and hours, the time differences, the language, thank you. And our secretary, Ellen Beasley, thank you so much for stepping in and assisting us.

*(applause)*

We also want to thank the other members of our Executive Committee who were unable to be with us, Juliet Spencer and Marie Kuch-Stanovsky, for your leadership on the Commission and the Executive Committee.

And we want to thank, and they're sitting up here I hope, Bishop Bickerton, Bishop Juan, and Bishop Alsted for your service on the commission. Thank you.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: I'm not sure if you are fully aware of putting an item of this magnitude together with a team of four people in our office. We have agencies that have twenties, thirties, forties people who put together activities—we have four people. One elected officer and three staff members. And so, in order to meet all of the needs that we have, we rely on a very talented and gracious group of people who walk alongside of us. Our thanks, first, to all of the groups—we're going to lift them up in each section—so thank you, first to the interpreters who work hour after hour to make sure that our worldwide church can come together.

*(applause)*

Don and the lead team and many of our interpreters who are not over in the booths waving from the windows are here with us. We thank you for lending your voices, your hands, and your written work to help us all work together. So thank you also to the interpreter tech team who have made that whatever is being said is able to be heard. And we want to make sure that we lift up all of those involved in this massive effort.

*(applause)*

HOTCHKISS: We want to thank and bring here Mark and Laura Wharff, along with the leadership team of the pages and marshals. We want to thank—

*(applause)*

Oh, yes. Please.

GRAVES: You can stay. Don, just hang on and start backing up. We'll fill up the stage. Back on up.

HOTCHKISS: Thank you for stepping in when we lost a dear friend and colleague, David Atkinson.

Thank you to the pages and marshals who give up their time, their financial resources to be here to help the body get the work done that we are called here to do. Put up those checkered flags, and pages don't run right now. But—there we go. Thank you so much for helping us. Thank you so much. Thank you.

*(applause)*

And for those that scan and greet you as you arrive and depart, and so much more.

GRAVES: Since we're not taking a ballot at the moment, we'll be able to invite members of our voting tech team to be recognized. It is one thing to work with yes and no votes, and be able to move things quickly. However, they have helped us through completely different nomination processes in which we had double the number of terms to fill because we had to fill classes from '28 and '32 instead of just one time. And so they have walked with us and with the presiding officers so that we can make sure that the speaker recognition system, the voting, and even our voting in the legislative committees was able to happen in a safe and secure way. So thank you to Lumi and the Lumi team.

*(applause)*

HOTCHKISS: Thank you to our production teams. Thank you to all the teams in the plenary that made sure the sound was working, the screens were functioning. I heard one slipped today, so we've got it back up. The cameras to capture to the world what was happening in Charlotte, North Carolina.

*(applause)*

And there is a team and a truck that you can now see. They have a picture to put up on the screen.

*(applause)*

And thank you to the production teams that got us through legislative committee, special meals, meetings, and trainings. And the two teams got together and brought out the big screens for our friends on either side of the plenary floor.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: We would like to recognize the next person, probably not someone who is unknown to you, but somebody who can rock a bow tie. Maurice.

*(applause)*

I was very happy to be able to bring the parliamentarian on to our secretarial team, and Maurice has fit right in. I don't know how we fit with all of your other conventions you work, but I think you've just worked your way right in here and are part of the family at this point. Amen. Amen.

HOTCHKISS: I want to thank our incredible worship and music team led by Raymond Trapp.

*(applause)*

Thank you to all of you who not only planned to be part of the 2020 General Conference but also stepped in for a special session in 2019 and then stayed with us to meet in 2024. Thank you for arranging for the choirs to come, the delegates to lead us in both song and liturgy, for the work you did so the legislative committees had time of devotion, worship, and all the artwork, it's just amazing. And liturgical dance, I think we have one of them on the stage. And on and on I could go. Thank you.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: We also want to lift up our team that works with the *Daily Christian Advocate* and the CALMS computer system. Those folks who work countless hours to not only get you the publications each day but have been working on it for years to pull together the volumes from 2020 throughout the postponement. They help to lead us on a path toward an online *Daily Christian Advocate* interactive website. To the recorders who kept track of all the legislation; to the transcribers who got every word down for the verbatim; and to the Channel B operators who captured the name of everyone who spoke. And for the work that is yet to come through the work of the Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision, and the *DCA* team to work with the book editor and me to make sure that the next edition of *The Book of Discipline* will be out and available and as accurate as possible as soon as possible. So, if you're on any of those teams, if you would stand and come forward, please.

*(applause)*

You all talk a lot and it takes a lot of people to get it all down on paper.

HOTCHKISS: I want to thank the General Agencies that helped us through monitoring, finances, the incredible prayer room ministry, the amazing exhibits, the work with the press and the communicators, the orientations, and so much more. I do want to give a little shout-out to Brenda Smotherman for leading our public relations and managing the pressroom operations.

*(applause)*

And a thank you to our five, count them, five members of our finance team that helped with all the expense reports, the financial transactions, and the offerings, etc. Thank you.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: Coordinating all of the work that happens through the secretarial office, we have a wonderful team that many of them are with us throughout the quadrennium, as we have been working with the Commission and making plans along the way.

So we would like to make sure that we lift up Susan Brumbaugh, coordinator of the calendar, and Abby Parker Herrera, the petitions secretary first.

*(applause)*

Assisting them has been Catherine Boothe Olsen, Ashley Meyer Wilkerson, if they are here. Ashley actually had to go home a little early, so we will be remembering her as well.

Nita Crump has been assisting with credentials and ethics, and Laura Bartlett with elections and credentials as well. So, Nita and Laura.

*(applause)*

Katie Voigt and Greg Cox has been coordinating the work of the recorders, and Sally AsKew has been serving as our Judicial Council liaison. I think she's actually doing that right now, so she's not right here with us.

In the legislative team, in the office, we have Zephora Benson, Yvette Massey, Tess Welch, Jessica Terrell, JD Herrera, and Dana Brady. If you're here, come on up.

*(applause)*

The folks who have been hoping and wishing and praying that you would fill out your attendance forms properly are Kristin Franklin and Joell Stanislaus, in the attendance office.

*(applause)*

Making sure that our reserve delegates are able to check in appropriately, we have Susan Reaves, who had to leave and go home early. We have Danita Anderson and Joe Kenaston. Come on up or wave from the table. There they are. They're in the back.

HOTCHKISS: Thank you to our incredible housing team, connections housing, and our travel agency, CTM. Thank you for not only helping behind the scenes, but also helping us here in Charlotte. And I want to give a special shout-out to Raquel Perez-Molloy, the assistant business manager.

*(applause)*

I am pretty sure I've said multiple times you will want to talk to Raquel, she knows more than me. Thank you for being a team player with me and all you do to keep my head above water. I also want to do a special shout-out to my fellow preachers' kids helping me this week: the Mulenga sisters and Grace Kiboko.

*(applause)*

I truly do not know how many relatives Grace has here, so if you want to wave if you're related to Grace, you can do that as part of the General Conference. I think—over there, yes. I'm not sure I would know what day it is without Grace, so thank you.

GRAVES: Making sure that we have been able to make these systems work has been the backbone of our conference, the incredible information technology team that has been led by Douglas Ward, and—she actually typed "sidekick" here, Michael. I don't know. We'll go with that. Michael Murphy-McCarthy.

*(applause)*

We are very happy that they brought along with them many of the member of UMITA, the United Methodist Information Technology Association, or whatever the "A" stands for, I think that's what it is. Some who are current members, some who have been with them for quite a bit of time, They have all been here crawling around on the floor, taping things down, chasing down everything, and catching those of you who brought big ole Wi-Fi networks to build at your table.

So, we are making sure that all of the things that we have and that we need to be able to function, power, internet, database scanning—without this team, none of that would have been possible.

*(applause)*

HOTCHKISS: And also, a special thanks to Rachel and Phoebe working in our office and holding that door down in 103, come on up. Thank you so much.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: In addition to our family that you see on the stage, we have families who have been supporting us throughout the entire time. I count my work family, Kelly, if you would stand, Kelly McDonald is the executive assistant to the secretary of the General Conference.

*(applause)*

And my wife, Jennifer, who has been here and has been standing everywhere along the way and traveling as much as possible. We want to make sure that we lift up our families and the sacrifices that they have made so that we've been able to serve you.

*(applause)*

HOTCHKISS: And I want to thank my husband, Andy, and my girls, Jackie and Lilly, I wouldn't be able to do what I do—

*(applause)*

This is just the start. Jackie's graduating this year, so I'm getting warmed up.



*(crowd response)*

GRAVES: I thought Andy made you cry.

HOTCHKISS: And my deepest apology if I missed anyone. It truly takes all of you, all of you in here, to assist us together. Thank you.

*(applause)*

OK, this one's harder, so I'll do my best. So, I want to take a moment of special privilege to thank Gary Graves, the secretary of the General Conference. I may have to have some—no, Kelly, it's not going to help.

Gary has been a part of the General Conference since 1992. Is that the right year?

GRAVES: That's the right year.

HOTCHKISS: Yes, I listened. When it was hosted in Louisville, Kentucky. I can't even start to count the number of petitions he has entered into the system over the years of his service as the petitions secretary. Gary, you have not only been a colleague to me, but a friend. Wow.

*(applause)*

We have traveled many miles together. We have helped plan this Postponed General Conference four times now. You have been a gift to the General Conference for over thirty years. It's been a joy and a privilege to serve with you, and to spend some extra time with your spouse, Jen, who I knew before I knew you, who happens to be my sorority sister. I wish you all the best in your next adventure, but please still pick up the phone, please text back. So the team has put together a small gift for you, and I'd like to include some of the few quotes that are included.

"Gary, it has been a joy to see how you have remained steady in the face of so much since 2016. You have held your head high in one of the highest positions of the church and I, for one, am thankful and grateful for your work and service to the church. May God continue to bless you in the next chapter of your ministry. If you find yourself with some down time and the itch to preach, you are welcome at both of my churches." Robert Amundsen.

Thank you, Robert.

"Good luck finding better coworkers than us! I'm grateful my grandmother answered your call. Live the journey, for every destination is but a doorway to another." Zephorah Benson.

"Thank you for serving as Secretary for the Commission on the General Conference. Only those who have served in the position can truly understand the demands. Go with God's blessing in the future ministries. You are bad to the bone!" Michael Watts.

And then, last, but definitely not least.

"Gary has never been afraid to be himself regardless of what is happening around him. I have always appreciated his contagious joy for life." Bishop Leonard Fairley.

And so, Bishop, I would ask if you could assist us in praying and hold our hands out to Gary. Thank him for his service.

BISHOP PALMER: Let's stretch our hands toward Brother Gary in thanksgiving to God and gratitude to him as well.

Gracious and eternal God, we thank you for the myriad of ways in which you invite us to serve the only cause that really matters; namely, your love unfolding more and more each and every day, as seen through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And a church in mission and on the move to partner with you in helping your new creation to become reality. For the ways in which a General Conference of The United Methodist Church enables that, we give you thanks and praise, and we are absolutely certain that without servant leadership of so many, but especially as we have seen in Gary Graves, it would not be possible for us to be nearly the General Conference that you would hope for. But with such servant leadership, high devotion, deep commitment, and hard work, Gary and others have enabled us and our predecessors before us to more nearly resemble being church when we gather in Christian conference in places like this.

As he turns the page and enters into a new season of ministry, we pray abundant blessings upon him and his family; that you would help him to be steadfast and immovable in the work of the gospel; and that by your power and his deep devotion to you, you would make him faithful, effective, and fruitful in his next stage of ministry. That the people he serves, in whatever the setting or configuration, may see your love bursting forth from every pore of his, with every word that he speaks, with every action and with every gesture. So, God, we ask that you bless him and Jennifer, their wide circle of family and friends, and bless them real, real good as only you can. We ask this now with confidence and with hope, in the strong name of Jesus. Let us together say,

ALL: Amen.

*(applause)*

GRAVES: Thank you.

HOTCHKISS: Thanks again, teams. It took a lot of you, and we needed every one of you, so thank you so much.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Gary and Sara, and all of these volunteers and staff that you have called to the stage. Our lives are enriched when we are a grateful people for every good and perfect gift that comes our way.

I did whisper while all of this, as people kept flowing to the stage, I leaned over to Brother Maurice, and I said, "Knowing how many delegates we have, and then watching the stage fill up, I said, I wonder what the ratio is of how many of us needs to be managed by one of them." So, it'd be a great math problem for those of you that like that. But is sign and symbol that we do do it together and we cannot and should not attempt to do it alone. So, thank you very much.

## Calendar Items

BISHOP PALMER: Friends, we are now at the place where we need to return to calendar items. And I understand that we are to be on Calendar Item 454, and I am recognizing Lisa Schubert Nowling from the Committee on Faith and Order to present our first calendar item for this session.

*(applause)*

LISA SCHUBERT NOWLING (Indiana): *Merci, évêque. Jambo!*

BISHOP PALMER: *Jambo!*

SCHUBERT NOWLING: *(speaking in several languages)*

*(simultaneous interpretation from French)* clergy from the Indiana Conference and responsible for the Faith and Order.

Good afternoon, my name is Lisa Schubert Nowling. I am clergy from the Indiana Conference and I am the chair of the Faith and Order Legislative Committee. I am clergy, White, female, adult. And I use the pronouns she/hers.

This afternoon I would like to turn your attention to Calendar Item 454. 454, which is located on p. 2178 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*. That's Calendar Item 454 on p. 2178 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*. And that is Petition No. 20173. 20173 on p. 623 of the ADCA. 20173 on p. 623 of the ADCA. This petition is entitled, "'Chastity' instead of 'Celibacy.'"

The committee's motion is to adopt this petition as amended.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The matter is before the house, and there's some people that have already registered into the pool to speak. I want to call on Mitchell Hedgepeth with an other parliamentary matter that they would like to get in front of us.

I don't know the microphone. Can I see that? OK. There it is. OK. My eyes. Mic. 6.

*(pause)*

MITCHELL HEDGEPEETH (Mississippi): I'm Mitchell Hedgepeth. Male, Mississippi Conference, clergy.

Bishop, I would like to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council regarding the following, if it is in order.

BISHOP PALMER: I promise to come back to you, but I think we need to give every due consideration to this. And then if you'll get back in, I'll try to not lose sight of you, OK?

HEDGEPEETH: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. All right. Other voices wishing to speak?

I've got Sheila Faye Binuya, Binuva. And correct me when you get there. Other parliamentary concern. Mic. 4.

SHEILA FAYE BINUYA (Bulacan Philippines): Good afternoon, Bishop. I'm Sheila Faye Binuya. A deaconess, a laywoman, from the Philippines Central Conference. I rise also for a petition the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision.

BISHOP PALMER: So, I think we better come back to requests for declaratory decision unless they really help us to get into the essence of the matter before us. OK? So, you and Brother Hedgepeth, I'll try to not lose sight of if you'll get back in the pool.

BINUYA: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Let me come to DeAndre Johnson at mic. 2 with an attempt to amend. Where is no. 2? Over here, OK.

DEANDRE JOHNSON (Texas): I'm going to use mic. 4, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, go right ahead.

JOHNSON: Wonderful. DeAndre Johnson. Clergy, Texas Conference, Black male.

I move to amend this petition by substitution with the following words, if that's allowed.

BISHOP PALMER: Let's give it a try.

JOHNSON: OK. To substitute in the words following the word *relationships* in this sentence with the following: "social responsibility and faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection, and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God."

If I have a second, I'd be glad to speak to it.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. It's supported.

JOHNSON: I had the pleasure of being part of this committee, this legislative committee, and we did some great work and had some great conversation about this petition, and we ended up with the language that is presented before you in the *DCA*. However, afterwards, we had some good conversation among some of us in recognizing that it may not give as much clarity, especially to both candidates of ministry and to boards—candidates for ministry and to boards of ordained ministry as how best to encourage a positive sexual ethic amongst us.

And so with that in mind, I offer these words as a way to put forth before us something that gives clarity for us, for how we are to engage in sanctifying grace and moving on to perfection in this particular way, while also acknowledging some of the movement of where the church is currently. So, thank you so much.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Friends, we're on the substitute and that will be the focus of your conversation if there are voices that wish to speak into it.

So, I'm looking in the queue and there is a speech for. And mic. 2. Brady Whitton.

BRADY WHITTON (Louisiana): Bishop, Brady Whitton. I'm a White male clergy from Louisiana.

So the phrase, “fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness” found in paragraph 304.2 was added to *The Book of Discipline* in 1984. Bishop Tuell, who crafted the language, later admitted that the phrase was a coded way to bay [ban] gay candidates from ministry. He also later repented of this action. This particular phrase is part of the legacy of harm and exclusion done to our LGBTQ+ siblings, and should be removed as we do with other harmful language. At the same time, we do need a sexual ethic that guides us to the highest ideals of the Christian life. I believe the proposed amendment, which affirms values like fidelity and monogamy, does that and I urge support of this amendment. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. Only have one person in the pool right now, and it is an interest in putting to the house a matter of closing debate. Richard Williams, mic. 3.

RICHARD WILLIAMS (Alabama-West Florida): Richard Williams, Alabama-West Florida Conference, clergy, delegate.

Chair, I move that we close this debate. Calling for the question.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Is it supported?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yes.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, friends, we’re on the matter of whether or not you want to close debate. And if you’d get your devices ready.

*(pause)*

So if you do vote to close debate, we’ll immediately turn to the amendment by substitution and care for that, and then take the next appropriate steps. OK?

And if the substitute is adopted, it’ll become the main motion and we’ll continue to consider it. If the motion is not approved, the original main motion will continue to be the matter that is before the General Conference.

The motion to substitute, of course, requires a majority vote, but this vote I’m asking you to ready yourselves for is on the matter of closing debate.

All right. If you have your devices ready.

If you would support the close of debate on the substitute, you’ll press *one (1)*. If you do not support it, you’ll press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

BISHOP: All right, I’m not seeing anybody who is struggling to vote. So I’m going to say that the balloting on this motion to end debate is now closed and the results are going to come on the screen.

*(pause)*

All right, friends, you have voted to end the, end the debate.

[Yes, 615; No, 41]

And I'm torn here if, where did Brother Johnson go? (*indecipherable*) Are you feeling a need to speak, friend? I think I have your drift.

JOHNSON: Bishop, if you need me to speak, I'm happy to speak.

BISHOP PALMER: I think we're good unless you feel it's urgent. OK? All right, will—

JOHNSON: I'm good.

BISHOP PALMER: And then I want to see if the committee. Do you have any need to speak?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, all right, that's great. Thank you. Thank you to you and the house.

Friends, we're on the substitute. It's the only thing we're on.

Brother Secretary, would you see that we hear that again?

GRAVES: I will be happy to, Bishop.

Amend by substitution as follows: to this end they agree to exercise—and then there is an ellipse—in all personal relationships, social responsibility, and faithful sexual intimacy expressed through fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, mutual consent, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you, Brother Graves.

Friends, if you'll get your devices ready, we're on the substitute that you've just heard read again.

And if you will make the substitute the main motion, please press *one (1)*; if you will not, press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

(*pause*)

Looks like the voting is complete and it'll be on the screen in just a few seconds.

All right, you have made this the main motion and that's all that is before us just now.

[*Yes, 490; No, 164*]

Are there other people wishing to engage in this conversation? All right. OK, some people are coming in and others are clearing out.

All right, I want to call on Tom Grieb, or Grieb, and please correct me when you get to the mic. 5. A speech against.

TOM GRIEB (Kentucky): Bishop, Tom Grieb from Kentucky, White male clergy.

I am for the amendment. I punched in much earlier when we were looking at the original motion.

BISHOP PALMER: Please forgive me, thank you. And I want to, the only person in the pool right now—Let's refresh it, OK?—is Thomas Lank at mic. 5. Thomas Lank at mic. 5.

THOMAS LANK (Greater New Jersey): Bishop, I call a question.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. Is that supported?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second. Yes.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you.

Friends, if you'll get your devices and in just a moment, you'll indicate whether or not you wish to close debate on this matter.

If you favor the close of debate, you'll press *one (1)*; if you oppose it, you'll press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

Friends, it looks like all of you that wish to vote have done that. I'm going to close the ballot now and the results will appear on the screen.

All right, you have closed debate.

[Yes, 603; No, 42]

I've already consulted with the legislative committee chair and she is not wishing to speak, so if you'll get your device and we are on the main motion. Do you need to hear it again?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: No.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you. Hey, listen, you guys are really clear this afternoon.

All right, if you will adopt it, you'll press *one (1)*, when the ballot opens; and if you're opposed to it, you'll press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

It appears that all of the votes are in, so we're going to close the ballot and the results will be on the screen.

You have adopted Calendar Item 454 as it was amended. Thank you very much. And oh, I didn't say the numbers out loud, OK.

544 persons favored it; 121 delegates were opposed to it.

[Yes, 544; No, 121]

And you see the ratio of percentages.

Thank you very much and leave it just five seconds if anybody needs to get a screenshot.

OK, I want to interrupt our process right now. The secretary of the General Conference has two Judicial Council decisions that he's obligated to read to us and that we need to hear. And then we'll see if we can pick up some other items that I asked that we defer a few moments ago.

GRAVES: In Decision No. 1500, the question was regarding the constitutionality of paragraph 543.7 as amended by Petition 21040 and the constitutionality of the changes enacted by Petition 21039.

For purposes of paragraph 2609.2, “to trigger jurisdiction and be properly before the Judicial Council, a petition for declaratory decision must meet the following two-part test. The request must contain proposed legislation that (1) requires no constitutional amendments for implementation, and (2) can be tested directly against the constitutional provisions in effect at the time of filing.”

This petition for declaratory decision fails to meet both parts of the test since it contains constitutional amendments and disciplinary changes requiring ratification of the former. It is beyond the authority of the Judicial Council to review proposed constitutional amendments, nor do we have jurisdiction to test proposed legislation against a set of hypothetically or presumably enacted and ratified constitutional amendments. Nevertheless, our ruling today does not prevent this question to be brought before the Judicial Council again in the future after the completion of the ratification process.

And the decision: The Judicial Council lacks jurisdiction to review the constitutionality of proposed constitutional amendments and changes to *The Book of Discipline* that require the ratification of the former. There is a dissent and that will be printed alongside when this is released.

In Judicial Council Decision No. 1501. The decision regarding paragraph 721.2 of the *Discipline* defines “quadrennium” to be, quote, “deemed to be the four-year period beginning January 1 following the adjournment of the regular session of the General Conference.” End quote.

Paragraph 49.3 does not permit a bishop elected less than two years to be eligible for transfer.

Those are the decisions.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very, very much. OK, I promised—and these, you say'll get published tomorrow? Or online or something?

GRAVES: They will be published in the wrap-up edition,

BISHOP PALMER: OK.

GRAVES: and they will be published online when they are ready.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you.

I promised to come back to mic. 6, Mitchell Hedgepeth, with a request for a declaratory decision.

(pause)

HEDGEPEETH: Bishop, Mitchell Hedgepeth, clergy, male, Mississippi Conference.

Requesting a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council regarding the following: With the provisions passed by this General Conference, does the language of paragraph 2533, quote, “The Board of Trustees shall not interfere with the pastor in the use of any said property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of The United Methodist Church,” prevent local churches from creating policies that would prohibit pastors from conducting worship services that include the marriage of same-sex couples in a local church?

BISHOP PALMER: Is it supported? The request? Yes. OK.



It's moved and seconded that the General Conference to declaratory decision from the Judicial Council regarding paragraph 2533 as it relates to the action of this General Conference. The motion to request such decision is not debatable. In order to move it along to the Judicial Council requires at least one-fifth vote of the members of the General Conference or 20 percent of the delegates.

The delegate is recognized again to provide a short rationale for his request.

HEDGEPEETH: Bishop, as a clergy person who's dealt with many issues related to trustees in the local church, I just think we need a clarification with what we have approved this week.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you very much. Friends, if you'll get your devices ready.

And if you will support moving this question to the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision, you'll press *one* (1). If you oppose it, you'll press *two* (2). The ballot is now open.

(pause)

All right, it doesn't look like anybody's having a challenge in voting. A few votes still coming in.

I'm going to declare that the ballot is now closed. OK? And the results will be on the screen.

All right, you have moved this along to the Judicial Council, and thank you very much.

[Yes, 408; No, 254]

I also promised to come back to mic. 4, to Shelia Faye Binuya. Is she nearby? OK.

BINUYA: Thank you, Bishop. My name is Sheila Faye Binuya, and I am a deaconess and laywoman from the Bulacan Annual Conference. I'm also the chairperson of the Commission on Deaconess Service, Philippines Central Conference.

I rise to move the petition the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision on the meaning, application, and the fact of paragraphs 32, Article 1, paragraph 602.4, and paragraph 602.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*, about the right of deaconesses to membership, participation, and vote in the annual conference, a matter of utmost importance and urgency.

Bishop and members of the General Conference, the Constitution of the United—

BISHOP PALMER: Right, right, you're, you're good.

BINUYA: OK, OK, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Let's see if we have a second, and then you'll give us a—all right, it's seconded. Give us a brief rationale, OK.

BINUYA: OK. Thank you, Bishop. Bishop and members of the General Conference, the constitution of The United Methodist Church, in particular paragraph 32, Article 1 says that, quote, "active deaconesses," unquote, are lay members of the annual conference. Moving farther into the Conferences section of our *Book of Discipline*, paragraph 602.4 says that the lay membership of the annual conference includes the, quote, "deaconesses," unquote, this time omitting the word *active* in the phrase *active deaconesses* found in paragraph 32, Article 1. This declaratory decision must clarify and

reconcile the membership and rights of active and retired deaconesses in the annual conference, which is also contemplated in paragraph 602.4. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much.

And, friends, when you get your voting devices out and when the ballot is open, if you will move this for the consideration by the Judicial Council and asking them to give a declaratory decision, you'll press *one* (1). If you prefer that not to be the case, i.e., you don't want it to go to the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision, you'll press *two* (2). Please vote now, and remember it'll take at least 20 percent of you to move it along to the Judicial Council.

(*pause*)

Looks like there are a few more votes coming in.

(*pause*)

All right, friends. The ballot is now closed. And the results will appear on the screen.

All right, you have moved this along.

498 delegates have requested the Judicial Council to consider this matter and render a decision. 157 have not moved it along to the Judicial Council.

[*Yes, 498; No, 157*]

So it will go before them.

And please, the maker of that last motion for a declaratory decision, we do need to have the whole thing in writing up here at the secretary's table. OK? So thank you, dear friends, for working faithfully on this.

I want to turn to mic. 1 and Milton Loyer. Other parliamentary matter.

MILTON LOYER (Susquehanna): Milton Loyer. White lay delegate from Susquehanna Conference, older adult.

I'd to suggest, Chair, that if an item is before the body and the only people in the pool are requesting to close debate, that the chair so state and we move on and vote on the item without having to vote to close debate.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you so much. And I'll see if that, if I can be helpful in that way if the opportunity presents itself. Thank you, Brother Loyer.

All right, friends, we are headed to the Committee on Judicial Administration. And Chairman Shanks?

ALEX SHANKS (Florida): Thank you, Bishop. Alex Shanks, clergy delegate from the Florida Conference, adult, White, male.

We are on Calendar Item 458, which can be found on p. 2179. And it is about Petition No. 20364. Again, Calendar Item 458 on p. 2179 about Petition 20364 as amended.

And I'm going to invite Rev. Molly Vetter, a member of our committee, to speak to this petition.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, Brother Shanks, before you leave the podium, I understood that there was to be a minority report. Is that not happening?

SHANKS: I understand the minority report, there is a minority report, yes.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, is the person making it part of those that have come to the stage?

SHANKS: I don't know who is presenting the minority report.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, John Stephens, if that's you, if you would get at the ready, and we'll see where we're headed, OK? All right. Thank you. Oh, you're there. You're there. OK. All right. Let's, let's hear from Ms. Vetter, right now. OK. Thank you.

MOLLY VETTER (California-Pacific): Thank you so much. I'm Rev. Molly Vetter, she/her, a White female, adult clergy delegate from the California-Pacific Conference.

I'm here to present this petition which removes rules that have been obstacles to the church and have done harm. They've excluded gay and lesbian clergy from leadership and prevented the church from honoring committed, same-sex relationships.

In the spirit of Bishop Tracy Smith Malone's word this morning, I want to testify just a little. And that is to give thanks to God for the Holy Spirit, who has continued to call and gift LGBTQ+ people for ministry in the church in many places. We've experienced the grace of God through the leadership of people who our rules have excluded. My own experience of the grace of God has been shaped by gay and lesbian clergy, colleagues, siblings in the body of Christ who our rules have sought to throw out. We've lost so many gay and lesbian leaders who could find no place in The UMC and also those who the words in these paragraphs have thrown out. Even still, as you see in the many communities who sent queer delegates to this General Conference and even bishops on our dais, our churches and conferences have recognized that the Holy Spirit has not stopped calling our siblings, regardless of sexual orientation. And some have bravely persisted, closeted faithful and courageously out, in spite of the threat of these rules.

Today, we have the opportunity to remove these, the final obstacles in our *Discipline* that have prevented the church from honoring these gifts from God. This is an urgent need; having experienced how God is moving in our midst, we can't go back or ignore the forward movement of the Holy Spirit as it pushes us past distinctions that we wrongly believed were obstacles to our unity in Jesus Christ.

This General Conference, with leadership from across our worldwide church, we have affirmed that diversity in our body will not divide us. This has been part of the story of Christ's church from its beginning. As the grace of God continues to push us past distinctions—male and female, slave and free, Jew and gentile—and the good news is God is still at work in us, forming and reforming, inviting us forward in the work toward reconciliation. The removals in this petition realign our list of chargeable offenses for clergy with those we have for laity in section 3 of the same paragraph, retaining the word *immorality* and relying on descriptions elsewhere in the *Discipline*, as in Ministry of the Ordained, including paragraph 304, which we just amended together, for clarity about how we understand this, as in this petition we just adopted.

So, this is my MethoNerd altar call. I know Bishop Malone, you said that the altar call for today is not just about what we vote on in our *Book of Discipline* but how we live going forward, but we do have

these voting devices, and so I urge you to support this petition, to release the church from this long struggle and move forward, together. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, very much. Would you let us do a little conferring for a minute?

(pause)

Thanks so much to the committee, and let me turn to the name, Brother Zilhaver? Do I have it correct? has a minority report and let's hear it, and then we'll proceed as to how we'll treat the minority report.

ROBERT ZILHAVER (Western Pennsylvania): Thank you, Bishop. Robert Zilhaver, clergy, White male, Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to present the minority report. And I want to thank the chair who helped me work through this. I had to submit it twice, and I appreciate all the staff that worked on that.

The main purpose of the minority report is to allow this General Conference to define the word *immorality* in the chargeable offenses. Only this body can make a definition of immorality for The United Methodist Church. The majority report will leave The United Methodist Church with no definition of immorality. The minority report provides the definition, "including but not limited to not being celibate in singleness and not being faithful in a marriage." First, I would draw your attention to the word that is not in the minority report—*heterosexual*. This word is not in the minority report because of the work of this conference at the—it appeared when I submitted it, and we have come to the point where there's a removal of all definitions of that immorality defined by The United Methodist Church. That hurtful language has been removed.

In addition to the important definition regarding celibacy in marriage, it includes the word *a* before marriage, to signify that there may be only one marriage, while still maintaining what I believe was the desire of the legislative committee and this body to lead to the removal of The United Methodist Church standard of immorality all language regarding the practice of marriage in regard to biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

The context of ministry where I serve as a district superintendent in Western Pennsylvania is blended with many persons in congregations who are traditional. So let me speak to those who are traditional, as a traditional voice in The United Methodist Church. I know that it is difficult to vote for a definition of marriage that is not between one man and one woman. I stand with you in spirit on that proclamation—I've argued that before the Judicial Council in what became Judicial Council Decision 1366 that makes our rituals of ordination and marriage sacred in our practices as they line up with the scriptures as required by the Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, and Wesley's Notes on The New Testament.

The Judicial Council held that even those practices were shown to be in direct opposition of Wesley's Notes on The New Testament, that the doctrinal standard of this hermeneutic could not bind the General Conference. And if the General Conference chose to abandon it, and we are standing in a moment where the changing and abandoning of historical, scriptural, and traditional definition of marriage, The United Methodist Church still needs and deserves to—a definition of immorality.

So let me speak as a traditional voice to my progressive brothers and sisters of the needs and the definition of immorality. As a member of a cabinet, we faced a crisis where this definition was needed to bring protection and healing to a congregation and a pastor and allow the intervention of supervision.

On September 7, 2022, the Pittsburgh city paper published an article, quote, “Being a queer pastor isn’t for the faint of heart.” The article quotes the pastor, “I’d love to introduce you to both my wife and my girlfriend. None of the people in my congregations know that I am bisexual and polyamorous. They have loved me and wife well, and it’s disheartening to know that if they were aware I practice non-monogamy and want to pursue a same-sex relationship, my parishioners would likely reject me as their pastor and ask for the revocation of my credentials.”

With the publication, with this publication, tight-knit communities and clergy grapevine and congregations came quickly to grasp what was going on in their parsonage. They had to understand, evaluate their shared ethical context, and communicate to the community their Christian witness regarding the sexual practices of their pastor, considering the ethics of society, the *Discipline*, and scriptures. I can’t tell you how grateful I was for the pastoral care and presence of my superintendent colleagues and my bishop. They were able to provide pastoral and supervisory care that minimized the harm to the churches, enabling continued vital ministry and help a pastor receive healing and support.

This would not have been possible without the inclusion of the language of the minority report and The United Methodist Church defining immorality as including but not limited to not being celibate in singleness and not being faithful in a marriage.

BISHOP PALMER: Brother Zilhaven, are you pretty close—

ZILHAVER: Yes.

BISHOP PALMER: to the finish line?

ZILHAVER: It was this language that allowed careful pastoral response. Please vote to retain the definition of immorality.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you very much. Thanks so much.

So, friends, the minority report has happened at least once or twice since we’ve been here. It needs to be treated as a substitute. Your conversation is on whether or not you want to substitute it for what has come from the committee. The pool is open and there is one speech for. OK, we’re refreshing the screen. OK.

All right, at the top, we’ve got a speech against, and Jim Allen, mic. 4. And this is against the substitution. And then we’ll see if there are other voices that need to speak. No. 4.

JIM ALLEN (Tennessee): Jim Allen, Tennessee Conference, layperson.

I have served since 1997 as legal counsel to many presiding bishops. I have trained many committees on investigation over the years. I’ve served on bishops’ task force on fair process. Immorality has been in the *Discipline* for a very long time. It has always been within the purview of the trial court to decide whether any given action is immorality. I think that’s where this decision needs to be made. When one or two items are lifted up as being immorality and all of the thousands of other bad things we can think of are not listed, it’s really easy to say, “Well, they must not be immoral because we didn’t list them.” I would invite you to vote against this minority report. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you very much. Let’s hear a speech—we’ve got a question, an inquiry. And mic. 4 also. Paul Ketoka, mic. 4.

Is he coming? OK, I see him now.

PAUL KETOKA (East Congo): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Thank you, Bishop, for giving me the floor. My name is Rev. Paul Ketoka, East Congo Annual Conference.

I have a question. The Bible that we are holding does not authorize us to have homosexual

BISHOP PALMER: Brother, Brother Ketoka. Brother, Brother Ketoka?

KETOKA: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) marriages. The Bible allows marriage of a woman and a man.

BISHOP PALMER: Brother, Brother Ketoka?

KETOKA: Eh?

BISHOP PALMER: Brother Ketoka, we are debating—

KETOKA: (*indecipherable*)

BISHOP PALMER: whether or not to take on the substitute as the, essentially as the main motion and in terms of the minority report. So I'm trying to get a bead on where you're headed. And can the interpreter help us with what I'm asking Brother Ketoka?

(*pause*)

KETOKA: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Yes, I am talking about the biblical foundation. We are discussing the context of marriage.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, Brother Ketoka. You appear, you appear to be debating something that's not in front of us. But you got into the pool, indicating you wanted to ask a question. So if you have a question, we're open to it. But otherwise, I'll have to ask you to stand aside and then try to get back into the pool if you desire to make a speech for or against the substitute. OK? Do you have a question about what's before us?

KETOKA: (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Yes. My question pertains to the fact that we are wondering whether it is possible to change the definition that is in the Bible about marriage. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. I don't think that that's a relevant question to the matter of the minority report and the substitution. I am not saying, Brother Ketoka, that it's not a good question for the church to be thinking about. But it's not relevant to this conversation.

So I want to turn to some other voices. And thank you, Brother Ketoka, for your kindness and patience. OK?

Let's see. A speech for, and at mic. 4, Joseph Estadilla. Mic. 4. OK.

JOSEPH ESTADILLA (Bulacan Philippines): Hello, Bishop. Joseph Estadilla from the Philippines Central Conference.

I rise to the matter of contextualization for the Philippine churches. Generally, we highly value heterosexual marriage and faithfulness.

On that regards I move for the acceptance of the minority report to have a clear definition.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you. So that's a speech in favor of our taking it on as the main motion. Let's look for a speech against. And I'm at mic. 2, Steve DeWilde or DeWild. Please forgive me if I don't have the name correct.

STEVE DEWILDE (Missouri): Yes, you got the DeWilde part, thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: OK, thank you.

DEWILDE: Steve DeWilde. White male, older adult, lay delegate from the Missouri Conference.

I'm against this for two primary reasons. First of all, thank you for the group that crafted it and the explanation of it. But we just approved Item 5—or 454—that went at great length to define morality. We also just made changes yesterday to the revised Social Principles to add the variants of two people in marriage being either a man and a woman or two people. So I think the issue that the minority report is trying to address we've already addressed. So I'd recommend voting against this.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. We've had our two speeches for and against. There are multiple people, two in the pool that want to speak for the substitution and four that would be ready to speak against it. And there are eleven people who want to close debate. If you'll work with me, as I implored you earlier, in effect, we're closed on the debate because we've had the speeches for.

I want to return to the maker of the substitute for a short statement, if he wishes, not to exceed two minutes. And then we'll come back to the chair of the Legislative Committee or the designee. Not to exceed two minutes.

ZILHAVER: Yes, from the arguments I heard from the floor, there was concern that we had already taken care of that. That is in other portions of the *Discipline*, and the ability for supervisory action has to, beyond simply talking and counseling, requires that there be a chargeable offense in order to move forward with that. The minority report believes that the dissonance between the majority report's lack of definition of immorality by The United Methodist Church and the witness of scripture and tradition would be too great to support healthy relations with the clergy financial support for congregations and connection, and the vital Christian witness in those contexts.

We have experienced an historical moment in The United Methodist Church where we are no longer moored to the traditional values of marriage and sexual morality that the church has held for thousands of years. And, and I believe that without this definition of immorality that we will leave this conference and we will have abandoned a clear definition of immorality across the church. Please vote for the minority report.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you, friend. Let's come to Rev. Vetter.

VETTER: Thank you, Bishop.

I just want to remind us that these particular phrases that were added into *The Book of Discipline* only were inserted in 2004 as a duplication of this same phrase about celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage that had previously been added to paragraph 304. An attempt as was raised from the floor to find a way to filtering out gay and lesbian clergy without saying we intended to filter out gay and lesbian clergy. We know that because Bishop Jack Tuell changed his mind and spent the latter years of

his life advocating for this change in the church. This majority report returns this section of the *Discipline* to parity between how we describe chargeable offenses for clergy and for laity, restoring that similarity and leaving the word “immorality” so that it can be interpreted by trial courts and bear implication on a wide variety of moral issues that are important for the faithfulness of our clergy. It’s a needless duplication. A standard that we’ve perfected already before and just added into paragraph 304, and so I urge you to reject the minority report and retain the majority report.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much.

Friends, if you’ll get your voting devices and your action is, if you press *one (1)* you are favoring, you are supporting, the substitute becoming the core of the work. If you hit—The minority report, excuse me, will be, in effect it’s treated as a substitute. If you press *two (2)* or no, you are sending us back to the, to the main motion and you are not taking on the minority report as the main motion.

The ballot is now open. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

I’m not observing any flags and looks like everyone who’s attempted to vote, it’s been tallied. The ballot is now closed and the results are coming to you on the screen.

All right, you have not adopted the minority report. We’re back on the main motion from the committee and, forgive me. I keep forgetting to say the numbers out loud. Please forgive me.

So, on the matter of the minority report, 191 people favored it, voted yes, and 479 did not support it, 479 did not support it, and it is not a part of the report as we go forward.

[Yes, 191; No, 479]

I think we’re, let’s see where we are. OK, so we’re back on the main motion.

And this has been refreshed? Yeah, OK, can I get our tech team to refresh this, so that making sure that we don’t have carryover from our previous conversation, OK?

*(pause)*

OK, it’s coming. All right. Now, let’s see.

All right, I want to turn to mic. 5. Stefan Schröckenfuchs, I hope I’m close. Mic. 5.

Stefan Schröckenfuchs (Austria Provisional): Very good job, Bishop. Thank you. Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Austria Provisional.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you.

Schröckenfuchs: I think you know what you get. I move to close debate and call the question. Thank you.

*(laughter)*



BISHOP PALMER: OK, so there were lots of people in the queue. At least six that were wanting to close debate. No one was waiting to speak for or against anything. So, there was, and one person was attempting to amend.

So, friends, we're on the matter of closing debate, if you would ready your devices and you've been doing wonderfully.

When the ballot opens, if you will close debate, you'll press *one (1)*, and if you will not have debate closed, you'll press *two (2)*. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

I'm not seeing anyone trying to get our attention because they can't vote. I'm declaring that the ballot is closed and the results are coming and I'll remember this time to give you the numbers.

621 delegates have favored closing debate: 52 are opposed to debate closing.

[Yes, 621; No, 52]

You have closed the debate.

We turn back to the committee for a short summary speech.

VETTER: Thank you, Bishop. I was so moved by these days we've spent together at this General Conference, at the clarity with which we have affirmed that we seek to move together as a United Methodist Church that includes and celebrates the richness of our diversities and to make space for the ways we're doing that faithfully in all of the places where the church is located. That we're committed to not using our *Book of Discipline* as a weapon against people. This morning at the end of worship when we were singing "Love Train," I was thinking, we've got a little bit of bad code still in the script that runs our all-electric love train of The United Methodist Church and this is a moment where we can vote to delete those harmful words that have caused division, and questioned the call of the Holy Spirit so that we can move forward in greater faithfulness together as a worldwide church. I encourage you to vote in support of this petition.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Friends, if you'll get your voting devices ready.

And when you vote, if you press *one (1)*, you are adopting the recommendation that came from the Judicial Administration Committee that is in Calendar Item 458. If you press *two (2)*, you are expressing your opposition to it or your no.

The ballot is now open. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

All right, I'm not seeing anybody that's having difficulty voting. I'm going to say that the ballot is closed and the results are coming to you and I'll read them out loud.

All right, 474 delegates or votes have favored the adoption of Calendar Item 458, and 206 votes or delegates have expressed their opposition to the adoption of Calendar Item 458.

[Yes, 474; No, 206]

The matter is adopted.

All right. Thank you, let me see where we're turning next. All right, thanks so much to, OK, Judicial Administration already fled so—

*(laughter)*

They said get out while you can, so our thanks to them for their leadership in this General Conference.

I want to turn to Lindsey Baynham Freeman and this is Ordained Ministry.

LINDSEY FREEMAN (Virginia): Thank you, Bishop. If you're wondering, her again? So is my mom, who's watching the live feed, who said, You sure are talking a lot.

*(laughter)*

Lindsey Baynham Freeman, clergy, Virginia Annual Conference, adult female. My pronouns are she, her, and hers, multiracial, Black African American and White Anglo. And it was my great joy and honor to chair the Ordained Ministry Legislative Committee.

Bishop, the first item before us can be found on p. 2180 of the *DCA*, Calendar Item 466, on p. 1041 of the *ADCA*, and this pertains to Petition 20469. The committee voted to adopt the petition as amended and the amendment to this petition reads that the action of this petition becomes effective at the close of the 2020 General Conference. The committee had thoughtful and diverse conversation around this petition and its amendment. In our discussion, in our holy conferencing together, we came to the decision that the discernment to officiate weddings resides with the authority of the clergy person. Bishop, I move that Calendar Item 466, Petition 20469 be adopted.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Friends, this is before us from the committee. And I'm going to look to the pool. There is at mic. 1 Ophelia Kennedy with a parliamentary inquiry— other parliamentary inquiry. Mic. 4.

OK. She may have pulled out of the queue, OK. Oh, she's coming. OK, great. Mic. 1.

OPHELIA KENNEDY (Liberia): Thank you, Bishop. I am Ophelia (*indecipherable*) Kennedy from Liberia from the Liberia Annual Conference, secretary of the conference United Methodist Women.

Bishop, for inclusive participation, I would like to suggest to reduce the air condition; we are frozen. It's too high for us. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Brother Secretary, do you have any guidance that—?

GRAVES: No, I do not.

BISHOP PALMER: All right.

GRAVES: But we will pass the word along.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, they're going to pass the word along and, OK.

At mic. 4, Dixie Brewster, an amendment. Mic. 4.

DIXIE BREWSTER (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. Dixie Brewster, Great Plains Conference, laity.

Bishop, I move to amend the petition before us by attaching to it the text of a petition entitled, "Providing for Local Church Disaffiliation," found on p. 1603 and 1604 of volume 3 of the ADCA. If I have a second, I will speak to it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Let me pause for a minute. I want to make sure that this is the right place for this.

*(pause)*

Dixie, would you repeat the page and petition number so that we can make sure we're in the right place for this conversation?

BREWSTER: Yes. It is p. 1603 and 1604, volume 3 of the ADCA. And I have the—*(indecipherable)*

BISHOP PALMER: OK. Give us just a minute, OK?

BREWSTER: OK. I can explain, and I think it would help. If you'd like.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bishop, I rise for a point of order.

BISHOP PALMER: So—and I hear you, Mr. Urriola. Dixie, I'm going to rule that this is out of order at this point. The heading on the pages you've given to us are on a completely different matter. If at another time, because you said you want to attach it to this, if you'd like to try to get back into the pool at another time when we've completed more calendar items, we'll try to be fair in recognizing people in the pool. Let me—

BREWSTER: Bishop, if I would explain, I think you'll find it does fit here.

BISHOP PALMER: Well, I'm going to stick with the direction I'm headed in right now, unless I just get run over by the house. OK?

BREWSTER: Well—

BISHOP PALMER: All right. I promised to respond to a request for a point of order.

IAN URRIOLO (Upper New York): Bishop, I think you took care of my point of order. Any amendment to a petition, per Robert's Rules 16 point—12 16, must be germane to the substance of the motion. And as this petition is connected to—

BISHOP PALMER: Well, you're making a speech, but you said I already took care of it.

URRIOLA: Yeah.

BISHOP PALMER: I feel the love, thank you, friend. OK.

*(laughter)*

Where we are, I've gotten myself confused now. Let me come back to the pool. Becca Girrell, a speech for.

BECCA GIRRELL (New England): Thank you, Bishop. Becca Girrell,

BISHOP PALMER: 3, thank you. 1.

GIRRELL: Clergy, New England Annual Conference. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I am a queer adult White female.

I want to tell you in support of this petition about the first time I was asked to preside at a wedding for a same-sex couple. A dear friend who I had known her entire life asked me, "Does your church allow you to preside at same-sex weddings?" I confess that I answered honestly, not realizing what she was asking. I attended her wedding, presided over by someone else, and was invited to bless the food at the reception. And as I blessed the food and not the brides, I promised I would never betray my heart or my call to offer ministry and grace to all persons again.

God granted me the opportunity for grace, and I was contacted by another dear friend, and this time I did officiate and preside. My friend and his now-husband were both in the United States Military, which had recently removed a ban on being gay. They were about to be separately deployed, and they wanted to be married so that they would have the right to claim one another's remains, should it come to that.

I married them under an arch with sparkling lights, and we ran to City Hall so that they could each take a paper copy of their certificate with them. You will never convince me that that was wrong. Vote in favor of this petition. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you.

Let me turn to Jørgen Thaarup at mic. 2, please. A speech for, I don't have anybody waiting on speeches against. I've got multiple people wishing to close debate. Mic. 2. There you are.

JØRGEN THAARUP (Norway): My name is Jørgen Thaarup, Denmark Annual Conference. I want to speak in favor of this petition.

John Wesley, he was in a situation exactly as this in the beginning of the Methodist movement where there were conflict between the preachers and the leaders of the local societies. And Wesley did not allow the local societies' leadership to take power over the ministry of the preachers. That was the reason why the locals should not own their houses. And it was also the reason behind the trust clauses we have in our *Book of Discipline*. A building is given for a specific purpose. The minister of that place is the person who have the full authority to decide who is going to be baptized, who is going to be married, who is going to be offered the Eucharist.

So, this petition is stating clear that the authority is on the minister and not on the people who have authority over the building, neither local or the annual conference, or the General Conference.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you, Brother Thaarup.

And there is one person waiting to speak against, and I can't see the name. Samuel Cole at mic. 1.

Mic. 2.

SAMUEL COLE (Liberia): Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Hold on, Brother Cole, for one minute.

(pause)

Dixie Brewster, you have a point of order? Mic. 4? Or is that from earlier on? OK, that's something else. I see her name multiple times.

Let's come to Brother Cole at mic. 2.

COLE: Thank you, Bishop. My name is Samuel Cole from the Liberia Annual Conference United Methodist Church.

Bishop, I speak against the petition from the committee. Bishop, when we crafted *The Book of Discipline* that governed us years back, the laws were accepted in all region around the world where marriage was for one man and a woman. So, Bishop, if we are trying to (*indecipherable*) things that will not be accepted around the world, I think it is difficult. Bishop, if we as human, can understand that if our parent were both male and male or female and female, I think some of us today could not have been born. Because we know that to reproduce, it should be a man and a woman. So, Bishop, I speak against the petition and ask all of us in here to vote no to the committee presentation. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Let me come to mic. 6, Max Aguinaldo. A speech against, and this will be our second and last speech against. Mic. 6.

(*pause*)

Everybody's fine. The pipe and drape fell.

MAX AGUINALDO (Northern Philippines): I am Max Aguinaldo from Northern Philippines Annual Conference. I am clergy. I am (*indecipherable*).

I am against with the petition in the sense that I came from a place where in, I observe and I witness how workers witness in the community. And from that experience, I'm still under traditionalist in disposing mainly of our responsibilities. Particularly on that particular petition with regards to (*indecipherable*) marriages. Thank you so much, and God bless us all.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Friends, we've had two speeches for and two against. We're really under the call, by your action of speeches, to move to the vote. I want to turn to Lindsey, if there's anything else you want to offer before the house expresses itself.

FREEMAN: Yes, thank you, Bishop. I want to thank the members of the committee for their care and grace shown while discerning this together. We believe that the deletion of this paragraph enables pastors to live more fully in their calling to care for all persons, particular to the act of marriage. The committee recognized that it does not mandate but rather allows for the discernment and ability to perform weddings to reside with the clergy person. We ask that you adopt Petition 20469.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. Friends, if you'll get your devices and ready yourselves.

When the ballot opens, if you press *one (1)*, you will be adopting the item. If you press *two (2)*, you will not adopt it.

The ballot is now open. Please vote now.

(*pause*)

All right, friends, I don't see any more votes coming—well, there's a few. OK.

All right. The ballot is now closed. Results will appear shortly.

All right, with 447 votes, you have adopted Calendar Item 466, and there were 233 votes in opposition to Calendar Item 466.

[Yes, 447; No, 233]

Thank you. Madam Chair, I want to turn back to you for one more item from Ordained Ministry. And when we dispose of this item, we will take a break. OK?

FREEMAN: One more. Thank you, Bishop. The next item can be found on p. 2180 of the *DCA*. Calendar Item 465 can also be found on p. 1040 of the *ADCA* as it pertains to Petition 20713.

The committee is recommending adoption of Petition 20713. This petition would add a new paragraph to *Book of Discipline* paragraph 340.2, affirming the clergy person's discernment in performing any wedding of any couple. The petition allows for clergy to exercise their conscience to host and/or perform weddings. Bishop, I move that Calendar Item 465, Petition 20713 be adopted.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, the matter is before us. I want to, I've got an other parliamentary inquiry. Alex Shanks at mic. 2. Is that something from earlier? Where did Alex go?

Oh, he's over here. OK.

SHANKS: Bishop, this is about asking the Judicial Council for a clarification or reconsideration. I don't know if it's—not about this current petition, but I would like to speak to it before the break, if possible.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, let's see what we can do. Let's turn to speeches for and against 465. Calendar Item 465. I want to turn to, at mic. 1, to Corey Shirey or Shirrey.

And get me straightened around when you get to the mic.

Mic. 1. Somebody coming? OK.

COREY SHIREY (Oklahoma): Thank you, Bishop. Corey Shirey, Oklahoma Annual Conference, layperson, White male.

Beyond the essentials of vital religion, United Methodists respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious people of faith. Wesley followed a time-tested approach: In essentials, unity. In nonessentials, liberty. And in all things, charity.

Children of God, we have to trust our pastors to choose to officiate the weddings, the ceremonies that they feel necessary. The ones that they feel confident in presiding over. I think living into this Wesleyan approach of liberty, of letting our clergy decide for themselves, is the right decision for the future of our church. And I think it will just be another step forward in what this General Conference has already been doing. Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: All right, thank you. Other parliamentary at mic. 1. L. Olandor Boyce.

(pause)

L. OLANDOR BOYCE (Liberia): Bishop, I'm L. Olandor Boyce, lay delegate, Liberia.

My inquiry is this: In the situation where you have two groups of twenty persons removing an item from the consent calendar, which one takes precedent in terms of what is published in the *DCA*.

BISHOP PALMER: Let me say, I do not know. But let me look down the line to see if that's for you or somebody else. Could you repeat the question?

BOYCE: If you have two groups of twenty persons signing off to remove an item on the floor, how do you see like the particular group that is published in the *DCA*, if you cannot put all, if cannot put the two groups on the, on the consent calen—I mean, I mean, in the *DCA*. How do you see like a particular group over the other? What are the procedures or rules for, for doing that?

GRAVES: In the calendar office, the first list that can confirm all of the twenty names that is received is the one that is printed. If there is any problem with the first list, they would move to confirming the second list.

BOYCE: Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Joy Barrett, mic. 5. A speech for. And this will be our second and last speech for.

Mic. 5. It's OK. 6 is fine.

JOY BARRETT (Michigan): Thank you very much. Joy Barrett. Michigan. Female, White, adult. I rise to speak in support of Petition 20713. The topic is paragraph 340, which addresses the duties of a local church pastor. The wording of the amendment that you see printed honors the diversity of perspectives and values held by our clergy in regard to marriage. No one will be forced to perform a marriage. That remains the decision of the pastor. This wording was intentionally added to support our clergy who hold more traditional understandings of marriage. We are a big-tent church. You are seen and valued. I encourage you to vote in support of this petition.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. I want to come to mic. 2 and the speaker is Olivier Izwela, a speech against. Mic. 2. I get the name right?

*(pause)*

OLIVIER IZWELA (Lukoshi): *(simultaneous interpretation from French)* I want to speak in French, Bishop. I am Olivier Izwela from the Annual Conference of Lukoshi. Dear Bishop, I am realizing that to this date we are now the last day of the General Conference and there are definitely a lot of reforms that this conference has made. Whereas, we already have voted for regionalization of the church. In my humble opinion, I think many things that we have reformed here should be reformed in each region, but we are now making reforms in this General Conference where all the General Conference—all of the regional conferences are present. I think that certain items, such as this one, should be decided in each of the regions. Unfortunately, we are making declarations in this bigger conference and so it will have an impact on all of the regions when those regions go into effect. So I oppose this petition because that should stay in the regions; it should be limited to The United States. That is why now, today, I am against this petition today. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. Thank you. And we can take one more speech against. At mic. 4, Sylvestre Muthoma. Mic. 4.

SYLVESTRE MUTHOMA (South Congo): (*simultaneous translation from French*) Thank you for allowing me to speak, Bishop. I am Sylvestre Muthoma. I am from East Congo. Muthoma is my name. I am here to speak against this petition. Dear Bishop, we are legislating for generations of future people of this church. We should not be legislating for those of us who are here or alive today. If we're talking about the conscience of someone who has to preside at a wedding, I don't think we have a thermometer to calculate what someone's conscience says. I think that we need to speak about respect of the rules and the laws for presiding at a wedding and not about someone's conscience. And, secondly, Bishop, what is being done here today it's as if we were twisting the knife in a wound. There has been a door that has been opened the United States in 2016, 2019, but now you are opening a very dangerous door for the church in Africa. I believe that we must stay in the general plans that central and jurisdictional conferences will make their own decisions in their jurisdictions. Instead of making a general rule about the conscience of people that can't be measured by a thermometer or any other instrument. I have spoken.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you so much. Friends, we've had our requisite two speeches for and two against so you have effectively ended the debate. I want to have you to get your voting devices ready. I'm going to turn to the chair of the Committee if she wishes to make a short statement.

FREEMAN: Thank you, Bishop. I just want to reiterate that the intention of this petition was to allow for the pastor to discern presiding in weddings—over weddings—and not mandating a particular type of wedding in hopes that it would allow for people in the breadth and depth of our denomination to be seen and to be respected. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you very much. Friends, if you'll get your devices ready, we're on Calendar Item 465. If you press *one (1)*, you will be saying yes to adopting 465. If you press *two (2)*, you will be saying no to its adoption. Please vote now.

(*pause*)

All right. Brother Shanks, I promised to come to you if you'll get at the ready. Friends, it looks like all of your votes are in and being tallied. I see a few more coming. I'm now saying that the ballot is closed. The results will come to the screen.

479 of you have voted in favor of the adoption of 465. And 203 of you have expressed your desire not to adopt 465. The matter is adopted.

[*Yes, 479; No, 203*]

Before we go to the break, Brother Shanks.

SHANKS: Bishop, Alex Shanks, clergy from the Florida Conference. I would like to ask the Judicial Council to provide clarification about Judicial Council Decision 1501. Based on this recent decision, could the Judicial Council explain how paragraph 407 informs the interpretation of paragraph 512.3. Paragraph 407 states, "When a bishop is elected under the provisions of this paragraph, the years remaining in the quadrennium within which the election occurs shall count as a full quadrennium for the purposes of assignment." Paragraph 512.3 says a bishop may be transferred across jurisdictional lines if they consent to such transfer and has served at least one quadrennium in or under assignment. The question is, can



bishops selected in 2022 be transferred to another jurisdiction because according to 407 they will have served a full quadrennium?

BISHOP PALMER: All right, Brother Shanks, let me see. Is this supported? All right it's supported. Can you give us a brief rationale, and I want to ask when you say interpretation you want them to bring further light to a ruling that they just made. Am I tracking with you?

SHANKS: That's correct. They were asked to rule on whether two years would be a quadrennium but I think the ruling does not take into account paragraph 407 which says someone elected under this paragraph will be counted as a full quadrennium. And the reason for this, Bishop, is the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy is going to be working on transfers in the next few weeks, and we need clarity about whether the bishops in 2022, who were elected, can be counted as having served a full quadrennium.

BISHOP PALMER: All right. I think our secretary wants to help us with the decision we heard earlier.

GRAVES: Is the—are you presenting this as a request for a declaratory decision on the application of the new paragraph in light of Decision 1501?

SHANKS: That's probably the best way to do it.

GRAVES: I thought maybe you were.

SHANKS: Thank you.

BISHOP PALMER: Thank you. All right. It's been supported. You've given us a brief rationale. Friends, if you'd get your devices ready. And when the ballot opens, if you press *one (1)*, you are supporting asking for this declaratory decision about the paragraphs that were cited. If you press *two (2)*, you are saying do not do that, and it takes one-fifth of the house in order to forward this to the Judicial Council. Ballot is open. Please vote now.

*(pause)*

And Brother Alex, we need the written version like yesterday. Thank you.

*(pause)*

By the pace of the votes, it looks like some folks already took their break. So I'm going to declare this ballot closed. The results are going to come on the screen. You have forwarded the matter to the Judicial Council with 523 votes favoring it; 87 in opposition to it.

[Yes, 523; No, 87]

So thank you very much, Brother Shanks. Friends, it's been my joy and privilege. I'm grateful to Bishops Fairley and Merrill for working with me. Thank you.

*(applause)*

And let me give you a return time. I want to put us at ten minutes after four. So 4:10, if you'll be back in your places. I'm sorry, did I miss something? What am I? Mic. 3.

ROGER GRACE (West Ohio): Bishop, Roger Grace, clergy, West Ohio Conference, male, older adult. I just wanted to rise for a point of information, and I had entered the pool. I just wanted the house to realize that with twenty-four years of episcopal leadership, Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer is the longest serving active United Methodist bishop in the United States. We thank you.

*(applause)*

And Mrs. Palmer.

*(applause)*

All right. I see you pulled one over on me. Thank you very much. So come back at 4:12 now and you'll be in the capable hands of Bishop Malone.

## Plenary 2

BISHOP TRACY S. MALONE: If we can please take our seats. We want to maximize the remainder of our time and get as much work done as we can. Let's continue our holy conferencing to do the business of the church. As we're coming into the room, I do ask that we come in quietly because we are about to start our business. I call this session back to order.

Let us pray. Most lovely and gracious God, we just give you thanks and praise for the gift of this day, for the gift of your church, for the gift of beloved community. We thank you for the work that has already been done, and we trust you for the work that is still before us. Give us your wisdom, give us your grace, give us your courage, grant us your power. All that we do is for your glory, O Lord, and we offer all that we are to you. Prepare our hearts, prepare our minds that we might be found faithful in well-doing. We want all that we do, O God, to honor and glorify you. It is in Christ's name that I pray. And I invite the people of God to say, amen.

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP MALONE: I am Bishop Tracy Smith Malone, the bishop of the East Ohio Conference, and I am very delighted to have sitting with me—backing me up during this plenary are my two colleagues, but I don't see them behind me.

*(laughter)*

Where art thou? Bishop David Wilson, come on down. Bishop Ruben Saenz, come on down. Amen.

All right, we're going to give them a moment to get to be where I need for them to be. Amen.

OK. All right, I don't see—here he comes. Amen.

*(applause)*

Well, while Bishop Ruben Saenz is coming, I want to thank the both of them for being here with me to join me in this time of presiding and providing some support. Amen? Amen.

So, the next item of business is the recognition of the new Judicial Council members and those members completing their service, and I, the chair, would like to recognize the president of the Judicial Council, Oswald Tweh.

*(applause)*

N. OSWALD TWEH (President of Judicial Council): Bishop, delegates, and friends, it is a good pleasure for me to stand before this conference and introduce the Judicial Council that has served the church from 2016 to today. We have Rev. Dr. Kabamba Kiboko, a native of the Congo DRC, and a clergy member from the West Ohio Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

She has served us as our secretary.

We have Beth Capen, a lay member from New York Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

We have the Rev. Dr. Dennis Blackwell, a clergy member from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

We have Rev. Dr. Luan-Vu Tran, a clergy member for the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

We have Lidia Romão Gulele, a lay member from the Mozambique South Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

We have Rev. Øyvind Helliesen, a clergy member from the Norway Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

We have Deanell Tacha, a lay member from the Great Plains Annual Conference.

And we have Warren Plowden, a lay member from the South Georgia Annual Conference. Warren was the first elected lay alternate. He filled the vacancy created by the death of Ruben Reyes, a lay member from Philippines Annual Conference. Ruben passed in September 2021. Warren served Ruben's unexpired term.

We appreciate the work that the council has done. They have served the church in a committed and dedicated way. I would like for you all to show your appreciation for their hard work.

*(applause)*

Thanks so very much, my brothers and sister, for your services. Also during the past quadrennium, we're very fortunate to have Rev. Timothy Bruster and Ken Fulton to fill in very ably at various times as alternate members, the first clergy and the first lay alternate members of the council. And we also appreciate their hard work as well.

*(applause)*

Rev. Dr. Kiboko, Beth Capen, Rev. Dr. Blackwell, Deanell Tacha, Lidia Gulele, Warren Plowden, and I, we have concluded our terms of service on the council, and we will be retiring from the council. Unfortunately, Deanell and Warren are unable to join us to be here with us today.

Now it is my pleasure to present to you the newly elected members of the council who will serve the church for the next quadrennium. We have Harriet Jane Olson, a layperson from the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Molly Hlekani Mwayera, a layperson from the Zimbabwe Annual East Conference.

*(applause)*

Bill Waddell, a layperson from the Arkansas Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Andrew Vorbrich, a layperson from the Michigan Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Rev. Øyvind Helliesen, a clergy member from the Norway Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Rev. Angela Brown, a clergyperson from the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, a clergyperson from the South Carolina Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Ulanday, a clergy from the East Mindanao Philippines Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

And Rev. Dr. Lu Tran, a clergy from the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

*(applause)*

Unfortunately, Andrew is unable to be here today.

Now to introduce the newly elected officers of the council for the next quadrennium. There are:

Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, the president,

*(applause)*

Rev. Øyvind Helliesen, the vice president,

*(applause)*

and Rev. Angela Brown, the secretary.

*(applause)*

Bishop, I thank you.

BISHOP MALONE: Thank you. Let's, again, give praise to God for our Judicial Council outgoing members and our incoming council members. Amen.

*(applause)*

OK. So, the next item of business are our calendar items. And before we get started, I see here in the pool—the chair would like to recognize Lonnie Chafin. And if you would go to mic. no. 2.

*(pause)*

Mic. no. 2.

LONNIE CHAFIN (Northern Illinois): Thank you, Bishop. Lonnie Chafin, Northern Illinois Conference, laity, White male, and it's good to have this moment with you for your home conference, Bishop.

Bishop, I would like to make a motion that would refer the following calendar items to the following bodies: No. 455 to GCFA; 283 to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters; 538 to the Connectional Table; 238 to the Committee on Faith and Order; and to GCFA it would be 461, 242, and 246; Calendar Item 539 to the Council of Bishops; 450 to the Division on Young People; and further, that we would not support petitions that were not supported by the committee. And if I receive a second, I'll speak to this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, we have heard a second. You may go ahead and speak.

CHAFIN: Bishop, we have had full and interesting conversations here. We're getting towards the end. I don't want anxiety or pressure to finish all the work, to shorten the richness of the conversations we've been having. In the past when we get to this point someone would move to accept all the petitions or not support all the petitions. So I wanted to suggest that we can refer these as a way to keep these ideas before the institution and be considered. What this would leave is now five, five items by my tally. Susan will confirm. It would leave 426, which is apologizing to victims of sexual violence; 247 on the readmission of clergy members; 240 on a constitutional adding gender protection to the constitution; 453, which is a report on the Committee of Faith and Order; and 550, which is also a constitutional change on the definition of racism. So, I tried to say we could focus our time on the constitutional proposals, the report that only we can receive, the apology that only we can make, and the petition that we had decided to reconsider earlier.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, we have a motion to refer, and I am going to ask that we clear the pool, and what we want to do—I want to make sure that the body fully hears and understands what is before you. What is before you is to refer Item—Calendar Item 455 to GCFA; Calendar Item 283 to Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters; Calendar Item 538 to Connectional Table; Item 238 to Committee on Faith and Order; Calendar Items 461, 242, and 246 to GCFA; Calendar Item 538 to Council

of Bishops; Calendar Item 450 to Division on Young People. And further, that you would not support petitions that were not supported by committee.

So that is what is before the house in this motion to refer. There's a correction; there's a correction. The item to be referred to the Council of Bishops is Item 539. OK, so there's a correction for that one particular item to be referred to the Council of Bishops; it should be Calendar Item 539. This motion requires a majority vote. So what is before you is the motion to refer.

Is there any discussion to the motion to refer the various calendar items to the various committees that were noted, and further not to support petitions that were not supported by the committee? You may register to speak, so if you have a desire to be recognized, you need to get into the pool.

There is a question. I need to recognize Becca Girrell for a point of information or inquiry. If you can please make your way to mic. no. 1, and if you can come prepared to state what your question is or what your inquiry is.

Becca Girrell (New England): Yes, thank you, Bishop. Becca Girrell, clergy, New England Annual Conference. My question is could we please have not only the calendar numbers, but their titles for each thing that is being proposed? This is way too fast to search the petitions that I want to make sure are addressed.

BISHOP MALONE: I am going to ask our coordinator of calendar, Susan Brumbaugh, if you would please restate those calendar items and also state the title of those, so that the body will know what it is that they're voting on.

*(pause)*

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (New Mexico, Coordinator of Calendar): Y'all, I really thought I was done at the microphone.

OK, so, the first item is 283, Calendar Item. The title is Revision of Paragraph 101 for General Conference 2020 Revised for Postponed—Let me actually do a wrap on these so I can get the whole title. Hold on. OK, now I can see the whole title. So 283 is Revision of Paragraph 101 for General Conference 2020 Revised for Postponed 2020 General Conference. That is Petition No. 20956. I can give you page numbers if that's helpful, if you want to write them down. OK, that one, ADCA is 1499 and the final version in DCA is 2239. I'm guessing I could make a little chart and get it to the truck so you can see it as I read it. Although, I can get titles in all four languages, too, but it's going to be hard to display.

BISHOP MALONE: Let's confirm the list.

BRUMBAUGH: Oh, OK, yes, thank you. That was the first one.

Second one is Calendar Item 455, DCA p. no. 2178, Petition No. 20982, ADCA p. no. 1507. Title is Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investments.

Calendar Item 538, DCA p. 2252, Petition No. 20698, ADCA p. no. 372, Next Generation UMC Number 1: Create a Commission and Call a Special Session.

Calendar Item 238—I'll just read the title first. Directing the Committee on Faith and Order to Draft an Official Catechism. That is DCA p. 2099, Petition No. 21081, ADCA p. no. 1502.

Calendar Item 461: Clarify Role of the Judicial Council as Related to Judicial and Administrative Appeals. I'll say that again 'cause it's kind of long: Clarify Role of the Judicial Council as Related to Judicial and Administrative appeals. *DCA* p. 2179, Petition No. 20357, *ADCA* p. no. 918.

Calendar Item 242: Define Administrative Appeal Process in Response to Judicial Council Decision 1361. That's Define Administrative Appeals Process in Response to Judicial Council Decision 1361. *DCA* p. 2100. Petition No. 20403. *ADCA* p. 939.

Calendar Item 246: Local Church Land Use Amendment. *DCA* p. 2100. Petition No. 21057. *ADCA* p. no. 1611.

Calendar Item 539 and 450 both have the same title: Building a Fully Inclusive Church. 539 is Petition 20526, *DCA* p. 2235, and *ADCA* p. no. 340. Calendar Item 450, also Building a Fully Inclusive Church, *DCA* p. no. 2178, Petition No. 20147, *ADCA* p. no. 409.

Those are all the items that the motion was having referred to various bodies, and now I can give you the list of items that were not supported by legislative committee and we received a form to present those to the plenary body.

Calendar Item 540: Also titled Building a Fully Inclusive Church. *ADCA* p. 313. Petition No. 2002—20002. I don't have the page numbers on these, so they were probably in yesterday's *DCA*.

Calendar Item 537: Submitting Petitions to General Conference Amendment. That's Petition No. 20079. *ADCA* p. 326.

Calendar Item 552: Full-Time and Part-Time Local Pastor Voting Rights Clergy Session. Full-Time and Part-Time Local Pastor Voting Rights Clergy Session. Petition 20104. *ADCA* p. 336.

Calendar Item 558: Local Pastors Vote on Constitutional Amendments. It's Petition 20107. *ADCA* p. no. 336.

Calendar Item 553: Equalization for Voting Rights among Clergy, Voice and Vote for the Status of Retired Local Pastors. Again, that's Equalization for Voting Rights among Clergy, Voice and Vote for the Status of Retired Local Pastors. That's Petition No. 20683 on *ADCA* p. 1028.

Calendar Item 551: Open Itineracy. Petition No. 20465. *ADCA* p. 1038.

Calendar Item 557: Disaffiliation of Annual Conferences outside of the U.S. Petition 21063. *ADCA* p. 1545.

Calendar Item 544: Add Nicene Creed to Doctrinal Standards. Petition No. 20159. *ADCA* p. 617.

And the last one is Calendar Item 545. The title is All Belong: Insuring Inclusive Welcome. Petition No. 20241. *ADCA* p. 636. That is the list.

BISHOP MALONE: Thank you, Susan, for providing that additional information. The chair will recognize Holly Grant for a point of order. Holly Grant. East Ohio. Mic. no. 5, please.

*(pause)*

HOLLY GRANT (East Ohio): Holly Grant. East Ohio. Laity. Bishop, I thought I put in for parliamentary procedure as opposed to point of order.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. No, you put in for a point of order. So, you would need to go back into the pool to be recognized.

GRANT: OK.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, there's another point of order. Jay Williams. The chair recognizes Jay William, New England Conference. Mic. no. 1, please.

JAY WILLIAMS (New England): Jay Williams, clergy, New England. Black man. Queer. Actually before I state my point of order, can you restate the list of the calendar items to be brought to the floor? I might be confused because this quite a list at this point.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, those calendar items to be referred—

WILLIAMS: No, the calendar items to be brought to the floor still, so that are not part of the reject or to refer.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. Susan will come back to the podium to state those for you.

BRUMBAUGH: Just the Calendar Item Nos., I assume? 540, 537—Oh—the four that we would do?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (*indecipherable*)

BISHOP MALONE: They're wanting the calendar items that, if this were to be referred, what would be the remaining calendar items.

BRUMBAUGH: OK. I only show four.

BISHOP MALONE: There were five, and I do have those here.

BRUMBAUGH: OK. Well, then, maybe you just have and you should just go. I'll listen to you.

BISHOP MALONE: So those five calendar items that would be remaining are as follows: Calendar Item 426, Calendar Item 247, Calendar Item 240, Calendar Item 453, and Calendar Item 550.

(*pause*)

Those were the five that were stated by Lonnie Chafin when he made the motion to refer.

WILLIAMS: So, Bishop, the order is, I believe Rule 34, subsection 3 states that petitions that were not adopted by the legislative committee can be brought to the floor by filling out the proper form, so then, in this motion to include it, and as you said, it would be by a majority vote, those would be in contradiction.

BISHOP MALONE: Can you please state the—restate the rule number, please?

WILLIAMS: Yeah, so it's Rule 34, subsection 3. It's the report of the non-calendar items. So we have a process to bring non-calendar items to the floor that's codified in the rules. This motion bypasses Rule 34, which allows for legislative items to be brought to the floor.



BISHOP MALONE: OK. Give me one moment, please.

*(pause)*

So here's where we are. Thank you for bringing that to our attention. In order to take such action, it would require a suspension of the rules, and so the body would need to make that decision as to whether or not you will want to suspend the rules in order for this motion to refer, which includes part of the remaining items not to be considered. In order to take that motion, this body would need to suspend the rules.

*(pause)*

I am going to confer again.

*(pause)*

So let me share with you where we are, so that you can understand, so that way you can do what you want to do. The maker of the original motion to refer, the part that was just identified that is in violation of the rule would be those remaining calendar items. So to separate those remaining calendar items, you would need to separate those calendar items if you want to consider, as a body, to refer the ones that were named. And to separate it, you would still need to suspend the rules. So there are multiple processes that would need to take place in order for the body to consider the motion to refer. So what I am going to ask is for someone to go into the pool and to acknowledge what it is that you would like to do, in light of what is before us, and in light of the information I just shared.

*(pause)*

Here is how this can be handled. Is there any objection to suspend the rules for this to be properly before us?

OK. So the rules are suspended. So the motion is still before us, as it was originally stated. The motion to refer.

OK. There is a point of order. The chair recognizes Lonnie Chafin, mic. no. 2.

*(pause)*

OK so if you can—all right. He's taken out of the pool. He's waving to be taken out of the pool. So we are back to the motion to refer the items that were stated to the various committees, and further, not to support the petitions that were not supported by the committee. And again, the motion requires a majority vote. We have persons who are in the pool, so we will now move toward conversation on the motion that is before the body.

*(pause)*

OK. There's another inquiry. The chair calls on Beth LaRocca-Pitts, North Georgia Conference, mic. no. 5.

*(pause)*

BETH LAROCCA-PITTS (North Georgia): Bishop, is there any way to deal with Calendar Items 552, 558, and 553 that have to do with the voting rights of local pastors? We have many in our conference, and they need a voice—

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So you did ask a question, and right now, the motion that is before us is the referral of these. So that is not germane to what is before us at this time.

LAROCCA-PITTS: I think that they were in the ones that didn't get—

BISHOP MALONE: OK. I'm sorry, I need to recognize you before you speak again.

LAROCCA-PITTS: Sorry.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. And I want to work with you, so give me one moment please.

*(pause)*

So here is what the chair is going to do. The ones that you want to be able to address, your question is, is there a process for how to take those that were a part of the ones that were not supported in order to have a conversation?

So what you would need to do in order to do that, you would have to make an amendment to add those particular petitions to the list that is before the body.

LAROCCA-PITTS: Thank you.

BISHOP MALONE: You are welcome.

OK there's another point of information or inquiry. The chair calls on Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Baltimore-Washington Conference, mic. no. 6. And if you can come prepared to state what your point of information is or your inquiry.

GINGER GAINES-CIRELLI (Baltimore-Washington Conference): Yes, thank you, Bishop. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Baltimore-Washington Conference, clergy, White, female, adult. My question is, the way that Delegate Chafin brought the motion, is that in order, or do I understand that part of it is not still before the body? Are we still looking at the whole thing that he brought before us, or—

BISHOP MALONE: Yes.

GAINES-CIRELLI: —not.

BISHOP MALONE: Yes, it is in order. Because you agreed to suspend the rules in order for it to be in order. So as it was originally brought by Lonnie Chafin as that motion, that is what is before the house. It is in order.

GAINES-CIRELLI: Thank you.

BISHOP MALONE: You're welcome.

OK. So there is another point of information/inquiry. The chair calls on Allie Scott from the Wisconsin Conference, mic. no. 1.

*(pause)*

ALLIE SCOTT (Wisconsin): Thank you, Bishop. Allie Scott, she/her. I'm a White clergywoman from the Wisconsin Conference. My question is, by including Calendar Item 283, which is the revision of paragraph 101 for the—it's *The General Book of Discipline*—would that stop the Standing Committee from being able to work on *The General Book of Discipline* during this next quadrennium?

BISHOP MALONE: That is a good question, and we would need to recognize—let me turn to the secretary of the General Conference.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): We would want to confer with the Stan—with the leadership of the Standing Committee, but if it is referred back to them, it would be given to them as action that they need to complete before the next General Conference, so, Bishop, I don't know that that would be something that would prohibit them from being able to do that. But we would want to confirm that with the leadership of the Standing Committee.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So the chair is going to call on Bishop Rückert. If you would come to the podium and speak to that question, please.

(pause)

BISHOP HARALD RÜCKERT: Thank you for calling again on me.

(laughter)

Harald Rückert, Germany Central Conference, chair of the Standing Committee, elected yesterday. Well, if the petition as it stands is just referred to the Standing Committee, the mandate for the Standing Committee is not really clear. Because if we stay with it in there, it's just what already has been done. We need a clear mandate what to do when it is referred to the Standing Committee. And this would be helpful for the Standing Committee to continue its work on working on *The General Book of Discipline*. So, a clarification about the mandate would be very much welcomed.

(pause)

BISHOP MALONE: OK. There is another point of information/inquiry. The chair calls on Celeste Eubanks, Alabama-West Florida Conference. Mic. no. 3.

CELESTE EUBANKS (Alabama-West Florida): Celeste Eubanks, Alabama-West Florida. Just a question actually, to Lonnie: What put—the Calendar Item 455, would that not be referred to Wespath in consultation with GCFA and GB—the General Board of Church and Society? I think we may have the referral part wrong.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So that is a question that you are raising. And the chair is going to use discretion to ask for Lonnie Chafin to come back to the microphone, mic. 1, to respond to that question.

CHAFIN: Illinois Conference. Laity. White male adult. You're not the only to have sent that question to me. So perhaps, but I feel like I've made the motion. I don't know that I can change it on the fly, but I think they would work in partnership.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So you just responded to the question. So thank you for the question. Thank you for the information. Now that the body has that information, you can do with what you want with that information.

OK, there are no more inquiries. Let me just share with you what is in this pool right now, so you'll get a sense of what we're contending with up here. There are fourteen persons in the pool seeking to amend. And, at this time, there are also five persons in the pool to close debate.

So, give me a moment so I can discern where we are.

(pause)

OK, the chair is going to call on Amy Lippoldt, Great Plains Conference, mic. no. 4, for an amendment.

Oh. Yes.

AMY LIPPOLDT (Great Plains): Thank you. Amy Lippoldt. Great Plains. Clergy. White American. Female. She/her. I would like to move to amend the petition to remove No. 283 from Lonnie's list to refer and put it instead on calendar items to be dealt with today on the floor.

BISHOP MALONE: Heard a second. You can go ahead and speak to it.

LIPPOLDT: The Standing Committee needs its mandate to finish its work on *The General Book of Discipline*. I really applaud Lonnie trying to move us forward. I'm very regretful that this is actually slowing us down. And I hope that we can take care of this matter and quickly move to our calendar items.

BISHOP MALONE: Okay. So I'm going to test the house on this. Are you ready to vote? OK. Hearing no objection, if you get your voting devices ready, what is before the house is an amendment to remove Calendar Item 283 to Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters to be dealt with today.

OK. The poll is open. If you vote yes, you press *one (1)*; if your vote is no, you press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(pause)

OK. The vote is now closed, and the results will appear on the screen.

OK. So the amendment has carried. We will—the vote is 538 in the affirmative, 91 not in the affirmative. So what you have just done, you have struck out Calendar Item 283.

[Yes, 538; No, 91]

OK. So what we have before us is the amended motion, with all of the calendar items referred to their respective committees as was noted. And again, not supporting the petitions that were not supported by the committee. You have struck out 283 from that list.

I am going to call on—

(pause)

I call on Fredrick Brewington, who has a speech for. New York. Mic. no. 3.

(pause)

FREDRICK BREWINGTON (New York): Fred Brewington. New York Annual Conference. African American male. Older adult. Straight. Bishop, thank you so much for the opportunity to speak. And to my brothers

and sisters throughout the connection, I applaud this attempt to try and streamline the work that we have to do. Part of the wisdom of that is that we not shoot ourselves in the foot. We are at a point now where there has been an enormous amount of work done. And the question I guess that we have to ask ourselves is, by doing this, are we going to lose any of our corporate memory or forward progress. And I believe not, because they have been referred to the appropriate places where work can be done and that we can continue the momentum that we have here with a clear understanding where there has been guidance by the committees but is also available to us to do the work that needs to be done by the referral. So I would encourage us, at this point, to deal with the remaining items that are left if we indeed and do pass this referral and then we allow ourselves not to be filled with the level of anxiety that will come when the clock starts ticking against us. And I yield my thirty seconds.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. Thank you. The chair now recognizes Odell Horne from North Georgia, who has a speech against. Mic. no. 5, please.

ODELL HORNE (North Georgia): Odell Horne. Laity. North Georgia Annual Conference. I'm speaking against this motion because we do have local pastors who are very concerned that all of their petitions were defeated. And we also have some people who have worked hard on petitions that are being referred that will not be voted upon on this—at this General Conference even though those petitions were duly submitted to be voted on at this particular General Conference, and the referral then would delay the action to potentially the next General Conference. I'm just lost as to why we wouldn't act upon the petitions that were duly passed, instead of referring them to agencies to vote on them potentially at the next regional conference or general conference, but also our local pastors do want voice and vote at General Conference.

BISHOP MALONE: Okay. Thank you. Let me share with you what we have in the pool right now. We have fifteen persons in the pool seeking to close debate. We've had one speech for and one speech against the amended motion. And we have sixteen persons in the pool who are seeking to amend.

So I'm going to test the body. If there is no objection to the motion to close debate—

*(pause)*

OK, I am going to call on Emily Kincaid, who has the motion to close debate and then the body will have to act on it. Mic. no. 3, Emily Kincaid from Alabama-West Florida.

EMILY KINCAID (Alabama-West Florida): Thank you, Bishop. Emily Kincaid. Clergy. Alabama-West Florida. White. Female. I move that we close debate.

BISHOP MALONE: Okay, I've heard a second. It is non-debatable. So if you'll get your voting devices ready. And the ballot will appear on the screen. The motion to end debate. That is what you're voting on. If it's yes, you press *one (1)*. If it's no, you press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

*(pause)*

OK. I am not seeing any flags, and so I am going to declare that the vote is closed.

If the results would appear on the screen. They are on the screen. 538 have voted in the affirmative. 108 voted not in favor.

[Yes, 538; No, 108]

So, now we are going to go ahead and to proceed to vote.

You are voting on the motion to refer as amended and not support the petitions that were not supported by the committee.

So, again be real clear about what you're voting on.

The motion to refer as amended and not to support the petitions that were not supported by the committee. It's been moved and seconded to close the debate. We are now ready to vote. It does require a two-third vote. OK. So, get your voting devices ready.

*(pause)*

Let me correct that because we handled the suspension of the rules, it does not require a two-thirds vote. So, don't do your vote yet. Just wanted to give you that clarity.

Because you suspended the rules, this is properly before us. OK. You may vote now.

If you're voting in the affirmative, you press *one (1)*. If you're not in favor, you press *two (2)*.

*(pause)*

OK. I'm not seeing any flags, so the ballot is closed. The results are now on the screen.

514 in the affirmative, and there are 137 in the negative. The motion is adopted. So, the items have been referred to the committees that were noted as well as the various petitions that were not supported by the committee are not adopted.

[Yes, 514; No, 137]

OK. So, here is where we are.

The chair is going to call on Mark Stephenson for a point of information.

*(pause)*

Mic. no. 4.

MARK STEPHENSON (California-Pacific): Good afternoon, Bishop. Mark Stephenson, California-Pacific Conference, lay, male, White.

I am going to delay and have Dawn and Giovanni address my question in their report at the end of this session.

BISHOP MALONE: So, that the body is aware of what the question was, could you please state what your point of information was, so the body could have that information.

STEPHENSON: Yes, this is in regards to what GCORR and COSGROW monitoring reports have indicated about inclusion, and I had specifically asked about GCFA slate that was elected yesterday, about racial and gender inclusion.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So, that was the request that you had brought yesterday and was expecting to have a report that was not in the—

STEPHENSON: Yes, it was not addressed this morning.

BISHOP MALONE: And you're going to get that directly from them?

STEPHENSON: Yes, they will address it at the end.

BISHOP MALONE: Thank you for yielding back time. Thank you.

OK. So, here's where we are. We are going back to calendar items. Well we were planning to go back to calendar items, but I see in the pool we have a point of information/inquiry. Judith Kenaston, West Virginia, mic. no. 1.

*(pause)*

JUDITH KENASTON (West Virginia): Bishop, I'm Judi Kenaston, laywoman from West Virginia.

I have a question because I was in the pool for—I wanted to try to table that last motion until we could consider the first items, and I wasn't recognized. I was in a parliamentary inquiry. And my question is what should I have been in to have been recognized to table or refer?

BISHOP MALONE: We scrolled through the pool and did not see you in there for what you just stated. Did you go in under "Other Parliamentary"?

KENASTON: Yes.

BISHOP MALONE: The correct one would have been point of information or inquiry.

KENASTON: OK. Thank you for that.

BISHOP MALONE: Sure, thank you.

*(pause)*

OK. So, let me share with you what we have here in the pool. I'm trying to help the body do the body's work.

We have three "other parliamentary." We have one "point of information/inquiry." We have one "close debate." And you already know the number of calendar items you have before you. So, I'm going to test the house.

There is a request for the closing—OK. The person took themselves out, and currently we have nothing pending, so we don't need to go there.

So, let me call on Marshall Bailey, other parliamentary, Virginia, mic. 1.

*(pause)*

MARSHALL BAILEY (Virginia): Bishop, Marshall Bailey, laity from Virginia.

I move to suspend the rules to require that all remaining calendar items be presented to the plenary by committee, including any applicable minority reports, and immediately move to vote without any speeches for or against.

BISHOP MALONE: So, if you could put that in writing so that we can be real clear, so that we can help the body real clear before there's any action on it.

BAILEY: How? Just through a page? Oh, right here.

BISHOP MALONE: Yes, please. OK. So, I'm not going to call for a second until we know what we're seconding. You need to know, and we need to know, so we can all be clear.

So, while we're waiting for that, there is a point of information/inquiry. Holly Grant. East Ohio. Mic. no. 5.

GRANT: My question—Holly Grant, East Ohio, laity. My question, Bishop, is whether you are seeing parliamentary procedure questions because I was also in there since the time I sat down to bring up a parliamentary issue, and I was not called on the whole time. I believe that my information could have probably helped us move along. But, so, I guess I'm just wondering if there is something wrong with the system.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So, the chair recognizes what Holly Grant just stated. As I shared with the body what the pool looked like, and by the time we were scrolling through the pool and what I put before the house, the house took action.

And so, Holly Grant, my hope is that you don't feel disenfranchised by that; that was not intended.

*(pause)*

OK. I see two persons, three persons in the pool, and there is a point of information/inquiry from Charles Boayue, Michigan Conference, mic. 5. If you can come prepared to state what your point of information is or what is your inquiry.

CHARLES BOAYUE (Michigan): May I use mic. no. 6?

BISHOP MALONE: Yes, you may.

BOAYUE: Thank you, Bishop. As we wait for our action on this, will it be in order for a brief moment of personal privilege?

BISHOP MALONE: What is the personal privilege related to? Because we're trying to maximize our time. We have a lot of items to care for. What is it in reference to?

BOAYUE: I wanted the General Conference to recognize the presence of the spouse of the late Bishop Yambasu of Sierra Leone, who lost his life in a tragic accident. And not to do anything else.

BISHOP MALONE: Yes. It is the chair's discretion that we will honor that, to recognize Mrs. Yambasu.

BOAYUE: And I would like to ask Mrs. Yambasu, who I think is in the hall, to stand. I have a great respect and this conference appreciates the outstanding ministry of Bishop Yambasu, who lost his life in the line of duty, and we praise God for his life and ministry. Mrs. Yambasu.

*(applause)*

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So we have the motion in writing, and I'm going to call on the secretary of the General Conference to read it. We were waiting to get it in writing. Please proceed.



GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. The maker of the motion moves to suspend the rules to require all remaining petitions to be presented to the plenary by the committee, including any minority reports, and move immediately to vote without debate.

BISHOP MALONE: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. So the maker of the motion, if you can please make your way back. I'm sorry. This motion, because of what it's requesting, it does require a two-thirds vote, and it is not debatable. So we will have to go immediately to a vote. OK? 'Cause it is a suspension of the rules; it's not debatable. So if you will get your voting devices ready. And you are voting on suspending the rules as indicated in the motion. If we can that just on the screen. Motion to suspend the rules. Press *one (1)* for yes. Press *two (2)* for no.

(*pause*)

OK. I see no flags so the ballot is closed. If the results can appear on the screen and they are.

537 in the affirmative. 108 in the negative. And you have suspended the rules. The motion is adopted.

[*Yes, 537; No, 108*]

So let me explain what this means. That the remainder of the calendar items, that they will come before the body. They will be presented. There will be no debate. We will go right to a vote. OK? That's where we are. OK. So, let's buckle up, and let's get ready here.

(*pause*)

OK. Give me one moment. We want to make sure we are all real clear on what those final remainder calendar items are. Give us one moment, please.

(*pause*)

## Calendar Items

OK. So we are going to move to Calendar Item 426. And the chair recognizes Judith Pierre-Okerson and Jesi Lipp.

JUDITH PIERRE-OKERSON (Florida): Good afternoon, sibling. Thank you, Bishop. I am Judith Pierre-Okerson, lay delegate from Florida, a deaconess. My pronouns are she, her, and hers. And I'm a Black woman, Haitian American. Bishop, as Susan mentioned this morning, Calendar Item 426 was printed in this morning's *DCA*. I move that we suspend Rule 38, which requires item to be in the hands of the delegates for one day before taking action, so that we can consider this calendar item.

BISHOP MALONE: Is there any objection? No objection.

PIERRE-OKERSON: So. OK. So, Bishop, if Jessie would present the item.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. Please proceed.

JESI LIPP (Great Plains): Good afternoon. I am Jesi Lipp, laity from the Great Plains, non-binary. My pronouns are they/them. I'm White, thirty-four, a person living with disability, and I served as the

secretary of the Independent Commissions Legislative Committee. The item before us is Calendar Item 426, Petition 20593, found on p. 2334, the last page, of today's *DCA* and p. 911 of the *ADCA*.

This petition, as amended, was supported 28 to 2 in our committee. However, due to a clerical error on my part, the last section of the petition, starting with the statement of apology, was not printed in the *DCA* when it appeared on Consent Calendar A04. And so, we have to come before you now to present it. I was asked to present this petition on behalf of the committee because I'm someone who works in the field of serving survivors of sexual violence at the rape crisis center in Kansas City. And so this subject matter is very important to me. People in our churches have suffered harm and our church has compounded that harm in our silence. This resolution and the apology it contains cannot erase what has happened, but it is the first step in committing to do no more harm. And so, on behalf of the Independent Commissions Committee, I urge you to adopt this resolution.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, so let me remind you that once the calendar item is presented, we would move straight to voting on the calendar item. So, get your devices ready You will prepare to vote; it requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of Calendar Item 426. The vote is open. If your vote is yes, press *one (1)*. If your vote is no, press *two (2)*.

*(pause)*

OK, I don't see any flags so I'm going to declare that the vote is closed, and let's have the results on the screen. 561 in the affirmative; 100 in the negative. You have adopted Calendar No. 426.

*[Yes, 561, No, 100]*

And it was just brought to my attention that within this calendar, this particular petition for the apology that that apology is to be read in a plenary session of the General Conference and because it does not designate the when of General Conference and we see where we are at this state, within this General Conference, that the apology would not be read until the next General Conference because it doesn't clearly state it. OK?

We're going to move now to Calendar Item 283. The next item of business is Calendar Item 283, and the chair recognizes Lisa Schubert Nowling from the Committee on Faith and Order to present the next calendar Item.

Lisa Schubert Nowling (Indiana): *(speaking in French)* I am Lisa Schubert Nowling from the Indiana Conference, clergy, female, White, and she/her pronouns. I am presenting to you Item 283, which is found on p. 2157 of your *Daily Christian Advocate*. Item 283 on p. 2157 of the *DCA*, and it relates to Petition 20956, 20956 on p. 1499 of the *ADCA*, p. 1499 of the *ADCA*, and it is entitled Revision of Paragraph 101 for the Postponed 2020 General Conference, and our motion from the committee is to adopt as amended.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, so again we are going to proceed to vote now that the calendar item has been presented. This motion does require a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of Calendar Item No. 283. If you will get your voting devices ready. Those who are in favor you're going to press *one (1)*; those who are opposed, you will press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

*(pause)*

I'm seeing no flags. The voting is now closed. If we can have the results of the vote on the screen? There are 552 in the affirmative and 92 in the negative. Consent Calendar No. 283 is adopted.

[Yes, 552; No, 92]

Our next item of business, we're going to move to Calendar Item 453, 453. And the chair calls on Lisa Schubert Nowling to present this calendar item and there is also a minority report. And Laura Witkowski. OK, you're here on the stage as well. We're going to first hear the report from the committee on Calendar Item 453, and then we will hear the minority report, and then we're going to move immediately to a vote to determine which report you want to take your final vote on. OK. I'll explain it to you again so you'll know where we are. Lisa, you may proceed.

Schubert Nowling: Calendar Item 453 is located on p. 2178 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and it is Petition No. 20643 on p. 627 of the *ADCA*. 20643. It is a resolution to adopt the report from the Standing Committee on Faith and Order entitled "Sent in Love, A United Methodist Understanding of the Church," and our motion is to adopt as amended. As a committee we felt that this was the culmination of sixteen years of very hard work from people around the world. We believe it is critical for our ecumenical work as a denomination. It is in line with "By Water and the Spirit" and "This Holy Mystery," and it presents our ecclesiology. It also calls for teaching, resources, and study guides to ensure that all church members can access and learn from this document, and our amendment indicates we hope that that work and those documents that will be resources for the local church would continue to be produced.

BISHOP MALONE: Thank you. The presenter of the minority report is now recognized.

(loud noise)

OK, let's try that again. The chair now recognizes Laura Witkowski, who will come and bring the minority report.

Laura Witkowski (Michigan): Thank you, Bishop. Laura Witkowski, Michigan Conference, she/her pronouns, White, adult, lay, woman. The minority report is to refer Petition 20643 to the Committee on Faith and Order for additional revision for lay accessibility, clarity, and current reality of our worldwide church. "Sent in Love" is an important and needed document for The United Methodist Church. The work of the Committee on Faith and Order is deeply appreciated. However, there is more work to be done so that this vital document can reflect our understanding of the church as it is being expressed and developed even at this General Conference. While we still have disagreements, as the document itself notes, we are discovering new and healthy ways to address this as siblings in Christ through concepts of contextual freedom and regionalization. And this is very important to our understanding of The United Methodist Church itself. As this is a study of the nature of the divine understanding of the church itself, an emphasis on being a worldwide church should be included. Finally, it comes across as needing a master of divinity to understand it. For what we call a lay-lead church, even with a forthcoming study guide, using it appropriately feels unattainable. I say this as an experienced, intelligent laywoman in leadership. The document needs final editing and revision more than simple editorial corrections. It is not ready for publication; it is admittedly being put before us as an unfinished document. As the only body who speaks for The United Methodist Church we should expect more and can do better than the way this document reads for all of us. Please support this minority report. Thank you.

BISHOP MALONE: So you have heard the report of the committee. You've heard the minority report. You will recall we've done this a number of times since we've been here, that we treat a minority report as a substitute motion, and so we're going to move right to voting. And so you are going to vote on whether or not you want the minority report to become the motion that you will finally vote on. So it's going to be a two-step. You have to determine which report will be the final report that gets voted on. But for right now we're voting on whether or not you want to substitute with this minority report. Ok, the body clear? So get your voting devices ready. And the vote is open. The motion to substitute Calendar Item 453, the minority report. If your vote is yes, press *one (1)*; if your vote is no, press *two (2)*. Vote now.

*(pause)*

OK. It seems that all the votes have come in. OK. I am going to declare that the vote is closed. And if the results—they are there on the screen. The motion to substitute Calendar 453 with the minority report: 396 votes in the affirmative; 276 votes in the negative. So you have voted and have approved the motion to substitute the calendar item with the minority report.

[Yes, 396; No, 276]

So now we move, again, right to voting again. OK, we're going to move immediately to a vote to determine if the minority report will officially be adopted by the General Conference. That's where we are. There's no more debate for the remainder of your work today. OK? So get your voting devices ready. And you are voting to adopt Calendar Item 453, the minority report. If your vote is yes, press *one (1)*. If your vote is no, press *two (2)*.

*(pause)*

OK. It seems that the votes are in. The vote is now closed. We have the result on the screen. You have adopted Calendar Item 453, the minority report. 531 votes in the affirmative. 137 votes in the negative. The minority report form is adopted.

[Yes, 531; No, 137]

OK. So let me see where we are here. Give me one second.

*(pause)*

OK, I see a yellow card but I'm going to need you to go into the pool. It's not open. Because we are voting. OK. I'm gonna, at my discretion, if you can go ahead and make your way to mic. no. 3 so I can hear what your request is.

LAUREN GODWIN (West Virginia): Bishop, Lauren Godwin, clergy, White woman, from West Virginia. She and her for pronouns. I believe, rising for a point of order, I believe we are in violation of a petition we passed just a few moments ago. Calendar Item 426. Because we won't be able to read this apology at the upcoming jurisdictional and central conference gatherings. So I would ask at some point that we ready the apology while we are gathered at this General Conference.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, so let me call on Gary Graves, the secretary of the General Conference to address what you just stated.

GRAVES: Bishop, as we read the petition, it would have an effective date of January 1 of the next year. We did not find anything in there that said it became effective immediately. If there is time and if the chair asks, we could be able to do that, if time allows. But I don't believe that the lack of reading it here would stop it from being read at a jurisdictional conference if the person in the chair there would want to do that. But the petition itself, unless we have overlooked it, did not have anything that brought it into effect immediately. And everything else would go into effect January 1 of 2025.

BISHOP MALONE: So here is how the chair is going to rule on this. Knowing the nature of this apology and knowing the hurt and the harm that has been caused, I think that it would be in good faith and in good conscience that we hear the apology.

GODWIN: Amen.

BISHOP MALONE: And so what I'm going to ask is, do we have it up here?

GODWIN: I've got it Bishop, if you need it.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, I think they have it. Give me one moment, please.

(pause)

To expedite time, would you be so kind as to bring that forward? This gives us an opportunity as the church to acknowledge the harm. We have had services of lament. We've had Thursdays in black. We are a church that stand on the principles of do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. Let us hear the letter:

GRAVES: From Committee Item 426 found on p. 2334 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*. Statement of Apology:

Introduction:

Sexual misconduct is a current and real problem within The United Methodist Church. Today we acknowledge there are people here who have been mistreated, abused, and assaulted by clergy and lay leaders in the church. We honor those who have shared their stories and those who have sat with their stories in silence. We commend the courage of all survivors of sexual misconduct to walk a path they did not choose. Too often, those who suffer from sexual misconduct are silenced, ignored, or not believed by the church. Sexual misconduct includes psychological, emotional, and spiritual abuse.

This apology is a beginning point for confession and hope in prevention and response to sexual misconduct in The United Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church apologizes for the times we allowed our desire to protect the church to outweigh our desire to care victims and survivors of sexual misconduct. We have allowed polity and protection of the institutional church to prevent us from holding persons accountable thus perpetuating harm within our local churches and other ministry settings and damaging the whole United Methodist connection.

We apologize for the times we have not listened to you, doubted your stories, ignored your wounds, and have not tended to your pain. We believe this has contributed to allowing an unsafe culture to exist. An apology is worthless without a commitment to the challenging work which must follow.

The United Methodist Church pledges to

One, apologize in every annual conference across the connection.

Two, educate church leaders regarding sacred trust in ministerial relationships and power imbalance within those relationships.

Three, provide healing resources to all affected in accordance with paragraph 362: Complaint Procedures.

Four, develop a trauma-informed response to complaints of sexual misconduct.

This apology alone is insufficient for healing. The United Methodist Church accepts our responsibility and publically states our commitment to carry out the steps named to do no more harm.

May God's blessing and never-ending love guide our work and see it through.

BISHOP MALONE: We've heard the letter, and let us hold in our hearts all who have been harmed, all who have been hurt in the church. Amen.

We are going to proceed and move on to Calendar No. 550. Calendar No. 550, and the chair calls on Henoc Mwenze.

HENOC MWENZE (South-West Katanga): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Thank you, Bishop, for allowing me to speak. Please wear your headsets as I am going to speak in French.

Thank you. Henoc Mwenze Malenge. I am from the episcopal area of South Congo and Zambia. I am the president—the chair of the subcommittee of Independent Commissions. I would like to thank the chair of that committee, Judith, as she gave me the privilege to present this item on behalf of the committee and the subcommittee.

The item that I present to you is No. 550, titled "Racial Justice," on p. 2838, dated April 30. The number of the Petition is 20332 on p. 859 of the French version of the *DCA*, volume 22.

So, indeed, the sin of racism that was fed by colonialism is a continuous plight. It should not be allowed to continue. The wording proposed is more direct and is not ambiguous for denouncing racism that we are all denouncing. And this is why, dear delegates of this session of this General Conference 2024, this is why I would like to invite you to adopt this petition by massive vote and by supporting it. Thank you, Madame Chair.

BISHOP MALONE: OK thank you. So, we have heard the presentation on Calendar No. 550. We are going to move to vote on whether or not you want to adopt this calendar item, so get your voting devices ready. It is a constitutional amendment, and it does require a two-third vote. So get your voting devices ready, please.

So, you are voting on whether or not to adopt Calendar Item 550. If your vote is yes, press *one (1)*. If your vote is no, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(*pause*)

I am not seeing any flags. I do see one over here. If someone could provide some assistance. I see a page making their way.

OK. I am going to declare this vote closed. If we can have the results on the screen.

OK. 621 voted in the affirmative. 59 voted in the negative.

[*Yes, 621; No, 59*]

It did require a two-third vote. You have adopted Calendar Item 550.

MWENZE: (*speaking in French*)

BISHOP MALONE: We are going to move to Calendar Item No. 240. The chair recognizes Amy Lippoldt.

LIPPOLDT: Thank you, Madam Chair, Great Plains Conference, clergy. I finally made it to you with a substantive petition. Is this our final item for action today, Bishop? No, OK.

I want to take a moment to say thank you to my fellow officers from the General Administration Committee: Vice-Chair Fred Brewington. If you ever want to have confidence as a chairperson, have Fred Brewington be the person supporting you. He was tremendous. Nitza Dovenspike as our secretary.

(*applause*)

Our subcommittee chairs, Betty Kazadi Musau and Ben Williams. They were a tremendous team to work with, and I was grateful to be alongside them.

I bring to you Calendar Item No. 240. 2-4-0. You'll find it on p. 2099 of the ADAC. P. 2099 of the DAC. This is Petition No. 20240. 20240.

This petition amends paragraph 4 of our constitution, which describes who is eligible for membership in The United Methodist Church, and in that paragraph it has a list of people that may not be discriminated against. This petition adds in the word *gender* and also the word *ability* so that people cannot be discriminated against based on their gender or their ability.

This petition comes from the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and it aligns paragraph 4 with other paragraphs in our *Discipline*, specifically, paragraph 16.1 and 16.1(4) that also list gender as a protected class. Additionally, both of these amendments—additions aligns us with our Social Principles where we say that we support equal opportunities and rights for all women and girls and also that we call for the elimination of all barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in the life of the congregation and in broader society.

So, the committee had a wonderful discussion about the addition of these and voted overwhelmingly to include them in paragraph 4, and we ask for your support of this petition.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. We have Calendar Item 240 before us. This is a constitutional amendment, which means it does require a two-thirds vote. We're going to move to voting, so get your voting devices ready.

You're voting on the adoption of Calendar Item 240. The vote is now open. If your vote is yes, press *one* (1). If your vote is no, press *two* (2).

(*pause*)

OK, I'm seeing no flags. It appears that all of you have voted. I declare the vote to be closed. If we can pull the results up on the screen. You have voted 607 in the affirmative; 67 in the negative. Adoption of Calendar Item—well, you have adopted Calendar Item 240.

[*Yes, 607; No, 67*]

OK. Let me share with you where we are. We're doing very well. We're in the home stretch here.

So, we have one more item that needs to come before the body in order to complete the work of the day. And before I bring that item before you, I am going to turn to the secretary of the General Conference, give me a moment, please. I see you, I'll recognize you in a moment. I'm going to call on the secretary of the General Conference to read the declaratory decisions from the Judicial Council.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. We have received Decision No. 1502. It is the question that centered on the standing of the Interjurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy.

The decision from the Judicial Council reads: Under the newly amended and effective paragraph 404.2, the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy has the authority to recommend to the General Conference the number of bishops in all jurisdictions, provided it follows the process set forth in said provision.

We have Decision No. 1503. The question centered on paragraph 2533 and the question as to whether the Board of Trustees could set policy. The decision of the Judicial Council: Nothing in paragraph 2533 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* prevents the Board of Trustees of a local church from adopting policies prohibiting the conduct of worship services that includes same-sex marriage ceremonies.

BISHOP MALONE: So thank you, Rev. Graves for sharing those decisions. I am going to recognize mic. no. 4.

DAVID LIVINGSTON (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. David Livingston, clergy, White male, Great Plains. I'd to ask for another declaratory decision from the Judicial Council. May I read the request?

BISHOP MALONE: Read—you can read the request.

LIVINGSTON: Thank you, I request a decision, a declaratory decision, from the Judicial Council regarding the constitutionality and applicability of the amended paragraph 101, 101, as it relates to paragraph 27 and 31.5, and Article 5 of our constitution, specifically, with our action at this General Conference on paragraph 101, do jurisdictions now have the authority to adapt *The Book of Discipline* in the same manner as central conferences and is such authority constitutional?

BISHOP MALONE: OK, is there a second? OK.

LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP MALONE: If you could provide your rationale please.

LIVINGSTON: Thank you, Bishop. The paragraph in question was amended and then approved in that big bundle so we didn't have a chance to debate it. Adding *jurisdiction* there doesn't appear to be constitutional and, in the spirit of this fantastic General Conference, where we have to come together to declare our clear intent to stay together in regional bodies, I'm really thrilled that the idea of jurisdictions needing to have an ability to make changes is irrelevant because of the regionalization that we have approved here and that we will, I'm confident, adopt in ratification by a wide margin. In gratitude for that, and out of concern for the constitutionality of this, I would ask for this declaratory decision.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. It is properly before the house. It is not debatable. If you will get your voting devices ready. It does require a one-fifth vote of the body. Give me one moment, please.



*(pause)*

The secretary of the General Conference advised me to make sure that this body is aware that because we are twenty-seven minutes before the adjournment of this General Conference that there may not be a response from the Judicial Council before adjourning today. Want the body to be aware of that. OK?

We have a hard, fast stop order of the day 6:30. OK, so get your voting devices ready. And what you are voting on is to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council. The vote is open. If your vote is yes, press *one (1)*. If your vote is no, press *two (2)*.

*(pause)*

OK. I'm seeing a number of yellow flags. And so, if it's not an issue with your voting device, I'm going to ask—let us finish. We are in the middle of a vote. OK? We are in the middle of a vote. So the vote now is closed. And we have the results. They will appear on the screen. And the motion to request a Declaratory Decision from the Judicial Council is adopted. OK?

[Yes, 492; No, 168]

Here is where we are, and I am going to move us along. We are at 6:05, and we have one more item that we need to care for. So we are going to care for our business that we need to care for, and depending on how much more time we have, then I will acknowledge some cards, a microphone, we gotta get our business done, friends. OK? All right.

We are at a point here at the General Conference for our last calendar item, which is Calendar Item No. 247 that was moved for reconsideration yesterday and before we proceed with this, the chair asks Delegate Elizabeth Brick to come forward to the chair. If you will come forward up here so that we can ask you a clarifying question before we proceed with the question. So if I can have Delegate Elizabeth Brick, if you can move expeditiously toward the front.

OK. I need you to come up here, please. OK. Here. Thank you.

*(pause)*

Thank you for your patience. We needed some clarification before we proceed.

*(pause)*

OK. So, again, our last item is a reconsideration of Calendar Item 247, and based upon the motion of the suspension of the rules in order to consider all remaining calendar items without debate, we're now going to call up this motion to reconsider Calendar Item No. 247.

It was moved and seconded yesterday. You postponed consideration of the item so that we could have the written alternative text. The possible text that the delegate proposes will now be read by the secretary of the General Conference. OK?

So, again, what we have before us is a reconsideration Calendar No. 247, and the alternative text is now going to be read by the secretary of the General Conference. OK?

And then after the possible text is read, we're going to move immediately to a vote, and what you're going to be voting on is if you wish to reconsider the vote. So, we're going to hear what it is, and then

we're going to move straight to a vote. And you're going to be voting on whether or not you want to reconsider voting on Calendar Item 247, and for the interpreters please refer to the document that was provided to you regarding Calendar Item No. 247.

So interpreters, to make sure that all of our seated delegates can have access to what it is before us, if the interpreters can refer to the document that was provided to you regarding Calendar Item No. 247.

So, I'm going to ask now for Rev. Gary Graves to please read the possible proposed alternative text.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. And we had to get clarity as to the instructions for utilizing this alternative text. The instructions we received was to substitute legislation for the petition. The maker of the motion now is changing that to "this is additional text."

And so on p. 1656 of the *DCA*, Advanced Edition, the strike-through provision that is there would still apply. On p. 2100 of the Daily edition, volume 5, no. 5, on Calendar R03, Committee Item 247 contains an amendment that was approved and would still apply. This text is to be entered after all of those items are considered. The text as submitted for your consideration is this:

Persons who have been terminated, surrendered, or have had their membership and license for ministry revoked by an annual conference, or 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 clergyperson, 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 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 recommends 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 clergy person immediately, and the individual may receive an appointment either *ad 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, or local pastor), with all 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 the individual because of conscious, 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 2024 General Conference.

BISHOP MALONE: OK. Thank you, Rev. Gary Graves.

You have heard the possible amendment. And, again, what's before you is whether or not you want to reconsider Calendar Item No. 247.

This alternative language will be adding text to the Calendar Item No. 247 that was already adopted. So what you have heard will be adding additional text to the calendar item that was already adopted. So, there's no debate. We're going to move right to a vote. But I want to remind you again, you are only voting on the motion as to whether or not you want to reconsider the vote on Calendar 247. OK? That is before you.

Everybody clear?

All right, let's get that ballot open.

Motion to reconsider Calendar Item No. 247. The vote is open.

If you want to reconsider, you press *yes*. If you don't want to reconsider, you press *no*.

*(pause)*

I am seeing no flags. OK. And it looks like we are ready.

I'm going to declare that the vote is closed, and if the results can appear on the screen. You have the results. It only requires a majority vote. 424 in the affirmative, and 223 in the negative. You have voted to reconsider Calendar Item No. 247.

[Yes, 424; No, 223]

We go, again, immediately to a vote.

So, you are voting on Calendar No. 247 with the amendment with the additional language added.

OK. Are we ready? All right? Get your voting devices ready. The vote is open.

Calendar Item No. 247 as amended. If your vote is yes, you press *one (1)*. If your vote is no, you press *two (2)*.

*(pause)*

We are in the middle of a vote so if we can keep the noise down, please. I am not seeing any flags. It appears that you all had an opportunity to vote. I am going to declare that the vote is closed.

And let's have those results on the screen. 474 in the affirmative; 178 in the negative. Calendar Item No. 247 as amended has been approved. It's been adopted.

[Yes, 474; No, 178]

OK. I'm going to ask what the nature is and before I do that—it is 6:20. We are at the order of the day for a closing worship, and we will not leave here, this chair will not let us leave here without some form of closure to spiritually center ourselves before we go.

*(applause)*

OK? So, I'm going to just ask what is the nature?

CHAFIN: Bishop, I move reconsideration of the referral of 455. There's many people, including Wespeth, who have been invested in that. It was beyond my vision. I should not have included it on the list. I think, if we could negotiate, if we could debate that under the new rules, I think we can get it done in—

BISHOP MALONE: So let me ask this. Let's work together here because we don't want to do anything that would prevent the church to be able to do the work that the church needs to do. OK, so what was the number?

CHAFIN: 455: Sustainable Investments and Fossil Fuels.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, so I'm going to test the body cause there's no more debate. OK, there's no more debate which means that you can do this in good faith and do it quickly. And so is there any objection in light of what needs to happen with that calendar item that was just mentioned. Any objection to that? Just to make sure that it lands in the right place.

*(pause)*

OK, so I'm hearing no and so we are at 6:20. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to move us real fast, so get your seatbelts on, get your voting devices ready. OK?

So, there was an objection so I'm going to ask you to vote on whether or not we're going to do this. OK? I'm going to move. OK? So get your voting devices ready. State the calendar item number again. 455 to refer it to—to reconsider and refer to Wespeth? Go back to the mic. and be very clear, please.

CHAFIN: I move to reconsider so we may debate it in this presentation.

BISHOP MALONE: No, no, no, I'm sorry.

CHAFIN: I'm sorry, sorry, sorry, no, to present it under the rules we have just established. So, we can reconsider, reconsider to vote. I know, I know, you're testing your patience with me, Bishop.

BISHOP MALONE: Here's the thing, the chair wants to do what is good for the body, the whole body of the church. We don't want any harm done and what I'm hearing is, and the body will have to decide, but we have eight minutes. So, does the body want to do this work?

*(crowd responses)*

CHAFIN: Reconsider and vote.

BISHOP MALONE: OK, so here's what I—here's what I'm going to do. Get your voting devices ready. Get your voting devices ready. And what I'm going to ask the body. Again, it's 6:22. We need to have a closing prayer, we need to have a centering, and an official adjournment. OK, but this is business of the church. So you're going to vote on whether or not we're going to continue this business. In order to set aside the orders of the day to reconsider the vote on Calendar Item 455. Get your voting devices ready. Let's open up the vote. This requires a two-thirds vote. If it's yes, press *one (1)*; if it's no, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

*(pause)*

OK, I'm not seeing any flags. I'm going to declare the vote closed and we're going to have the results on the screen. OK. So, you've done your work, and this is the decision of your work. 324 votes yes in the affirmative; 338 in the negative. So, the reconsider of that calendar item has not been approved.

[Yes, 324; No, 338]

So let's settle ourselves, take a deep breath everybody. You did good work. You did good work. You were patient with each other. Amen.

*(applause)*

You truly did the work of holy conferencing. And we give God all the praise and the glory and the honor. And here's what we're going to do now. Just center yourself for a moment. We're going to proceed to our closing centering before we prepare to go forth. I'm going to call on Rev. Gary Graves for a quick announcements.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. We continue to receive offerings for the pages and marshals. If you would like to submit those, you can do so to room 103. For those who were elected to the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, you may mark your calendars for your first meeting January 27 to the 29 in Atlanta and you will hear more by email. As you are preparing to depart from your seat, please be sure to leave your voting card, voting device, and interpretation device at your seat. If you are planning to move your ADCAs and DCAs to recycling, those bins are available at the back of the room.

BISHOP MALONE: Thank you, Rev. Graves.

Let us now turn our hearts for a time of centering as we prepare to close.

## Evening Devotion

*(chimes)*

DORIS DALTON (New York): Be still. My siblings, be still. "Be still and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations. I'm exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge."

BISHOP MALONE: As you go, as you go forth from this General Conference, tell the world about Jesus. As you go, tell them about his love. As you go, be love, be joy, be peace, be patient, be kind, be good, be faithful, be gentle, be the body of Christ. As you go, be still and know that God is God and God can be trusted. Let us walk together, beloved of God, and let us never grow weary or tired of doing the work of the kin-dom. Amen.

*(applause)*

RAYMOND TRAPP (General Conference Worship Team): We come from love. At our birth we are claimed as God's own. In our Baptism we are incorporated into God's family. By remembering who we are and the Baptism we share, we can go from here to the ends of the earth. Being true to who we are and how we have been called as unique representatives of Christ on earth. Remember your Baptism and be thankful.

*(music)*

BISHOP MALONE: For the love of God I hereby declare that the postponed 2020 General Conference is now adjourned. Amen.

*(applause)*