

1021-03

The requests for an episcopal ruling from members of the Indiana Annual Conference:

First Request [written submission and verbal request]

Does the amendment we just passed “Other provisions and rules notwithstanding, only laity may vote in district conference ballots to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates,” restrict clergy voting privileges to be stricter than what the Book of Discipline allows?

“Does the amendment we just passed in JW128 that allows clergy to vote on all matters allowed by the Discipline, override the amendment passed in JW127 that restricts clergy voting privileges to be stricter than what the Discipline allows?”

Second Request [written submission and verbal request]

Does the action of the Indiana Annual Conference to amend its Rules and Structure to deny clergy the right to vote in district conferences whether to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates violate Paragraphs 329.2 and 334.1 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016 edition?

“Does the action of the Indiana Annual Conference to amend its Rules and Structure to deny clergy the right to vote in district conferences whether to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates violate Paragraphs 329.2 and 334.1 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*?”



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L'ÉGLISE METHODISTE UNIE
 RECHTSHOF DER EVANGELISCH-METHODISTISCHEN KIRCHE
 CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA
 CONSEJO DE LA JUDICATURA DE LA IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA



Report by Bishop on Decision of Law

This form is to be used for (please check one):

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

Name of Bishop: Bishop Julius C. Trimble
 Address: 301 Pennsylvania Pkwy, Suite 300 City: Indianapolis
 State/Province: IN ZIP/Postal Code 46280 Country: USA
 Phone: 317-564-3241 Fax: 317-735-4210 E-mail: larry.whitehead@inumc.org
 Annual Conference: Indiana Date of session: 10/10/20 (month/day/year)
 Question(s) of Law: Please see the attached documents.

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

Constitution: _____ Book of Discipline: ¶329.2 ¶334.1 ¶604.1
 Judicial Council Decision(s): _____

Signature: Bishop Julius C Trimble

Digitally signed by Bishop Julius C Trimble
 DN: cn=Bishop Julius C Trimble, ou=Indiana Conference of the United
 Methodist Church, ou=email=bishop@inumc.org, c=US
 Date: 2020.11.10 15:32:42 -0500

Bishop of The United Methodist Church

Date: 11/9/20

(month/day/year)

The following must be attached:

- Decision of Law, including facts, rationale and ruling
 - Text of the written request for decision
 - Minutes of annual conference proceedings (relevant portions only)
 - List of names and addresses of interested parties
 - Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)
- Eight (8) hard copies must be submitted via USPS or other delivery service to:
 Clerk Price of the Judicial Council, 5556 N. Sheridan Road, #610, Chicago, IL 60640, USA
- Electronic copies in both Word and PDF (with security features disabled) must be submitted to: secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org.

**Request for a Ruling of Law
Duly Submitted in the Indiana Annual Conference Session
October 10, 2020**

During the October 10, 2020 session of the Indiana Annual Conference, the following motion (jw127) was made and passed by the delegates:

“Other provisions and rules notwithstanding, only laity may vote in district conference ballots to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates.”

See the attached Minutes of the Indiana Annual Conference session held on October 10, 2020 (hereinafter “Minutes”), p. 11.

After the motion was passed, Mark Dickens, Retired Elder, made the following request for a decision of law:

“Does the action of the Indiana Annual Conference to amend its Rules and Structure to deny clergy the right to vote in district conferences whether to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates violate Paragraphs 329.2 and 334.1 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016?”

See Minutes, p. 11.

A motion (jw128) was then made and passed as follows:

Motion that we add, for clarification, the phrase “for which clergy are entitled to vote under the Book of Discipline in D.4.b and D.4.c”

See Minutes, p. 11. With this addition and amendment, the applicable provisions of the Indiana Rules & Structure Document in Rules D.4.b and D.4.c then stated as follows in relevant part: “all clergy shall be eligible to vote in all matters for which clergy are entitled to vote under the *Book of Discipline* in D.4.b and D.4.c.”

Following the adoption of the motion to amend, Rev. Meg Lassiat, Elder serving in Extension Ministry – GBHEM, made the following request for decision of law:

“Does the amendment we just passed in jw128 that allows clergy to vote on all matters allowed by the Discipline, override the amendment passed in jw127 that restricts clergy voting privileges to be stricter than what the Discipline allows?”

See Minutes, p. 12.

Paragraph 604.1 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* provides as follows:

“The annual conference, for its own government, may adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, provided that in exercise of its powers, each annual conference shall act in all respects in harmony with the policy of The United Methodist Church with respect to elimination of discrimination.”

Paragraph 334.1 of the *Discipline* provides as follows in relevant part:

“Elders in full connection shall have the right to vote on all matters in the annual conference except in the election of lay delegates to the General and jurisdictional or central conferences ...”

Paragraph 329.2 provides similar voting privileges to deacons in full connection. Aside from ¶¶ 334.1 and 329.2, there is no prohibition against clergy in full connection voting on matters that come before the annual conference or its constituent district conferences, including the endorsement of lay candidates in district conferences.

Because the initial motion establishes a restriction on clergy voting privileges that is not contained in the *Discipline*, I therefore rule that the initial motion preceding the request for decision of law by Rev. Dickens violates ¶¶ 334.1 and 329.2, is

therefore in conflict with the *Discipline*, and is invalid. The action established by the initial motion also conflicts with Rules D.4.b and D.4.c of the Indiana Conference Rules. These rules allow clergy to vote on all matters where clergy have the right and responsibility to vote under the *Discipline*.

Since the action established by the original motion is invalid, I rule that the action of the second motion does override and, in effect, supersedes the action of the original motion. The provision of the second motion is consistent with and in compliance with the *Discipline*.

Amy Land submitted a similar motion that reads “Other provisions and rules notwithstanding, only laity may vote in district conference ballots to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates.” Shannon Priddy, Albert Hildago and Joseph Easley spoke against the motion. Mike Womack and James Ottjes spoke in favor. **SECONDED APPROVED (57.7%)**

Lunch Break

4.9 EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

Worship – “Canticle of the Turning” sung by Bobby Lancaster, and Rev. Bryan Langdoc.

Bishop Trimble shared an impassioned Episcopal Address entitled “Always – A Promise We Should Remember” based on Matthew 28:19-20, during which he encouraged members of the Conference to remember that God is with us always, even in the midst of life’s storms. For Clergy Appreciation Sunday, Bishop thanked all the pastors and clergy of the Indiana Conference.

4.10 RULES AND STRUCTURE CONTINUATION

Paul Wagner spoke to 3 Questions of Rule of Law that John Lomperis had previously submitted.

Question of Rule of Law #1 – corrects an error of language omission. D.2.a.11. erroneously omitted the phrase “from each district” implying only one youth and one young adult -- total. The Bishop has ruled that D.2.a.11. violates the Book of Discipline ¶132. Our rule should read “One youth between the ages of 12 to 18 years old and one young adult between the ages of 18 to 30 years old from each district.” Rules and Structure Committee will make the correction immediately.

Question of Rule of Law #2 – Our current Rules include a clause allowing for exceptions to be made regarding “age” of eligible lay member of the annual conference based on ¶1602.4a Book of Discipline. Therefore, as written, this rule is in compliance with the Book of Discipline.

Question of Rule of Law #3 – asked the Bishop to rule on whether or not sections D.4.b. and D.4.c. are allowable by the Book of Discipline. Both Rules questioned state that active and retired clergy “shall be eligible to vote on ALL MATTERS at district conferences.” The Bishop has ruled on this matter saying, “This phrase could be taken out of context and misapplied by a person who is not familiar with the other voting limitations in the Book of Discipline, and therefore recommends that the rules be altered to read as follows: D.4.b. “All clergy appointed in the conference, shall be eligible to vote in all matters for which clergy are entitled to vote under the Book of Discipline, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.” D.4.c. reads, “All clergy in retired status whether appointed to serve in a local church in retirement or not, shall be eligible to vote in all matters for which clergy are entitled to vote under the Book of Discipline, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.

Motion – Paul Wagner, Rule and Structure Chair – move that we add, for clarification, the phrase “for which clergy are entitled to vote under the Book of Discipline” in D.4.b and D.4.c. **APPROVED (94.9%)**

Mark Dicken made a request for a Question of Rule of Law - “Does the action of the Indiana Annual Conference to amend its Rules and Structure to deny clergy the right to vote in district conferences whether to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates violate Paragraphs 329.2 and 334.1 of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016 edition?” Bishop Trimble will respond at the appropriate time and manner.

4.11 CHILDREN MATTER MOST

Shannon Stringer addressed the Conference about Children Matter Most, an initiative prompted by Bishop Trimble, First Lady Grandberry -Trimble, and the Extended Cabinet as a reflection of our passion for and commitment to the children of our churches and communities. The Children Matter Most Steering Committee consists of individuals from throughout our state whose response to their own discipleship call has led them to active engagement with children and youth through a variety of ministry expressions. Shannon extended an invitation to members of the Annual Conference to specifically pray for children. They presented a resolution that will be submitted for a vote of affirmation at the 2021 Annual Conference session. Bishop Trimble thanked all of the United Methodists of Indiana on what they do to support children and those who work with children.

4.12 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Teri Crouse, Chair of Conference Board of Trustees and President of the Indiana Annual Conference of the United Methodist, Inc.

Terri Crouse addressed a question that they received about the Granger Community Church transaction, and why it was not included in this year’s Trustees’ Report. That transaction was not completed by the Report deadline, or by the usual time of

Indiana's Annual Conference. There is information about the Cabinet's deliberations on it in the Cabinet Resolutions Report. The completed transaction will be reported in next year's Trustees' Report.

Motion – The Board of Trustees moves that the Annual Conference accept their report as submitted and presented. **APPROVED (98.2%)**

4.13 CELEBRATION LEGACY CHURCHES

Rev. Dave Neckers, Dean of the Appointive Cabinet, celebrated the following churches in the Central District that merged in the last year:

- Fortville UMC merged with Gateway UMC
- Horizons of Faith UMC merged with Bethel UMC
- Wesley UMC merged with Bethel UMC

The following churches disbanded in the last year:

- Central District: Whiteland UMC
- East District: Barton UMC, Eastside UMC (Connersville), Old Franklin UMC
- North Central District: Hillsburg UMC, Kokomo Faith UMC
- North District: Grovertown UMC
- Northwest District: Culver Poplar Grove UMC, Deedsville UMC, Santa Anna UMC
- Southwest District: Rockport First UMC
- West District: Crawfordsville Trinity UMC

4.14 PASSING THE CONFERENCE CANE

The Conference recognized the oldest ordained Elder by presenting the Conference Cane to 98-year-old Chester Mahan.

4.15 BLUE RIBBON TASK TEAM

Larry Whitehead recognized the members of the Blue Ribbon Task Team, Dr. Betty Hart, Mount Vernon, Rev. Bryan Langdoc, Greencastle, Mr. David Johns, Ms. Emily Reece, Ms. Hope Tribble, Rev. Jake Ohlemiller, Mr. Jeff Gehring, Rev. Lore Blinn Gibson, Rev. Larry Whitehead, Bishop Julius Trimble. They met monthly from July 2019 to April of 2020 exploring many ideas, examining demographic data and community trends for Indiana, and prayerfully considering multiple reorganizing options. In the COVID era, the Conference has experienced a 25-30% decrease in tithe contributions, and the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration directed leadership to make an \$800,000 reduction in the 2021 budget. Because of these realities, the "phasing in" recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Task Team was no longer a viable option. After prayerful discernment, Bishop Trimble named a Master Plan Team to follow up on the Blue Ribbon Task Team recommendation to begin a strategic plan. The team was led by a consultant and 10 members. David Johns, Ian Hall, Rev. Shannon Stringer, Emily Reece, Rev. Russ Abel, Dr. Aleze Fulbright, Rev. Lore Blinn Gibson, Rev. Larry Whitehead, Bishop Julius Trimble and consultant, Wes Zirkle. Significant outcomes to date include the reduction of 2 Conference Superintendents and 1 Conference Director.

Motion – move that the Blue Ribbon Task Team's report be approved as presented. **APPROVED (87.1%)**

4.16 RULE OF LAW

Question of Rule of Law by Meg Lassiat – Does the amendment we just passed "Other provisions and rules notwithstanding, only laity may vote in district conference ballots to endorse laypeople willing to serve as General Conference delegates," restricts clergy voting privileges to be stricter than what the Book of Discipline allows? Bishop Trimble will respond at the appropriate time and manner.

4.17 RESOLUTIONS

Paul Wagner presented five resolutions that were submitted to the Annual Conference.

The first four resolutions were submitted by Rev. Mark Dicken, who withdrew them because his concerns were already addressed in the Rules and Structure adoption earlier in the session, and the fifth resolution is from Riley Case. The Petitions & Resolutions Team received and discussed his request and a majority voted to accept Rev. Cases' request to withdraw his resolution.

Break

4.18 COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Chris Lantz, Vice Chair of the Council on Finance & Administration

2020 INDIANA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

RULES & STRUCTURE DOCUMENT

...

D.3 General and Jurisdictional Conference Procedures

D.3.a. Eligibility for Election

- 1. Lay delegates** to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected by the lay members of the Annual Conference without regard to age, provided such delegates shall have been professing members of The United Methodist Church for at least two (2) years preceding their election and shall have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least four (4) years preceding their election, and are members thereof within the Annual Conference electing them at the time of holding the General and Jurisdictional Conference (§136). Lay delegates need not be voting members of the Annual Conference to be elected.
- 2. Ordained delegates** to the General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall be elected from the ordained ministerial members in full connection within the Annual Conference (§135). They shall be elected by ordained ministerial members in full connection, associate members, provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements, and local pastors who have completed the course of study or an M.Div. degree and have served a minimum of two (2) consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.

D.3.b. Managing the Election

The Annual Conference Sessions Committee shall provide general oversight of the election process. In addition, the committee shall provide a *Willingness to Serve* form that shall include pertinent biographical information, recent photo, reasons for wanting to be a delegate, and a statement of three (3) areas crucial to the United Methodist Church's mission, and three (3) issues emerging from those areas.

D.3.c. Commitment of a Delegate

Election to General and/or Jurisdictional Conference conveys the trust and respect of peers within the Annual Conference. Those offering themselves for election need to make the following commitments:

- 1) attend their respective conferences on a full-time basis (10 to 12 days for General and 3 days for Jurisdictional);
- 2) participate in all scheduled meetings of the delegation – prior to, during, and after the conferences;
- 3) demonstrate familiarity with the ways in which the General and Jurisdictional Conferences function;
- 4) study proposed legislation;
- 5) accept responsibility for expenses beyond the per diem;
- 6) exemplify a visionary outlook, a team spirit, and a disposition to conferencing; and
- 7) adhere to the qualities set forth in the “Guidelines for Christian Conferencing” (adopted by the Annual Conference) throughout the entire time they are delegates.

D.3.d. Procedure for Endorsement of Delegates

In order to involve leadership from many parts of the conference, the election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall begin in local congregations, continue in districts, and conclude at Annual Conference.

In order to allow informed decisions by voters in all elections, the Indiana Conference shall make information available regarding endorsed persons who have indicated their candidacy through the following process no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Conference election in question. This information shall be posted online and available through the standard means of Conference communications.

1. Each local congregation may submit the name of a potential lay delegate to their district lay leader by a specified date, together with a *Willingness to Serve* form. The district lay leader shall bring all such names to the Fall District Conference meeting preceding the Annual Conference in which delegates shall be elected. At that meeting, three laypersons from the district may be endorsed (by a ballot overseen by the Conference Superintendent). The Conference Superintendent shall forward the names of these individuals (and their *Willingness to Serve* forms) to the chair of the Election Committee.
2. Potential clergy delegates may submit their names to their Conference Superintendent by a specified date, together with a *Willingness to Serve* form. At the same meeting of the Fall District Conference, three clergy from the district may be endorsed (by a ballot overseen by the district lay leader). The district lay leader shall forward the names of these individuals (and their *Willingness to Serve* forms) to the chair of the Election Committee.

3. The chair of the Election Committee shall forward the results of the district endorsements to the convener of the Conference Coordinating Council by January 15 of the year when elections shall be held. In order to monitor diversity, the Conference Coordinating Council shall review the results and shall have the opportunity to add up to ten (10) additional individuals (five lay and five clergy) by February 15 to the list of endorsed nominees. The list of these additional nominees shall then be submitted to the Election Committee.
4. The finalized list of endorsed nominees – those coming from the districts and those added by the Conference Coordinating Council – shall be communicated as clergy in alphabetical order and as laity in alphabetical order. In a list to all members of the Annual Conference by April 1, with a notation that any additional individuals who are qualified and who have completed the *Willingness to Serve* form may add their names to the list of those who have been endorsed. Included with that announcement shall be copies of all completed *Willingness to Serve* forms that have been received by the Sessions Committee by March 15.

D.3.e. Procedure for Election

- 1) Lay and clergy delegates shall be elected at the Annual Conference in the calendar year preceding the General and Jurisdictional Conferences and shall serve for the quadrennium. The General Conference secretary shall provide the number of those to be elected (lay and clergy) to the Bishop and Annual Conference secretary no later than December 2 prior to election.
- 2) The Sessions Committee shall provide opportunity, prior to the first ballot, for members of the Annual Conference to meet and talk with persons seeking election.
- 3) The Annual Conference secretary shall call attention to the “Guidelines for Christian Conferencing” at the beginning of the election process, and shall assure that proper secure arrangements have been made for accurate voting and reporting of the results.
- 4) Voting may be by official ballot or electronic means (as determined by the Annual Conference Sessions Committee), with the number of persons to be elected for each ballot being announced by the Bishop or a person designated by the Bishop.
- 5) All clergy meeting Disciplinary requirements (§135) will be assigned a number.
- 6) Any lay persons meeting Disciplinary requirements (§136) who wish to be elected as a delegate may submit a write-in application by filling out the *Willingness to Serve* form available through the Annual Conference registration booths. The deadline is the first day of the Annual Conference Sessions.
- 7) During elections only the candidates who receive twelve (12) or more votes will be announced.
- 8) A majority of valid ballots cast shall constitute an election.
- 9) Balloting shall continue until the allotted number of delegates for General Conference is elected.
- 10) Following completion of General Conference elections, balloting shall begin for Jurisdictional Conference delegates and shall continue until those delegates have been elected.
- 11) General Conference reserve delegates (lay and clergy) shall be made up of the elected Jurisdictional Conference delegates (lay and clergy) in the order they were elected. (§134).
- 12) Jurisdictional reserve delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the ballots cast. For Jurisdictional Conference there shall be elected three (3) reserve delegates for clergy and three (3) reserve delegates for laity.
- 13) Jurisdictional reserve delegates may act as reserve delegates to General Conference when it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at General Conference. (§134)
- 14) The number of reserve delegates invited to attend General Conference is to be determined by the Conference delegation.

D.3.f. Leadership of Conference Delegation

After delegates have been elected, the Bishop shall invite all elected delegates to an organizational meeting, and shall preside until leaders of the delegation have been elected. The following actions shall be included:

- 1) declaration by each delegate to follow the “Commitment of a Delegate” (as adopted by the Indiana Conference) throughout the entire time they are serving as a delegate;
- 2) determination of leaders that need to be elected (i.e., chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer), with particular attention given to the qualities needed for effective work to be accomplished—prior to the conferences, at the conferences, and subsequent to the conferences;
- 3) following a time of prayer, nomination of persons for offices, followed by interactive discussion, and casting of ballots (with the Bishop and two alternate delegates counting ballots); and
- 4) continuation of the meeting led by the individual elected as chairperson.

...

D.4 District Conferences

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (§659) states that “a district conference shall be composed of members as determined and specified by the annual conference, giving attention to inclusiveness (see §§ 124, 140).

District conference membership with voting privileges shall consist of:

- a. The district lay leader and any associate district lay leaders
- b. All clergy appointed in the conference, shall be eligible to vote in all matters at district conferences, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.
- c. All clergy in retired status whether appointed to serve in a local church in retirement or not, shall be eligible to vote in all matters at district conferences, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.
- d. One (1) person elected by the district as a secretary
- e. All local church lay leaders duly elected at their church charge conference
- f. All local church annual conference representatives duly elected at their church charge conference
- g. Persons chairing or leading ministry and missional work as organized by the district (§661).
- h. All laypersons serving as General or Jurisdictional Conference delegates (including alternates) during the current quadrennium who are professing members of a congregation in the district.
- i. Additionally, the Conference Superintendent is permitted to invite as voting at-large members of the district conference up to six (6) other persons who will assure the inclusion of diversity; such as but not limited to: youth, young adults, older adults, people with disabilities; and persons of racial, ethnic or gender groupings.

1 requirements, and local pastors who have completed the course of study or an M.Div.
2 degree and have served a minimum of two (2) consecutive years under appointment
3 immediately preceding the election.
4

5 **D.3.b. Managing the Election**

6 The Annual Conference Sessions Committee shall provide general oversight of the election
7 process. In addition, the committee shall provide a *Willingness to Serve* form that shall include
8 pertinent biographical information, recent photo, reasons for wanting to be a delegate, and a
9 statement of three (3) areas crucial to the United Methodist Church's mission, and three (3)
10 issues emerging from those areas.
11

12 **D.3.c. Commitment of a Delegate**

13 Election to General and/or Jurisdictional Conference conveys the trust and respect of peers
14 within the Annual Conference. Those offering themselves for election need to make the
15 following commitments:

- 16 1) attend their respective conferences on a full-time basis (10 to 12 days for General and 3
17 days for Jurisdictional);
- 18 2) participate in all scheduled meetings of the delegation – prior to, during, and after the
19 conferences;
- 20 3) demonstrate familiarity with the ways in which the General and Jurisdictional Conferences
21 function;
- 22 4) study proposed legislation;
- 23 5) accept responsibility for expenses beyond the per diem;
- 24 6) exemplify a visionary outlook, a team spirit, and a disposition to conferencing; and
- 25 7) adhere to the qualities set forth in the "Guidelines for Christian Conferencing" (adopted by
26 the Annual Conference) throughout the entire time they are delegates.
27

28 **D.3.d. Procedure for Endorsement of Delegates**

29 In order to involve leadership from many parts of the conference, the election of delegates to
30 General and Jurisdictional Conferences shall begin in local congregations, continue in districts,
31 and conclude at Annual Conference.
32

33 In order to allow informed decisions by voters in all elections, the Indiana Conference shall
34 make information available regarding endorsed persons who have indicated their candidacy
35 through the following process no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual Conference
36 election in question. This information shall be posted online and available through the
37 standard means of Conference communications.
38

- 39 1. Each local congregation may submit the name of a potential lay delegate to their district lay
40 leader by a specified date, together with a *Willingness to Serve* form. The district lay
41 leader shall bring all such names to the Fall District Conference meeting preceding the
42 Annual Conference in which delegates shall be elected. At that meeting, three laypersons
43 from the district may be endorsed (by a ballot overseen by the **Conference**
44 **Superintendent**). The **Conference Superintendent** shall forward the names of these
45 individuals (and their *Willingness to Serve* forms) to the chair of the Election Committee.
- 46 2. Potential clergy delegates may submit their names to their **Conference Superintendent** by a
47 specified date, together with a *Willingness to Serve* form. At the same meeting of the Fall
48 District Conference, three clergy from the district may be endorsed (by a ballot overseen
49 by the district lay leader). The district lay leader shall forward the names of these
50 individuals (and their *Willingness to Serve* forms) to the chair of the Election Committee.
- 51 3. The chair of the Election Committee shall forward the results of the district endorsements to
52 the convener of the Conference Coordinating Council by January 15 of the year when
53 elections shall be held. In order to monitor diversity, the Conference Coordinating Council

1 shall review the results and shall have the opportunity to add up to ten (10) additional
2 individuals (five lay and five clergy) by February 15 to the list of endorsed nominees. The
3 list of these additional nominees shall then be submitted to the Election Committee.

- 4 4. The finalized list of endorsed nominees – those coming from the districts and those added
5 by the Conference Coordinating Council – shall be communicated as clergy in alphabetical
6 order and as laity in alphabetical order. In a list to all members of the Annual Conference
7 by April 1, with a notation that any additional individuals who are qualified and who have
8 completed the *Willingness to Serve* form may add their names to the list of those who
9 have been endorsed. Included with that announcement shall be copies of all completed
10 *Willingness to Serve* forms that have been received by the Sessions Committee by March
11 15.

12
13 **Procedure for Election** – Lay and clergy delegates shall be elected at the Annual Conference in the calendar
14 year preceding the General and Jurisdictional Conferences and shall serve for the quadrennium. The General
15 Conference secretary shall provide the number of those to be elected (lay and clergy) to the Bishop and
16 Annual Conference secretary no later than December 2 prior to election. Persons elected to Jurisdictional
17 Conference shall, in the order of election, be reserve delegates to General Conference.

18 The Sessions Committee shall provide opportunity, prior to the first ballot, for members of the Annual
19 Conference to meet and talk with persons seeking election.

20 The Annual Conference secretary shall call attention to the “Guidelines for Christian Conferencing” at the
21 beginning of the election process, and shall arrange for a head teller and a sufficient number of tellers in each
22 order to support the election process. Ballots counted at the close of any session shall be sealed and the
23 results not known until reported at the next session.

24 Voting shall be on official ballots, with the number of names voted for each ballot being exactly the
25 number announced by the Bishop. If write-in ballots are permitted, only the names of those spelled correctly
26 will be counted, and only those who receive 12 or more votes will be announced. A majority of valid ballots
27 cast shall constitute an election. Balloting shall continue until the allotted number of delegates for General
28 Conference is elected. Following their completion, balloting shall begin for Jurisdictional Conference delegates
29 and shall continue until those delegates have been elected. Reserve delegates shall be elected by a minimum
30 of a simple majority of the ballots cast. There shall be 3 reserve delegates for clergy and 3 reserve delegates
31 for laity. These reserve delegates may act as reserve delegates to General Conference when it is evident that
32 not enough of the previously elected reserve delegates are in attendance at General Conference. (§134)

33 34 **D.3.e. Procedure for Election**

- 35 1) Lay and clergy delegates shall be elected at the Annual Conference in the calendar year
36 preceding the General and Jurisdictional Conferences and shall serve for the
37 quadrennium. The General Conference secretary shall provide the number of those to be
38 elected (lay and clergy) to the Bishop and Annual Conference secretary no later than
39 December 2 prior to election.
- 40 2) The Sessions Committee shall provide opportunity, prior to the first ballot, for members of
41 the Annual Conference to meet and talk with persons seeking election.
- 42 3) The Annual Conference secretary shall call attention to the “Guidelines for Christian
43 Conferencing” at the beginning of the election process, and shall assure that proper
44 secure arrangements have been made for accurate voting and reporting of the results.
- 45 4) Voting may be by official ballot or electronic means (as determined by the Annual
46 Conference Sessions Committee), with the number of persons to be elected for each
47 ballot being announced by the Bishop or a person designated by the Bishop.
- 48 5) All clergy meeting Disciplinary requirements (§135) will be assigned a number.
- 49 6) Any lay persons meeting Disciplinary requirements (§136) who wish to be elected as a
50 delegate may submit a write-in application by filling out the *Willingness to Serve* form
51 available through the Annual Conference registration booths. The deadline is the first day
52 of the Annual Conference Sessions.
- 53 7) During elections only the candidates who receive twelve (12) or more votes will be

1 announced.

2 8) A majority of valid ballots cast shall constitute an election.

3 9) Balloting shall continue until the allotted number of delegates for General Conference is
4 elected.

5 10) Following completion of General Conference elections, balloting shall begin for
6 Jurisdictional Conference delegates and shall continue until those delegates have been
7 elected.

8 11) General Conference reserve delegates (lay and clergy) shall be made up of the elected
9 Jurisdictional Conference delegates (lay and clergy) in the order they were elected. (§134).

10 12) Jurisdictional reserve delegates shall be elected by a minimum of a simple majority of the
11 ballots cast. For Jurisdictional Conference there shall be elected three (3) reserve
12 delegates for clergy and three (3) reserve delegates for laity.

13 13) Jurisdictional reserve delegates may act as reserve delegates to General Conference when
14 it is evident that not enough reserve delegates are in attendance at General Conference.
15 (§134)

16 14) The number of reserve delegates invited to attend General Conference is to be
17 determined by the Conference delegation.

18 19 **D.3.f. Leadership of Conference Delegation**

20 After delegates have been elected, the Bishop shall invite all elected delegates to an
21 organizational meeting, and shall preside until leaders of the delegation have been elected.
22 The following actions shall be included:

23 1) declaration by each delegate to follow the “Commitment of a Delegate” (as adopted by the
24 Indiana Conference) throughout the entire time they are serving as a delegate;

25 2) determination of leaders that need to be elected (i.e., chairperson, vice-chairperson,
26 secretary, and treasurer), with particular attention given to the qualities needed for effective
27 work to be accomplished—prior to the conferences, at the conferences, and subsequent to
28 the conferences;

29 3) following a time of prayer, nomination of persons for offices, followed by interactive
30 discussion, and casting of ballots (with the Bishop and two alternate delegates counting
31 ballots); and

32 4) continuation of the meeting led by the individual elected as chairperson.

33 34 **D.3.g. General and Jurisdictional Conference Petitions**

35 1) Petitions for General and Jurisdictional Conference provide all members of United
36 Methodist Churches, as well as organizations within the Indiana Conference, the
37 opportunity to engage the members of the Annual Conference and the larger church.
38 These petitions may be sent directly to the General Conference Secretary following the
39 rules and guidelines of the General Conference or if Indiana Annual Conference
40 affirmation is sought these petitions must be submitted to the Indiana Annual Conference
41 Secretary no later than ninety (90) days prior to the Annual Conference Session.

42 2) All General or Jurisdictional Conference petitions must deal with only one issue or
43 disciplinary paragraph, and must be signed by the submitter with appropriate
44 identification, including address and local church affiliation. If it is from an organization,
45 the identification must be that of a responsible individual within the submitting
46 organization and include address information for that individual.

47 3) All General or Jurisdictional petitions and resolutions appropriately submitted to the Indiana
48 Conference are referred to the Annual Conference Petitions and Resolutions Team for
49 review and will be presented to the Annual Conference Session.

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51 NOTE: Petitions, as submitted, become the property of the Annual Conference, and as such,
52 may be amended by action of the Annual Conference. Petitions affirmed by the Annual
53 Conference will be forwarded to the appropriate entity.

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D.4 District Conferences

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (¶659) states that “a district conference shall be composed of members as determined and specified by the annual conference, giving attention to inclusiveness (see ¶¶ 124, 140).

District conference membership with voting privileges shall consist of:

- a. The district lay leader and any associate district lay leaders
- b. All clergy appointed in the conference, shall be eligible to vote in all matters at district conferences, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.
- c. All clergy in retired status whether appointed to serve in a local church in retirement or not, shall be eligible to vote in all matters at district conferences, in the district where their charge conference relationship resides.
- d. One (1) person elected by the district as a secretary
- e. All local church lay leaders duly elected at their church charge conference
- f. All local church annual conference representatives duly elected at their church charge conference
- g. Persons chairing or leading ministry and missional work as organized by the district (¶661).
- h. Additionally, the Conference Superintendent is permitted to invite as voting at-large members of the district conference up to six (6) other persons who will assure the inclusion of diversity; such as but not limited to: youth, young adults, older adults, people with disabilities; and persons of racial, ethnic or gender groupings.

(END)

1021-3 Indiana Interested Persons

Review of Bishop's Ruling

Dicken & Lassiat

Darlene White

Conference Secretary

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Rev. Mark Dicken

Asked Question of Law [Minutes § 4.10]

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Rev. Meg Lassiat

Asked Question of Law [Minutes § 4.16]

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Amy Land

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November 30, 2020, email request

to be added as interested person to this docket

Bishop Julius C. Trimble

Resident Bishop, Presiding

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Rev. Larry Whitehead

Director of Connectional Ministries

Bishop's Executive Assistant

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