

Proceedings

Morning Proceedings for May 3

Worship

(music)

STEPHANIE PARSONS (General Conference Worship Team): Good morning, church.

ALL: Good morning.

PARSONS: Will you please rise in body or spirit or whatever way you feel called this morning and join me in the call to worship.

Our God is our refuge and strength.

ALL: Our God is present and helps us at all times, especially in times of trouble.

PARSONS: Our God has been in this place, in the stillness and in the rejoicing.

ALL: Through our discernment, our fellowship, our singing, and our disagreements.

PARSONS: Our God has shown us the way.

ALL: As we explored and created new possibilities for our beloved church.

PARSONS: Our God has been steadfast, and we move forward in the knowledge that you are God.

ALL: For our God is exalted among the nations; our God is exalted in the earth.

PARSONS: Our God, the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob is our refuge.

ALL: Come let us worship our God.

PARSONS AND ALL: Amen.

(music)

MARIE KING (Tennessee-Western Kentucky): Amen. You may be seated in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Please receive this prayer. Gracious God, we express our profound gratitude for this day. We are thankful for the resilience of our bodies, our minds, and spirits. For the unexpectedly ways you have guided us in our collective efforts. We are grateful, God, for reconnection with old friends and the bonds formed with the new ones. We acknowledge the transformative power of your influence on us. As we approach the conclusion of our business, we humbly ask for your continued presence, not only among us here in this place, but also among those joining us via livestream. Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. Help us to hear you and give us the strength to act in your name. It is in the name of Jesus we pray and the people of God said,

KING AND ALL: Amen.

(music)

DENISE SMARTT (New York): Amen, let the church say amen.

Speak to us again, O God, so in the reading of your word, we can find your truth for us today. Amen.

Our scripture this morning comes from the book of Psalm 46:1-6 and 10-11.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; God utters God's voice, the earth melts. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Thanks be to God for the reading of this word.

(music)

(applause)

BISHOP TRACY S. MALONE: Amen. My soul looks back in wonder how I got over. Let the church say, Amen. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Praise be to God. Hallelujah. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, the captives are set free, the wounded are made whole, and there is rest for the soul. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the one in whom and through whom we are all set free, set free to love and to live and to have, and to enjoy life and to have it abundantly. Oh, my soul looks back in wonder how I got over.

Let us pray. Most loving and gracious God, you are the giver of every good and perfect gift. For the gift of your Holy Spirit, O God, that is moving among us this day; for the gift of the reminder that we need to look back every once in a while to remember how we got over. And I just pray, O God, that the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts together would be acceptable in thy sight, for you are our strength, you are our rock, and you are our redeemer. Let the redeemed of the Lord say, "Hallelujah."

ALL: Hallelujah.

BISHOP MALONE: Let the redeemed of the Lord say, "Praise the Lord."

ALL: Praise the Lord.

BISHOP MALONE: Let the redeemed of the Lord say, "Amen."

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP MALONE: We find in Psalm 46 a compelling confession of faith in the midst of a time of uncertainty. We witness in David a courageous defiance. We witness a faith that completely trusts in the

provisions of God. A faith that defies fear and doubt, a faith that refuses to succumb to the powers and the principalities that seek to shake the very foundations of his faith. Or cause him to question God's presence in his circumstances. But I want you to notice something in this psalm: David chooses not to focus his attention on the crises or dwell on his troubles, but instead he focuses his attention on the goodness and the providence of God. He testifies to how God has intervened in his circumstances. He testifies to how God is guiding them and protecting them and sustaining them in their times of trouble.

So I want to ask you this morning: When was the last time you testified about God's grace and work in your life? When was the last time you gave witness to how God carried you through a situation or circumstances that you know that it was only by the grace of God that you survived and still have a peace of mind? When was the last time you said, "Thank you, Lord, for your goodness. Thank you, Lord, for your grace. Thank you, Lord, for your mercy"?

The songwriter says, "I don't feel no ways tired, because I've come too far from where I started from. Oh, nobody told me that the road was going to be easy, but I don't believe he brought me this far to leave me."

Beloved, we know that circumstances, disappointments, and tragedies and trauma that we witness and experience in our life can weigh us down. They can wear us out. It can sometimes test our very faith. And we can easily find ourselves becoming weary and cynical and disillusioned, and if we are not mindful, these disappointments and challenges and even the trauma can cause us to sometimes doubt our faith. They can sometimes cause us to question the promises and provisions of God. And if we are not mindful, if we are not prayerful, if we are not confessional, if we are not testimonial, we can lose sight of God's purpose and God's plans for our lives and become oblivious to how the Holy Spirit is moving and is at work in our lives. And, yes, all around us in unexpected places and through unexpected people, and even through unexpected circumstances.

Whether we realize it or not, we are all directly and indirectly affected by the racial, political, and cultural violence that is pervasive all around us in our communities, in our nation, and throughout the world. We are still living with and still working through the grief and the loss associated with the separation within the church. We are still recovering and rebuilding our lives, our local churches, and our denomination from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. And if we are honest, while there have been many historic decisions that have been made here at the General Conference that paves the way forward as a fully inclusive church, with a generous unity and a new form of connectionalism, there is still some anxiety. How will we fully live into the decisions and the commitments that we have made here?

In Psalm 46 David makes a bold proclamation that speaks into this time of liminality. He says, "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in the time of trouble." God is! God is! Period. Fact. God is! God is our shelter in the midst of a storm, God is our help right here and right now, and always God is with us! And God is with this United Methodist Church leading us and guiding us and sustaining us and preparing us for a future with hope. Notice after the proclamation, David issues a declaration. He says, "Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, and though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its tumult," if God is our refuge and strength and help, and God is, there is no reason to fear.

Beloved of God, as a people called United Methodists, I too declare that we shall not fear. We shall not feel defeated, though the very foundations of our memberships and our structures and our finances are being shaken. Though the challenges we face as a denomination seem insurmountable, and though the forces of wickedness continue to assail us, we have to choose, like David, not to succumb to fear and doubt, for God is with us. Say that with me:

BISHOP MALONE AND ALL: God is with us.

BISHOP MALONE: And because God is with us, there is no weapon that forms against us that shall prosper.

(applause)

Following the proclamation and the declaration, there is a word from God: Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations. I am exalted in the earth. I am exalted in The United Methodist Church. Be still, and know and acknowledge the sovereignty of God, that God is over all things, and in all things, and nothing, no thing, is outside of God's realm and control and possibilities. God can redeem even the worst of situations.

Now hear this: Being still is God calling us to surrender, to give up thinking that we have all of the answers, to give up thinking that we have the control, to give up the need to have control over matters and situations and circumstances that only God can redeem, that only God can reconcile and only God can transform. We have to wait on God. Being still is surrendering to God in prayer, trusting in the Lord with all of our hearts and with all that concerns us, and not leaning on our own understanding and letting God direct our paths. The Word of God says, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land."

Being still is not God's call to rest. But it is God's call for us to get out of God's way. Being still is God expecting us to stop the fighting and stop the quarreling and stop even the wandering. God is calling us to put down the weapons and put down the harm and put down the hostility and put down the boxes we create, the fences we build, the barriers we erect, and the lines we draw. God says, I am exalted in the nations, I am exalted in the earth. God wants us to have eyes to see God's redemptive love and grace and power and justice that is at work in the world, that is at work in our beloved United Methodist Church and in our lives.

God is inviting us to join God in this holy and courageous work of healing and forgiving and transformation.

Hear this good news. God is always, always, always working for God's good and for our good and for God's divine purposes in the world. Even when the evidence seems otherwise. Even when we cannot see the outcome or even know what the end is going to be. Even when we cannot comprehend the mysteries of life or even understand the whys of life. God is exalted in the nations. God is exalted in the earth. God is exalted in The United Methodist Church. God is exalted in our lives. God is our refuge and our strength and our hope. Today, tomorrow, and always. The hymn writer says: Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, thy fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever will be. Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy

faithfulness! And morning by morning new mercies I see; all that I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

By the time General Conference ends today, over 1,000 petitions would have been deliberated, debated, and decided. We will have enacted processes and procedures and protocols. We will have worshiped, approved reports, celebrated mission, elected leadership, and the list goes on. We will have conducted the church's business. We will have engaged in holy conferencing. So what?

(audience response)

Now what? Where do we go from here? We go forward in faith with a courageous defiance. With a faith that trusts in the provisions of God. With a faith that will not succumb to fear, to doubt, to scarcity or paralysis. We serve a God who is exalted, and we serve a God of abundance and a God of hope. We go forward surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit and trusting God to lead us and to show us God's vision for the next expression of The United Methodist Church. And we go forward with the courage to continue to do the hard work and the heart work of dismantling racism and sexism and classism and homophobia and xenophobia and white supremacy and privilege.

(applause)

We go forward keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and on our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Daring to dream new dreams and daring to see new visions, we go proclaiming the love and the good news of Jesus, loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. As we go, we go beyond our comfort zones; we go to the margins, to the borders, to the prisons, to the places where people are hurting and feeling abandoned and lonely and marginalized, and all for them Jesus.

(applause)

We go to be disciples and to make disciples of all nations. Seeing all the people, seeing everybody is God's somebody as the beloved child of God, and we go baptizing them in the name of Jesus and teaching them everything that Christ has taught us, and as we go, it matters how we show up. How we show up in our communities, how we show up in people's lives, how we show up in the world. We don't show up in judgment, but we show up in love to listen and to serve. We don't show up being stingy with God's grace, but we show up proclaiming the wideness of God's love, of God's compassion, and of God's mercy.

(applause)

That's how we show up. How we go matters. How we show up, it matters. How we love matters. William Sloane Coffin in his sermon "Being Called," he says this and I slightly adapt it: There is no way that Christianity can be spiritually redemptive without being socially responsible. God is always trying to make humanity more human, but without us, God won't, and without God, we can't. And every time we cry out, Lord, how long will evil prevail and how long will violence run rampant and how long will corruption exist and how long will exclusion corrode. We can be sure that God is putting God's finger in question back at us. Saying, Church, how long? There can be no such thing as secret discipleship. For either the secrecy destroys the discipleship or the discipleship destroys the secrecy. You see, what defines the church's witness is not our membership vows—and they are important and sacred. Not our doctrinal standards—and they ground us; that's who we are. Or our creeds and structure or polity—but

that is a part of who we are and how we structure ourselves as the body of Christ. All of that matters. But that's not what defines the church. What defines the church is the integrity of our discipleship.

(applause)

The integrity of our love and the relevancy of our mission. Beloved God is able to do far more abundantly than what any of us can ever think or even imagine. But here is what I want you to do. I want you to imagine with me for our beloved United Methodist Church that hope will be reborn. That people would be reconciled to one and other. That we will be committed to build God's beloved community. Let us imagine a church that reclaims the priority of discipleship and I'm talking about a radical kind of discipleship that is grounded in the love and the teachings and the example of Jesus Christ. I want you to imagine with me. Every local church loving well. A church that recognizes God's divine image in everyone, and each one is regarded as God's beloved no matter their race, their ethnicity, their age, their orientation, their status, or even location. Let us imagine a church where no one, nobody is marginalized. You know there is plenty good room in the kingdom. And don't you also know that there are no box seats in the kingdom? There are no box seats in beloved community. Let us imagine a church that transcends geography and cultures and languages and borders and barriers and differences. I'm talking about a beautiful mosaic that reflects the kingdom, the kingdom, of God. Let us imagine a church that is beautifully diverse, intrinsically connected to love each other, intrinsically connected as we go forth to serve our neighbors near and far. Let us together reimagine church.

I leave you with these words of Natalie Sleeth's "Hymn of Promise":

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see. Oh, there's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody; there is a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me. From the past will come the future; and what it holds, a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Hear this now.

In our end is our beginning;

(applause)

and in our time, infinity; in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity. In our death, a resurrection; at last, a victory, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Beloved, we do not know what the future holds, but we do know the one who holds the future,

(applause)

and we can embrace together the uncertainty, knowing that it's unrevealed until a season, something God alone can see. So may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in God so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(applause)

(music)

XIMENA DIAZ: Church, I invited you to stand in body or in spirit as we engage together in our liturgy of commitment.

Would you pray with me? Ever moving Spirit, you have guided us through troubled waters and have strengthened us through unknown times. Everlasting God, you have called us to be your church, a church that responds to today's need. As we prepare to return to our communities, we commit to respond to the call you have put in our hearts.

Let us prayer together.

ALL: Through baptism we are incorporated by the Holy Spirit in God's new creation and made to share in Christ's royal priesthood. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

TISHA BRANCH: On behalf of the whole church, and, beloved, I need you to look at the church. I mean look to your—I wasn't kidding—look to your right and to your left. And look in front and behind. So on behalf of the whole church, I ask you, Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? And if so, say, "I do."

ALL: I do!

BRANCH: I heard you.

DIAZ: Church, do you accept the freedom and power that God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever form they present themselves? If so, say, "I do."

ALL: I do!

BRANCH: Beloved, do you confess Jesus Christ as your savior, put your whole trust in his grace and the promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church, which Christ has opened to all people, as they have been created in the image of God? If so, say, "I do."

ALL: I do!

DIAZ: And this is important. According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world? If you say, say, "I will."

ALL: I will.

BRANCH: Beloved, let us pray together.

ALL: As members in the body of Christ and representatives of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministry of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

BRANCH: And the church shouts,

ALL: Amen!

(music)

(applause)

BISHOP TRACY S. MALONE: Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. People all over the world, love train, yes! Yes! Amen.

(applause)

I'm going to invite us just to stand still right where we are. Let us just stand still right where we are. Whew, it's hard to set down this party!

(laughter)

Receive this blessing.

God of love, we seek your blessing this day. Guide us through the rest of our hours together. Help us to show love to all we encounter. Help us to love in the places we feel it the least. Bless us, O Lord, in the name of the one who loves us today and always and forever.

Let the people of God say Amen.

ALL: Amen.

BISHOP MALONE: Amen.

(applause)

(music)

(applause)

Plenary 1

BISHOP CYNTHIA MOORE-KOIKOI: Amen! They told me the United Methodists came to Charlotte and a love revival broke out.

(cheering)

Amen.

(pause)

Good morning, General Conference of The United Methodist Church. Good morning, visitors, observers, reserves, I see you. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening to all of you who are joining us online. My name is Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, and the most important thing you need to know about me is that I love Jesus. I love Jesus, and I love The United Methodist Church in that order. I've had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ since I was twelve years old, and my relationship with Jesus has been perfected by being in community with others who love Jesus too. What a blessing it has been to spend the last two weeks with thousands of United Methodists who know and love Jesus for themselves.

I have the privilege of serving as bishop of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, and I collaborate as co-bishop of the Susquehanna Annual Conference. I am a sis gender African American female and like most of African Americans I am multiracial. About 32 percent of my DNA is West African;

almost 25 percent is Bantu, that's from the center of the continent of Africa; just over 20 percent of my DNA is Nigerian.

(applause)

Thank you, siblings. Thank you for the love. And about 20 percent is a combination of DNA from the British Isles—I love you, my siblings—Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. I identify as a Black African American middle-aged woman who is young at heart.

This morning, I will be collaborating with two colleagues, Bishop Tom Berlin of the Florida Annual Conference and Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth of the Alaska, Oregon-Idaho, and Pacific Northwest conferences—they work them hard in the west.

(cheering)

And while he does not want me to specifically recognize him, I also want to acknowledge that I'll be collaborating with Parliamentarian Maurice Henderson.

(cheering)

It is important that I call his name. In my culture we often call the names of our ancestors. We name our biological, spiritual, and social justice ancestors. When this naming is done in a preaching or praying moment, we refer to it as calling the roll. Naming our ancestors helps us to reclaim our identity, an identity which was stolen by slavery and continues to be denigrated by racism.

Naming our ancestors helps us to access the wisdom God gave to our ancestors. I share this with you, and I identify our parliamentarian by name, because my father and grandfather were named Maurice.

It is an ancestral name and so in this moment, I reclaim my identity.

(applause)

In this moment, I claim access to the God-given wisdom of all of my ancestors. *àşę, àşę, àşę.*

So I will be collaborating with my colleagues and with the parliamentarian, but the most important collaboration in which I will engage this morning is my collaboration with you, the delegates of the General Conference.

My role is to set an environment for you to do your best discernment. My role is to help ensure that the decisions you make as a body, as a result of your discernment, will withstand the scrutiny of those who disagree with the majority and the scrutiny of the Judicial Council. We will do this work together.

Following my prayer, I'm going to start referring to myself as the chair and you will be delegate so and so.

Please do not allow my formality to cause you to forget that my love for you is sealed by the name of Jesus and that we are doing this work together.

Won't you pray with me.

Creator. Redeemer. Sustainer. We are still. Help us to know and the world to know through us, that you are God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

I do want to share with us a note. Last night our beloved Bishop Unda lost his brother unexpectedly. So I just, as we're going through the things of this day, if you would lift his family in your prayers, and I hope that it's a reminder of the importance of the work we do as we do what we do.

Monitoring Report

At this time, the chair invites Rev. Dr. Giovanni Arroyo, general secretary of the Commission on the Religion and Race, and Judge Dawn Wiggins Hare, general secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, to provide a monitoring report.

DAWN WIGGINS HARE (Alabama-West Florida, General Secretary of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women): Thank you, Bishop. Good morning.

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

ALL: *Buenos días!*

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

(cheering)

I got my tennis shoes on. Laywoman, White, older adult.

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

Thank God it's Friday.

WIGGINS HARE: Wooo!

ARROYO: We have been working diligently on matters that impact ministry and mission. Our decisions provide directions on how we continue to be witnesses of God's love and justice. Our discernment in the past week has led us to new frontiers and a glimpse of the equity work we must continue to strive for as we are co-laborers of God's kin-dom.

WIGGINS HARE: Friends, you have been asking, as have we, for the gender makeup of the elected delegates here at General Conference 2020/2024. We are grateful for the receipt of the unaudited preliminary numbers from the Commission on General Conference, which we received just last night. These are pretty amazing. According to our data in 2016 and 2019, women made up 36 percent of the delegates at General Conference. So what about now?

First, let's start with a chart from the central conferences. By gender in our central conferences, females represent 29 percent and males, 69 percent.

OK, let's go on to the U.S.

(cheering)

Look at that. Yes, I heard it. Look at that. Female, 52 percent; male, 45 percent; and no gender listed as 3 percent.

So, third chart, our cumulative for this General Conference, and remember these are unaudited numbers right now: 56 percent male, 42 percent female. Friends, history has been made at this General Conference. We have a 6 percent percentage point increase from our last General Conference of women delegates.

(applause)

ARROYO: As we engage in our last day of deliberations, let's take a quick glance at a few charts to help us understand how we have fared thus far this week in hearing the diversity of voices. The first set is a series of our daily speakers based on ethnicity identifiers.

The pie chart demonstrates how we heard diverse voices at the beginning of the week. But gradually, predominantly White speakers increased.

However, yesterday's discussion began to shift the speaker paradigm towards a more equal representation.

The next set of pie charts provides us how this body has shared speeches between U.S. and central conference delegates. Various variables would explain the differences. For example, where the petitions before the body more U.S.-centric, inviting U.S. delegates to speak versus the day we deliberate regarding regionalization when central conferences participation was recorded higher. GCORR will continue to provide more data collected on our website.

WIGGINS HARE: The work of equity continues today as we engage in the final petitions of this General Conference, including the budget. The commitment of the church to be equitable prompts us to ponder the following questions.

ARROYO: How would the proposals move us or hinder us toward mission—vital mission and ministry?

WIGGINS HARE: Who is impacted by our decisions who is not in the room?

ARROYO: Who was involved in the budget-making process?

WIGGINS HARE: Will the proposal increase, expand, or create programs that are vital to or disproportionately needed by particularly disadvantaged communities?

ARROYO: As delegates, you and I are setting the direction of the church with every vote. May you continue to engage in holy conferencing as you finish this historic General Conference.

WIGGINS HARE: Thank you for the hard work you have done thus far and thank you for allowing us to be part of your daily reflections.

ARROYO AND WIGGINS HARE: Thank God it's Friday. Amen.

BISHOP CYNTHIA MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you so much for your report.

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

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

chair asks the tech team to make sure that we're clear—and we are clear on the pool, thank you so very much.

EMILY ALLEN (California-Nevada, Chair of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar): Thank you, Bishop. The schedule for our last day of this General Conference is printed on p. 2274 in today's *DCA*, that's p. 2274. The Committee on Agenda and Calendar recommends the following changes for the remainder of today. Prior to receiving the GCFA Report, we will hear a report from the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy. During our 4:00 P.M. plenary, we will recognize new Judicial Council members and those members completing their service. I also want to point out our closing worship at 6:00 and adjournment at 6:30. By contract with the Convention Center and various support staff, we cannot continue past this adjournment time. Bishop, I move the adoption of today's agenda, with the changes I have described.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Beloved, it has been moved to adopt the agenda with the changes as described. In a moment we will open the pool so that if you wish to speak you may register.

The question before us is on the adoption of the motion to adopt the agenda, with the changes as described.

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

I call on Gomer Chamsua [Chamusa] for a point of inquiry. If you could go to mic. 2 and let us know what your point of inquiry is.

GOMER CHAMUSA (South Congo): (*simultaneous interpretation from French*) Thank you very much. Thank you, Bishop. Gomer Chamusa, lay from South Congo. We were following the program and the formal debates as it was said that there will not be any more time after adjournment. So I would like to know that the delegates who came and that will leave on the 5th, not tomorrow but after tomorrow. What are the provisions for them, because they did not receive the tickets (*indecipherable*) if they have been reimbursed. So what will the delegates do because they will be staying one more day? Thank you very much. (*indecipherable*) done for those delegates who are staying an extra day? Thank you.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you for that question, for that inquiry. We will get an answer for you and get that answer to you later. I want to move us on the motion that is in front of us to adopt the agenda. I call on Paul Ketoka to speak in favor of adoption. Mic. 4.

(*pause*)

I don't see anyone going to mic. 4, so maybe that was an error. So I'm sensing maybe you're ready to vote to adopt the agenda. All right, beloved, we will now proceed to vote. The motion requires a majority vote.

The question is on the adoption of the agenda with the changes as prescribed.

Those in favor will press *one* (1); those opposed will press *two* (2). You may vote now.

(*pause*)

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

678 have voted in the affirmative; 14 have voted in the negative.

[Yes, 678; No, 14]

The affirmative has it.

The motion is adopted and the agenda is adopted with the changes as described.

ALLEN: Thank you. We have twenty-six remaining calendar items before us, seventeen of which we are required to take action on under *Book of Discipline*, paragraph 507.10. We will continue working through calendar items as set by the Committee on Agenda and Calendar. As a reminder, the chairs of each legislative committee have joined our committee members every day to help us discern as a group how to prioritize the order in which remaining calendar items are presented. We have collaborated well, and we have confidence in how we have ordered the remaining business. Yesterday afternoon, you all demonstrated that as a plenary body we can get through our calendar items efficiently and thoughtfully. If we focus like we did yesterday afternoon, we might have time to discuss every calendar item. At this time, I would like to thank our committee vice-chair, Easmon Ngakui; our secretary, Mary Spradlin; our coordinator of the calendar, Susan Brumbaugh, along with all the members and staff of the Committee on Agenda and Calendar as well as the legislative committee chairs for their dedicated work these past two weeks. I am grateful for your service. Your willingness to attend daily meetings at 6:30 A.M. shows you really love the church.

(applause)

SUSAN BRUMBAUGH (New Mexico, Coordinator of the Calendar): I'm Susan Brumbaugh, coordinator of the calendar, lay delegate from the New Mexico Annual Conference, White, straight, adult, cisgender female, using she/her pronouns.

I mentioned yesterday that Calendar Item 426, which was previously acted upon in Consent Calendar B04, had missing text and needed to be corrected so that the plenary could properly consider the full proposed resolution. That calendar item, with its full corrected text, appears in today's *DCA* on p. 2334. Item 426 is on p. 2334. Prior to presenting this item for consideration, the legislative committee chair will be making a motion to suspend Rule 38, which requires items to be in the hands of delegates for one day before taking action. Bishop, this concludes what I hope is our final report. Thank you.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We thank you for your report. The chair now—it's OK to show appreciation. We can pause for that.

(applause)

The chair now recognizes the secretary of the General Conference, Gary Graves.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): Thank you, Bishop. Some of us hear and learn a little differently. We have heard Emily and Susan share with us numbers and words about everything that is coming before us, but some of us learn visually, and sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, and you've used more than a thousand words, so we're going to give you a picture or two to help with that. Yesterday this is what we accomplished.

(laughter)

And we'll pick it back up. Today this is what is in front of you.

(pause)

Please help us clean things up.

(laughter)

You can do so by keeping the love train moving as a high-speed express.

(laughter)

We request that when you feel the temptation to spend an hour to help us save ten minutes that you think about that. We pray that if you hear your name—and we all already know which microphone you're going to be called to—think about that as to whether you need to make that trip or not. If it's necessary, we understand, but there are a lot of things going, and a lot of voices that haven't been heard, so please consider that as you think about it. This is the visual. Let's go!

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you.

Committee on Journal

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: The next administrative committee report is the Committee on Journal Report. The chair recognizes the chair of the Committee on Journal Report, Rachel Bootes Miller.

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

(applause)

We are thankful for the twelve years we have had under the leadership of Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer and his lovely wife, Cynthia.

(applause)

And we wish them our very best as they enter into retirement status. I also want to thank Rachel Wright from the Rio Texas Annual Conference, who has served with me as we have operated as a committee of two Rachels. So we've had a great two weeks.

As for our report from the Committee on the Journal, our daily proceedings are posted in the *DCA* website under the Proceedings tab are there for your convenience. And you will have continued use and access of that when you return home.

The *errata* today can be found on p. 2000, 2000—I mean 2262. Election results from May 1 Judicial Council Alternate contains a spelling correction. In turning to p. 2259, Remembering Those Who Have Died, Bishop Felton May was inadvertently omitted from the list of bishops and spouses. *DCA* volume 5, no. 7, p. 2199 of the *DCA*, nominations for the Commission on the General Conference Updated contains a spelling correction.

This concludes our report for this General Conference. Alleluia and amen!

(laughter and clapping)

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Alleluia. Amen. Thank you for the report.

Committee on Presiding Officers

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: The next administrative committee report is the Committee on Presiding Officers. The chair recognizes the chair of the committee, Jasmine Rose Smothers, and the vice-chair, Audun Westad.

(pause)

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

ALL: Good morning.

SMOTHERS: All right. *Magandang umaga po!* Remember that's "good morning" in Filipino. We've made it to our final morning of the postponed 2020 General Conference, and we pray that you are proud of the work that you've done and the work that we will complete today. My name is Rev. Jasmine Rose Smothers. I am clergy, African American, female, adult. And I'm a delegate from the North Georgia Conference in the United States.

(cheers)

I love y'all. My pronouns are she and her.

Audun Westad and I have the privilege of leading the Committee on Presiding Officers. Audun and I represent twelve incredible committee members who come from each central conference and jurisdiction, six clergy and six lay. Please thank Audun, Honorine Mujing Mwad, Nitza Dovenspike, Alice Lassayo, Christine Flick, Thomas Fux, Arnaldo Estrella, Sandy Olewine, Clayton Oliphint, and Tom Salsgiver for the incredible work they've done these two weeks.

(applause)

AUDUN WESTAD (Norway, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Presiding Officers): Good morning. My name is Audun Westad, lay delegate from the Norway Annual Conference and from the Central Conference of the Nordic, Baltic, and Ukraine.

After two weeks together, I will miss starting the day with a little language lesson with you guys, but as my last farewell here on the stage I will just remind you of the message Jasmine and I told you guys in the first week. When we're operating on a different language, we do not seek perfection, but understanding. And it is my understanding that we have achieved that in these days here in Charlotte. So, we want to thank Bishops Bigham-Tsai, Wallace-Padgett, Graves, and Easterling for leading us so well yesterday.

(applause)

WESTAD: And—yes, as a matter of fact, I think we should give a big round of applause and thanks to all our presiding officers who have offered their leadership over the last two weeks.

(applause)

SMOTHERS: We do want to commend our bishops for their work as presiding officers this week. Bishops Ough and Bard, thank you for preparing us for the task that was entrusted to us. Council of Bishops, we know that you usually hear criticism loud and clear. So today, we want you to hear encouragement and

gratitude. Your preparation was evident. Thank you for investing resources into training, coaching, having our parliamentarian, Maurice Henderson, here with us. We loved the team and triad model that you used to support each other. And bringing your language, culture, and cooperative spirit to the work was a gift. Celebrating so many firsts was a privilege. For those who were asked and said, “I don’t think I’m the best person for the job right now.” Thank you for caring for the body in that way. We were so impressed by our bishops for whom this was their first General Conference as a bishop. Most of you have only presided over one annual conference, and yet you approached this work with grace, courage, and the leading of the Spirit of God.

WESTAD: So, you remember that today we are welcoming Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, Bishop Karen Oliveto, Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer, and our new Council of Bishop president, Bishop Tracy Smith Malone. And for the last time, and I think you know it by now, speak slowly, concisely, respectfully, and directly into the microphone as we do our work today. Thank you for your cooperation with our presiding officers. *(speaking in Norwegian)* Amen.

SMOTHERS: Amen.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you so much for your report.

Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy Report

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: The next report is the report of the Interjurisdictional Study Committee. The chair recognizes Kim Ingr—

(pause)

We want to make sure that we get for the record the correct name of the committee. It is the Interjurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy report. So the chair recognizes Kim Ingram to present their report.

KIM INGRAM (Western North Carolina): Thank you, Bishop. I am Kim Ingram. I'm a clergy member of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

(applause)

Thank you. I am White, female, adult. And I also want to introduce those who are on stage with me. And it is the Executive Committee of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy. If you'll stand when I call your name:

Jasper Peters, who is the vice-chairperson;

Beata Ferris, the secretary;

(cheers)

Amy Lippoldt is the chairperson of the South Central Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy; Judi Kenaston is the chairperson of the Northeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy;

(cheers)

Barrie Tritle is the chairperson of the North Central Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy;

(cheers)

Dan Hurlbert is the chairperson of the Western Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy;

(cheers)

and Alex Shanks is the secretary of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy,

(cheers)

serving as the SEJ representative since I am the chair of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy.

(cheers)

I am thankful for these leaders and the teamwork that we have experienced together. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy consists of two people from each conference as they existed in 2020. One layperson and one clergy person that serve on the Jurisdictional Committees on Episcopacy. All of these people together make up the Interjurisdictional Committee. So we are a body of about one hundred people. The role of the Jurisdiction Committee on Episcopacy is to provide support and accountability for the bishops in the jurisdictions. Our United Methodist Episcopal leaders, our bishops, have provided faithful and fearless leadership in this difficult season of the Church. Can we please give them our gratitude?

(applause)

We are grateful for the ways they have been a pastoral presence, a courageous and prophetic voice, and faithful leaders guiding annual conferences around the world. We recognize the value of leadership, especially in this season, and acknowledge a need to invest in our bishops. We prioritize having episcopal leaders who continue to help annual conferences navigate changes, reorder our life together, and provide vision that the kingdom might come on earth as it is in heaven.

The work of the Interjurisdictional Committee is defined in paragraph 512 of *The Book of Discipline*. The committee has two primary functions: to discuss the possibility of transfers of bishops across jurisdictions; to consider a request based on missional needs for the possibility of a jurisdiction having more bishops than it is allotted. In order to serve these two functions, another requirement is that the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy recommends the total number of bishops in the jurisdictions to the General Conference. According to Judicial Council Decision 1312, 1312, from May 2016, 2016, this includes the number of bishops to be assigned in each jurisdiction.

The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy met to organize on Saturday, and since Monday we have met four times during lunch or in the evening. In addition, according to the petition that was approved earlier in the week, the Executive Committee consulted at lunch yesterday with the officers of the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration. We have taken our charge seriously and explored extensively many different options. The missional needs were always primary in our conversation. Some of these included: densely populated areas with a significant evangelistic opportunity, large geographic regions with churches located substantial distances from one another, regions with significant disaffiliation who continue to need pastoral leadership and rebuilding efforts, projected population growth in particular areas of the country and learnings from previous

episcopal coverage experiences. We acknowledged that beautiful and unexpected things emerge when we live into the image of being the body of Christ. An example was given of the Kansas East, Kansas West, and Nebraska Conferences, which were assigned one bishop. It was unexpected and at the time, people were skeptical about the potential. These conferences eventually merged by their own choice and testify now to being better because of it. They have strong relationships, significant ministries, and they have learned from each other.

The petition that was approved this week by the General Conference included a mandate to consider criteria that includes the number of charge conferences and clergy, the geographic size, and church membership. We are grateful to GCF and A for providing the available information quickly and for being present at our meetings as needed to answer questions. In addition, the petition indicated that each jurisdiction shall have at least five bishops. Other conversation included but was not certainly limited to the following: We were reminded of Bishop Wilson's encouragement to think seven generations out. We recognize the need for a runway in the next four years during which the work can be done to explore the function of the episcopacy, our ongoing financial capacity, and to live into regionalization. We recognize that there will be thirty-two active bishops once retirements take place this summer. This has been understood as natural attrition. The General Conference had a significant discussion last week about the number of bishops in the central conferences. It was recognized that the central conferences in Africa made an argument based on missional needs, and the final decision was primarily around a financial reality. The Episcopal Fund in the budget that will be presented today supports thirty-two active bishops in the jurisdictions. And finally, to meet the missional goals of the whole, it might require mutual sacrifice. Multiple times during the meetings we heard from each jurisdiction. The jurisdictions met separately within the meetings to talk about context and possibility. Each jurisdiction offered a rationale and missional needs for more bishops than were available to distribute among the five jurisdictions.

Over the course of the week, the Spirit moved within the body. We began the work not having worked together previously as five distinct entities. By the time we adjourned last night, we had become a family.

Having shared the information about our charge, our process, and our considerations, we now share with you our recommendation. The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopal unanimously recommends thirty-two bishops to serve the jurisdictions for 2025–2028 quadrennium.

Those thirty-two bishops will be distributed in this way. The Southeastern Jurisdiction will have nine bishops. The Northeastern Jurisdiction will have six bishops. The North Central Jurisdiction will have six bishops. The South Central Jurisdiction will have six bishops. The Western Jurisdiction will have five bishops. The recommendation would necessitate a transfer of two bishops to the Western Jurisdiction and one bishop to the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Each of the other jurisdictions, Southeastern, South Central, and North Central, will have one more active bishop than assigned.

Our priority will be to do no harm. In addition, this number anticipates no episcopal elections unless there is an unexpected vacancy in the jurisdictions.

That is our recommendation to the body.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you so much for your report and in order for the body to act on a recommendation, we need it in the form of a motion.

INGRAM: So the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy moves the distribution of bishops as I have just identified.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Is there a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Second.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: It is moved and seconded the motion for distribution of bishops as the committee has described to us.

That is the motion that is before us. In a moment we will open the pool so that if you wish to speak to the motion, you may register to do so.

The question is on the motion of distribution of bishops in the jurisdictions as described by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

You may register to speak. There is a point of inquiry from Amanda Bonnette-Kim, mic no. 1.

AMANDA BONNETTE-KIM (New England): Good morning. My name is Amanda Bonnette-Kim. I am a young adult for a few more years. My pronouns are she/her/her. I'm from the New England Annual Conference. I am a laity and I am biracial, multiethnic, with majority of that being 50 percent Korean.

So I do have a question and it is in two parts. They are not two separate questions. It is the same question, so in honor of the spirit of the monitoring reports we have gotten all these past two weeks, I am interested if (1) we can get a verification of information that I have gathered on the ethnic and gender identity diversity of the active bishops in the United States with it being currently forty active bishops including Bishop Johnson, who was acting—

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We just need you to ask the question, not provide information. Thank you. So get your complete question out.

BONNETTE-KIM: So the information is relevant to the question that I have for total transparency. I need verification if the information I've gathered is correct. I will be brief.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: When we answer the question, you will be verified as to whether or not what you've gathered is correct or not. So, just, just stick to the question.

BONNETTE-KIM: All right. Is it accurate that of the thirty-nine plus one active bishops, that twelve are Black, three are Hispanic, which are to represent thirty-six Hispanic Latino countries, two AAPI, which are to represent seventy-five countries, and one to represent the indigenous, Native American nations, where are there 574 federally recognized tribes. Is that an accurate representation of our ethnic diversity currently as standing, and then what would those figures look like when the bishops retire so we can make sure we have accurate representation of our ethnic diversity in The United Methodist Church in the United States?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you for that question.

INGRAM: I don't have the information.

BONNETTE-KIM: OK, is there a way we can get that?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Hold on. It's important that the chair responds—

BONNETTE-KIM: I apologize.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: and not that we have responses from the floor. Thank you so much. We appreciate the question. I'm just looking to see if there is someone who could answer that question. I do know that the General Commission on Religion and Race and GCORR have been monitoring some of the demographics of our bishops. I don't know if they have that information readily available at this moment though. We will try to get an answer to your question.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We have—

ARROYO: Bishop?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We have someone, if you want to speak, you—GCORR. Thank you.

ARROYO: Will you give me a few minutes and I'll try and get that data for you.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, thank you so much, General Secretary.

We have a point of information. Allie Scott, mic. 1, Wisconsin.

MOSES KUMAR (General Secretary and Treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration): Bishop, I have the information, Bishop.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, so we're going to have Allie Scott move to mic. 1, and we do have the information from our General Secretary on Finance and Administration, Moses Kumar.

KUMAR: Black male 6, Black female 7, White male 11, White female 6, Hispanic male 2, Hispanic female 4, Asian American male 2, Native American male 1, total 39. Bishop.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you. And the other part of that question is, after retirement, after retirements after jurisdictions, what will those numbers look like?

KUMAR: One minute, Bishop. I'm just rolling the computer.

(pause)

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We are so appreciative to our general agencies who keep this information for us.

(pause)

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Allie Scott, I wonder as they are looking for that information if you could ask your question.

ALLIE SCOTT (Wisconsin): Absolutely. I imagine Secretary Kumar will need to answer my question as well.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK.

SCOTT: Thank you, Bishop. My name's Allie Scott. I am a White clergy woman from the Wisconsin delegation and thank you also to all who are serving on the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy. I know it's been quite a heavy lift this week, so thank you for your work.

We've heard—one of the questions that I have—the only question I'm asking here is that we have heard members of this body ask Secretary Kumar this week, Given the number of bishops that we've discussed and recommended, what would the salary for jurisdictional bishops need to be in order to have an episcopal fund that does not reallocate funds away from our general agencies? Earlier this week Secretary Kumar said it takes—

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, we've got your question.

SCOTT: OK.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, thank you.

(pause)

Just want to remind the body of the question that we're now looking for an answer for, and that is, What would the demographics be of the bishops after retirements happen, and I'm sure that the only answer that can be given is after mandatory retirements happen. We won't know if there are folks who might voluntarily retire.

KUMAR: Bishop, with regarding to the salary portion of it, we need to calculate that, Bishop.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, that will take some time. Thank you.

(pause)

KUMAR: Bishop.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Yes.

KUMAR: I'm going to give the after retirement and mandatory retirement, what is the number.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you.

KUMAR: Black male 4, Black female 7, White male 8, White female 5, Hispanic male 2, Hispanic female 3, Asian American male 2, and Native male 1.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you. That is the information that was requested. Thank you so very much. We still have that outstanding question of the impact of salaries. But I understand you need some more time.

KUMAR: Bishop, while the question was asked, I was looking at my computer. Can the delegate repeat the question for me, please, one more time please?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Yes.

SCOTT: I'd be glad to.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Yes, please do that now.

SCOTT: All right, thank you. Sorry.

My question, Secretary Kumar, is earlier this week you said you needed some time—

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Please address the question to the body.

SCOTT: OK, sorry.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: And just the question.

SCOTT: Yes. What would the salary for jurisdictional bishops need to be in order to have an episcopal fund that does not reallocate funds away from our general agencies?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you for that question. We will get the response and get back with you.

All right, I'm going to call on Delegate Alice Williams. Mic. no.—I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I need to look at the order. I need to call on Delegate Jay Brim, a speech for.

JAY BRIM (Rio Texas): Bishop, I'm Jay Brim, an older adult White male from Rio Texas Annual Conference, and I'm a layperson.

I speak in support of the actions of our committee and I call on all of us to thank them for this very significant decision that they've made, and I call on our colleagues from the central conferences to recognize this sacrifice that the United States is talking about taking here of reducing by seven bishops in this next quadrennium so that we may add to an Africa now and more later as needed. The missional needs of this church are significant, and we are asking a lot of our episcopal colleagues to step up to the plate. Thank you, interjurisdictional episcopacy committee, for these very tough decisions you've brought to us, and we love you all.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you for that speech.

We will now call on—

KUMAR: Bishop, I have—

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Delegate Odell Horne for a speech against.

KUMAR: Bishop, can I give the answer now or later, Bishop?

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Yes, you may give the answer.

KUMAR: The answer to the delegate question is, If the thirty-two bishops to be reduced, the salary of the bishops have to reduce by one-third in order not to touch any deduction in the agencies, Bishop.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you so much for that information.

Delegate Odell Horne, mic. 5, I believe?

ODELL HORNE (North Georgia): Mic. 6.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: 6, mic. 6, yes.

HORNE: Odell Horne, laity, North Georgia Conference.

I want to thank the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy for their report. However, I'm opposed to removing an additional two bishops to the Western Jurisdiction and one bishop to the Northeast Jurisdiction when the Southeastern Jurisdiction is by and far the largest jurisdiction in The United Methodist Church and we need more bishops in the Southeastern Jurisdiction just based upon membership numbers. The North Georgia Conference is one of the largest conferences in the United States, and it has one bishop. It is almost larger than some of the jurisdictions in the United States. I am opposed to this report.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: Thank you for your comments.

The chair now calls on Delegate Christina McDermott, mic. no. 1.

CHRISTINA MCDERMOTT (Susquehanna): My name is Christina McDermott. I'm from the Susquehanna Conference. I'm lay. I'm very White, and I'm an adult.

And I would like to close debate and call the question.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: It has been moved and seconded—Did I hear, I thought I heard a second but I'll give you a chance.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (*indecipherable*)

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: OK, it has been moved and seconded to close debate.

The question is on the adoption of the motion to close debate.

The motion requires a two-thirds vote. There is no one in the speaker pool to speak in favor or against.

There are no speeches to amend, two to close debate, and two for other parliamentary.

Again, this motion requires a two-thirds vote. Get your voting devices ready.

Those in favor would press *one (1)*. Those opposed would press *two (2)*.

Please vote now.

(*pause*)

Don't see any flags. The vote is now closed. You have the results.

(*laughter*)

We don't play the lottery as United Methodists, do we?

666 in the affirmative to close debate; 40 in opposition.

[*Yes, 666; No, 40*]

You have voted to close debate. Does the chair of the committee wish to have a word?

INGRAM: Thank you, I think I have given us the information that we need to make an informed decision.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKOI: We will now proceed to a vote. The motion requires a majority vote.

The question is on the adoption of the motion of distribution of bishops as described by the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

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

(pause)

The vote is now closed. We'll see the results.

631 in the affirmative; 65 against.

[Yes, 631; No, 65]

The affirmative has it, and the motion is adopted.

Thank you so much for your report and your work.

INGRAM: I have a bit more of a report.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKO: OK.

INGRAM: The Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will continue to meet throughout the quadrennium. Our most immediate work will be to develop and implement a consultation process with all of the bishops who are not retiring about their continuing service. We want to be clear that *The Book of Discipline* provides that a bishop must consent to a transfer. You will find more information about that process in paragraph 512. It also matters to the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, the Jurisdictional Committees, and the annual conferences that the consultation process is robust and that a bishop who transfers does so out of their own discernment and call. Beyond the jurisdictional conference meetings this summer, the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy will meet over the next four years as we explore theological purposes, elections, deployment, function, funding, and care of the office of the episcopacy within the U.S. regional conference.

I do want to give a shout-out to Sara Hotchkiss, the business manager of the General Conference who has been extremely helpful in getting out meetings scheduled with rooms, meals, and technical support. We never knew until the end of one meeting when the next one would be.

And finally, please express gratitude to the people from your conference who serve on this committee. While you were out having fun, enjoying delegation dinners, and getting the much-needed rest, the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy has been doing faithful work.

If you serve on the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy, will you please stand?

(applause)

We look forward to continuing our work together. Thank you very much.

BISHOP MOORE-KOIKO: Thank you, thank you for your work.

Beloved, the time for our next order of the day has arrived. The order of the day is a break. So, delegates and friends, we have reached that time for our break.

We will take a recess until 12:20—I'm sorry, until 10, 10:25 A.M.

(crowd reaction)

(laughing)

When we resume—you've not been recognized—when we resume, Bishop Karen Oliveto will be our presiding officer.

It has been my honor and privilege to help this body discern what it would want us to do.

(applause)

Thank you so much.

(applause)

Be back in your seats at 10:25!

Plenary 2

BISHOP KAREN OLIVETO: Good morning, friends. My name is Karen Oliveto. I am the episcopal leader of the Mountain Sky Conference. I'm a White, older adult, lesbian woman. My pronouns are she/her. I'm joined today with two bishops who will assist me. Bishop Israel Painit, resident bishop of the Davao Episcopal Area in the Philippines. And Bishop Daniel Wandabula, resident Bishop of the East Africa Episcopal Area.

(applause)

There is such a generous spirit in this body, and I received some of that generosity this morning. I don't know why, but a page brought me several boxes of Nerds.

(applause)

I feel like I should be Oprah—"...And there's nerds for you, and nerds for you!" But I want to thank Emily and the BU seminarians for that gift. Thank you.

I taught United Methodist studies for twelve years. I would open each new semester of polity with these words: "I may be preparing you for a church that might not exist by the time you graduate." Now it's not that the essentials of our faith would be changed—our doctrinal standards and theological task are what grounds us as Christians, and particularly as United Methodists. What I was trying to impart to them is the fact that The United Methodist Church, through each General Conference, reconstitutes itself as it responds prayerfully to the leading of the Holy Spirit, helping reorganize us so that we can provide a relevant and responsive witness of God's generous grace as the body of Christ. Each time this body concludes its work, God has molded us anew. Amen?

So, I want to thank you for the hard work you've done this week. But more, for the way you've done this work. You have modeled what unity in the midst of diversity looks like as we've listened to one another, learned from one another, and grown closer as a global church. This can only strengthen our mission as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I've asked my brother, Bishop Israel Painit, to offer the prayer to open our session.

BISHOP ISRAEL PAINIT: (*simultaneous interpretation from Tagalog*) Let us pray. Dear God of love and history, as we gather today for the last day of a very important, engaging, and historic General Conference, we ask for your guidance and blessing. Give us wisdom and open hearts, as we continue to discern and make decisions. Bless all of us here who wish for unity and courage. We continue to lift our hearts in union with all people near and far. May the warmth of hope fill our souls and inspire us to embrace each other. May we stand together hand in hand with determination in unity against fear and division. May our discussion be fruitful, and our actions bear the eternal love in kindness and each of us possesses. In unity, may we find strength. In the name of Jesus Christ, who is the ruler of all races, genders, and colors, Amen.

GCFA Report

BISHOP OLIVETO: The next item of business is the GCFA report. The chair recognizes Moses Kumar, General Secretary and Treasurer, General Council on Finance and Administration, and their team to present the GCFA report.

MOSES KUMAR (General Secretary and Treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration): Bishop Oliveto, (*speaking in undisclosed language*). Don't worry about the translation. Now the English comes now. My name is Moses Kumar. I'm an Indian, clergy from Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.

(*applause*)

I bring you greetings on behalf of the General Council of Finance and Administration. As you may remember, when I was on the stage, I talked about joy. It has been a joy to reconnect with all friends and meet new ones as we worship. Going into the next four years together, it is now a time for hope. Earlier the delegates worked together to pass Report No. 8, which gave us the base rate for the next quadrennium. Working together, we came up with a solution in a spirit of collaboration and compromise giving us hope and United Methodist Communications and GCFA will promote giving throughout the quadrennium. We are committed; we will trust in God that our members will support the church with their prayers, presence, gifts, and witness. Together, friends, we hope to achieve a combined 90 percent collection rate in 2025 and 2028. This is not about funding and financial support; it is about ministry and mission. Paying apportionment is a value of our denomination, because it comes back to John Wesley's three simple principals: do no harm, do good, stay in love with God. GCFA is excited to present the 2025 to 2028 revised budget. As guided by the General Conference and in joy and in harmony with the Connectional Table. I also want to especially thank the local churches and annual conferences who joyfully, faithfully pay their apportionments and make this budget possible.

We present to you a budget based on two base rates. For simplicity's sake, I will refer to them as 2.9 percent conditional base rate. I'm going to repeat this—for simplicity's sake, I will refer to them as 2.9 percent conditional base rate. Bishop, when we obtain a 90 percent collection rate in the first two years of the quadrennium, and alternatively a 2.65 percent rate. If you're going with the 2.9 percent conditional base rate budget, it will be a total of \$373.4 million and if you take the other alternative which is 2.6 percent rate would be \$353.5 million. But we know that stewardship is a value of the United Methodist connection, and we know that we will meet and exceed a combined 90 percent collection in the years of 2025 and 2028. We will present Report Nos. 1–7 now.

(*pause*)

SCOTT BREWER (Great Plains): Bishop, on behalf of the Financial Administration legislative committee, I recommend adoption of Report No. 1, World Service Fund.

KUMAR: Before I begin, I want to update delegates on petitions passed at General Conference that have financial implications. GCFA and Connectional Table collectively determined that all petitions have been cared for without the necessity of changing final budget amounts. Thank you, Bishop.

The following reports, numbered 1–7, will be presented for your adoption. All the reports will be found in today's edition of *Daily Christian Advocate*. Report No. 1 relates to World Service Fund. It is the Petition No. 21116, and it is—

BISHOP OLIVETO: Mr. Secretary, I hate to—will you excuse—excuse us for one moment.

(pause)

Friends, thank you as we come to order. I ask Ken Ow to come to mic. 4. Ken?

KEN OW (Baltimore-Washington): Mic. 6. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move to suspend the rules in order to consider revised GCFA Reports 1–7 together.

BISHOP OLIVETO: There has been a second. Is there any objection to suspending the rules to consider Reports 1–7 together? Is that—did I hear objection? There's objections. OK. We will proceed to vote, then. We will be voting on the motion to suspend the rules. Get your voting devices ready. We will be voting to suspend the rules to consider Reports 1–7. Those in favor will press *one* (1), those opposed will press *two* (2). You may vote now.

(pause)

The voting is closed. We can show the numbers. You have voted to suspend the rules. It required a two-thirds vote. You had 509 in affirmative, 89 in the negative.

[Yes, 509; No, 89]

The rules have been suspended, and we will consider together—however, so we're not jumping back and forth between reports, we will take each report one at a time, and then take one motion to adopt all seven. So we will turn to Report No. 1.

KUMAR: Report No. 1 relates to World Service Fund. It is Petition No. 21116, and it is found on p. 2290 in today's *Daily Christian Advocate*. World Service Fund is the heart of our collective church ministry. It funds the work of the church reaching out into the world. The World Service Fund provides financial support for the worldwide ministries of our denomination, the ministries of our general church. The proposed World Service Fund budget, under the 2.9 percent conditional base rate is \$167.5 million, and the World Service budget under the 2.6 percent rate would be \$158.5 million.

BISHOP OLIVETO: So you've heard the report about the World Service Fund. Is there any discussion? If there is not, we will return and hear Report No. 2.

KUMAR: We now move to Report No. 2 relating to the Ministerial Education Fund. It can be found on p.—

BISHOP OLIVETO: I'm sorry, we did have someone who is—came into—came late just as we were transitioning. I recognize Lydia Muñoz.

LYDIA MUÑOZ (Eastern Pennsylvania): Thank you, Bishop. Lydia Munoz, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, clergy, *ella*, Latina. I move to amend Report No. 1.

(*pause*)

BISHOP OLIVETO: If you'll state what you wish to amend.

MUÑOZ: Yes. I move to amend Report No. 1 to add to our mission strategies a no. 5: "the eradication of racism, White supremacy, patriarchy, and colonialism" as one of our missional strategies.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Can you repeat that, please?

MUÑOZ: Absolutely. I move to amend Report No. 1 to add to our missional strategy, after no. 4, the no. 5: "the eradication of racism, White supremacy, patriarchy, and colonialism."

BISHOP OLIVETO: Is there a second? You may proceed.

MUÑOZ: Thank you, Bishop. We have heard this week the need for us to be a new church, for us to be a more inclusive church. If we don't write down how, if we don't become intentional about the mission—being a part of the mission of the church with our dollars, with our witness, with our prayers, with our service—it will not happen. We have to put it down. We have to be intentional about removing racism from this world, and I hope and pray that we can adopt this.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. It is before you, any further discussion?

If you can provide us with that motion in writing?

Luis Reyes, speech for, mic 2.

LUIS REYES (Northern Illinois): Thank you, Bishop. Luis Felipe Reyes-Rosario, LatinX, clergy, Northern Illinois Conference, my pronouns are *el/him/hims*. Thank you for your recognition. In 1992, I heard Dr. Barbara Thompson say, "Racism is the unfinished agenda in The United Methodist Church." And we have been dreaming new expressions of the church and the trouble in that we have, at least I have, is that we like to talk a lot, but when it's time to do the work, we end it that says "we don't have the money". It is time for us to say, "enough is enough". If we envision a church that is free of colonialism, racism, sexism, let us fund it. Let us put it in priority, because it's time for us to stop the talking and moving into the action. The world is watching and it's time for us to reflect that our actions, our works reflected in our actions. So please help us to stop what Dr. Barbara Thompson says many years ago, "Racism can be eliminated if we put the money into action." Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I'm seeing no one in the pool who wants to speak against. So it looks like you are ready for a vote. Would you read your motion one more time, Lydia? Delegate Muñoz? Mic. 5.

MUÑOZ: Sorry I had closed the book. I move to amend Report No. 1 to add to our missional strategy, a no. 5 after no. 4: "the eradication of racism, White supremacy, patriarchy and colonialism."

BISHOP OLIVETO: The body is prepared to vote. You will have your devices ready. Vote one for approving the amendment, vote two against. You may vote now.

(pause)

The voting is closed. You have approved the amendment. 510 votes in the affirmative, 111 against.

[Yes, 510; No, 111]

The tech team can please restore the previous pool. Alka Lyall, mic. 2. You have a point of info or inquiry.

ALKA LYALL (Northern Illinois): Thank you, Bishop. Alka Lyall. Clergy. My pronouns are she and her. Adult, Asian-Indian female. Bishop, my question is on p. 2226. I just see that there is a line item for Young Clergy Initiative, which has been taken away, so there's no more money allocated for that initiative for the next quad. If I could understand, Bishop—I don't understand finances completely—but if I could understand why there's no more money for the Young Clergy Initiative.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I will turn to our general secretary.

KUMAR: I will answer to the delegate that this program was initiated in 2012, and it ended in 2024. And the allocation, when the Connectional Table took that in consideration, they didn't restore that back again.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Delegate Edwin Momoh, mic 5. Point of info or inquiry.

EDWIN MOMOH (Sierra Leone): Bishop, Edwin Momoh from the Sierra Leone Conference. My question has already been asked, so I will save you that trouble.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you, sir. Thank you. General Secretary, please continue with the presentation of Report 2.

KUMAR: Thank you, Bishop. We now move to Report No. 2, related to the Ministerial Education Fund. It can be found on p. 2298, of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and it is Petition No. 211[1]7. During the life of the Ministerial Education Fund, we have faithfully given more than \$900 million to support the work of clergy leadership in our church. 23 percent of this fund is retained by the annual conferences. The Ministerial Education Fund proposed budgets under 2.9 percent and additional base is \$57.9 million, and the Ministerial Education Fund posts budgets under the 2.6 percent they have \$54.8 million.

I go to Report No. 3. Report No. 3 relates to the Black College Fund.

BISHOP OLIVETO: We want to see it if there are any questions or discussion. You've heard Report No. 2. Any discussion? I see none. We go to Report No. 3.

KUMAR: Thank you, Bishop. Report No. 3 relates to the Black College Fund. It can be found on p. 2301 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and it is Petition No. 211[1]9. The Black College Fund supports eleven Historically Black Colleges in the United States. The proposed budget for this fund under the 2.9 percent conditional base rate is \$33.1 million. The proposed Black College Fund base rate under the 2.6 percent rate is \$31.9 million. Through your support together we can continue to change lives and develop excellent leadership. We want to thank the leadership of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and administration of Black College Fund for this faithful witness and support.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. You've heard the report. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we'll move to Report No. 4.

KUMAR: We are now ready to present Report No. 4, relating to the Africa University Fund, the report can be found on p. 2304 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and it's Petition No. 21120.

Africa University is one of the greatest success stories of The United Methodist Church. And with the 2.9 percent initial base rate, the proposed budget for Africa University is \$5.1 million; and under the 2.6 percent rate, the budget would be \$4.9 million.

BISHOP OLIVETO: You've heard the report. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we'll move to Report No. 5.

KUMAR: Bishop, we are ready to present Report No. 5, relating to the Episcopal Fund. Found on p. 2307 of today's *Daily Christian Advocate*, and its Petition No. 21121.

The Episcopal Fund, raised in accordance with *The Book of Discipline* provides for salary, expenses, and support of the United Methodist Episcopal Leadership.

Under the 2.9 percent conditional base rate, the budget is at \$87.4 million, and the proposed Episcopal Fund Budget under a 2.6 percent base rate is \$82.8 million.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Is there discussion? I'd like to call on Jasmine Smothers, parliamentary question. Mic. 5.

JASMINE SMOTHERS (North Georgia): Good morning, I'm Jasmine Smothers, clergy, delegate from North Georgia, female, adult, she/her, I think that's it, OK. I would like to request a declaratory judgement from the Judicial Council, paragraph 49—should I stop for a minute?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Yes, could you come back to that? Is it related to what we are discussing?

SMOTHERS: Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: OK. OK.

SMOTHERS: And I tried to do it during the Interjurisdictional Report as well. OK, it's paragraph 49, which is Article 5.3. Paragraph 49, Article 5.3.

It says, "No bishop shall be eligible for transfer unless the bishop shall have served one quadrennium in the jurisdiction that elected the bishop to the episcopacy." And my question for the declaratory judgment is, "What constitutes a quadrennium, less than two years or four years?"

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you, is there a second? It has been moved and seconded that the General Conference requests a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council. This move is not debatable; the motion requires a one-fifth vote, which is 20 percent of the General Conference delegates, to be adopted. The delegate is allowed to state their reason for the declaratory decision. Before the delegate speaks, please refrain from making any remarks that would be considered a debate. Please keep your statement to the reason you're requesting this declaratory decision.

SMOTHERS: My reason for requesting the declaratory decision is that I understand that the Interjurisdictional Committee will have to transfer some bishops, and I would like some clarity one whether bishops that were just elected less than two years ago are eligible for transfer.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you very much. The motion isn't debatable. We'll now proceed to vote. The question is on the adoption of the motion that the General Conference request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council regarding paragraph 49.

It will require a one-fifth or 20 percent of the General Conference adoption. If you wish to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, you may press *one (1)*. If you do not wish to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, you may press *two (2)*.

You may vote now.

(pause)

Voting is closed. There are 506 votes in the affirmative. 141 in the negative. You have adopted. It needed one-fifth or 20 percent in the affirmative, so it has been moved. Please provide that in writing for us. Thank you.

[Yes, 506; No, 141]

I'll go back to the pool. We have another point of info, Anthony Diah. Mic. 1.

ANTHONY DIOH (Liberia): Thank you, Bishop. My name is Anthony Diah, from Liberia Annual Conference, clergy delegate, male. I just want a point of clarity on p. 2308 regarding salaries of the bishops. On 1(a), it says all salaries are set by GCFA. And then on letter B, for central conference bishops, it says that salary for a bishop will be recommended by the respected central conference or its committee on the episcopacy.

I need clarity on that, please. Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Gonna turn to General Secretary Kumar.

KUMAR: Every year, we create a spending plan for the Episcopal Fund and at that time, one of our committees called the General Agency for Episcopal Matters Committee decides the percentage increase for each of the bishops; that's for the jurisdictions. In terms of the central conferences, the salaries are also decided—it varies between Africa, Europe, and the Philippines, and the range is different for each of those—and that is also decided by GCFA.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. We have a point of order, Ken Ow. Mic. 6.

OW: Ken Ow. Baltimore-Washington. Laity. My point of order is, is that Reports 1–7 have already been dealt with through this body. It was run through committee, it has passed on the floor, and the only change that we are making at this point is—

BISHOP OLIVETO: What rule are you citing?

OW: I'm not citing a rule, Madam Chair, I am saying that we have already voted and passed that all the narrative is not up for debate again, but only the numbers. That's all that has changed. The body has asked for updated numbers at 2.6 and 2.9 percents, and that's all. And that's all this is referring back to. Not to open up debate on all of the narrative that has already been through this body.

(pause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. We're just taking a moment.

(pause)

Thank you. While this, these reports have been through committee, the body does have the right to discuss and to amend. We will be taking all seven at the end, but right now we are reviewing each one, seeing if there's any discussion.

I'd like to recognize Drew Dyson. Another point of info. Mic five.

DREW DYSON (Greater New Jersey): Thank you, Bishop. Drew Dyson. Clergy. Greater New Jersey. White male. Adult. On p. 2307, it indicates that the salary and benefits structure that's in the budget reflects forty-six jurisdictional bishops and twenty-five central conference bishops. My question is, do the budget figures that are on p. 2310 reflect the actual report, or are these somehow other numbers? I believe we just made thirty-two the number, and it would seem by calculations that the '25 to '28 number of \$80 million plus the \$15 million has been taken from the agencies reflects that seventy-one number rather than the fifty-four number that we've set as a General Conference.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I'll turn to our general secretary.

KUMAR: That's a good question. The numbers will alter when the eighth jurisdiction is elected at the time. This is only a provisional budget we are approving as of now. Now we just heard the thirty-two bishops that was approved by this body, and that will be taken care of and that will be the adjustment.

BISHOP OLIVETO: No follow-up questions. I call on delegate Robert Zilhaver. Mic. 1.

ROBERT ZILHAVER (Western Pennsylvania): Robert Zilhaver. Clergy, male. Western Pennsylvania. I would rise to make an amendment.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Please state.

ZILHAVER: On motion to amend Report No. 5, The Episcopal Fund, p. 2308 of the ADCA. In section 1, Bishops Elected by the Jurisdictional and Central Conferences, (A) Salaries, (1) Active Bishops, (A) Jurisdictional Bishops, after the last sentence in the first paragraph ending "and the overall economic status of the Episcopal Fund and its reserves," add a new paragraph: "Any salary adjustment shall not exceed 220 percent of the most current denominational average compensation (DAC). This limit on episcopal salary adjustments shall remain in place until altered by the General Conference."

And if I have a second, I'd like to speak to that.

BISHOP OLIVETO: It's been seconded.

ZILHAVER: The purpose of this amendment is twofold. First is, we're in a period of shared sacrifice. And the second is to reestablish the connection between pastor salaries and bishop salaries. The Episcopal Fund payout is based upon what a pastor is paid. If a pastor is paid 100 percent, the church should pay 100 percent of its share of apportionment to the Episcopal Fund. But because of unified budgets and a period of time, that link of the limit of the bishop salary has been severed. So my recommendation of 220 percent of the DAC would, if you calculate with the 2024 DAC that I have of \$78,292 would be a salary of about \$172,242. It would allow the salary increases to go up as the financial strength of our churches, exhibited by how they pay their pastors, go up. That would be the link.

The second is, this is a sacrifice. This is a cut, and it's an offer for the episcopal leaders to share in that. I serve as the finance chair of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. The GCFA has set a midpoint. And over and over again, I've had to ask our general secretary, the salaries, and staff of the people of that agency to make sacrifices. They have, and they have done great work. And this motion is a way we can join together and share sacrifice for the mission of the church. Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. In a moment we'll open the pool, so if you wish to speak you may register. I recognize Jim Allen, mic. 4, for a point of info.

And is this related to the amendment?

JIM ALLEN (Tennessee): Yes, it is. Jim Allen, Tennessee Conference. I would ask the chair to inquire perhaps of Wespath. Will there continue to be a DAC calculation after they begin using Compass or in the next quadrennium? Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Is someone from Wespath able to respond to that? I see Andy coming to mic. 4.

ANDY HENDREN (General Secretary and CEO of Wespath Benefits and Investments): Andy Hendren, Wespath Benefits and Investments. White, male, adult, straight. Delegate Jim Allen's question is appropriate. When we move to Compass, the new plan that this body approved day before yesterday, we will cease calculating the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) as we have before with CRSP, which was based on that calculation. The amendment that closed CRSP will instead have us assume a 2 percent increase in the DAC going forward for pension benefits when people eventually retire, with the benefits they have accumulated in the closed plan.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I will turn to Bill Brownson, mic. 3, for a point of inquiry.

BILL BROWNSON (West Ohio): Bill Brownson, lay, West Ohio Conference. Based on the amendment, my question is: by how much would our bishops' compensation change—either drop or stay the same or not increase—starting January 1? I'm interested in understanding if we're asking our bishops to take a pay cut, effective January 1 based on the recommendation—the amendment.

BISHOP OLIVETO: General Secretary?

KUMAR: What I don't understand is that we don't even have a DAC figure, we won't have a DAC figure, and how would we calculate the salary? That's what the General Secretary Andy Anderson was talking about. We don't even have the base to calculate it, so I'm not in a position to give you the figure.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Bethany Amey, mic. 5.

BETHANY AMEY (Greater New Jersey): Bethany Amey, Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, laity, Korean, adult, she/her/hers. My question is, what would the budget on p. 2310 look like at the number of fifty-four active bishops in the denomination, as set forth by the actions of this General Conference?

BISHOP OLIVETO: You weren't speaking to the amendment. We're speaking to the amendment right now.

AMEY: But it's kind of relevant to that.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Do you want to respond?

KUMAR: I have to calculate, Bishop. I don't have the figure in front of me.

AMEY: I feel as if the body show know that—

BISHOP OLIVETO: OK. OK. You've asked your question.

AMEY: OK.

BISHOP OLIVETO: We keep moving on. Alex Shanks, mic. 2.

ALEX SHANKS (Florida): Alex Shanks, Florida, clergy, male, adult. If we're going to start lowering bishops' salaries, my point of information is if we could have an understanding of what our general secretaries' salaries are and how they compare to the bishops' salaries as listed?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I turn to the general secretary.

KUMAR: I think the general secretaries' salaries are listed in the volume 4, and if you could refer that and compare the bishops' salaries also listed. So it's transparently listed there and you could look at that if it's possible. P. no. 1843 is the page for the general secretaries' salary. Volume 4.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Samuel Smith, mic. 5, point of inquiry.

SAMUEL SMITH (Upper New York): Bishop, could I use mic. 6?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Yes, you may.

SMITH: All right, thank you. Hi. Sam Smith, lay delegate, Upper New York, White, male, young adult, he/him pronouns. My question is: does the wording of this amendment enable each increase to be 220 percent of the denominational average? I don't think that was the intention?

BISHOP OLIVETO: I'm going to ask the secretary to reread the amendment.

GARY GRAVES (Kentucky, Secretary of the General Conference): The amendment as presented reads: "In section 1, Bishops Elected by the Jurisdictional and Central Conferences, Section A, Salaries, point 1, Active Bishops, subsection A, Jurisdictional Bishops, after the last sentence in the first paragraph which ends 'and the overall economic status of the Episcopal Fund and its reserves,' add this new paragraph: Any salary adjustment shall not exceed 220 percent of the most current Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). This limit on episcopal salary adjustment shall remain in place until altered by the General Conference."

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I will recognize Jethro Muyombi, mic. 2.

KUMAR: Bishop. I have an answer to the question from delegate who asked about fifty-four bishops. Can I answer the question? The total expenses with fifty-four bishops would be about \$39 million, and the collection rate and the deficit at that point with an 85 percent collection rate, we would have to use about \$12.3 million in terms of our reserves. The ending reserves, if the collection rate is 85 percent, would be a 2.3 percent in deficit. If the collection rate is 90 percent rate, we'll be using \$79 million expenses, we'll be using \$8.4 million, and ending reserve would be around \$8.4 million.

BISHOP OLIVETO: OK, I'm going to go to mic. 2, Alka Lyall.

JETHRO MUYOMBI (South Congo): Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Oh, I'm sorry. Delegate Muyombi, we will come back to you. So, stay tuned.

MUYOMBI: OK.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Mic. 2.

LYALL: Thank you, Bishop. I am standing to speak in support of the amendment. And I'm in no hurry we are in the process, if that's—

BISHOP OLIVETO: You're speaking in favor of the amendment.

LYALL: I'm speaking in favor so it's right, then I'm ready to speak. I'm speaking of favor, Bishop. Alka Lyall, clergy, female, she/her pronouns, Asian-Indian adult. Speaking of favor of the amendment because, Bishop, I believe that in this season of our denomination and contraction of our budget, we need to be equally balanced between our program ministries and our administrative expenses. Thank you, Bishop.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Our next recognizes Mark Holland, mic. 4, and then Jethro Muyombi, you'll be after Mark Holland.

MARK HOLLAND (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. Mark Holland, clergy, Great Plains, White, male. I'm asking, I'm speaking against this amendment for two reasons: One, we just had a report that we're going to have fewer bishops that ever in the United States, and we have bishops covering multiple annual conferences in multiple areas. There is shared sacrifice and our bishops are doing the work. So to suggest that the only way we show sacrifice is by salary I think it is inaccurate. The second piece is I don't believe we can micromanage the budget from the microphone. We have professionals who are setting these rates with representation from around the connection to do what's right. They've brought a budget, and we could, I could find fifteen lines that I'd like to change in this budget. But the reality is we have a budget, we have good process, we have good people. I encourage us to vote no against this amendment and vote for all of the budget as presented. Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Delegate Jethro Muyombi, mic. 2.

MUYOMBI: Thank you, Bishop, for pronouncing my name correctly. Jethro Muyombi from South Congo. I'm a lawyer, I'm lay, and I'm a man. Bishop, I want to suggest to close the debate. I think we have heard all the information. It's enough, and now we can proceed with the vote. Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: It's been moved that the debate be closed. Is there a second? It's been moved and seconded that the debate be closed. We've heard a speech for and a speech against. In the pool, there are three speaking for, three against, and no one opposing amendments. We will be closing the debate on the motion to amend Calendar 554. It requires a two-thirds vote. Do you need to hear the amendment again? I'm going to ask that the secretary read it.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. It is adding a new paragraph at the place that we have already entered into the record. The new paragraph says, "Any salary adjustment shall not exceed 220 percent of the most current denominational average compensation. This limit on the episcopal salary adjustment shall remain in place until altered by the General Conference."

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. The question is on closing debate. Those in favor of closing debate, you will press *one* (1). Those opposing closing debate, press *two* (2). You may vote now.

(*pause*)

Voting is now closed. May we have the results of the vote. There 653 in the affirmative, 25 in the negative. It required a two-thirds vote; you have voted to end the debate.

[*Yes, 653; No, 25*]

We will proceed to vote on the amendment. Those in favor of the amendment, you will press *one (1)*. Those opposed will press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(*pause*)

Voting is closed. We can have the results of the vote. There are 260—261 in the affirmative, 402 in the negative. The negative has it. The amendment has failed. The chair ask the tech team to restore the previous pool.

[*Yes, 261; No, 402*]

BISHOP OLIVETO: Katie Dawson, mic. 5, point of inquiry.

KATIE DAWSON (Iowa): I'm sorry, Bishop, I was in the pool from before, and I think my question was answered on with the question Bethany Amey asked.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Have we had the pool restored from prior to the amendment? If we could start a new one, so if you want to speak, we're going to take a second to clear the pool. If you want to speak, you may now register.

David Livingston, mic. 4, point of inquiry.

DAVID LIVINGSTON (Great Plains): Thank you, Bishop. David Livingston. Clergy. Great Plains. White Male. I may have lost track. My memory is we started the day with twenty-six calendar items. Can you remind me how many we've completed so far today?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Here we are. Thank you. Jay Williams. Mic. 1. Amendment.

JAY WILLIAMS (New England): Jay Williams. Clergy. New England Conference. Black American man. Queer. I move to amend that the Episcopal Fund Report to the 2028 General Conference for the 2029–2032 budget will include calculations and projections that are based on the number of bishops that GCFA proposes to be sustainable for the ensuing quadrennium. If there's a second, I'll speak to it.

Based on the comment that were made by the delegates from Greater New Jersey and the—

BISHOP OLIVETO: Hold on one second. Excuse me.

(*pause*)

Do you have this in writing?

WILLIAMS: I can write it.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Could you repeat it again, slowly?

WILLIAMS: Sure. Thank you, Bishop. I amend that the Episcopal Fund Report to the 2028 General Conference for the 2029–2032 budget will include calculations and projections that are based on the number of bishops that GCFA is proposing and finds sustainable for the ensuing quadrennium.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. This motion is out of order because one General Conference cannot bind a future General Conference. Thank you.

WILLIAMS: How do we get the actual data that's reflected in the proposal?

(pause)

Because the question is, the general secretary provided us kind of an amended budget projection on the floor, so we've made decisions with incomplete information. I'm just wondering how we get accurate information so that we can make informed decisions?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Thank you.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Bishop.

(pause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: The general secretary will be providing you with some, that information. I turn to Ian Urriola. Mic five with a parliamentary.

IAN URRIOLO (Upper New York): Thank you Bishop, and thank you for pronouncing my name correctly. My name is Ian Carlos Urriola and I am a lay, LatinX, young adult delegate from the Upper New York Annual Conference, and I rise to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Is it regarding this pending report?

URRIOLA: It is connected to this report. Yes.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Proceed please.

URRIOLA: I rise to request a declaratory from the Judicial Council as to the legality and the effect of the Interjurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy's proposal for the number of bishops in all the jurisdictions in the United States being considered and applied to our budget prior to their enabling legislation coming into effect at the close of this General Conference and my question is as follows: What standing does the Interjurisdictional Committee—

BISHOP OLIVETO: One moment please. One moment.

(pause)

Thank you. You may proceed. My apologies for interrupting you.

URRIOLA: No problem. What standing does the Interjurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy have to make a recommendation to this effect, given their enabling legislation, Calendar Items 546 and 473, are not yet in effect; and the authority they are given through paragraph 512 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* does not give an avenue for such a recommendation for all jurisdictions, only in response to single ones.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Is there a second? I hear a second. It is moved. This motion is not debatable. The motion requires a one-fifth vote, which is 20 percent of the General Conference delegates, to be adopted. Would you please repeat your question to the Judicial Council?

URRIOLA: Absolutely, and you'll have to forgive me, I already gave the front sheet—oh, I'm getting the front sheet back from the page. Would you like me to just ask the question?

BISHOP OLIVETO: Yes. Yes, please.

URRIOLA: OK. What standing does the Interjurisdictional Committee on the Episcopacy have to make a recommendation to this effect, given their enabling legislation, Calendar Items 546 and 473, are not yet in effect; and the authority they are given through paragraph 512 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* does not give an avenue for such a recommendation for all jurisdictions, only in response to single ones.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you so much. Again, this is not debatable. The motion requires a one-fifth vote, 20 percent of the General Conference delegates, to be adopted. We will now proceed to vote. The question is on the adoption of the motion that the General Conference requests a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council as stated by delegate Ian Urri – Urrio – see you said I said your name right and now my tongue got twisted. My apologies. Delegate Ian Urriola. If you wish to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, you may press *one* (1). If you do not wish to request a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, you may press *two* (2). You may vote now. While you are voting, can the page bring the motion forward, please?

(*pause*)

BISHOP OLIVETO: Voting is closed. If we could see the results. You voted yes, 270; no, 391. It needed a 20 percent affirmative to pass; it has passed.

[*Yes, 270; No, 391*]

All right. Moses? Yes. My apologies.

KUMAR: The question on a sustainable number of bishops—can I answer that, Bishop? During the transition that is going to happen, we need effective leadership. And that needs to be funded accurately, and that's why this reflects the thirty-two bishops are important for us, and it is sustainable, and that's why we have thirty-two bishops, and that is a sustainable budget that we're bringing forward.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I call on Stefan Schröckenfuchs, mic. 5.

STEFAN SCHRÖCKENFUCHS (Austria Provisional): Stefan Schröckenfuchs, Austria Provisional Annual Conference, clergyman. I move to end debate and call the question. Thank you.

BISHOP OLIVETO: There's been a motion to close debate. Is there a second—I hear it seconded.

(*laughter*)

And I just want clarity, is this closing debate on this specific Report No. 5?

SCHRÖCKENFUCHS: Maybe you want to help me if—

BISHOP OLIVETO: We're on Report No. 5.

SCHRÖCKENFUCHS: On what is before us. Thank you.

(laughter)

(pause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you, and thank you for your patience as we do this so that voices are heard and we truly holy conference together. So as the chair understands it, if we close debate, that will move us to simply hear the two remaining reports and then go immediately to the final vote on accepting 1–7 reports. I hear a yes, so we’re going to take a vote. If you move to close debate, if you say yes, we will be just hearing the reports. If you vote no, we will continue to offer debate on each one. So if you want to close debate, press *one (1)*; if you don’t, press *two (2)*. You may vote now.

(pause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: OK. If we might have the votes—results. 629 votes in the affirmative, 51 against, you have approved.

[Yes, 629; No, 51]

We will listen to the final two reports without debate and move to the final vote.

KUMAR: Thank you, Bishop.

Report No. 6 involves the General Administration Fund. This can be found on p. 2313 of the *Daily Christian Advocate*, and it’s Petition No. 21122. The General Administration Fund finances general church activities that are especially administrative in nature, as opposed to those activities which are programmatic, missional, or ecumenical. The General Administration Fund for the quadrennium using the conditional 2.9 percent base rate is \$29.9 million and with the 2.6 percent base rate, the General Administration Fund becomes proposed at \$28.3 million.

Report No. 7 concerns the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund. The Petition No. is 21123 and can be found on p. 2327 of today’s *Daily Christian Advocate*. This fund allows The United Methodist Church to partner with Christian sisters and brothers throughout the world to fulfill the shared ecumenical mission, our relationship with ecumenical partners, supported through this fund. It should be noted this fund has a high amount of reserves, and therefore, capacity to do their work. Therefore, when you adopt this report, you’re voting to unrestrict the funds so that they may be used to carry out this important ecumenical ministry. Under the 2.9 percent conditional base rate, the Interdenominational Cooperation Fund is proposed for \$2.4 million, and at the 2.6 percent basic rate, funding would be \$2.3 million.

BREWER: Bishop, on behalf of the Financial Administration Legislative Committee, I move to adopt Reports 1–7, Calendar Items 513–518 as printed in today’s *ADCA*.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. We will vote, we will now proceed to vote. The motion requires a majority vote. The question is on the adoption of the GCFA Report Nos. 1–7 as amended.

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

(pause)

Voting is closed. If we can have the results. The affirmative has it with 647 votes for, 31 against. You have adopted the GCFA Reports 1–7 as amended.

[Yes, 647; No, 31]

Scott?

BREWER: Thank you, Bishop. First, for a matter of clarification and to correct the record, that motion should have also included Calendar Item 543 for the African University Fund. That was included, I think, in all of our motions. Secondly, and more importantly, I just simply want to take a moment now that this concludes our business to thank the Financial Administration Legislative Committee leadership, including Bonnie Marden, our vice-chair; Gomer Chamusa, our secretary; and Bill Brownson, Staci Current, and Jessica Rooks, our subcommittee chairs; as well as all of our wonderful members who did tremendous work. Thank you.

(applause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you so much.

KUMAR: Bishop, I have one more thing. If you give more one more minute.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Yes. One minute.

KUMAR: Yes, Bishop. Bishop, I would take this time an opportunity to thank my GCFA staff for their excellent work throughout this General Conference, Bishop. I'm so grateful to my staff here and in Nashville. The work they have done is remarkable, and I'm thankful to God for such a dedicated group of people. Thank you for this opportunity to present the 2025–2028 quadrennial budget. I pray you all have safe travel home, and I wish you many blessings in the days to ahead and as we work together. I'd like to end with Romans 15:13. "May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope." Amen. Thank you all.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. Can you show your appreciation to the GCFA staff?

(applause)

Thank you. The chair recognizes the secretary of the general conference for some announcements.

I don't see a point of order on the queue. OK. Mic. 6—5.

JARED GADOMSKI LITTLETON (East Ohio): Thank you, Bishop. I apologize. I think this is good to get in before lunch. Jared Gadomski Littleton—

BISHOP OLIVETO: Can you say again? Slowly and close to the mic.

GADOMSKI LITTLETON: Yes, Jared Gadomski Littleton. Clergy in extension ministry. East Ohio. White adult. Male. Pronouns he/him.

Bishop, I believe we are in violation of Rule 22. Yesterday, this body voted to reconsider Calendar Item 247, titled "Make Current the Readmission after Termination Process," and a motion to substitute by amendment was offered and properly seconded. The chair ruled that the amendment was to be printed in today's DCA so that the body could address it. The amendment was not printed, and the underlying

petition does not appear on any calendar, and thus, we appear to be at risk of this body's right to address this important matter.

BISHOP OLIVETO: I believe the agenda chair is prepared to bring us up to date on that. I call on Emily Allen.

EMILY ALLEN (California-Nevada): Thanks, Bishop. And thank you for that question. I have had conversations with several people about where this petition stands. I will share my understanding from the various experts I have consulted.

First, if we take no further action on this petition, it will stand as adopted by this body. Second, delegate [Elizabeth] Brick has an opportunity to bring it back to this body if and when she desires. Third, I recommended to her an appropriate time to do that in the order of legislation we have before us. However, it is up to this body if they wanted to address it at this point rather than continuing with the order of legislation, and at that point, we can address the content of the amendment by substitution as proposed.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you so much. We apologize that the document wasn't provided in print due to printing deadlines. We're prepared to make sure the amendment is read aloud for the body and the interpreters, and that delegates will have the opportunity to make informed decisions.

We'll be coming back to that, but at this time, because we're at order of the day, I'm going to move to the general secretary.

GRAVES: Thank you, Bishop. These announcements are necessary at this moment. First, the Commission on the General Conference that has been newly elected will meet to organize today, immediately after this session, in the Richardson Ballroom A and B. You will meet during the lunch break, and lunch will be provided. Again, Commission on the General Conference that was just elected, you will meet to organize today during the lunch break. Lunch will be provided. Richardson Ballroom A and B.

For those of you who are departing after Saturday, because the Saturday schedule is covered in what is in the *DCA*. If you depart after Saturday, buses will not be running, and delegates are asked to make arrangements to take an Uber, Lyft, or taxi to the airport.

For General Conference delegates from central conferences that are currently still waiting on reimbursements, please make sure you have stopped by the Central Conference Finance Office in room E215. Central Conference Finance Office, room E215, before 6:30 tonight. For General Conference delegates who are using per diem and expenses that are going to your bank accounts, for those of you that served on administrative committees, your per diem is being sent out today. They have made adjustments if necessary to work with your early arrival to General Conference to fulfill that role. Checks will be sent out after the conclusion of the General Conference for those who did not turn in an ACH form. If you did not receive your per diem and/or expense reimbursement, but you did turn in an ACH, please go to the finance office in room 214 or you will be able to email generalconference@umcgc.org, and the business office will work with you on that. Any other questions, please direct those through your chair of delegation, who can reach out to Sara Hotchkiss. Those are the announcements.

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you. I want to thank the body. There is a sweet, sweet spirit in this place. And I know that it's the presence of the Lord. Amen?

ALL: Amen!

BISHOP OLIVETO: Thank you for the gracious way you enter into this holy conferencing. Will you join me in thanking my backup bishops, Bishop Painit and Bishop Wandabula.

(applause)

BISHOP OLIVETO: We've reached the time for our lunch break. When we resume, Bishop Gregory Palmer will be our presiding officer. We are in recess until 1:30. Thank you.