Pre-Conference Petitions Report

English

Rev. Lamar C. Oliver
Petitions Secretary
July 1, 2026
(v1.30 · 2026-07-24)

Petitions by the Numbers

GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH · GENERAL CONFERENCE 2026

TOTAL PETITIONS SUBMITTED

471

Filing Window · January 5 to May 1, 2026

DISPOSITION

448	For Consideration
18	Withdrawn
5	Invalid

9	77	127	¶302
LANGUAGES PUBLISHED	DISTINCT PETITIONERS	BDD ¶¶ TOUCHED	BUSIEST PARAGRAPH (18)

BY LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance	123
Local Church	122
Ministry	50
Superintendency	44
Conferences	39
Doctrine & Sacraments	34
Social Witness	20
Judicial Administration	16

BY SUBMITTER TYPE

General Conference Delegations	270
Individuals	98
General Church Commissions/Boards	54
Local Church Boards/Councils	13
Conference Boards & Councils	7
Annual Conferences	4

TOP PARAGRAPH FAMILIES

Includes subparagraphs (e.g., ¶302.7 counts under ¶302)

¶302	18
¶610	11
¶449	10
¶807	10
¶208	10
¶446	10

BY DISCIPLINE SECTION

I	Doctrinal Foundations	19
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July 1, 2026

Dear Friends:

THANK YOU. As was the case for our first General Conference in 2024, you, the people of the Global Methodist Church, have demonstrated through the petition process your deep love for Christ and His Church, along with a deep commitment to helping the church be as faithful as possible to our Wesleyan tradition and biblical foundation. You produced petitions that touched on every part of the 2024 Book of Doctrines and Discipline (BDD), demonstrating that every portion of the covenant promulgated therein is worthy of attention and consideration.

Since we gathered in Costa Rica, our movement has seen explosive growth across the globe, and with it comes the joyful reality that many new faces are bringing their voices, perspectives, and vibrant faith in Christ to the conversations we will have in Johannesburg and long after. To those who are with us for their first GMC General Conference, welcome to the sacred and holy work of the legislative process by which our covenant is clarified and through which we follow in the footsteps of the very first General Conference found in Acts 15 by discerning together how God is calling us to live together.

In 2024, this letter mentioned that we started the GMC petition process from scratch. As part of the Wesleyan tradition, it will come as no surprise to you that this iteration of the process focused on God's help in making it more perfect. Including those automatically brought forward from San José, there were 471 petitions submitted in preparation for GC2026. Rather than get into a slew of numbers which you can find elsewhere in the front matter of this report, here are some things about this report and the process behind it:

NEW FOR 2026

- **Legislative Committee Indexes** — Indexes for each legislative committee are found at the front of their respective section. The hope is this will help those delegates who want to print only their section, or have their committee index much easier to find. This was the most-requested change arising from after-action review meetings with legislative committee chairs and secretaries from 2024.
- **Petition Order** — Within each section, petitions are sorted by paragraph (and subparagraph). When a committee is addressing legislation that deals with certain paragraphs, delegates will have them all together, enabling more efficiency in their work.
- **Line Numbers** — Line numbering can't match exactly across all nine languages, but it should help the body work together, especially on longer petitions.
- **Action Headers** — In bold at the top of the text field of each petition is a sentence that tells you what the petition is attempting — to amend, replace, delete, or add a paragraph or subparagraph.
- **Paragraph Number Index** — In addition to listing petitions by their primary paragraph reference, users will find italicized petition numbers showing petitions that affect that paragraph, even if it is not the primary paragraph being addressed.
- **Resolutions** — When the 2026 version of the BDD is published, all resolutions approved by the plenary session will be printed in the back of the book.
- **Additional Languages** — Given the substantial growth of our movement, we are publishing in Amharic, Russian, and Thai in addition to the six current official languages.

- **Whole-Sentence Strikethroughs** — Striking a single word does not carry the same meaning across languages, and that gap only widens as we add more. So that our process reflects the global nature of our movement and serves the translation work, even a one-word change is shown by striking the entire sentence. Please keep that in mind as you read.
- **The Current BDD as Reference** — Given we have over twice as many petitions before the body as we did in 2024, and to be good stewards of space and printing costs, where a petition struck entire paragraphs or subparagraphs we removed that struck text. A free digital BDD is available at globalmethodist.org and in print, so we strongly encourage ALL delegates to keep it at hand during prep and in GC2026 committee and plenary sessions — especially with petitions that ***amend*** or ***replace*** existing language.
- **Document Format** — We switched to a more automated system that speeds production of both this report and the on-site Daily Journal, freeing more time to ensure accuracy.
- **Titles/Honorifics** — Because the gathered church embodies the priesthood of all believers — all equal before God — all titles and honorifics have been removed from petitioner names, and neither clergy nor lay status is indicated.

CONTINUED FROM 2024

- **Completely Hyperlinked** — For digital readers, every footer and index is fully hyperlinked — the most-praised feature in 2024, made even more responsive based on your feedback.
- **Pagination Across Languages** — The second most-praised feature in 2024 was matching page numbers across languages. This year we manage it in over 90% of cases; in all cases, each petition starts on the same page in every language.

A word about petitions deferred from 2024: in September 2025 we asked each petitioner whether they still wished to proceed. Some declined then, and some withdrew as this year's process opened. Because many referenced the Transitional BDD, we sent each a version changing nothing but the paragraph numbers; those included here carry the original petitioner's assent.

To all of you who participated in this process by writing, editing, co-signing, or advising on petitions submitted for consideration, THANK YOU. Due to your faithful approach to the process, over 90% of submitted petitions are presented for consideration by the GC2026 delegates. Reading through your work over these past months, what kept coming to mind was something I shared with a group of young clergy at the Acts 2:42 conference in March: **Debate is not division; it is discernment.**

We are now right at two months away from our time of worship, prayer, mission, celebration, and doing the holy and sacred legislative work through which we, the people of the Global Methodist Church, define and live out the covenant to which we have all been called.

Rev. John Wesley's final words are most appropriate as we dive into this work — "The best of all is, God is with us."

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam!

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Lamar C. Oliver (US: West Plains)
Petitions Secretary / Assistant General Conference Secretary

P.S. Don't be fooled — just because a legislative committee does not have nearly the same number of petitions as others does not mean their workload is any lighter.

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Petitions Process Overview

General Conference 2026

Petitions Process Timeline

December 5, 2025	Petitions Process Released
January 5, 2026	Petition Submission Portal Opens
April 14, 2026	Reference Committee Meeting
May 1, 2026	Petition Submission Portal Closes
May 18, 2026	Reference Committee Meeting
June 1, 2026	Reference Committee Meeting
July 1, 2026	Petitions Report Published in All Languages

Committee Breakdown

- **123** Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance
- **122** Local Church
- **50** Ministry
- **44** Superintendency
- **39** Conferences
- **34** Doctrine & Sacraments
- **20** Social Witness
- **16** Judicial Administration

Petitions by Submitter Type

- **269** General Conference Delegations
- **101** Individuals
- **54** General Church Commissions/Boards
- **13** Local Church Boards/Councils
- **7** Conference Boards & Councils
- **4** Annual Conferences

Disposition Breakdown

- **471** Total Petitions Submitted
- **448** Petitions for Consideration
- **18** Withdrawn
- **5** Invalid

Reference Committee

John Howard, Jr. (US: North Carolina) - *Clergy*, Chair
Jay Allred (US: North Georgia) - *Lay*
Bill Brown (US: Heartland) - *Lay*
Jana Fox (US: Mid-Texas) - *Lay*
Greg Stover (US: Allegheny West) - *Clergy*
Christian Mwite Mwango (DR Congo) - *Lay*
Rosette Ngoy Kalumba (DR Congo) - *Clergy*
Bonface Wanyama (Kenya) - *Clergy*
*Stephen Gambo (Central Nigeria) - *Lay*
*Khen Su Andrei Kim (Northwest Russia-Belarus) - *Clergy*
†Rev. Tom Lambrecht - *General Conference Secretary*
†Rev. Lamar C. Oliver - *Petitions Secretary / Assistant GC Secretary*

**Non-voting member* *+Non-voting staff*

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Pagination is identical in all nine language editions: every petition begins on the same page in every edition.
Line numbers apply to the petition text and are specific to each language edition.

DOCTRINE & SACRAMENTS

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PETITION 1324

¶102.2

Removing "fallen" from Creation in Wesleyan Way of Salvation

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell

Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The theological constructs associated with “the Fall” or “fallen creation” appear nowhere in the GMC’s Normative Documents (¶105) and are not used or defined in Holy Scripture. ¶104 states that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service. Teachings associated with “the Fall” and “fallen creation” should therefore be removed from the BODD for these reasons: They claim sin can be inherited, contradicting Ezekiel 18. They claim humanity is cursed into perpetuity by Adam’s sin, contradicting Exodus 20:2–6. They contradict God’s control over good creation in Job 38–41, Romans 1:18–20, Psalms 8, 19, 104, and 148. Neither Jesus nor any biblical writer teaches a fallen creation

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶102.2

~~God’s love toward fallen creation is made manifest in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; his life, ministry, death, and bodily resurrection.~~ God’s love toward creation is made manifest in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; his life, ministry, death, and bodily resurrection. This gift of salvation is available to all humanity by grace through faith. Grace includes the active, empowering presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, enabling believers to trust, love, and serve God. This undeserved gift works to liberate humanity from both the guilt and power of sin, and enables us to live as children of God, freed for joyful obedience. In the classic Wesleyan expression, grace works in numerous ways throughout our lives, beginning with the general providence of God toward all.

PETITION 1325

¶102.3

Removing "original Sin" Connotations in Wesleyan Way of Salvation

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell

Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The theological construct “Original Sin” (along with “the Fall” and “Total Depravity”) appears nowhere in the GMC’s Normative Documents (¶105) and is never used or defined in Holy Scripture. ¶104 states Scripture is the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service. Teachings associated with Original Sin/Total Depravity-theology should therefore be removed from the BODD for these reasons: They claim sin can be inherited, contradicting Ezekiel 18. They claim humanity is cursed into perpetuity by Adam’s sin, contradicting Exodus 20:2–6. They claim total inability to choose good, contradicting God’s prevenient grace, the divine teaching of choice (Deut 28–30; Prov 1–9; Matt 5–7), and the many righteous people listed in Scripture.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶102.3

~~God’s prevenient or preventing grace refers to “the first dawning of grace in the soul,”, mitigating the effects of original sin, even before we are aware of our need for God. It prevents the full consequences of humanity’s alienation from God and awakens conscience, instills a basic knowledge of the moral law, gives an initial sense of God, and restores a measure of liberty to receive the further graces of God—all of this issuing in the first inclinations toward life~~. Received prior to our ability to respond, preventing grace enables genuine response to the continuing work of God’s grace.

PETITION 1056

¶103

Seeking All the Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Petitioner: Mark Barrow

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Hendersonville Christ (US: MidSouth)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church is not a "cessationist" denomination. Following John Wesley, we do not believe that any of the gifts of the Spirit listed in the Scripture "ceased" with the death of the last of the apostles or the closing of the biblical canon. John Wesley wrote: "I do not recollect any scripture wherein we are taught that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the apostolic age…or any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things." [Works, Vol 8, Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained, 465.] Charles Wesley, A Hymn For Pentecost, verse 5, "Now let us speak with other tongues/the new strange language of Thy love."

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶103 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶103.4, RENUMBERING SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

An added point 4, renumbering the rest of the list.

4. Seek all the power and gifts the Holy Spirit has to offer. We "eagerly desire the spiritual gifts" [1 Cor. 14:1], including prophecy, healing, tongues, words of knowledge, and all the rest, recognizing that the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power [1 Cor. 4:20]. We seek to follow the Apostle Paul in fully proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in word and deed, by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit [Rom. 15:18-19].

PETITION 1409

¶103

Covenantal Connections

Petitioner: Kenneth "Toby" Chastain
Organization: Russellville (US: North Alabama)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It establishes shared expectations for laity and clergy to participate in Wesleyan discipleship, strengthen their local congregations and conferences, protect the vulnerable, and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. It ensures every charge receives faithful pastoral oversight and calls all leaders to pursue the highest standards of training and ministry excellence. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS THE TITLE OF ¶103, REPLACES THE BODY OF ¶103 IN ITS ENTIRETY, AND AMENDS ¶101.2 & 101.5

¶ 103. PRINCIPLES OF OUR COVENANT LIFE TOGETHER.

Wesley said, "there is no holiness but social." By referring to "social holiness,", we take that to mean that the road to holiness is one that we cannot travel alone, but rather involves the community of faith at every step along the way. We are a covenant people who are bound together through our shared mission. Our life together flows out of our membership vows (¶ 419). We see a church (locally and denominationally) that is:

Rooted and grounded in the Scriptures and in the historic teachings of the Christian church as defined in the historic creeds, and our Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith allowing us to remain centered in our Wesleyan understanding of the faith.

Committed to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples of Christ, teaching and baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; aspiring to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences.

Committed to leading all those who experience the new birth in Jesus to deepen in the faith and to grow in their relationship with him, accepting Him as Lord in all aspects of life, receiving the Holy Spirit as evidenced by both spiritual fruit and gifts that are manifested in their lives to the glory of God, encouraging all to participate in the covenant fellowship through discipleship and accountability groups, such as Wesleyan class and band meetings, and to utilize all the other means of grace to achieve this end.

Committed to modeling the love of God in order to respond to the summons to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; submitting ourselves to regular peer review for living, leading, and teaching this covenant life together (clergy holding clergy accountable, churches holding churches accountable, and all believers holding one another accountable); fulfilling the commandment in John 21 of lovingly feeding and tending to the flock of God and others; worshiping God in spirit and in truth; and watching over one another in love; until, perfected in love, the church experiences the fullness of God's restored Kingdom with Christ.

Recognizing the laity as the people of God and a royal priesthood who are called, chosen, and empowered for the

work of God in this world through their baptism; encouraging and equipping our laity to be able to fulfill their commitment to strengthen the church with their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness; affirming the participation and leadership of those of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, sexes, and ages in the Body of Christ; and understanding that laity are in full partnership with our clergy.

Encouraging and affirming the call of God in the lives of those lifted up as clergy who are grounded in the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, set apart by the church, and recognized to possess the necessary gifts and graces for ministry in alignment and accountability with our settled doctrines and discipline; understanding that these individuals never lose their calling as co-laborers with Christ as laity even as they pursue a call of servant leadership.

Displaying a "catholic spirit" to the church universal, cherishing our place within the greater Body of Christ through mutual respect, cooperative relationships, and shared mission with others wherever possible, envisioning a global church in which all work together, resourcing and learning from one another, to fulfill the tasks given by Christ to His church universal to continue the Kingdom work started during his earthly ministry (including proclaiming the good news, releasing captives, healing the sick, and standing up for the weak, disadvantaged, and oppressed).

To further align the Book of Doctrines and Discipline with these proposed changes, the following changes are needed for clarity and congruency.

¶ 101. OUR HERITAGE OF FAITH.

2. This faith has been tested and proved since its proclamation by the women at the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene among them, the first witnesses to the resurrection. It was taught by the apostles and defended by the women and men of the early church, many of whom gave their lives as testimony. Their labor, while being lived out in covenantal communities, enabled and inspired by the Holy Spirit, resulted in the canon of Scripture as the sufficient rule for both faith and practice (the Greek word kanon means rule). The church formulated creeds such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition as accurate expressions of this faith.

5. Through the labors of many Methodists in the British Isles, especially through the efforts of John and Charles Wesley, an organization and body of literature emerged, giving rise to a distinctly Methodist articulation of the Christian faith and life. To illustrate, Methodism placed particular emphasis on the universal work of grace, justification by faith, the new birth, and the fullness of salvation, (lived out in covenantal communities of societies, bands, and classes), otherwise known as entire sanctification or Christian perfection. Methodists created structures and communities alongside the established church to facilitate the mission "to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."

PETITION 1461

¶103

Worship as New Creation People

Petitioner: Jeff Jacob

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Loretto (US: MidSouth)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

There are no statements about the new creation in our doctrine. We need to change the narrative of popular Christian culture in the US and pockets of similar perspectives around the world. This eschatological statement is needed, not only to orient our ministry with full hope, but is needed to inspire the writing of future hymns, sermons, ordination requirements, and worship liturgy for communion, baptism, and funerals. The world needs a "voice" of eschatological hope from the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶103 BY ADDING ¶103.9

Worship God as New Creation People. The scope of salvation is from creation to new creation. The resurrection of Christ launched the new creation with bold optimism that God is putting the world right. Those in Christ are new creation people waiting as Jesus remains in heaven until the restoration of all things when all who belong to Jesus, dead or alive, receive new bodies to reign as royal priests. Our worship of the One True God, who gives salvation, justice, and beauty, is a sign that the new earth will surely be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord, just as the water covers the sea.

PETITION 1403

¶103.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: More Than Aspirational

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This deletion removes aspirational ambiguity and gives clarity to our call to share the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people throughout the world.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶103.2

~~Aspire to introduce all people, without exception, to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences. We are committed to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 to go into all the world to make disciples of Christ, teaching and baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.~~

Introduce all people to Jesus Christ, recognizing that the mission in which we are engaged has eternal consequences.

PETITION 1404

¶103.8

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: For the Local Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This edit gives clarity to the General Conference that our structure serves to support and strengthen the ministry of the local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶103.8 IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~Provide an organization and structure that is able to accomplish its primary functions of support, with a connectional polity that can empower and multiply the gifts of all for the sake of Christ's work in the world.~~

Provide an organization and structure that accomplishes its primary function of supporting the local church with a connectional polity that empowers and multiplies the gifts of all for the sake of Christ's work in the world

PETITION 1060

¶104

Strengthening Position on Biblical Authority

Petitioner: Scott Boltz

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Kokomo Zion (US: Great Lakes)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The current wording of ¶104 needs to make a stronger declaration of the accuracy and authority of the entire Bible. Methodism's historical doctrinal battles have been subject to changing cultural values and norms. We must affirm the Bible is the complete and final revelation of God, otherwise anyone can claim they have new or a different revelation from God contrary to the canon of Scripture. Failure to make a stronger declaration of the full accuracy and authority of the canonical books of the Old and New Testament will doom our new denomination to fight the same battle within, that has resulted in our separation from the United Methodist Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶104

¶ 104. HOLY SCRIPTURE. The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (as specified in the *Articles of Religion*) are the authoritative, inspired Word of God, being accurate in the original texts. They are the ~~primary~~ final rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured.

PETITION 1441

¶106

Articles of Faith of the Global Methodist Church

Petitioner: Discipleship and Doctrine Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Articles of Faith are proposed after General Conference 2024 instructed the Commission on Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry to combine the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church (AR) and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren (CF) into a single Articles of Faith. The following articles were excluded and are referred for possible inclusion, perhaps with modification, in ¶302 as part of our social witness: AR 21, 23, 24, 25; CF 15, 16. The following article is excluded without referral: AR 14. All other articles excepting the aforementioned are incorporated into the proposed Articles of Faith.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶106 IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACES IT WITH THE FOLLOWING

The Articles of Faith of the Global Methodist Church

¶106. The *Articles of Faith* of the Global Methodist Church. The *Articles of Faith* prescribe the normative doctrinal standards of the Global Methodist Church. To that end, they are both consistent with the creedal tradition of the church universal and express our church's particular Wesleyan-Methodist emphases and concerns, as well as our theological heritage of faith. The *Articles of Faith* are constitutive standards that declare the "faith once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and serve as a guard against false teaching by providing a basis for the praise and honor of God in faithful instruction that orients us toward a life of service to God's kingdom.

I. THE HOLY TRINITY

We believe in one holy and living God, everlasting, without body or parts, Creator of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and love, and rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of all, to the glory of his name. We believe the one God reveals himself as he is: three persons, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in being, majesty, power, and glory: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

II. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, truly God and truly human, the eternal Word made flesh, in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united, without division, confusion, or change. As to his divine nature, he is of one and the same substance as the Father. As to his human nature, he is of one and the same substance as us, yet without sin. The only eternally begotten Son of the Father, he was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. He truly suffered, was crucified, died for our sins, and was raised bodily from the dead. Having ascended to the throne of heaven, he is our eternal Savior and Mediator who reigns over all things and will return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

We believe God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The offering of Christ, once made, is the perfect atonement, redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is no other satisfaction for sin.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. He is of the same substance as the Father and the Son and is coequal with them in majesty, power, and glory. As very and eternal God, he is worthy of our worship and praise. The Spirit convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He testifies to Jesus Christ, leads us to faith in him, and incorporates us into the Church. With the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit distributes gifts and empowers the Church with everything needed to fulfill its mission in the world. A deposit guaranteeing the glory to come, he comforts and sustains the faithful and guides us into all truth, bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

IV. CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

We believe that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—created all things out of nothing, and nothing has been made that was not created as an act of God's will. All that the triune God creates is good, and he made all things as a free expression of his perfect love. God continuously upholds, governs, and sustains all creation by his power and wisdom. Human free will and responsibility operate within this providential framework.

V. HUMAN NATURE

We believe that human beings were created in the image and likeness of God, and that human nature was created good and endowed with dignity. We were made to love and glorify God in his perfect goodness, to love others, and to desire and work for their good. God created us male and female and designed us for family, community, and the stewardship of his good creation. We are now fallen into the corruption of sin and are very far gone from the state of original righteousness. Yet we remain of inestimable worth to God.

VI. SIN AND FREE GRACE

We believe that human beings are fallen from original righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, are inclined to evil from birth. Original sin, which is the corruption of every person's nature, is the condition into which we are all born. Sin corrupts every part of our humanity. Apart from prevenient grace, we cannot turn to God and are unable to do works pleasing to God. Any good will that we have comes through the grace of God in Christ and the Spirit at work in us.

VII. THE CHURCH

We believe that the visible Church is the communion of the faithful under the Lordship of Christ. The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic in nature and in calling. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ′s command. Qualified men and women are ordained for ministry in the Church by bishops through the laying on of hands. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the Church exists for the worship and glorification of the Holy Trinity, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

VIII. HOLY SCRIPTURE

We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Old and New Testaments in their entirety. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for Christ offers us everlasting life in both. Scripture is without error in all it affirms and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It contains all things necessary to salvation. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Holy Scriptures is not to be taught as essential to salvation.

The same Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures continues to work through them, illumining the Church's interpretation for the edification of the people of God. They are the basis for the Church's proclamation and a vital means of grace for all who hear them. Through the proclamation of the Word, the Spirit awakens us to sin, calls us to repentance, draws us to faith in Christ, and renews us in the image of God.

The canonical books of the Old Testament are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The canonical books of the New Testament are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.

IX. OF THE SACRAMENTS

We believe the Sacraments, ordained by Christ, are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, and not only pledges or symbols of the Christian's profession of faith, As such, they are expressions of God's love toward us. They are a special means of grace by which God works in us to enliven, strengthen, and confirm our faith in him.

We believe in only two Sacraments which are ordained by Christ our Lord: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

OF BAPTISM

We believe Baptism marks entrance into the visible Church and the New Covenant in Christ. Baptism is a sign and seal of our incorporation into the household of faith in union with Christ's death and resurrection. Baptism signifies repentance, cleansing from sin, and new birth in the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the promises of the New Covenant include the children of believers, making infants proper and acceptable subjects for Christian baptism, which should not be denied. It is the Church's special responsibility to nurture and lead baptized children to the confirmation of their baptism as their public profession of faith and personal commitment to lifelong discipleship.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Lord's Supper is the Sacrament of our redemption through which we are made participants in God's mighty acts of salvation. Holy Communion is both a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ and a token of the love and union which Christians have with Christ and one another. While the elements themselves are not to be worshipped, the Holy Spirit mysteriously communicates the body and blood of Christ through the Sacrament as a means of grace, though the substance of each element remains unchanged. Those who receive this Sacrament reverently partake by faith in the body and blood of Christ until he comes again.

X. PUBLIC WORSHIP AND THE LORD'S DAY

We believe divine worship is essential to the life of the Church and the duty and privilege of all Christians. The Lord's Day is divinely ordained for public worship and a commemoration of Christ's resurrection. Gathering regularly with the people of God is necessary for spiritual growth and our sanctification. We believe the order of public worship may be modified by the church according to the needs of the worshipping community. Worship

should always be held in a language and form understood by the gathered people, consistent with the Holy Scriptures, and in accordance with the order and discipline of the Church.

XI. REPENTANCE

We believe the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and enables us to turn from evil to faith in Christ. True repentance is expressed by our renunciation of evil and confession of sin and our turning to active participation in the means of grace and the pursuit of good works. It is a posture of humility, granted by God to unbelievers as a preparation for justification, and to believers as a continual grace through which we grow in holiness and enter deeper communion with Christ.

XII. JUSTIFICATION AND REGENERATION

We believe that justification is the gracious declaration of God that our sins are forgiven and that we are accounted righteous in his sight on the basis of Christ's merit. This declaration of God comes to us by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Justification is not the result of our own good works or personal merit. For nothing can fulfill the demands of divine justice except the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and nothing can cleanse us from original or actual sin apart from him. Therefore, we are graciously invited to receive Christ by faith, placing our full trust and confidence in him as our personal Lord and Savior. Through Christ we are made children of God and heirs of eternal life. That we are justified by faith alone is a most wholesome doctrine and a great comfort.

We believe regeneration is an inward renewal in righteousness through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Unless we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. Through the new birth we are reconciled to God, made partakers of the divine nature, experience new life in Christ, and are enabled to serve him with our will and affections. Regeneration is our initial sanctification, after which we are renewed in holiness by degrees as we seek to be made perfect in love.

XIII. GOOD WORKS

We believe good works are the necessary fruit of faith and follow regeneration, but they do not have the virtue to remove our sins or to avert divine judgment. We believe good works, pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, spring from a true and living faith. Through and by good works our faith is made evident. There are no works that may be required of believers beyond those commanded in Scripture. Our good works do not obligate God's favor to us or accrue merit for others.

XIV. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

We believe entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness, and true holiness. It is the work of God's grace through Word and Spirit. Entire Sanctification is received through faith in Christ and should be sought earnestly by every child of God. Those who have been born of God are already set free from the power and dominion of sin. They are subsequently cleansed from original sin and washed from its pollution in thought, word, and deed. Such believers are now free to love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves, walking blamelessly in God's holy commandments.

The process of sanctification prepares the way for the reception of entirely sanctifying grace, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We believe that perfect love or Christian perfection does not deliver us from the infirmities,

ignorance, or mistakes common to all, nor from the possibility of further sin. The pure in heart must guard against ongoing temptations, especially in the form of spiritual pride, by abiding in holiness through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

XV. THE JUDGMENT AND THE FUTURE STATE

We believe that Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the wicked to condemnation and the righteous to eternal life in God's new creation.

PETITION 1231

¶106.1

Revised Articles of Faith

Petitioner: C.Chappell Temple
Organization: Sugar Land Trinity (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

Since the 1968 creation of the United Methodist Church, two statements of faith have co-existed reflecting the complementary streams of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren communities. As a new denomination, combining both statements into new unified articles is important for helping those both within and outside of the Global Methodist Church understand its doctrinal foundations and core beliefs. In addition to the proposal coming from a commission and others, the following is offered to provide a simple summation of what it is that we believe as Global Methodists, while retaining the theological ideas and much of the language of our historical standards adopted in 1784, and arranging the articles into a more logical sequence.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106

Petition Text: Amend existing Paragraph 106 as follows:

¶ 106. NORMATIVE STANDARDS FOR WESLEYAN WITNESS. As is the case in many Christian communities, we recognize additional statements of faith that are consistent with the creedal tradition of the church universal, but which also express our church's particular emphases and concerns, as well as our theological heritage of faith.

These constitutive, normative standards embody the "faith once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and serve as a bulwark against false teaching, providing the framework for the praise of God in our teaching (orthodoxy), the development of our collective theology, and the launching point for our living and service (orthopraxis). ~~Recognizing the complementary streams of the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren faith communities, both the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith define the doctrinal boundaries of our church, until such time as a combined Articles of Faith may be approved by the church.~~

~~1. THE *ARTICLES OF RELIGION* OF THE METHODIST CHURCH.~~ Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England were ratified in their final form in 1571 during the reign of Elizabeth I. They reflect both the concerns of the English Reformation and the comprehensive nature of the established church. As the United States emerged as an independent nation, John Wesley revised the Articles in 1784 for the Methodist work in America. His twenty-four Articles reflected both his theological commitments and his desire for doctrinal clarity, shortening some of the 39 Articles and deleting others entirely if they could be easily misread. ~~The Methodist Episcopal Church added an additional article dealing with the duty of Christians to civil authority.~~ Those ~~twenty-five~~ Articles were officially adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference of 1808 when the first Restrictive Rule prohibiting changes in them was also implemented. Soon thereafter, German-speaking Wesleyans in the United Brethren Church adopted a similar Confession of Faith in 1815. Slight revisions were made to both statements in the years that followed, including the addition of articles dealing with sanctification and civil authority. With further consolidation, the articles of faith below represent a theological consensus within the Global Methodist Church as to the core elements of our faith.

Delete ¶ 106.1 and 106.2

~~Article I—Of Faith in the Holy Trinity There is but one living and true God~~.... ...

~~Article XVI- Civil Government. We believe civil government derives its just powers from the sovereign God..... We believe it is the duty of Christian citizens to give moral strength and purpose to their respective governments through sober, righteous, and godly living.~~

Add the following:

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I – THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe in the one living, holy, and true God, who is the Creator, Sovereign and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness and love, and He rules with gracious regard for all, to the glory of His name. In the unity of the Holy Trinity, God reveals Himself as three persons, distinct but inseparable, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE II – JESUS CHRIST, THE WORD OF GOD

We believe in Jesus Christ, who is the eternal Word made flesh, truly God and truly human, the only begotten Son of the Father who took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Him, the Godhead and Humankind were joined together in one Person, never to be divided. He suffered and was crucified, died and was buried, to reconcile us to the Father and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of all. He physically rose from the dead and took again His body, after which He ascended into Heaven to be with the Father until He returns in glory to judge all men and women at the last day.

ARTICLE III – THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is of one substance, majesty, and glory with them, very and eternal God. The Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin, leads believers to repentance, and comforts, sustains, and empowers the faithful, guiding them into all truth.

ARTICLE IV – THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired and contain all things which are necessary for our salvation. They are the sufficient and only rule for faith and practice. We believe that the Old and New Testaments are in perfect accord with each other, for in both testaments everlasting life is offered to all by Christ. Whatever is not revealed in or established by the Word of God, as expressed in the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments long accepted by the church, is not to be made an article of faith, nor is it to be taught as essential to salvation. Though Christians are not bound by all of the ceremonial rites or civil precepts expressed within the Old Testament, no Christian whatsoever is free from obedience to the moral commands contained therein.

ARTICLE V – ORIGINAL SIN AND FREE WILL

We believe that all persons are very far gone from righteousness and, because of original sin, we are destitute of holiness and naturally inclined to evil. The condition of humankind after the fall of Adam and Eve is such that we cannot turn and prepare ourselves, by our own natural strength and works, to faith, nor have we the power to do good works pleasing and acceptable to God without the grace of God working within us. Except a person be born

again, we cannot see the Kingdom of God. Influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit, however, we are responsible in freedom to exercise our will for good.

ARTICLE VI - REPENTANCE

We believe that true repentance, prompted by the Holy Spirit, involves not just sorrow for our sins, but a turning away from those behaviors and dispositions in our lives that are not of God. Repentance requires conviction, followed by confession, the renouncing of evil, and a renewed commitment to doing good as we follow the tenets of God's Word, leading to our justification through faith in Christ.

ARTICLE VII – JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

We believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself by the offering Christ freely made on the cross. We are never accounted righteous thus before God through our own work or merit, but only by faith in Jesus Christ whose perfect and sufficient sacrifice was for the sins of the whole world. Through spiritual regeneration we may be justified and renewed in righteousness, made partakers of the divine nature, and experience newness of life to be able to serve God with both our will and affections.

ARTICLE VIII – GOOD WORKS

We believe good works are the necessary fruits of faith which follow justification, though they cannot remove our sins or advert divine judgment. Good works which spring from a true and living faith, however, are pleasing and acceptable to God for through them faith is made evident, as a tree is discerned by its fruits.

ARTICLE IX – ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

We believe that though no one can snatch us from God's hand, after experiencing new life, Christians may yet willingly depart from following God and fall back into sin. Even then, however, by the grace of God, we may arise again, amend our lives, and be renewed in righteousness. The place of forgiveness cannot be denied to such as those who truly repent.

ARTICLE X – ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and Spirit, received through faith in Jesus Christ, by which those who have been born again are set apart, cleansed from sin and washed from its pollution in their thoughts, words, and acts as they are perfected in their love for God and others. This experience, also known as going onto perfection, may be received in this life gradually or instantaneously. Sanctification does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, or mistakes common to all, nor from the possibilities of further rebellion against God, but sin loses its debilitating grip for all those who respond wholly to the will of God and desire to walk in His holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE XI – THE CHURCH

We believe that the visible church of Christ is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ, one, holy, apostolic, and catholic or worldwide. It is the congregation of men and women in which the pure Word of God is faithfully preached, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. The church thus exists for the glorification of God, the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the

redemption of the world.

ARTICLE XII – PUBLIC WORSHIP

We believe that unfeigned worship of God in spirit and in truth is the duty and privilege of all and is essential to the life of the Church. Accordingly, the Lord's Day, a remembrance of the resurrection of Christ and of God's eternal rest, is divinely ordained for private and public worship, for rest from unnecessary work, and should be devoted to spiritual improvement, Christian fellowship, and service. Worship should be conducted in a language and form that is appropriate for a local congregation, provided it is in accordance with both the Holy Scriptures and the discipline of the broader church.

ARTICLE XIII – THE SACRAMENTS

We believe that sacraments are ordained of Christ as outward signs of God's inward grace toward us by which He works to strengthen and confirm our faith in Him. Two sacraments are ordained by Christ in the gospels: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion.

ARTICLE XIV - BAPTISM

We believe that baptism signifies repentance and entrance into the household of faith whereby persons are publicly and privately marked as disciples of Christ. It is also a sign of spiritual regeneration or new birth. As heirs of the Kingdom of God, children of believers are acceptable subjects for Christian baptism which should not be denied to them. Those so baptized become the special responsibility of the church to nurture and be led to a personal profession of faith in which they can confirm the vows made on their behalf at their baptism.

ARTICLE XV – THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the Lord's Supper, also known as Holy Communion or the Eucharist or Thanksgiving, is not only a token and sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but it is a representation of our redemption through the sufferings and death of Christ. Those who rightly, worthily, and in faith share in this sacrament partake of the spiritual body and blood of Christ until He comes. Though there is no physical change in the bread and cup, through both elements of the sacrament we may encounter the mystical presence of Christ in the whole of the sacrament, as we feast at His table which is open to all who seek Him.

ARTICLE XVI – THE JUDGMENT AND FUTURE STATE

We believe that all persons stand under the righteous judgment of Christ, both now and in the last day. We believe in the return of Christ in glory, the bodily resurrection of the dead, the divine judgment of the wicked, and the victory of the righteous to life eternal.

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PETITION 1321

¶106.1

Replacing Article VII - "Of Original or Birth Sin" with "Agape Love and Sin"

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell
Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

Original Sin/Birth Sin appears nowhere in the GMC's Normative Documents (¶105) and is never used or defined in Holy Scripture. ¶104 declares the Old and New Testaments are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service. Yet "Original Sin" conflicts with this by teaching inherited guilt (contradicting Ezekiel 18) and perpetual cursing from Adam (contradicting Exodus 20:2-6). Therefore, all references to "Original Sin" and "Birth Sin" should be removed from the BODD. To ensure Scripture is the ultimate authority, GMC doctrine should ground sin in Jesus' two greatest commandments (Mark 12:28-34; Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18). These commands sum up the entire moral law (Matt 22:40). Sin is willful disobedience to this agape love.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106

~~Article VII—Of Original or Birth Sin~~

~~Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.~~

¶106 – *AGAPE LOVE and SIN*

We believe every human being is called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as we love our self. Our Lord Jesus Christ connected love of neighbor to love of God while using the "agape" meaning of love, signifying total devotion to God and genuine care for neighbor as oneself. Jesus said these were the Two Greatest Commandments: there are no commandments greater than these, they sum up all the Law and the Prophets, and eternal life is given to those who live by them. Therefore, we believe love of God and neighbor is the fruit of faith that all of God's people are called to produce.

However, when we reject this heavenly wisdom and fail to love God and our fellow human beings either by our words, actions, or inactions, we sin. Sin that is not repented of leads to relational separation from God in this life and eternal separation from God in the afterlife.

Without the aid of divine grace and repentance from sin, we are unable to do works pleasing to God. Unless we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. We are rescued from this desperate state by God's forgiveness of our sin through the timeless atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. Through the saving work of our Trinitarian God, we are no longer slaves to sin but free to live in holiness, doing what is good and rejecting what is evil.

PETITION 1322

¶106.1

Replacing Article VIII - Of Free Will with Article on "Human Nature"

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell

Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Fall of Adam, Original Sin, and Total Depravity appear nowhere in the GMC's Normative Documents (¶105), are never used or defined in Holy Scripture, and should not be used in the BODD. ¶104 establishes Scripture as the primary rule and authority for faith. Yet these teachings conflict with Scripture by asserting inherited guilt (contra Ezekiel 18), perpetual cursing from Adam (contra Exod 20:2-6), and total inability to choose good which ignores God's prevenient grace as well as Deut 28–30, Prov 1–9, Matt 5–7. Therefore, all references to the Fall, Original Sin, and Total Depravity should be removed from the BODD. The proposed article "Human Nature" uses clear, scriptural terms consistent with the Jewish worldview of Jesus and scripture.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106

~~Article VIII—Of Free Will~~

~~The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.~~

¶106 – *HUMAN NATURE*

We believe that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and therefore, though swayed by both good and evil inclinations, are fundamentally good. By grace human beings are given the moral capacity to distinguish good from evil and to love and choose the good. We are made to love and glorify God in his perfect goodness, to love other creatures, and to desire and work for their good. We are created male and female, and we are designed for family, community, and the stewardship of God's good creation.

PETITION 1323

¶106.1

Removing Phrase "original Guilt" from Article II - Of the Word, or Son of God...

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The theological constructs “Original Guilt” and “Original Sin” appear nowhere in the GMC’s Normative Documents (¶105) and are never used or defined in Holy Scripture. ¶104 states that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service. Yet these teachings conflict with Scripture by asserting inherited guilt (contradicting Ezekiel 18) and perpetual cursing from Adam’s sin (contradicting Exodus 20:2–6). They are the product of Greco-Roman “lost paradise” paradigms superimposed on Jewish biblical texts. Therefore, all references to “Original Guilt” and “Original Sin” should be removed from the BODD.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106

Article II—Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

~~The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.~~

¶106 – Article II—Of the Word, or Son of God, Who Was Made Very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

PETITION 1326

¶106.1

Removing "original Sin" from Article XX - Of the One Oblation of Christ...

Petitioner: Victoria Campbell
Organization: Katy Resurrection (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The theological construct “Original Sin” appears nowhere in the GMC’s Normative Documents (¶105) and is never used or defined in Holy Scripture. ¶104 states that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service. Teachings associated with Original Sin should therefore be removed from the BODD for these reasons: • It claims sin can be inherited, contradicting YHWH in Ezekiel 18. • It claims humanity was cursed into perpetuity by Adam’s sin, contradicting YHWH in Exodus 20:2–6. Therefore, each person is only accountable for their personal sin.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106.1

~~The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.~~ The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

PETITION 1446

¶106.3

Adopt Clear Doctrinal Standard on Marriage

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

This recognizes how our community in the Wesleyan theological tradition, along with others, has discerned that this must be an important doctrinal dividing line. Every time we ask a person or institution to be aligned with our doctrine, this should include alignment on this matter. Placing this in our doctrinal standards (rather than merely in the Social Witness) elevates its status and makes it much more difficult (realistically, impossible) for any future General Conference to ever liberalize. The General Conference has the option to make this content part of a combined Articles of Faith.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶106 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶106.3

¶ 106. NORMATIVE STANDARDS FOR WESLEYAN WITNESS. ...

1. THE *ARTICLES OF RELIGION* OF THE METHODIST CHURCH.

...

2. THE *CONFESSION OF FAITH* OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH.

...

3. ARTICLE OF DOCTRINE ON Marriage.

We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. We affirm either faithfulness in such a marriage or celibacy in singleness as God's calling for all, clergy as well as laity.

PETITION 1077

¶107

Clarify Inclusive Interpretation of Wesley Writings

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

There are places in the BODD where language may be interpreted as not inclusive of women. Namely, in the Articles of Religion in Paragraph 106 and in John Wesley quotes in Paragraphs 107 and 108. We do not want to make changes to historical documents.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶107

107. FOUNDATIONAL WESLEYAN STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. Representing the normative contributions and emphases of Methodism's articulation of the Christian faith, the Wesleyan Standards have, to one degree or another, been broadly shared between the spiritual descendants of the eighteenth-century evangelical renewal led by John and Charles Wesley. We honor the Articles of Religion and John Wesley's writings. While we acknowledge that the context of the time of their writing utilized man/men in the writings, the Wesleyan Standards – when applied to Christians, salvation, preaching, etc. – should be interpreted as applying to men and women. These standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should be consistent with them. These include the following:

PETITION 1443

¶107

Clarify Understanding of Wesley's Sermons and Notes

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

We must very intentionally build a new culture in which our doctrine is widely known and taken seriously, and we have clear, consistent, doctrinal boundaries. Wesley's Sermons and Notes include important teachings that should shape us as Methodists, but also include statements that should not be taken as litmus tests of orthodoxy, such as saying that unborn babies' ears do not hear (II.4 of "The New Birth"), saying that the thief on the cross "was no thief" (III.2 of "The Scripture Way of Salvation"), or accepting the debated exegesis that Mary Magdalene was a reformed prostitute (III.6 of "Salvation by Faith"). Different opinions on such non-essentials in the Sermons and Notes should not be grounds for defrocking.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶107

¶ 107. FOUNDATIONAL WESLEYAN STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. Representing the normative contributions and emphases of Methodism's articulation of the Christian faith, the Wesleyan Standards have, to one degree or another, been broadly shared between the spiritual descendants of the eighteenth-century evangelical renewal led by John and Charles Wesley. These historic standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should remain consistent with their main doctrinal themes, theological teachings, and piety. ~~These standards teach us what it means to be Methodist and the teachings of our communities should be consistent with them.~~ These Wesleyan Standards must be respected throughout our Church as important documents for our theological grounding. They should shape the faith and ministry of our clergy and other teachers, and all Global Methodists are encouraged to consult them as resources to guide their understanding of Scripture and theology. Given the great breadth of topics covered and John Wesley's brief expressions of personal opinions on non-essential issues, the Global Methodist Church does not expect the same level of conformity with every statement made in these particular Wesleyan Standards as it does with the doctrinal standards of the preceding paragraphs, as long as our approaches to these Wesleyan Standards do not "strike at the root" of historic or Wesleyan Christian faith, do not contradict the core theological teachings and themes of these documents, and remain aligned with our other standards of doctrine. These Wesleyan Standards include the following:

1. THE *STANDARD SERMONS* OF JOHN WESLEY

...

2. THE *EXPLANATORY NOTES UPON THE NEW TESTAMENT*.

....

PETITION 1434

¶108

Locate Revised General Rules in Foundational Principles Section of BDD

Petitioner: Discipleship and Doctrine Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The 2024 General Conference asked the Assembly of Bishops to oversee a process that would bring to the 2026 General Conference a revision of The General Rules. The Assembly cooperated with the Commission on Discipleship, Doctrine and Just Ministry to produce this proposal. The General Rules should be open to occasional revision by the General Conference in order to be influential in our church. They are not covered by our Restrictive Rules since they are not named in ¶212 and are not listed as one of "our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards." They should appear in the section labeled "Foundational Principles" right after the paragraph describing "Our Covenant in Christ."

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶108 AND PLACES ITS CONTENT IN A NEW ¶404, RENUMBERING CURRENT ¶404 AND SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

Delete ¶108 from the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline, 2024*.

Insert the following as a new paragraph following ¶403 and renumber the following paragraphs.

The Nature, Design and General Rules of the Global Methodist Church

In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley, in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them, and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

This was the rise of the United Society, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society was no other than "a company of [persons] having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

That it may the more easily be discerned whether they were indeed working out their own salvation, each society was divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There were about twelve persons in a class, one of whom was styled the leader. It was his or her duty:

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order: (1) to inquire how their souls prospered; (2) to advise, reprove, comfort or exhort, as occasion may require; (3) to receive what each individual was willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church, and poor.

2. To meet the ministers and the stewards of the society once a week, in order: (1) to inform the minister of any that were sick, or of any that walked disorderly and would not be reproved; (2) to pay the stewards what they had

received of their several classes in the week preceding.

There was only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

Over time, among many Methodists, class meetings were widely abandoned, while Wesley's General Rules for these accountable small groups became increasingly treated as a vestigial dead letter, to which lip service was often paid without serious expectations of commitment. But the early twenty-first century saw renewed interest in reviving class and band meetings among the people called Methodists. These energies were important for the formation of the Global Methodist Church as a new denomination continuing in the historic Methodist tradition, firmly committed to basic doctrinal orthodoxy, integrity in church governance, missional effectiveness, and renewed intentionality about Wesleyan spirituality and theology. It was observed at this time that some parts of the General Rules for Methodist societies written by John Wesley were very reflective of the peculiarities of his context in eighteenth-century England, and/or were not consistently appreciated and understood by many Global Methodists. In 2024, the inaugural General Conference of the Global Methodist Church, held in Costa Rica, adopted legislation calling for a process to produce revised set General Rules "that honor and continue the core values of the historic General Rules … while better addressing today's realities, being intentionally globally applicable, and focusing on commitments we realistically expect all of our clergy to actually keep when they promise at their ordinations to 'keep the General Rules of our Church.'"

It is as a result of this process that we now have these General Rules of the Global Methodist Church:

It is therefore expected that all clergy and laity should continue to evidence our desire of salvation, by receiving the grace of God through faith in the following way:

First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, by ignoring the responsibility to attend corporate worship or participating in practices that hinder others from participating in corporate worship.

Drunkenness: recreational intoxication from alcohol or other drugs; otherwise using alcohol or other mind-altering or addictive substances in such a way that one's thoughts and deeds no longer glorify Christ; or consuming alcohol excessively without moderation.

Abusive economic exploitation, particularly any exploitative, demeaning, or dehumanizing treatment of workers, participation in the enslavement of others including sex trafficking, and any participation in or patronization of the pornography and prostitution industries, which are inherently immoral and exploitative.

Engaging in any form of sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, engaging in either trivial or vindictive lawsuits with brothers and sisters in Christ; abusive or bullying treatment of others; engaging in racist words or behaviors; returning evil for evil.

The buying or selling of goods illegally, evading any payments we rightfully owe, or otherwise failing to be

scrupulously honest in all business interactions, payment of taxes, and other financial matters.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation or gossip; particularly speaking in harsh, slanderous, or exaggeratedly negative ways about divine image bearers, including those who serve in government or spiritual leadership; or otherwise engaging in conversation that is detrimental to the holiness of myself and others.

Behaviors that we know are directly contrary to holiness and/or to glorifying God as:

Dressing immodestly or flaunting one's wealth.

Engaging in activities that are detrimental to the holiness of ourselves or others.

Engaging in media and other social diversions that stir up sinful passions in us or distract us from a focus on God or are otherwise detrimental to holiness.

Laziness or excessive self-indulgence.

Greed: laying up treasure upon earth beyond what is necessary to care for others or oneself in retirement. Hoarding wealth for ourselves, seeking to acquire riches without regard to crossing boundaries of morality or hurting others, excessive shopping, gambling and refusing to contribute generously per our ability to church and charity, or trusting in our material resources rather than in God.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

It is further expected that we should continue to evidence our desire of salvation, by receiving the grace of God through faith in the following way:

Secondly: By doing good; by doing unto others as you would have them do unto you; by honoring all people as fellow bearers of the image of God, being in every kind merciful after our power; as we have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all people:

To their bodies, of the ability which God gives, by being generous to both the church and those in need, giving food to the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting or helping those who are sick or in prison, and caring for the vulnerable in society.

To their souls, by finding appropriate ways to instruct, reprove, or exhort all we have any interaction with; trampling under foot that aberrant doctrine that "we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good, especially to those who are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only.

By continual diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before us, accepting the cost of discipleship, denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; being willing to be criticized and mistreated, and for people to say all manner of evil about us falsely, for the Lord's sake.

It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation, by receiving the grace of God through faith in the following way:

Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

The public worship of God and Christian fellowship

The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

The Supper of the Lord.

Family and private prayer.

Searching the Scriptures.

Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our church; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice.

PETITION 1061

¶109 (NEW)

Addition of the "Catechism of the Global Methodist Church" to "PART ONE: DOCTRINE"

Petitioner: John Howard

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Madison Bethesda (US: North Carolina)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The catechism is an educational tool that expresses the essential teachings and doctrines of the Church. Before any person is brought into the membership of the church they should be educated and understand the essential teachings of the Church. All of the essential teachings and doctrines of the Church that Lay and Clergy members are expected to know and profess should be found in The Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Part One of the BDD encompasses the doctrines and foundational standards upon which the GMC is founded. The catechism should be located in Part One of The Book of Doctrines and Discipline so that it is easily located for Laity and Clergy use.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶109

Add the "Catechism for the Global Methodist Church" to The Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church as paragraph ¶109.

PETITION 1011

¶413

Petition on Sacramental Authority

Petitioner: Tera Ertz

Organization: Williamsburg Daybreak (US: Virginia)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

Matt. 28:19 calls all Christians to go and make disciples, baptizing them. Christ commands believers to practice Communion. The GMC has a missional, practical theology and must be consistent in empowering disciples for obedience and disciple-making in every context. We cannot use Matt. 28:19 to commission, then forbid laity to baptize and administer communion. But, any who administer the sacraments should be equipped to teach new disciples their significance in Wesleyan teaching.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶313

¶ 313. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY. During the English Reformation, the church was defined as the community where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered (Methodist Articles of Religion XIII). The Global Methodist Church seeks to honor this history and be faithful to the commands of Scripture. In keeping with the historic practice of the Christian church, Elders are ordained to oversee the Sacramental life of the church and thus have full authority and responsibility to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. In recognition of The Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20) given to every believer and the missional nature of the Global Methodist ChurchBishops, may extend Sacramental authority to Deacons and laity who have been commissioned to administer sacraments upon completion of training in the Wesleyan doctrine of Baptism and The Lord's Supper. Such sacramental authority ~~appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the Sacraments. Such Sacramental authority for a Deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and~~ is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder.

The Bishops will provide a uniform training and commissioning process for lay members in good standing with the Global Methodist Church wishing to fulfill a calling to administer the sacraments in the diversity of their ministry contexts.

PETITION 1062

¶413

Extending Sacramental Authority to Trained Laity

Petitioner: R.C. Muhlbaier

Organization: Muncie Garden at Gethsemane (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The GMC seeks to be a global movement of disciple-makers in community as local churches. An essential function of the church is the administration of the sacraments. Elders have authority and responsibility over the sacraments. The BDD makes provision for this authority to be extended to non-ordained persons "in recognition" of the priesthood of all believers (¶ 512), (¶ 510), and deacons (¶ 413). Elders are called to order the life of the church (¶ 503.2) and to "equip the saints" for sake of missional acuity (Eph. 4:12). Allowing Elders to similarly extend sacramental authority to trained laity allows the GMC to fulfill this function of the church across the globe where the church exists in different sizes and structures.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶413

SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY. During the English Reformation, the church was defined as the community where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered (Methodist Articles of Religion XIII). In keeping with the historic practice of the Christian church, elders are ordained to oversee the sacramental life of the church and thus have full authority and responsibility to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Bishops may extend sacramental authority to deacons appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments. Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder. Elders may extend sacramental authority to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion to laypersons who satisfy the following requirements:

a.) the layperson is a confessing member of the charge to which the elder is appointed

b.) the layperson is referred for training in administering the sacraments by their appointed elder

c.) the layperson completes training in administering the sacraments as determined by the annual conference

d.) the layperson receives advanced approval from the extending elder to perform a baptism and to administer Holy Communion in a specific ministry context.

Such sacramental authority of laypersons is limited to ministry settings of the charge to which the extending elder is appointed and is exercised under the oversight and authority of the extending elder. Such sacramental authority extended to a layperson may be rescinded at the discretion of the extending elder or a succeeding elder appointed to the charge. Elders shall notify, in writing, the Presiding Elder and Charge Conference of those laypersons extended sacramental authority under his or her supervision and when such authority is rescinded.

PETITION 1300

¶413

Clarification of Granting Sacramental Authority to Deacons

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The authority to extend sacramental authority to Deacons does not reside with the Presiding Elder but with the Bishop. The paragraph rightly speaks of this proper authority and also that this must be exercised under the supervision of the Presiding Elder. However, having already been granted by the Bishop, saying that it is under the "authority of the Presiding Elder" is either incorrect or else redundant.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶413

Bishops may extend sacramental authority to deacons appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments. ~~Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder.~~ Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight of a presiding elder.

PETITION 1428

¶416

Addition of Growth in Holiness to Baptismal Vows

Petitioner: Discipleship and Doctrine Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The call to discipleship in general and growth in holiness in particular cannot be separated from membership in the Global Methodist Church. Therefore, we propose amending the baptismal and membership vows of the GMC to reflect this commitment to growing in holiness and pursuing Christian perfection. These amendments align our vows with our mission statement.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶416

¶416. BAPTISMAL VOWS. In faithfulness with early Christian practice as well as the Wesleyan tradition, those wishing to receive the sacrament of Holy Baptism within the Global Methodist Church shall first be asked the following questions:

Do you renounce the devil and all his works, and reject the evil powers of this world?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of your sin, turn to Jesus Christ, and confess him as your Lord and Savior?

I do.

Do you commit yourself to growing in holiness and pursuing Christian Perfection?

I do.

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

I do.

Do you accept the responsibility to resist evil, injustice, and oppression by the grace and power of God?

I do.

Will you obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in them all the days of your life by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit?

I will.

Those who present candidates for Holy Baptism who are unable to answer for themselves will also be asked this question:

Will you nurture these children (persons) in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, profess their faith openly, and lead a Christian life?

I (We) will.

The congregation is then asked to affirm their commitment to support the baptismal candidate in the faith.

Will you who witness these vows encourage [these persons] in the faith and do all in your power to support [these persons] in [their] life in Christ?

We will.

Baptismal candidates (or those presenting candidates unable to answer for themselves) are then asked to confess their faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, [who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.]

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, [the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.]

PETITION 1140

¶418

Simplify Professing Membership Paragraph

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

Our current paragraph on Professing Membership contains information on transfers, which is repeated and expanded upon in later paragraphs. This information is unnecessary and muddies the statement on what it means to be a professing member. We recommend removing the transfer information from this paragraph.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶418

¶ 418. PROFESSING MEMBERS. Those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church may present themselves to the pastor of any local congregation and, after any appropriate counsel, be baptized if they have not already done so, and join by professing their faith in Jesus Christ and agreeing to the vows of discipleship. ~~Those wishing to transfer their membership from one congregation of the Global Methodist Church to another may do so by indicating such to the receiving pastor who shall send a request for the transfer to their previous congregation. Persons may also be received by transfer from other denominations in which the Lordship of Christ is affirmed.~~ The pastor in charge has the authority to determine the readiness of any person to assume the vows of membership. A person deferred by the pastor may appeal that decision to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent. In order to fulfill the mandate to "watch over each other in love," professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be encouraged to participate in a class meeting, small group, discipleship or other accountability group on a regular basis, as a key part of the fulfillment of their vows of membership.

PETITION 1405

¶418

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Church Membership Expectations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This deletion removes language that is suggestive and limiting. While the original suggestion is good, it is simply one of many ways that church members should watch over each other in love.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶418 BY STRIKING THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES

~~In order to fulfill the mandate to "watch over each other in love,"19 professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be encouraged to participate in a class meeting, small group, discipleship or other accountability group on a regular basis, as a key part of the fulfillment of their vows of membership~~

PETITION 1315

¶419

Making Disciples

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Virginia

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

Identity is a critical battleground in the world. We believe that the gospel offers God's intended identity for humanity in Jesus Christ, and he names us disciples. We believe a word change in the final vow of paragraph 419 in The Book of Doctrines and Discipline 2024 will clarify that a professing member of a local church embodies God's intended identity of disciple. Jesus commands us to make disciples, and paragraph 405 defines a disciple, but not a representative. We ask that this petition be passed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶419

¶ 419. VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP. In addition to taking the vows of baptism (¶ 416) those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions before being received into the church: Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord? Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures? Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy church? Will you be loyal to Christ through the Global Methodist Church and joining with your brothers and sisters around the world do all in your power to fulfill its mission?

~~Will you be a faithful member of the [Name] Global Methodist Church (or alternatively the [Name], a Global Methodist local church), doing all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?~~ *Will you be a faithful member of the [Name] Global Methodist Church (or alternatively the [Name], a Global Methodist Church), doing all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's disciple in this world?*

PETITION 1430

¶419

Addition of Growth in Holiness to Membership Vows

Petitioner: Discipleship and Doctrine Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The call to discipleship in general and growth in holiness in particular cannot be separated from membership in the Global Methodist Church. Therefore, we propose amending the baptismal and membership vows of the GMC to reflect this commitment to growing in holiness and pursuing Christian perfection. These amendments align our vows with our mission statement.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶419

¶ 419. VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP. In addition to taking the vows of baptism (¶ 416) those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions before being received into the church: *Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?*

Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord?

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures?

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy church?

Are you growing in holiness and pursuing Christian Perfection?

~~*Will you be loyal to Christ through the Global Methodist Church, and joining with your brothers and sisters around the world to earnestly seek to do all in your power to fulfill its mission?*~~ *Will you be loyal to Christ through the Global Methodist Church, joining with your brothers and sisters around the world to do all in your power to fulfill its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe?*

Do you assent to the doctrines and discipline of the Global Methodist Church?

Will you be a faithful member of the [Name] Global Methodist Church (or alternatively the [Name], a Global Methodist local church), doing all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?

PETITION 1406

¶420

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Faithful Church Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This deletion removes language that is suggestive, unenforceable, and inadequately articulated from a Wesleyan perspective. Faithful membership in the local church is a sanctifying grace through which God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit perfects us as we participate in the means of grace together. The current language does not reflect the role of God's grace in church membership and should be removed

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶420

~~Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves. Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.~~

PETITION 1013

¶421

The Meaning of Holy Communion

Petitioner: Joe Stallings
Organization: Lucama (US: North Carolina)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

The existing version is sacramentally weak, pragmatically vague, and is not thoroughly commensurate with John Wesley's teaching. Since we are in the formation of a new Wesleyan-Methodist expression and considering the EXTRAORDINARY significance that Holy Communion had among the Wesleys and the early Methodist movement, it is VERY important that we do this—of all things—correct from the ground up. This petition provides this.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶421

Par. 421. THE MEANING OF HOLY COMMUNION. In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, which is also called The Lord's Supper and the Eucharist, we are invited into deep participative fellowship with Jesus Christ (Greek *koinonia*: 1 Cor 10:16-17). Jesus is actively and sacramentally present in the bread and the cup as well as with the communicants as his Holy Church. Moreover, through the Sacrament, Christ convicts, forgives, heals, fortifies, empowers, sanctifies, transforms, and provides many spiritual fruits and gifts to communicants. As we receive the Sacrament continuously, it is sustaining food for our lifelong Christian pilgrimage.

Holy Communion is normatively practiced within the gathered congregation, which is assembled as the living Body of Christ to *remember* the living Head of the Body, Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. This remembrance is much more than a psychological-historical recall—viz., a calling back to mind of a past event (Greek *mimneskomai*). Holy Communion manifests a divine-kairological recall—viz. a calling back of Christ in his Real Presence as a living sign: "Do this to call *me* back" (Greek *anamnesis*). Thus, the Sacrament is a personal and supernatural meeting between the Church and the Lord of the Church. In and through the Sacrament, the communicants actually encounter (meet) the Crucified and Risen Jesus Christ, who is present as the Host of his Table (1 Cor 11:23-26).

In the service of divine worship, the Sacrament of Holy Communion, which is practiced as the Wesleyan Altar Call, should follow the Proclamation of the Word. The two—both Word *and* Sacrament—should be pragmatically held together in the primary worship service of the local Methodist church. In the Wesleyan-Methodist imperative, pastors and local congregations should offer the "constant" opportunity for the people to receive the Holy Sacrament and to encounter the Living and Risen Jesus Christ at his, at least weekly, Word and Table meeting. (See John Wesley's Sermon 101, "The Duty of Constant Communion".) Word and Sacrament constantly used together are the preeminent Means of Grace for Christian growth in holiness and discipleship. Therefore, they should be practiced by each local church as often as possible.

It is prudent for the properly consecrated elements of Holy Communion to be taken to those who could not be physically present in the regular weekly service of worship. It is also prudent to offer non-alcoholic juice and gluten-free bread as health alternatives.

PETITION 1331

¶421

Local Authority to Serve Wine Without Requiring Grape Juice

Petitioner: Ethan Gross

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Clear Lake (US: Upper Midwest)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

This amendment provides greater local church flexibility while preserving the sacramental integrity of Holy Communion. It removes the preference for grape juice and instead allows the choice between either element. By allowing congregations, under pastoral leadership and a two-thirds congregational vote, to determine whether wine or grape juice is served, the church affirms both tradition and practical pastoral care. This change maintains full inclusion by continuing to allow grape juice where needed for health or conscience, while removing the obligation of dual provision in every setting of the table.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶421

Those who cannot (or choose not to) receive the eucharistic elements for whatever reason are still encouraged to come forward to receive a blessing. The elements of Holy Communion may be taken to those whose condition prevents them from being physically present. ~~We encourage the use of nonalcoholic wine or juice for Holy Communion. Nonalcoholic juice must be offered as an option where wine is used.~~

Congregations may serve either wine or grape juice in the celebration of Holy Communion, according to the practice and discernment of the local church. In cases where a person cannot receive wine due to concerns related to alcohol, provision should be made for grape juice under pastoral guidance.

PETITION 1240

Resolution

Clarify Doctrinal Language and Boundaries

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

As we build our culture of being a denomination that takes our doctrine seriously, it is important to be clear about what we mean by our doctrine, and what exactly we ask clergy candidates and others to affirm. Different paragraphs inconsistently refer to "normative standards," "constitutive standards," "Doctrinal Standards," "doctrinal foundations," "our doctrines," or "doctrines…established by" the GMC. Updates to the historic First Restrictive Rule (Para 212.1) have not ended questions and differing interpretations of what, if anything, is protected beyond the four documents specified, the status of the rest of the 100s paragraphs, and how any additional article may potentially be added to our doctrinal standards. Clarity is our friend.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

The General Conference hereby directs the Commission on Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry, or a task force created by the Commission for this purpose, to carefully examine the different ways our denominational doctrine is identified and made binding in different parts of our Book of Doctrine and Discipline, and to submit any legislation to the next regular session of the General Conference that it judges to be helpful, potentially including but not limited to amending the First Restrictive Rule (Paragraph 212.1), for ensuring that Global Methodists throughout our connection have a clear, consistent understanding of the boundaries of our doctrine, of doctrinal expectations, of the effects of the First Restrictive Rule, and the exact boundaries of what is and is not protected from change by the First Restrictive Rule. This process may include soliciting diverse feedback of how different language in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline is perceived by different Global Methodists. This is not a mandate for the commission to seek to change the substance of our doctrine, but rather for them to guide us towards greater clarity.

PETITION 1454

Resolution

Defining "What is a Movement" in the Global Methodist Church

Petitioner: Kingdom Advancement Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

This resolution defines “What is a Movement” in the Global Methodist Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

Defining “What Is a Movement” in the Global Methodist Church

Whereas Jesus empowered the church to be a movement, spreading from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and throughout the earth; and

Whereas the Global Methodist Church was formed to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread Scriptural holiness across the globe; and

Whereas the Global Methodist Church Book of Doctrines and Disciplines cites the word “movement” no less than nine times, affirming that the Church understands itself not simply as an institution but as a missional force called into being by God; and

Whereas clarity about what we mean by movement is essential for shaping leadership, structures, cultures of equipping, church multiplication, budgets, clergy formation, congregational expectations, and global mission.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Global Methodist Church hereby adopts the following definitions of a Movement:

A disciple-making movement is characterized by the rapid, exponential multiplication of disciples making disciples to at least the fourth generation of reproduction.

A church multiplication movement is characterized by the rapid, exponential multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches within a defined demographic, reaching at least four generations of reproduction.

Be It Finally Resolved

The Global Methodist Church calls all conferences, commissions, councils, congregations, clergy, and lay members to evaluate their ministries, priorities, and practices by this understanding of movement, so that everything we do may advance the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe.

PETITION 1455

Resolution

A Resolution to Establish GMC Commentary on Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith

Petitioner: Wilton T.A. Odongo
Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

In keeping with Methodism's historical heritage, Methodists and their founding fathers focused on identifying what and how to teach at their general conferences, dubbed "Holy Conferencing." This tradition has kept the Methodism movement alive, with over 200 years of history. The petition requests that eminent classical theologians be identified and entrusted with the responsibility to ably write a commentary on the doctrinal teachings of the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith. This commentary shall provide a summary of the denomination's authentic doctrinal position, consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

The commentary shall provide a summary of the theological scriptural content of authentic doctrinal faith, as taught by our founding fathers, for future generations, in reference to Psalm 78:1-11 and Jude 3-4. It will as well guard the denomination's confession of faith and make it possible for the bishops, conference superintendents, presiding elders, elders, and deacons of all other denominations' clergy and laity who supply the pulpit to uphold the apostolic faith as presented in Scripture and Christian tradition and interpreted from a Wesleyan perspective. The Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission will oversee the subcommittee of eminent orthodox theological experts nominated by the assembly of bishops and approved by the connectional council. Every twelve (12) years during the general conference, a new task force will be appointed to review and evaluate the relevance of the Global Methodist Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith, as well as its doctrinal standards in relation to contextualization.

PETITION 1462

Resolution

Recognition of Congregational Singing Resources

Petitioner: Sterling Allen

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Houston Cornerstone (US: Trinity)

Legislative Committee: Doctrine & Sacraments

RATIONALE:

¶703.12 states that the General Conference may, "Approve and revise music resources and worship rituals of the GMC, providing for variations as shall be most helpful to particular contexts worldwide, including making such resources available digitally." Since the earliest days of the Wesleyan Witness, hymnody has played a central role in discipleship by forming the lyrical-theology of worship for use of the people called Methodists, especially the hymns of Charles Wesley.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, ¶703.12 states that the General Conference may, "Approve and revise music resources and worship rituals of the Global Methodist Church, providing for variations as shall be most helpful to particular contexts worldwide, including making such resources available digitally;"

WHEREAS, since the earliest days of the Wesleyan Witness, hymnody has played a central role in discipleship by forming the lyrical-theology of worship for use of the people called Methodists, especially the hymns of Charles Wesley;

WHEREAS, moving forward without an endorsed hymnal and other denominationally endorsed resources may be a stumbling block for discerning congregations;

WHEREAS, the Methodists are a singing people of faith and have even been known to "shout" on occasion with the Holy Spirit's guidance;

WHEREAS, John Wesley felt so strongly about the use of hymnody as a means of discipleship that he self-published no less than twenty-six hymnals;

BE IT RESOLVED that The Global Methodist Church recognizes and endorses the use of Our Great Redeemer's Praise (2022) and O For a Heart to Praise My God (2024) published by Seedbed for congregational singing (excluding endorsing included liturgies until the time an official Book of Worship is developed and adopted by the General Conference);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that wherever English is not the common vernacular, these resources may be considered the standard by which other hymnals may be evaluated for congregational singing in the Wesleyan tradition by Global Methodist churches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this action be recorded in the official conference transcript and posted to the Global Methodist Church website.

SOCIAL WITNESS

Social Witness Statements & Resolutions · all ¶300s

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PETITION 1156

¶302

Our Witness Update

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett
Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

After a group of us preached through these statements in our churches, we found that some updates were needed. In particular, we found that we should make sure that we are not proof-texting the scripture passages to go with our social witness statements. Therefore, we propose the following changes for clarity and so that we can preach and teach these social principles in a way that honors the passages' scriptural context.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.1, ¶302.2, ¶302.5, ¶302.7, ¶302.8, ¶302.9, ¶302.11, & ¶302.12, AND REPLACES ¶302.3, ¶302.4, ¶302.6, ¶302.10, ¶302.13, & ¶302.14

¶ 302. OUR WITNESS TO THE WORLD.

1. We believe that all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect. We denounce as sin racism, sexism, and other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person

~~(Genesis 1-2, Deuteronomy 16:19-20, Luke 11:42, 19:9, Colossians 3:11)~~

(Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:4-7; 1 Samuel 16:7 (16:1-13); Zechariah 7:8-10; Matthew 25:31-40; Luke 18:15-17; Colossians 3:11 (3:8-11); James 2:1-4, 12-13).

2. We believe that life is a holy gift of God whose beginnings and endings are set by God, and that it is the particular duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities or serious illness, and the aged

~~(Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 19:32, Jeremiah 1:5, Luke 1:41-44)~~

(Gen. 2:7; Lev. 19:32; 1 Samuel 2:6 (2:6-8a); Psalm 39:4-5; Proverbs 22:22-23; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41–44; James 1:26-27 (1:22-2:26); Revelation 22:12-13).

3. ~~The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Exodus 22:22-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27).~~

The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the mortality of the mother and/or the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection. We call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support women and men facing pregnancies (intended or unintended) without adequate care, counsel, or resources

(Genesis 35:16-20; Exodus 1:15-18; Exodus 3:18-22; Exodus 21:22-23; Ps. 139:13–16; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Amos 6:1-7;

Matthew 2:13-18; Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 1:26-38; 1 Corinthians 9:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; 1 Timothy 4:11-14).

4. ~~We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God's creative power (Deuteronomy 5:12-14, Luke 10:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Timothy 5:18).~~

We believe work is a holy act and as such that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. In the same understanding Sabbath is a holy act that must not be neglected. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God's creative power

(Deuteronomy 5:12–15;1 Kings 12:3-16; Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 15:25-32; 1 Tim. 5:18).

5. We believe that God has called us to share his concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God's people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed

~~(Leviticus 19:9-10, Matthew 25:37-40, Luke 6:20-25, James 2:1-5)~~

(Leviticus 19:9–10; Deuteronomy 14:28-29; Nehemiah 5:1-19; Psalm 24:1-2; Isaiah 61:1-9; Matthew 25:37–40; Luke 6:20–26; Acts 6:1-7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; James 2:1–7).

6. ~~We believe that all have been summoned to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all (Genesis 2:15, Leviticus 26:34-35, Psalm 24:1).~~

We believe that all have been created for relationship with God and tasked to care for the earth as our common home, stewarding its resources, sharing in its bounty, and exercising responsible and sustainable consumption so that there is enough for all

(Genesis 1:26-31a; Genesis 2:4b-17; Leviticus 26:34–35; Psalm 24:1; Matthew 7:24-27; Romans 8:18-25; 1 Corinthians 9:1-18; Revelation 21:1-7).

7. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman

(Genesis 1:28; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14; Song of Solomon ~ 8:3-7; Matthew 19:3–9; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9).

8. We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for his children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives

~~(Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20)~~

(Genesis 1:27, 2:24; Leviticus 18:1-30; Isaiah 11:6-9; Matthew 19:3–9; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Corinthians 6:7–20; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

9. ~~We believe that children, whether through birth or adoption, are a sacred gift to us from God, and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture the youngest among us, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world~~

We believe that children, whether through birth, ~~or~~ adoption, or caregiving, are a sacred gift to us from God. We accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture those requiring special care, regardless of age, among us, particularly acting against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world

(Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 4:9–10; Psalm 127:1 3–5; Matthew 2:14-23; Matthew 7:9-11; Matthew 18:5-10; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; 1 Timothy 5:3-16).

10. ~~We believe that followers of God have been called to exercise self-control and holiness in their personal lives, generosity and kindness in their relations with others, and grace in all matters of life (Romans 12:9-21, Galatians 5:22-23).~~

We believe that followers of God have been called to personal and social holiness through our shared life in the Holy Spirit. This life, lived by grace and approved by God, is shown to the world by exercising love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We are called to exemplify God's grace to the world in all our interactions

(Leviticus 19:2; Proverbs 25:28; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:6-8; Matthew 5:16; Romans 12:1–21; Galatians 5:16–25; 1 Peter 1:15–16).

11. We believe in the rule of justice and law in society, in the right of individuals to follow God's call and to lawfully immigrate to new places, and in the pursuit of peace both between nations and individuals. We offer ourselves to work in order to reduce the bitterness that has overflowed in God's world

~~(Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 11:1-9, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 2:19-10)~~

(Genesis 12:1–3; Genesis 31:45-55; Genesis 47:1-12; Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Isaiah 11:1–9; Jeremiah 34:12-22; Daniel 4:28-37; John 1:9-13; John 17:13-19; Romans 13:1-10; 2 Corinthians 13:11).

12. We believe the practice of the Golden Rule, treating others as we would wish to be treated, can effectively guide our social and business relationships. We seek to cultivate the mind of Christ and a heart for others

~~(Matthew 7:12, Romans 12:1-2)~~

(2 Kings 6:8-23; Proverbs 25:21-22; Matthew 7:9-14; Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:1-20).

13. ~~We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution and that governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the greater society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, or political views~~

We believe that each person should have the right to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of persecution and that governments should respect freedom of religion and the important role of faith communities within the greater society. We further denounce discrimination or persecution which may target any because of their gender, economic status, ethnic or tribal identity, age, languages, national association, past hurts and reparations, education, traditions, and religious or political views

~~(Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:35)~~

(Ruth 4:2-12; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 29:4-9; Matthew 5:43-48; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:14-29; Mark 10:13-16;John 15:18-25; Acts 9:1-6; Romans 8:31-37; Galatians 3:23-29; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; James 2:1-7; 1 Peter 2:18-25; 1 Peter 4:12-19).

14. ~~We believe in the final triumph of righteousness when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work towards that end as Christ's light and the salt of the earth~~

We believe in the final triumph of the righteousness of God's kingdom when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of Christ, and we accept our calling to work toward that end as Christ's light and the salt of the earth

~~(Matthew 5:13-16, Revelation 11:15-17, Revelation 21-22)~~

(Exodus 15:1-21; Exodus 19:3-6; Matthew 5:13–16; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; Revelation 11:15-19; Revelation 21–22).

PETITION 1044

¶302.3

Petition to Amend Paragraph 302.3 from the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Allegheny West
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

¶301.2 reminds us of our heritage of living by social creeds which call for "equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life". ¶302.1 states that "all persons irrespective of their station or circumstances in life have been made in the image of God and must be treated with dignity, justice, and respect [...] We denounce as sin [...] other expressions that unjustly discriminate against any person." Therefore, our defense of persons whose station is dependency on the womb ought to be rooted in dignity and justice. This revised paragraph reaffirms our historic claims to justice and clarifies both our dedication to the protection of the lives of innocent people as well as our commitment to caring for mothers and fathers.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

¶ 302.3 We believe that all human life, regardless of level of development or ability, is sacred and divinely deserving of equal protection under the law. ~~The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion We denounce the practice of abortion as an offense against the image and authority of God except in the cases of tragic conflicts of physical life against physical life when the wellbeing physical life of the mother and the child are is at stake.~~ We denounce the practice of abortion as an offense against the image and authority of God except in the cases of tragic conflicts of physical life against physical life, where the physical life of the mother is at stake. In such conflicts, every effort should be made to protect the life of the mother and the child. ~~We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection and Wwe call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women mothers and fathers facing unintended or unwanted pregnancies by providing them without adequate care counsel or and resources~~ We call upon all Christians, as disciples of the Lord of Life, to prayerfully support mothers and fathers facing unintended or unwanted pregnancies by providing them with care, counsel, and resources. (Genesis 9:5-7, Exodus 22:22-23, Psalm 139:13-16, James 1:27).

PETITION 1111

¶302.3

Supplying Language to Further Protect the Unborn and the Mother

Petitioner: Shelley Van Antwerp

Organization: Avon Bartlett Chapel (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

According to the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, abortion is never medically necessary. If the child needs to be separated from the mother, premature delivery can possibly save the life of the child as well. There is no need to intentionally kill the child.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion. ~~except in~~ In the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the well-being of the mother and the child are at stake, premature delivery may be necessary with the baby cared for as a separate patient. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Ex. 22:22–23; Ps. 139:13–16; James 1:27).

PETITION 1238

¶302.3

Adopt a Clearly Pro-Life Stance on Abortion

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Condoning abortions for the expansively vague standard of maternal "wellbeing" is very loaded language, with particular history in the jurisprudence of American abortion laws of effectively allowing abortions for any reason. That word continues the UMC tradition of ambiguity that we should leave behind. Also, many of us now in the GMC worked hard to get our previous denomination's Social Principles to affirm pro-life pregnancy centers. With such ministries increasingly coming under heavy-handed, unjust attacks, now is not the time for us to fall silent about standing with them.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

3. ~~The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the wellbeing of the mother and the child are at stake.~~ The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of physical life against physical life. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources. We affirm and encourage our churches to support pro-life resource centers and life-affirming pregnancy clinics that compassionately help women find alternatives to abortion *(Exodus* 22:22-23, *Psalm 139:13-16, Luke 1:41-44, James 1:27).*

PETITION 1305

¶302.3

Affirming the Sacred Worth of Persons with Disabilities

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Virginia

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

¶ 302.2 states, "it is the duty of believers to protect those who may be powerless to protect themselves, including the unborn, those with disabilities..." ¶ 302.3 gives further explanation to ¶ 302.2 to include the use of abortion for birth control or gender selection. World-wide data shows intentional testing for and systematic termination of unborn persons with disabilities. Amending ¶ 302.3 to explicitly reject abortion as a means of, "disability prevention," strengthens our stance to protect the unborn and those with disabilities. This language also provides greater clarity on the sacredness of human life to include those unborn with disabilities. This reaffirms our Social Witness that all persons are made in the image of God.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the well-being of the mother and the child are at stake. ~~We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Ex. 22:22–23; Ps. 139:13–16; James 1:27).~~ We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control, disability prevention, or ability or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources (Ex. 22:22-23; Ps. 139:13-16; James 1: 27).

PETITION 1306

¶302.3

Including the Denunciation of Eugenics as Means of Birth Control

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Including the wording about eugenics is important as those beliefs and philosophies are still alive today with proponents of tampering with the genetic code of the unborn to kill them, eliminate undesirable traits, etc. as those practices used alters the person who that God created.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

3. The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the well-being of the mother and the child are at stake. ~~We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control, or gender selection and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources.~~ We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control, or gender selection and all forms of eugenics. We call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources. (Ex. 22:22-23, Ps. 139:13-16; James 1:27).

PETITION 1448

¶302.3

Abortion is Contrary to God's Will and Should Always Be Opposed by the Church

Petitioner: Michael Cooper
Organization: Gaylord (US: Great Lakes)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

1. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church allows for abortions "in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the well-being of the mother and the child are at stake." 2. Every abortion could be justified by the language in our BDD, as a "tragic" situation, or one where the mother's "well-being" is at stake. From situations where the doctor said the fetus' abnormalities means he/she will die within a month of birth, to a mother with an abusive partner, to an impoverished mother, or even the situations where an unplanned pregnancy will interfere with a mother's college or career plans, someone will justify that abortion because it is a "tragic" situation. Let's start as a 100% pro-life church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.3

3. ~~The sacredness of all life compels us to resist the practice of abortion except in the cases of tragic conflicts of life against life when the well-being of the mother and the child are at stake. We do not accept abortion as a means of birth control or gender selection, and we call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without adequate care, counsel, or resources.~~ Abortion, because it intentionally takes an innocent human life sacred to God, is always an immoral act that we oppose in all situations. We call upon all Christians as disciples of the Lord of Life to prayerfully consider how we can support those women facing unintended pregnancies without care, counsel or resources. We also call upon the Church to develop resources and programs to support those who chose abortion in the past, or who are affected by past abortions. (Ex. 22:22–23; Ps. 139:13–16; Luke 1:39-44;James 1:27).

PETITION 1125

¶302.4

Against Assisted Suicide

Petitioner: David Watson

Organization: Lexington St Luke (US: Allegheny West)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

God determines the beginning and end of life. In various parts of the world, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, and portions of the United States MAID (PAD) and PAS are increasingly common. The practice now extends to patients who are not terminally ill, but who deem (or have determined for them that) their lives are 'problematic' due to impairment, developmental disability, or mental illness The killing of people who are sick, have a disabling condition, or are elderly is inconsistent with a Christian view of the value of human life as bearers of the imago Dei.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶302.4 AND RENUMBERS SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

Add new ¶302.4

Just as we resist the practice of abortion, we also reject the involuntary or a-voluntary euthanizing of any person. Further, we reject the deliberate termination of human life through the practice euphemistically called MAID, or Physician Assisted Death (PAD) and its subset, Practitioner (Physician) Assisted Suicide (PAS). This is not a condemnation of the removal of life support from terminally ill patients with no hope of recovery and facing near-term death, but a rejection of the practice of terminating life directly or through the facilitation of their suicides, rather than allowing their lives to end in natural death.

PETITION 1258

¶302.4

The Unborn - Awareness, Education, and Action

Petitioner: Fulshear Union Chappel
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

According to the World Health Organization, around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year. Of these abortions, 45% are unsafe, which not only kills the unborn but also potentially harms the mother. In Latin America and Africa, the majority of all abortions were unsafe. (WHO Abortions 8-Sept 2025). Amazingly, many people do not know these staggering numbers, which by any measure qualifies as a human crisis. Awareness and Education about the Abortion Crisis are critical for clergy and laity to understand. This insertion, which follows subparagraph 302.3 on abortion, is a Call to Action for believers to learn, speak up and protect the most vulnerable while giving voice to the voiceless.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302 BY ADDING A NEW ¶302.4 AND RENUMBERING SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

Amend ¶302 (Our Witness to the World) by inserting a new subparagraph after ¶302.3, and renumbering subsequent subparagraphs accordingly.

New ¶302.4 to read:

We believe the World is in a Spiritual and moral crisis with tens of millions of the Unborn being aborted every year. We will protect and give voice to the voiceless by raising awareness and education of the Abortion Crisis and by inspiring believers to discuss, help and protect those who are powerless to protect themselves. (Proverbs 24:10-12, Proverbs 31:8, Eph. 2:10)

PETITION 1307

¶302.4

Clarification to Be More Broad in Supporting the Voice of the Worker

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Changing the wording to reference negotiating individually for one's own work removes the bias towards to only supporting unions and legislation and practices in only this way. We should be promoting the general idea of allowing workers to have a voice (themselves or as a group) when discussing pay and benefits with their employer.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.4

~~We believe that all should have the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation and free of grinding toil or exploitation by others. We respect the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining to protect their welfare.~~ We respect the right of workers to negotiate wages and benefits with their employers, individually or collectively. We pray that all should be allowed to freely follow their vocations, especially those who work on the frontiers of truth and knowledge and those who may enrich the lives of others with beauty and joy. We acknowledge that science and technology are gifts of God intended to improve human life and we encourage dialogue between faith and science as mutual witnesses to God's creative power (Deut. 5:12–14; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 5:18).

PETITION 1308

¶302.5

Removing Accusation of Source of Poverty

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

We should be careful in our language here not to sow discord internally for political purposes. The wording here is overtly political and skews in a specific ideological direction. By updating this statement, we can focus on the broader issue of poverty and not state a given political position on what we might think causes poverty.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.5

~~We believe God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to alleviate the conditions and policies which have produced vast disparities in wealth and resources, both among individuals and nations, giving rise to poverty~~. We believe God has called us to share His concern for the poor and to work to alleviate poverty as it arises due to conditions and policies in communities and nations. We are called to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all God's people as we share the good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed (Lev. 19:9–10; Matt. 25:37–40; Luke 6:20–25; James 2:1–5)."

PETITION 1006

¶302.7

Human Sexuality and Marriage

Petitioner: Springfield Oaks
Organization: US: South Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

We live in a culture that is redefining what marriage is and who can be marriage. We believe more precise language is needed to clarify that we support marriage between one man and one woman according to their biological sex. Further, we believe it is important to clarify that all other forms of human sexuality are incompatible with God's Word.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.7

7. We affirm that marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman according to their biological sex. Therefore, all other forms of human sexuality are incompatible with the Inerrant Holy Scriptures and the Wesleyan teaching of pursuing Scriptural Holiness (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 19:3-9, Ephesians 5:22-33).

PETITION 1020

¶302.7

Clarifying the Church's Doctrine on Christian Marriage and Sexual Holiness

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Many churches left the United Methodist Church to form or join the Global Methodist Church because the UMC departed from the biblical teaching that marriage is the lifelong covenant between one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy outside this covenant is contrary to God's will. While the Book of Doctrines and Discipline affirms this definition of marriage, it does not clearly state that homosexual practice—like all sexual activity outside biblical marriage—is sin that calls for repentance and transformation through the grace of Jesus Christ. This petition addresses a doctrinal matter, affirming that the Church's teaching on marriage, sin, repentance, and holiness should guide its disciplinary standards.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶302.7

~~7. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman (Ex. 20:14; Matt. 19:3–9; Eph. 5:22–33).~~

7. We affirm that marriage is God's holy gift, instituted by God in creation, affirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and intended as a lifelong covenant of mutual love, fidelity, and support between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:18–24; Matt. 19:4–6; Eph. 5:31–32). Sexual intimacy belongs only within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. Therefore, all other forms of human sexuality are incompatible with the Bible and traditional Christian teachings.

PETITION 1467

¶302.7

The Celebration of Holy Marriage

Petitioner: Stewart Kouba

Organization: Atlanta (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Article 302.7 fails to define human sexuality and makes no provision of human sexuality apart from marriage. Thus, a simple and distinct definition of marriage is needed and helpful. Though 302.7 is succinct and beautifully stated, without a distinct definition of marriage apart from human sexuality we are open to ambiguity in it's current form (Note: I count 5 different statements on marriage in the TBDD). This would help the Body to begin with a concrete definition and celebrate God's design.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.7

7. ~~We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within the legal and spiritual covenant of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman.~~ We believe that marriage is a legal and spiritual covenant between one man and one woman. We believe that human sexuality is a gift of God that is to be affirmed as it is exercised within a loving and monogamous marriage. *(Exodus 20:14, Matthew 19:3-9, Ephesians 5:22-33).*

PETITION 1007

¶302.8

Expressions of Unholy Forms of Sexual Behaviors and Gender Identifications

Petitioner: Springfield Oaks
Organization: US: South Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

We live in a culture that continues to promote many expressions of sexual behavior and gender identification as approved by God. We believe it is important to expand the listing of unscriptural expressions of sexual behavior and gender identification in Paragraph 302.8 that are incompatible with God's Word.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.8

8. We are saddened by all expressions of unholy sexual behavior and gender identification, including sexual intimacy outside of marriage, adultery, homosexuality, transgenderism, pedophilia, pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His children. They are incompatible with the Inerrant Holy Scriptures.While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives.

(Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24Leviticus 18: 22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:26-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, 1 Timothy 1:8-11 Jude 1:7)

PETITION 1021

¶302.8

Clarifying the Church's Doctrine on Christian Marriage and Sexual Holiness

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Many churches left the United Methodist Church to form or join the Global Methodist Church because the UMC departed from the biblical teaching that marriage is the lifelong covenant between one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy outside this covenant is contrary to God's will. While the Book of Doctrines and Discipline affirms this definition of marriage, it does not clearly state that homosexual practice—like all sexual activity outside biblical marriage—is sin that calls for repentance and transformation through the grace of Jesus Christ. This petition addresses a doctrinal matter, affirming that the Church's teaching on marriage, sin, repentance, and holiness should guide its disciplinary standards.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶302.8

8. ~~We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for his children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (Gen. 1:27, 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:9–20).~~

8. The Scriptures consistently teach that all expressions of sexual behavior, including LGBTQI pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for his children. (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 Tim. 1:9–10). Yet the gospel is the good news that all sinners, whatever our sin, may be forgiven, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:11). The Global Methodist Church welcomes every person, offers Christ's transforming grace to all, and calls everyone to repentance, faith, and holiness of heart and life.

PETITION 1127

¶302.8

Sex and Gender Identity

Petitioner: David Watson

Organization: Lexington St Luke (US: Allegheny West)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

As a church, we are not primarily interested in what makes us sad, but in identifying ethical and unethical forms of behavior. We identify immoral actions as sinful. While some moral issues cannot be determined through appeal to the natural order, it does seem apparent that 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are the created order and divinely intended. In light of the crisis of gender identity that has taken place in Western culture, it is necessary for us to specify explicitly that there are two genders, that we affirm the coherence between sex and gender, and that the conditions of intersex people do not undermine these normative categories.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶302.8 IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for his children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (Gen. 1:27, 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:9–20).~~

We recognize as sinful all expressions of sexual behavior that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to: pornography, polygamy, promiscuity, and sex slavery. These activities diminish both the abuser and the abused, in that God's intentional design for persons is their fulfillment and flourishing as distinct humans with meaningful identity as males and females. The proper expression of sexual behavior is the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman (¶ 302.7).

Necessarily, then, we affirm there are two sexes. We acknowledge the ambiguity caused by the rare exceptions of intersex people, but we do not understand their condition to undermine the normative categories of male and female. Such is a disordered condition – as is any illness or disabling condition – and in those cases the person is to be valued as imago Dei, not for the sake of the disordered state but beyond it. Further, while surgically and/or pharmaceutically altering ones' secondary sexual characteristics as an adult is morally wrong, to do so to those underaged must be consider physical child abuse.

Debates over terms such as 'sex' and 'gender' can be used to obfuscate the fact that only male and female are divinely-intended categories of persons. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all people, including those with gender dysphoria and same-sex attraction, to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (Gen. 1:27, 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:9–20).

PETITION 1468

¶302.8

The Celebration of Holy Marriage

Petitioner: Stewart Kouba

Organization: Atlanta (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

Article 302.8 contains unnecessary language that departs from the current 'We believe' introductions with each declarative statement. The fact that one feels sadness in regards to a state "less than God's intentional design" is irrelevant. The revised form of 302.8 highlights a key cultural example from 1 Cor. 6:9-20 on sexual behavior absent from the TBDD. We celebrate God's design, and desire a clear and loving distinction from the world.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.8

8. ~~We are saddened by all expressions of sexual behavior, including pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, or that represent less than God's intentional design for His children.~~ We believe all expressions of sexual behavior, including homosexuality, pornography, polygamy, and promiscuity, that do not recognize the sacred worth of each individual or that seek to exploit, abuse, objectify, or degrade others, represent less than God's intentional design for His children. While affirming a scriptural view of sexuality and gender, we welcome all to experience the redemptive grace of Jesus and are committed to being a safe place of refuge, hospitality, and healing for any who may have experienced brokenness in their sexual lives (*Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20*).

PETITION 1457

¶302.9

Biblical Anthropology and Sanctification in Sexuality and Gender

Petitioner: Jeffrey Rickman
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Yazoo City (US: Mississippi-West Tennessee)
Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

This petition clarifies and strengthens the Global Methodist Church's witness by grounding its doctrine of sexuality and gender in a Biblical anthropology that honors God's created design, redemption, and sanctifying grace.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶302.9 BY ADDING A NEW SUBPARAGRAPH

¶302.9 — Biblical Anthropology and Sanctification in Sexuality and Gender

All persons are created by God in His image as male and female. Human identity is not to be defined by fallen desires, inclinations, or temptations but by redemption and sanctification in Christ. We reject any theological or pastoral framework that ties temptation or disordered desire to personal identity. The Gospel proclaims transformation through the Holy Spirit, who works to conform every believer to the likeness of Christ in every dimension of life, including sexuality and gender.

PETITION 1466

Resolution

The Racial Theology of the GMC

Petitioner: Jeffrey Rickman

Organization: Yazoo City (US: Mississippi-West Tennessee)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Social Witness

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church has obviously different theologies around race within its decision-making apparatus. There is clearly a need to define the denominational approach to facilitating racial reconciliation in our midst. This resolution is an attempt to provide a theological framework in which to root future decisions and assumptions around the questions posed by racial tensions.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

Be it resolved that the Global Methodist Church collectively renounces the worldly framework of race. While we can and do acknowledge the ways in which class, culture, nationality, and geography can often work against the full inclusion of all persons, we reject racial quotas and metrics as a valid or helpful measure of our success or failure as a beloved community. We also reject any efforts to segregate parts of the church from one another based on any worldly differences, especially race. Moreover, we reject worldly redistributive neo marxist understandings of race. Specifically, the framework of antiracism, which teaches that current discrimination must be practiced in order to remedy past discrimination.

Be it further resolved that the GMC commits to uphold and practically live out a biblical lifestyle of universal inclusion of all people groups into all levels of ministry in the denomination, on the condition that all persons entering into and serving within the church desire to flee from the wrath to come and be saved from their sins. We must resolve not to be a body that continues to prefer our own in-groups rather than other faithful covenant partners. Any who repeatedly rely on affinity rather than merit or gifting to elevate others will be shown the door. Our leadership must commit to habitually, as a way of life, build relationships with people of different ethnicities, classes, cultures, and nationalities. The GMC will not be a happy home for people who want to stick with their own worldly identifiers.

It is our belief that, as we refuse to give power to the worldly constructs that divide us, we will one day look around and find that we accomplished what worldly bodies are, by nature, unable to. We will seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, trusting that God will add to us all people of all ages, ethnicities, and nations.

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PETITION 1359

¶401

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Clarifying Vision Statement Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶401

~~Vision Statement: Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the Global Methodist Church envisions multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the earth who flourish in scriptural holiness as we worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.~~

Vision Statement: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Global Methodist Church equips and sends disciples of Jesus Christ who live in scriptural holiness and participate in Christ's mission in the world.

PETITION 1361

¶401

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Redundant Theological Statements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶401 BY DELETING THE FOLLOWING

~~The church is one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic.~~

~~The mission of the church is an extension of the mission of God. All those of every age and station stand in need of the grace that God has promised to extend to others through his body, the church.~~

PETITION 1363

¶401

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Methodological and Explanatory Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES FROM ¶401

~~As Christ draws all people to himself, we participate in that work through our evangelism, worship, preaching, teaching, sacramental practice, works of mercy, works of piety, and fellowship. While it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to change the hearts of individuals, ours is the task of sharing the good news of God as we respond to the summons of Christ in Matthew 28: "As you are going, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you," even as Christ has promised to remain with us always, "even to the end of the age."~~

PETITION 1364

¶401

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Historical and Non-Directive Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶401 BY DELETING THE FOLLOWING

~~Following the example of early Methodists, we believe God has raised us up in order to "spread scriptural holiness across the land," embodying that "grand depositum" of the faith that John Wesley believed had been entrusted to "the people called Methodists": the continued striving for entire sanctification.~~

PETITION 1365

¶402

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Historical and Narrative Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶402 BY REMOVING THE FOLLOWING

~~John Wesley famously declared in his journal on June 11, 1739: "I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation." Since that time Methodists have recognized that at the core of our church's mission is ensuring that the good news of Jesus Christ is shared around the globe. From Britain to the Americas, to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Methodists who came before us shared Jesus's message of salvation. Today our mission receives this rich inheritance and moves forward boldly into a new chapter.~~

PETITION 1373

¶402

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Clarifying Global Church Identity

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶402

~~We recognize the world is the parish of the Global Methodist Church. We are active in advancing the cause of Christ on multiple continents, and our faith communities will continue to do so. Ours is a global church that recognizes the gifts and contributions of each part of our communion in Christ, working together as partners in the Gospel with equal voice and leadership.~~

The Global Methodist Church is a global church engaged in the mission of Jesus Christ.

PETITION 1376

¶402

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Aspirational and Explanatory Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶402 BY DELETING THE FOLLOWING

~~Learning from each other and sharing best practices across cultures, we follow the admonition of St. Paul that "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good," that together we are the Body of Christ, sharing in "an equal concern for one another" (1 Cor. 12). Our vision of a global church is one marked by mutual love, concern, sharing, and accountability.~~

PETITION 1469

¶503.1

The Celebration of Holy Marriage

Petitioner: Stewart Kouba
Organization: Atlanta (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The BDD has not defined marriage, thus a description of Biblical marriage is helpful and clear. This would also conform the description of marriage in this paragraph to other mentions of marriage in the BDD.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶503.1

¶ 503. ORDERS OF MINISTRY

1. *Order of Deacons.* Within the people of God, some persons are called to the ministry of deacon, which is a ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. The words deacon, deaconess, and diaconate all spring from a common Greek root—diakonos, or "servant," and *diakonia*, or "service." This ministry exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and in the world. Deacons are to witness to the Word in their words and actions, and to embody and lead the community's service in the world for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice. Within and beyond a local church, deacons may, among other ministries, lead in worship, preach and teach, conduct marriages between one man and one woman, bury the dead, care for the sick and needy, and interpret the needs of the world to the church. Deacons may also consecrate or assist with the Sacraments in accordance with ¶ 313. Deacons may serve in a variety of offices within and beyond a local church, including, but not limited to, serving as pastor of a local church. Deacons retain their responsibility as Laity to witness and service in the world. Ordination as a deacon is for life, whether a person is subsequently ordained an elder or not; persons may remain as permanent deacons should they desire to do so...

PETITION 1378

¶408

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying the Definition of the Local Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶408

~~The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society, providing the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. The function of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church. Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church. Such a society of believers, being within the denomination and subject to its discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.~~

The church of Jesus Christ is the redemptive fellowship under the Lordship of Christ in which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered. Each local church shall minister to its members and community in alignment with the mission and discipline of the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1138

¶409

Elders for All Churches

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett
Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It establishes shared expectations for laity and clergy to participate in Wesleyan discipleship, strengthen their local congregations and conferences, protect the vulnerable, and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. It ensures every charge receives faithful pastoral oversight and calls all leaders to pursue the highest standards of training and ministry excellence. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity. Further details:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/16bOiGPVAH58lZk0d6j2au6ImFTkAVuALG1OCECLElPQ/edit?usp=sharing

TEXT:

THIS PETITION COMBINES ¶409.1-2, REPLACES ¶409.3, AND AMENDS ¶437.1, ¶437.2, ¶443.1, ¶443.3, ¶443.5, ¶501.2, ¶603.8, & ¶609.11

¶ 409. DEFINITION OF A PASTORAL CHARGE.

~~1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which a pastor is appointed to serve.~~

1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches (this may be a circuit and/or a cooperative parish) that are organized under and subject to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which an Elder is appointed to oversee.

~~2. A pastoral charge of two or more churches may be designated a circuit or a cooperative parish.~~

~~3. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.~~

2. When the appointed Elder is not the minister in residence, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson, appoint a parish pastor, or appoint a Deacon to do the work of ministry in that charge extending the ministry of the Supervising or Presiding Elder. This individual is accountable to the presiding or supervising elder appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry and temporal oversight.

By making these changes to ¶ 409, it creates a cascading effect on the following paragraphs 437, 443, 501, 603, and 609.

¶ 437. ORGANIZATION.

1. ~~The basic organizational plan for the local church may be designed by each congregation in such a manner that it provides for a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness to all. In addition to a charge conference, a congregation must have a church council or similar governing board. The charge conference shall determine how to allocate the other responsibilities outlined in this *Book of Doctrines and Discipline.*~~

The charge conference shall determine how to allocate the other responsibilities outlined in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The basic organizational plan for the local church may be designed by each congregation in such a manner that it provides for a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness to all. In addition to a charge conference, a congregation must have a church council or similar governing board which meets regularly with the appointed elder who has the responsibility of maintaining the order of the local church.

2. ~~Members of the church's governing board or council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they would be serving. The pastor shall be the administrative officer of the church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.~~

Members of the church's governing board or council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they would be serving. The appointed elder shall be the administrative officer of the church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. All other clergy appointed or laity assigned to the congregation shall be considered an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces with vote under the authority of the appointed elder, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

¶ 443. THE CHURCH COUNCIL. 1. ~~The church council, or its equivalent governing body, shall provide for planning and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference.~~

The church council, or its equivalent governing body, shall provide for planning and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life in consultation with the appointed elder. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference.

3. Meetings

~~The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.~~

The council shall meet regularly with the appointed elder. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. Any decisions made at meetings where the appointed elder is not present should be communicated to the appointed elder and then be ratified at the next meeting with the appointed elder present.

5. ~~Membership—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eight persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The membership shall include but not be limited to the chairs of the committees responsible for pastor-parish relations, the finances of the church, the management of the church's properties and assets, the lay leader, the lay member(s) of the annual conference, and all appointed clergy.~~

Membership—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eight persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The membership shall include but not be limited to the chairs of the committees responsible for pastor-parish relations, the finances of the church, the management of the church's properties and assets, the lay leader, the lay member(s) of the annual conference, all appointed clergy, and lay leadership assigned by the bishop.

¶ 501. MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH.

2. ~~With the exception of the offices of bishop and presiding elder, which are reserved for elders, all laity and clergy may serve in various offices. Offices of ministry refer to what followers of Christ do for the general building up of the body of Christ. Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11-13, and 1 Cor. 12:28). The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the church.~~

Offices of ministry refer to what followers of Christ do for the general building up of the body of Christ. Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11-13, and 1 Cor. 12:28). The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the church. The work of ordering the life of the church is exclusive to the ordained office of Elder, including the offices of Bishop, Presiding Elder, and Supervising Elder. Therefore, every local congregation will have the oversight of an appointed Elder.

¶ 603. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES. As general superintendents of the Church, bishops are entrusted with the following responsibilities:

8. Fix the clergy appointments in each conference in consultation with the conference superintendents and conference cabinet. This must include an elder for each local congregation in accordance with ¶ 501.

¶ 609. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS. As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall oversee the ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district to which they are appointed. The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. The presiding elder has the following specific responsibilities:

11. ~~In consultation with the bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet, work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges, larger parishes,~~

~~cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new church starts, and ecumenical shared ministries.~~

In consultation with the bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet, work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges, larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new church starts, and ecumenical shared ministries to ensure that each local congregation has an elder appointed for ordering the life of the church and administering the sacraments in accordance with ¶ 409.

PETITION 1199

¶409

Clarify Definition of Pastoral Charge

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Many parts of this paragraph need to be clarified and brought into accordance with the rest of the BDD. A few examples are: (1) Currently, this defines cooperative parishes differently from ¶452 and uses undefined "circuit" language not found in other places. (2) ¶ 609 uses the term "lay minister" when referring to qualified and trained laypersons. (3) While we don't want lay ministers serving indefinitely, there are many laity willing to serve a small, rural church, who don't feel called to pursue ordination. Our current requirement for lay ministers to begin the candidacy process after only one year is too short. Instead, lay ministers should be encouraged to begin candidacy immediately, but given two years to begin the process.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶409.1 & ¶409.2

¶ 409. DEFINITION OF A PASTORAL CHARGE. 1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which a pastor is appointed or assigned to serve.

~~2. A pastoral charge of two or more churches may be designated a circuit or a cooperative parish. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continues longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.~~

2. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an appointed clergyperson, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained lay minister, as defined by the conference board of ministry, to do the work of ministry in that charge. The assigned lay minister shall be accountable to the presiding elder or another elder designated by the presiding elder, who shall oversee the charge and make provision for sacramental ministry. The lay minister shall immediately be encouraged to begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry. Lay ministers shall not be assigned to a charge for more than two years unless they have begun the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry. The assigned lay minister shall be accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.

PETITION 1380

¶409.1-2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Clarifying the Structure of a Pastoral Charge

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶409.1-2

~~1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches that are organized under and subject to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which a pastor is appointed to serve. 2. A pastoral charge of two or more churches may be designated a circuit or a cooperative parish.~~

1. A pastoral charge shall consist of one or more churches organized under and subject to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church, to which a pastor is appointed. A pastoral charge of two or more churches may be designated a circuit.

PETITION 1299

¶409.3

Clarification of Facilitating over Doing the Ministry of a Charge

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current language implies that "ministry" is "done" by the layperson referenced. One of the following is implied by this: 1. We see "the ministry" as being "done" by the person leading the charge, in which case we implicitly believe this about deacons and elders as well. 2. We see this assigned layperson as providing fundamentally different leadership when assigned than a clergyperson would provide when appointed. Neither of these is appropriate for church leadership and so the wording should be changed to represent a better philosophy of ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶409.3

3. ~~When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of the ministry in that charge.~~ When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to facilitate the ministries in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.

PETITION 1389

¶409.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Clarifying Lay Assignment and Development

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶409.3

~~3. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge. The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.~~

3. When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop may assign a qualified layperson to serve under the supervision of the presiding elder, who will ensure provision for sacramental ministry. The layperson shall be encouraged to pursue appropriate training and development for ministry in accordance with the policies of the annual conference.

PETITION 1098

¶411.1

Clarifying the Definition of Baptized Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current definition of baptized members is confusing because the inclusion of "elsewhere" separate from the ability to transfer a baptized member into a church can be interpreted to mean that we are claiming every person who has ever been baptized anywhere. This definition also does not include the specification that a baptism be Christian in order to transfer it in.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶411.1

The baptized membership of a local church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation ~~or elsewhere, or~~ and those whose membership has been transferred to the local church ~~subsequent to~~ after receiving Christian baptism in ~~some other~~ another congregation.

PETITION 1139

¶411.2

Clarifying the Definition of Professing Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current definition of professing members is confusing because: 1 – it refers to "the ritual", which is not defined or printed anywhere else in the BDD, instead of clearly stating that vows of membership are in ¶419 for those making a profession of faith, and 2 – because it creates a slightly different definition of what it means to transfer membership, instead of referring directly to ¶423, which defines transfer.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶411.2

~~2. The professing membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches and who profess the vows of membership in ¶419.~~

2. The professing membership of a local church shall include all baptized people who have made a profession of faith in that local church through the vows of membership in ¶419 and those who transfer their membership from other churches according to ¶423.

PETITION 1031

¶411.4

Clarifying Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The local church specifies the nature of a person's membership, baptized or professing. A lack of specification in the statement regarding the Global Methodist Church could imply professing membership status for baptized members.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶411.4

All baptized or professing members of any local Global Methodist congregation are respectively baptized or professing members of the Global Methodist Church and members of the church universal.

PETITION 1410

¶422

Covenantal Connections: Laity

Petitioner: Kenneth "Toby" Chastain
Organization: Russellville (US: North Alabama)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It seeks to clarify the expectations for laity as they participate in Wesleyan discipleship and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶403, ¶405, ¶408, ¶411, ¶419, ¶420, ¶422, & ¶908.2.f

¶ 422. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

Each member is called to fulfill their vows of baptism and membership, being faithful by participating in the spiritual formation, worship, stewardship, and service opportunities each church provides. It is the responsibility of each congregation to establish and communicate clear expectations of their members who share in the partnership (koinonia) of the gospel (Philippians 1:5), and the responsibility of each member or partner to strive to meet those expectations. The leadership of the local congregation shall establish a membership covenant that fulfills principles of our covenant fellowship explaining for the local body how they are expected to "strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world."

Each member is to live in holiness alongside one another living a life of either faithfulness in covenantal marriage or celibacy in singleness as God's calling for all, clergy as well as laity. (*renumber afterwards)*

To further align the Book of Doctrines and Discipline with these proposed changes, the following paragraphs also must be clarified or strengthened: 403, 405, 408, 411, 419, 420, & 908

¶ 403. OUR COVENANT IN CHRIST.

We believe that God has called us to live together in a faithful covenant that expresses our commitments both to God and to each other. With John Wesley, we affirm that the Scriptures know of no such thing as "solitary religion,", but that we have been designed to grow in our discipleship in the company of others. As a church, we are committed to a connectional organization that is meant to encourage such sharing and accountability, with the end goal of all being partners in the gospel work of making disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe. This connection is founded in both our common doctrinal understandings. Towards that end, the church universal is a connection of local congregations of people (lay and clergy) who live in covenant accountability with one another, encouraging all to be in Wesleyan classes and bands as we are moving on to perfection. We celebrate our unity with one another at the table of the Lord that extends across the globe, crossing all boundaries of language, culture, customs, and social and economic distinctions.

¶ 405. TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP.

In light of the mission of the church and our covenant in Christ, the Global Methodist Church engages the commandment to make disciples of Jesus through an intentional process grounded in Scripture and in our

Wesleyan heritage. The Global Methodist Church defines a disciple as a person whose life reflects the character of Christ and extends the mission of Christ in holy love of God and neighbor. The disciple's character and practice are informed by the Scriptures, nurtured by the community of faith, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The disciple is to live a holy life that shows Christ to the world through all aspects of daily life. The disciple's purpose is to worship God and join with Christ to continue the mission and ministry started during the incarnation (including works of teaching, service, multiplication, mercy, and justice). The goal of transformational discipleship ministry in the Global Methodist Church is to make, develop, and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ who will in turn make more disciples of Jesus Christ. This is primarily accomplished through Wesleyan accountability (such as classes, bands, and other small groups) where each person is invited, challenged, supported, and held accountable in living sanctified lives that reflect the practices, character, and mission of Christ.

Discipleship also includes submission to one another, acknowledging the spiritual leadership that God has raised up around us. Therefore, following our true spiritual head, Jesus Christ, we will submit to our structure of accountability: bishops, conference superintendents, presiding elders, supervising elders, and elders. Appointed deacons, parish ministers, and assigned laity extend this leadership under the authority of the appointed elder. All those appointed and assigned to lead will do so as servant leaders following Christ's example in Ephesians 5:25b-27.

¶ 408. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society, providing the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive covenant in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church. Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, holding them accountable, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church. Such a society of believers, being within the denomination and subject to its discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

¶ 411. DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP.

The membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all people who have been baptized, who have professed their faith, and committed to live in covenant relationship with their congregation.

The baptized membership of a local church shall include all baptized people who have received Christian baptism in the local congregation or elsewhere, or whose membership has been transferred to the local church subsequent to baptism in some other congregation.

~~The professing membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come~~

~~into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches and who profess the vows of membership in ¶ 419.~~ The professing membership of a local Global Methodist church shall include all baptized people who have come into membership by profession of faith through appropriate services of the baptismal covenant in the ritual or by transfer from other churches and who profess and maintain the vows of membership in ¶ 419 and adhere to the standard of covenantal fellowship of the local church.

For statistical purposes, church membership is equated to the number of people listed on the roll of professing members.

All baptized or professing members of any local Global Methodist congregation are members of the Global Methodist Church and members of the church universal.

¶ 419. VOWS OF MEMBERSHIP.

In addition to taking the vows of baptism (¶ 416) those wishing to become professing members of the Global Methodist Church shall be asked the following questions, preferably in a public setting among other members, before being received into the church:

Do you believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord?

Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures?

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life as a faithful member of Christ's holy church?

Will you be loyal to Christ through the Global Methodist Church and joining with your brothers and sisters around the world do all in your power to fulfill its mission?

Will you be a faithful member of the [Name] Global Methodist Church (or alternatively the [Name], a Global Methodist local church), doing all in your power to strengthen its ministries through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness as Christ's representative in this world?

Will you do all in your power to strengthen the covenant fellowship of this local body, submitting to one another and looking over one another in the love of Christ?

¶ 420. GROWTH IN FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP.

Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As members involve themselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, mutual accountability and holy discipline, they grow in their appreciation of Christ, understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and an understanding of themselves. Faithful discipleship includes the obligation to participate in the corporate life of the congregation with fellow members of the body of Christ submitting to one another and looking over one another in the love of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, and celebrate the joys of

fellow members. A Christian is called to speak the truth in love, always ready to confront conflict in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.

¶ 908. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS.

2. A professing member of a local church may be charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with the following offenses:

Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

forsaking the covenant fellowship (¶ 403, ¶ 405, ¶ 422).

(renumber afterwards)

PETITION 1401

¶422.1

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Member Participation Expectations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶422.1

~~Each member is called to fulfill their vows of baptism and membership, being faithful by participating in the spiritual formation, worship, stewardship, and service opportunities each church provides. It is the responsibility of each congregation to establish and communicate clear expectations of their members who share in the partnership (koinonia) of the Gospel (Phil. 1:5), and the responsibility of each member or partner to strive to meet those expectations.~~

Each member shall fulfill their vows of baptism and membership by participating in the life and ministry of the church. Each congregation shall establish and communicate expectations for its members.

PETITION 1400

¶422.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Pastoral Discipleship Responsibility

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶422.2

~~The pastor is responsible for ensuring that members are cared for by implementing a discipleship process focused on helping members to "go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1 NKJV) by loving God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and by loving their neighbor as themselves (Matt. 22:37–39). Pastors are charged with equipping all the members of a congregation to be in ministry by meeting people at their point of need and offering them Jesus (Eph. 4:11–13).~~

The pastor shall ensure that members are cared for and equipped for ministry through discipleship.

PETITION 1399

¶422.3

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Clarifying Member Accountability and Restoration

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶422.3

~~All members of the church are called into a loving accountability with one another. If a member neglects the membership vows, however, the congregation shall use every means of encouraging that member to return to an active faith and to lovingly restore them to the fellowship of the church (Matt. 18:15–17). Each local church council shall establish a grace-filled process to restore negligent members to full participation in the life of the church. Negligent members may be placed on an inactive roll by a two-thirds vote of the church council.~~

Members of the church are accountable to one another. If a member neglects the membership vows, the congregation shall encourage restoration to active participation. Each local church council shall establish a process for restoring members. Members may be placed on an inactive roll by a two-thirds vote of the church council.

PETITION 1398

¶422.4

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Inactive Membership Provisions

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶422.4

~~Members placed on the inactive roll may remain in that status while every attempt is made to return them to active membership. Members on the inactive roll are suspended from serving on church committees or voting on church matters during that time. If an inactive member does not complete the restoration process or show evidence of desiring to return to a more active status, then the charge conference, with the recommendation of the pastor, may remove the member by a two-thirds vote.~~

Members placed on the inactive roll may remain in that status while efforts are made to restore them to active membership. Members on the inactive roll may be restricted from leadership and voting. The charge conference may remove inactive members by a two-thirds vote upon recommendation of the pastor.

PETITION 1397

¶422.5

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removing Annual Membership Renewal Requirement

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶422.5

~~Upon the approval of the charge conference, congregations may require that individuals' membership be intentionally renewed on a yearly basis. In such churches, congregants who do not choose to renew their commitment may be placed on the inactive roll of the church (¶ 422.3–4), after which the charge conference may, with the recommendation of the pastor, remove their names from the membership roll by a two-thirds vote.~~

PETITION 1142

¶423

Clarifying the Process of Transferring Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current process of transferring members needs clarification. In ¶418, the pastor has the authority to prevent someone from joining the church, but the current ¶423 states that anyone who is a member of another church "shall" be admitted. This needs to say "may" in order to preserve the pastor's authority. It is also unclear whether someone coming as a professing member must certify their baptism and answer the membership questions in ¶419. This should be explicitly stated. Also, there is no need to define "Christian baptism" in this paragraph. Instead, we should refer to ¶415, which defines "Holy Baptism". Finally, the last line needs to be deleted since there is no corresponding guidance on how to list persons received by other means.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶423

~~¶ 423. TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by notification of transfer from that person's former church or some certification of Christian baptism, and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith (see ¶¶ 411, 418, 419). In valid Christian baptism, water is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by an authorized person. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue letters of transfer or recommendation shall be listed as "Received from Other Denominations."~~

¶ 423. TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has received Holy Baptism as defined by ¶415 and desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church may be received as either a baptized or a professing member. A person may be received as a baptized member by notification of transfer from that person's previous church or some certification of Holy baptism. A person may be received as a professing member after meeting the requirements above for baptized membership and taking vows declaring the Christian faith (see ¶¶ 411, 418, 419). The pastor will report the reception of all transferring members to that person's previous church. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the Global Methodist church be provided for all such persons.

PETITION 1396

¶423

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Reception from Other Denominations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶423

~~A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church shall be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by notification of transfer from that person's former church or some certification of Christian baptism, and as a professing member upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith (see ¶¶ 411, 418, 419). In valid Christian baptism, water is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by an authorized person. The pastor will report to the sending church the date of reception of such a member. It is recommended that instruction in the faith, work, and polity of the church be provided for all such persons. Persons received from churches that do not issue letters of transfer or recommendation shall be listed as "Received from Other Denominations."~~

A baptized member in good standing in another Christian denomination who desires to unite with the Global Methodist Church may be received as a baptized or professing member in accordance with the practices of the local church.

PETITION 1395

¶424

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Affiliate and Associate Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These deletions eliminate narrative and non-governance language, along with provisions that may introduce ambiguity, thereby strengthening clarity while maintaining the original intent and framework. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶424

~~A professing member of the Global Methodist Church, of an affiliated autonomous Methodist or united church, or of a Methodist church that has a concordat agreement with the Global Methodist Church, who resides for an extended period in a city or community at a distance from the member's home church, may on request be enrolled as an affiliate member of a Global Methodist church located in the vicinity of the person's temporary residence. The home pastor shall be notified of the affiliate membership. Such membership shall entitle the person to the fellowship of that church, to its pastoral care and oversight, and to participation in its activities. Local churches may decide whether affiliate members may serve in local church leadership including the holding of offices. Affiliate members may not serve as a lay member to the annual conference. Affiliate members shall be counted and reported as a professing member of the home church only. A member of another denomination may become an associate member under the same conditions. This relationship may be terminated at the discretion of the church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held whenever the affiliate or associate member shall move from the vicinity of the church in which the affiliate or associate membership is held.~~

Local churches may provide for affiliate or associate membership for persons who temporarily reside within their community, in accordance with the policies of the annual conference.

PETITION 1145

¶425

Definition of the Constituency Roll

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This can be condensed into one list with a clear definition of constituency, instead of 4 separate lists with overlapping categories. For instance, this entire paragraph refers to a "Constituency Roll", but only one of the 4 categories (#2) explicitly uses the term "constituent". Also, the "Cradle Roll" line (#1) only refers to "unbaptized infants", but the rest of the paragraph doesn't allow for unbaptized children or youth under the age of 18 to be listed, even though they are no longer infants. Lines 2 and 4 use a very similar definition of "constituency" that would make it hard to determine which line they should be included on. Churches will still be allowed to categorize persons as they desire, but the requirements should be leaner.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶425

~~¶ 425. CONSTITUENCY ROLL. A constituency roll shall be maintained in each congregation, comprising four categories of persons:~~

~~Unbaptized infants ("Cradle Roll");~~

~~Individuals over the age of eighteen who have not indicated a desire to become professing members, including the spouses and adult children of professing members,~~, ~~but who are those for whom the local church has a pastoral responsibility ("Constituents");~~

~~Persons who have attended worship more than twice, or participated more than twice in the ministries of the church, during the previous twelve calendar months ("Potential Members");~~

~~Persons who, though unlikely to join the church due to distance or other faith commitments, nevertheless come under the pastoral care of the congregation and are recognized as part of its wider community ("Friends of the Church"). The constituency roll shall be reviewed and audited annually.~~

PETITION 1394

¶425

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removing Prescriptive Constituency Roll Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶425

~~A constituency roll shall be maintained in each congregation, comprising four categories of persons: (1) Unbaptized infants ("Cradle Roll"); (2) Individuals over the age of eighteen who have not indicated a desire to become professing members, including the spouses and adult children of professing members, but who are those for whom the local church has a pastoral responsibility ("Constituents"); (3) Persons who have attended worship more than twice, or participated more than twice in the ministries of the church, during the previous twelve calendar months ("Potential Members"); and (4) Persons who, though unlikely to join the church due to distance or other faith commitments, nevertheless come under the pastoral care of the congregation and are recognized as part of its wider community ("Friends of the Church"). The constituency roll shall be reviewed and audited annually.~~

PETITION 1146

¶426

Clarification of How to Join the Church Through a Non-Local Setting

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph refers to the wrong paragraph in its explanation. ¶422 refers to member accountability, while ¶411 and ¶423 refer to joining a church. This paragraph also seems to classify chaplains and campus ministers as separate categories from an extension minister, which is not correct. To fix this and to make sure we do not inadvertently leave out one of the extension ministry categories, we recommend removing the list of categories and only using extension minister, with a reference to ¶ 610.10. Finally, the last three sentences seem to contradict the definition in the first sentence that the extension minister be present where a local church is not available, and do not say when and how the membership shall be reported to the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶426 IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~¶ 426. NON-LOCAL CHURCH SETTINGS. Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church, while serving as a chaplain of any organization, institution, or military unit, as an extension minister, or as a campus minister, or while otherwise present where a local church is not available, may receive a person into the membership of the Global Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶ 422. Where possible, before the sacrament of baptism or vows of profession of faith are administered, such appointed minister shall consult with the pastor of the local church (should one be nearby) on the choice of the person concerned. Upon agreement by the pastor, a statement verifying that such sacrament was administered or that such vows were made shall be issued. The baptized or professing member may use the statement to join a local church.~~

¶ 426. NON-LOCAL CHURCH SETTINGS. Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church, while serving as an extension minister (¶ 610.10), may receive a person into the membership of the Global Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶ 411 and ¶ 423. After the person is received, the extension minister shall report the name and circumstances to the Annual Conference where the extension ministry is located and encourage the person to join a local Global Methodist church when possible.

PETITION 1393

¶426

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Membership in Nonlocal Church Settings

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶426

~~Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church, while serving as a chaplain of any organization, institution, or military unit, as an extension minister, or as a campus minister, or while otherwise present where a local church is not available, may receive a person into the membership of the Global Methodist Church under the conditions of ¶ 422. Where possible, before the sacrament of baptism or vows of profession of faith are administered, such appointed minister shall consult with the pastor of the local church (should one be nearby) on the choice of the person concerned. Upon agreement by the pastor, a statement verifying that such sacrament was administered or that such vows were made shall be issued. The baptized or professing member may use the statement to join a local church.~~

Duly appointed clergy of the Global Methodist Church serving in nonlocal settings may receive persons into membership under the conditions of ¶422. Such clergy shall provide appropriate documentation for membership and, when appropriate, coordinate with a local church for the ongoing care of the member.

PETITION 1392

¶427

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Membership Reception Outside Congregational Settings

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶427

~~Any candidate for church membership who, for good reason, is unable to appear before the congregation may, at the discretion of the pastor, be received elsewhere in accordance with the rituals of our church. In any such case lay members should be present to represent the congregation. Names of such persons shall be placed on the church roll, and announcement of their reception shall be made to the congregation.~~

A candidate for church membership who is unable to appear before the congregation may, at the discretion of the pastor, be received elsewhere in accordance with the rituals of the church. The reception shall be recorded and communicated to the congregation.

PETITION 1147

¶428

Clarification of Location of the Membership List, Church Records, and Other Property After a Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

There is no process in the BDD to discontinue a church. We recommend the term "close" instead. While there is not currently a mechanism for a church to close, the constitution states that a local church cannot be forced to close, so the rest of the BDD should reflect that principle. The word "discontinued" also appears in ¶ 1005.2.c., so the word change should be made there for consistency, and ¶ 428 and ¶ 429.7 should add the other legal possibilities in ¶ 1005.2.c. as reasons to transfer the membership list and other records. Also in ¶ 429.7, it makes sense to transfer church records to the local church where the majority of the members transfer. If the members transfer to a non-GMC church, the records go to the annual conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶428, ¶429.7, AND ¶ 1005.2.c

~~¶ 428 TRANSFER FROM DISCONTINUED LOCAL CHURCHES. If a local church is discontinued, the presiding elder shall transfer its members to another Global Methodist Church or to such other churches as the members may select.~~

~~¶ 429.7. All baptism, membership, marriage, and funeral records are the property of the local church and cannot be sold. If the church is discontinued, these records are placed in the care of the annual conference.~~

~~¶ 1005.2.c. Designation of the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, discontinued, or ceases to exist as a legal entity.~~

¶ 428 TRANSFER FROM CLOSED LOCAL CHURCHES. If a local church is abandoned, chooses to close, or ceases to exist as legal entity, the presiding elder shall transfer its members to another Global Methodist Church or to such other churches as the members may select.

¶ 429.7. All baptism, membership, marriage, and funeral records are the property of the local church and cannot be sold. If the church is abandoned, chooses to close, or ceases to exist as legal entity, these records shall be placed in the care of the local church where the Presiding Elder transferred the majority of the members. If no members transfer to a local Global Methodist church, the records shall be placed in the care of the annual conference.

¶ 1005.2.c. Designation of the recipient(s) of corporate property in the event the corporation is abandoned, chooses to close, or ceases to exist as a legal entity.

PETITION 1391

¶428

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Transfer from Discontinued Local Churches

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶428

~~If a local church is discontinued, the presiding elder shall transfer its members to another Global Methodist Church or to such other churches as the members may select.~~

If a local church is discontinued, the presiding elder shall provide for the transfer of its members to another church in consultation with those members.

PETITION 1388

¶429

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Redundant Roll Listings

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶429.2, ¶429.3, ¶429.4, AND ¶429.5

~~2. Inactive Membership Roll (¶ 422.3–4). 3. Constituency Roll (¶ 425). 4. Affiliate Membership Roll (¶ 424). 5. Associate Membership Roll (¶ 424).~~

PETITION 1390

¶429.1

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Membership Record Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶429.1

~~Each local church shall accurately maintain a permanent membership record for each baptized or professing member including: (a) the person's name, date of birth, address, place of birth, date of baptism, officiating pastor, and sponsors; (b) date of confirmation or profession of faith, officiating pastor, and sponsors; (c) if transferred from another church, date of reception, sending church, and receiving pastor; (d) if transferred to another church, date of transfer, receiving church, and address of receiving church; (e) date of removal or withdrawal and reason; (f) date of restoration of professing membership and officiating pastor; (g) date of death, date and place of funeral/memorial, place of burial, and officiating pastor.~~

Each local church shall maintain an accurate membership record for each baptized or professing member, including essential information related to baptism, membership, transfer, and status.

PETITION 1387

¶429.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Reporting in Shared Congregations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The provision contains language that may reduce clarity, consistency, or enforceability across global contexts. This revision improves clarity while preserving the intent and governance structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶429.6

~~In the case of a union or federated church with another denomination, the governing body of such a church may report an equal share of the total membership to each judicatory, and such membership shall be published in the minutes of each church, with a note to the effect that the report is that of a union or federated church, and with an indication of the total actual membership.~~

In the case of a shared congregation with another denomination, membership reporting may be determined by agreement among the participating bodies.

PETITION 1386

¶430

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Membership Reporting

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes unnecessary procedural detail and overly prescriptive timing that reduce clarity and flexibility. The revision preserves the essential reporting requirement while allowing appropriate adaptation across diverse contexts. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶430

~~The pastor shall report to the charge conference annually the names of persons received into the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge and the names of persons removed since the last charge conference, indicating how each was received or removed. The church shall be encouraged to audit the membership records annually.~~

The pastor shall report to the charge conference on changes in the membership of the church or churches of the pastoral charge. The church shall ensure membership records are reviewed regularly.

PETITION 1149

¶431

Replace Requirement to Report College Students with Encouragement to Attend a Local Church or Campus

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

There are very few campus ministries affiliated with the Global Methodist Church, so the reporting provision would only apply to a handful of churches. It makes more sense to take the provisions found in ¶432 and modify them for all church members who become students in another community.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶431

~~¶ 431. ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERS ATTENDING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. The pastor is encouraged to report annually the names and contact information for professing and baptized members attending colleges and universities to the chaplain or campus minister of such institutions where the church's ministries exist.~~

¶ 431. MEMBERS ATTENDING SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY.

If a member of a local church moves to another community to attend school, college, or university, the pastor shall encourage the member to participate in the worship and ministries of a nearby Global Methodist church. If no Global Methodist church exists in the area near the school, the pastor shall assist the student to find a suitable church or campus ministry to participate in.

PETITION 1385

¶431

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Non-Enforceable Reporting Provision

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This provision is non-directive and context-specific, relying on optional language and assumptions about ministry structures that are not universally applicable. It does not establish a requirement essential for governance and is better addressed through local ministry practices. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶431

~~The pastor is encouraged to report annually the names and contact information for professing and baptized members attending colleges and universities to the chaplain or campus minister of such institutions where the church's ministries exist.~~

PETITION 1150

¶432

Clarify Procedure for Members Who Move

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains redundant instructions and can be shortened. It is also more important to provide "contact information", which may include an address, than to only provide "the latest known address".

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶432

~~¶ 432. MEMBERS WHO MOVE. If a member of a local church moves to another community so far removed from the home church that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, this member shall be encouraged to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in the community of the newly established residence. As soon as the pastor is reliably informed of this change of residence, actual or contemplated, it shall be the pastor's duty and obligation to assist the member to become established in the fellowship of a church in the community of the future home and to send to a Global Methodist pastor in such community, or to the presiding elder, a letter of notification, giving the latest known address of the person or persons concerned and requesting local pastoral oversight. When a pastor discovers a member of the denomination residing in the community whose membership is in a church so far removed from the place of residence that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, it shall be the duty and obligation of the pastor to give pastoral oversight to such person, adding the name to the constituency roll (¶ 425) and to encourage transfer of membership to a Global Methodist church in the community where the member resides.~~

¶ 432. MEMBERS WHO MOVE. If a member of a local church moves to another community so far removed from the home church that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, the pastor of the home church shall encourage the member to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in the community of the newly established residence. The pastor of the home church shall also notify the pastor or Presiding Elder of a Global Methodist church in the member's new community, providing contact information for the member and requesting local pastoral oversight. When a pastor discovers a Global Methodist member residing in the community whose membership is in a church so far removed from the place of residence that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, the pastor shall give pastoral oversight to such person, adding the name to the constituency roll (¶ 425) and encouraging transfer of membership to a nearby Global Methodist church.

PETITION 1384

¶432

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Membership Transfer and Pastoral Oversight

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains repeated directives and overly detailed procedural language that do not enhance clarity or enforceability. The duplication of scenarios and specific administrative steps creates unnecessary complexity and limits adaptability across diverse global contexts. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶432

~~If a member of a local church moves to another community so far removed from the home church that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, this member shall be encouraged to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in the community of the newly established residence. As soon as the pastor is reliably informed of this change of residence, actual or contemplated, it shall be the pastor's duty and obligation to assist the member to become established in the fellowship of a church in the community of the future home and to send to a Global Methodist pastor in such community, or to the presiding elder, a letter of notification, giving the latest known address of the person or persons concerned and requesting local pastoral oversight. When a pastor discovers a member of the denomination residing in the community whose membership is in a church so far removed from the place of residence that the member cannot participate regularly in its worship and activity, it shall be the duty and obligation of the pastor to give pastoral oversight to such person, adding the name to the constituency roll (¶ 425) and to encourage transfer of membership to a Global Methodist church in the community where the member resides.~~

When a member of a local church resides in a community where they cannot regularly participate in the worship and life of their home church, the member should be encouraged to transfer membership to a Global Methodist church in that community. Pastors shall assist such persons in establishing connection with a local congregation and ensure appropriate pastoral oversight

PETITION 1383

¶433

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Membership Transfer Between Churches

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains detailed procedural steps and situational requirements that are not essential for global governance and limit flexibility across diverse ministry contexts. The revision preserves the core requirement of proper communication and record-keeping while removing unnecessary specificity and subjective conditions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶433

~~When a pastor receives a request for transfer of membership to another Global Methodist congregation, that pastor shall send the proper notification directly to the pastor of the congregation to which the member is transferring, or if there is no pastor, to the presiding elder. On receipt of such notification, the pastor or presiding elder shall enroll the name of the person so transferring after public reception in a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, public announcement in such a service. The pastor of the sending church shall then be notified to remove the member from its roll.~~

When a member transfers to another Global Methodist church, the pastors of the respective congregations shall ensure appropriate communication, reception, and updating of membership records.

PETITION 1144

¶433 / ¶423

New Process for Transferring GMC Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The BDD does not have a streamlined process for how a person transfers membership from one GMC church to another. There is a note in ¶418 and instructions for the sending church in ¶433, but no real process on how to receive a transfer from a GMC church. ¶433 also does not account for churches that take a long time or never respond to transfer requests. Since this happens occasionally, it should not derail a person's request to join another GMC church. This new paragraph would correct all of those issues by drawing from actual experience and the other paragraphs that speak of transfers. This new paragraph would be placed directly before the current ¶ 423 and replace the current ¶433.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶433 AND CREATES A NEW ¶423, RENUMBERING ALL SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

¶ 423. TRANSFER FROM OTHER GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCHES

When a person desires to transfer membership from one Global Methodist congregation to another, the pastor of the receiving church shall determine the person's readiness, including verification of the person's baptism and membership in a local Global Methodist church. The pastor may then receive the person during a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, in another setting, followed by public announcement in such a service. If the person wishes to transfer as a professing member, a reaffirmation of the vows of membership in ¶419 shall be conducted. Afterwards, the pastor of the receiving church shall enroll the person in the church's membership and send a notification to the pastor of the sending church, who shall and remove the person from the roll of the sending church and send confirmation of such action to the receiving church.

Delete:

~~¶ 433. TRANSFER TO OTHER GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCHES. When a pastor receives a request for transfer of membership to another Global Methodist congregation that pastor shall send the proper notification directly to the pastor of the congregation to which the member is transferring, or if there is no pastor, to the presiding elder. On receipt of such notification, the pastor or presiding elder shall enroll the name of the person so transferring after public reception in a regular service of worship, or if circumstances demand, public announcement in such a service. The pastor of the sending church shall then be notified to remove the member from its roll.~~

PETITION 1151

¶434

Simplify Process to Transfer to Other Denomination

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This process requires an unnecessary step of waiting for confirmation of a person's transfer, which can be eliminated. While reporting the transfer to the next charge conference is not a bad idea, since no other transfer or reception of membership has this requirement, it should be removed unless we require something similar for all other changes in membership. Similarly, most of the other membership change paragraphs don't contain a note on how to label the change, so this should be eliminated as well, unless we detail how to label every change.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶434

~~¶ 434. TRANSFER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, or upon receiving such request from a pastor or duly authorized official of another denomination, shall (with the approval of the member) issue notification of transfer and, upon receiving confirmation of the member's reception into another congregation, shall properly record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall enter "Transferred to a Church of Another Denomination" after the person's name on the membership roll and shall report the same to the next charge conference.~~

¶ 434. TRANSFER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS. A pastor, upon receiving a request from a member to transfer to a church of another denomination, or upon receiving such request from a pastor or duly authorized official of another denomination, shall (with the approval of the member) issue notification of transfer to the receiving church and record the transfer of such person on the membership record of the local church. If a pastor is informed that a member has without notice united with a church of another denomination, the pastor shall make diligent inquiry and, if the report is confirmed, shall record the transfer on the membership roll.

PETITION 1302

¶436.6

Ensuring Safety in This Matter

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We want to ensure that however the local church is being managed that it is done with safety as a key aspect, especially for those that are found in countries that are hostile to Christianity let alone any expression of faith.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶436.6

Seeking inclusiveness and safety in all aspects of its life.

PETITION 1158

¶437.2

Clarify Membership of Church Committees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph is confusing because it refers only to the Church Council in some parts, but to all committees in others. It should apply to all committees. A few other changes: 1. Church leaders needs to love both God and the church. 2. Including youth and young adults here is unnecessary because ¶ 440 has a more extensive list. 3. "In relationship to" a church is not used anywhere else in the BDD. Requiring leaders to be an active member is more specific. 4. For churches that have more than one pastor, we need to specify that only "the pastor in charge" is an ex officio member, while giving them the ability to designate another pastor if desired. 5. The BDD needs to specify whether the pastor, as an ex officio member, has voting rights.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶437.2

~~2. Members of the church's governing board or council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church, and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they would be serving. The pastor shall be the administrative officer of the church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~

2. Members of all boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces in a local church shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love God and the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church, and are competent to administer its affairs. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church on the active membership roll of the local church where they serve. The pastor in charge is the administrative officer of the local church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member with vote of all its conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The pastor in charge may also designate another pastor appointed to the church to take their place as the ex officio member of any board, council, commission, committee, or task force.

PETITION 1382

¶437.2

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Clarifying Qualifications for Church Leadership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes subjective and non-enforceable character descriptions that are not suitable for global governance. The revision retains essential structural and membership requirements while removing language that cannot be consistently applied or measured across diverse contexts. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶437.2

~~Members of the church's governing board or council shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of the Global Methodist Church, and are competent to administer its affairs. It should include confirmed youth and young adult members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote must be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they would be serving. The pastor shall be the administrative officer of the church and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~

Members of the church's governing board or council shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in relationship to the local church where they serve. Local churches may include youth and young adult members in leadership according to their practices. The pastor shall serve as the administrative officer of the church and shall be an ex officio member of its leadership bodies, unless otherwise restricted by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1159

¶437.4

Define Quorum for All Church Committees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Currently, only the Charge Conference, Church Council, and Trustees have explanations of what constitutes a quorum. Other committees do not, which makes it ambiguous. At this time, many people treat ¶438.4 and ¶443.6 as universal rules for church committees (other than Trustees), but they aren't written in a universally applicable way. We recommend creating a new subsection in ¶437 that covers quorum for all church committees, conferences, and other groups. Placing the quorum rule in ¶437.4 would allow us to delete the requirement from ¶443.6 and ¶438.4 since those doesn't specify anything different from the new rule we are proposing in ¶437.4.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS NEW ¶437.4 AND DELETES ¶443.6 & ¶438.4

4. Quorum. Unless specified otherwise in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline or required by local law, the members present and voting at any duly announced meeting for any conference, board, council, committee, commission, or task force at a local church shall constitute a quorum.

Delete:

¶ 443.6

~~6. Quorum—The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.~~

Delete:

¶ 438.4

~~4. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.~~

PETITION 1032

¶438.2

Removing a Spurious Reference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Great Lakes

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Book of Doctrines and Discipline does not mention “diaconal ministers” anywhere else, and we do not use the term “retired”. This mention of “retired ordained ministers and retired diaconal ministers” appears to be a holdover from predecessor denominational documents, and does not match polity. Broadening to include any ordained ministers not appointed to a local church would include clergy who are retired (inactive Senior Status), and clergy who are appointed beyond the local church, indicating a connection to a local Global Methodist Church for all Global Methodist clergy.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.2

~~The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other equivalent body of the local church who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church, together with retired ordained ministers and retired diaconal ministers who elect to hold their membership in that charge conference, and any others as may be designated in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~

The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other equivalent body of the local church who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church, together with any ordained ministers not appointed to a local church who elect to hold their connection to that charge conference, and any others as may be designated in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

PETITION 1160

¶438.2

Remove Diaconal Ministers and Retired Clergy from Charge Conference Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

¶ 438.2 currently refers to “retired ordained ministers” and “retired diaconal ministers”. In the GMC, we don’t call people “retired”, we call them “Senior Clergy”. We also don’t currently have a mechanism anywhere else in the BDD for senior clergy to elect to hold their membership in or otherwise formally relate to a local church. Unless and until this changes, we need to remove this reference. We also do not have diaconal ministers as a status, so we need to remove this reference as well.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.2

2. ~~The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other equivalent body of the local church who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church, together with retired ordained ministers and retired diaconal ministers who elect to hold their membership in that charge conference, and any others as may be designated in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~ The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other equivalent body of the local church who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church, together with any others as may be designated in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

PETITION 1161

¶438.5

Clarify Which Pastor Can Call a Charge Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

For churches with multiple pastors, it would help to clarify that only the pastor in charge must be consulted by the Presiding Elder or can ask the Presiding Elder to give consent to a special charge conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.5

~~5. Special sessions may be called by the presiding elder after consultation with the pastor of the charge, or by the pastor with the written consent of the presiding elder. The purpose of such a special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purposes stated in the call. Any such special session may be convened as a church conference.~~

5. Special sessions of the charge conference may be called by the presiding elder after consultation with the pastor in charge, or by the pastor in charge with the written consent of the presiding elder. The purpose of such a special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in the call. Any special session may be convened as a church conference.

PETITION 1411

¶438.5

Charge Conference Authority and Church-Wide Votes

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Unnecessary. The charge conference is the governing board for a local church (437.1). All members of the church council are voting members of the charge conference (438.2) , for which the presiding elder presides (438.3). “Church conferences” and church-wide votes set aside the authority of the charge conference and shift decision-making to a congregational form of administrative approval. Open meetings and the presence of the presiding elder ensure that major decisions are made with transparency and oversight. No special provision is necessary for property sales since there is no trust clause and property belongs to the local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.5

438.5 Special sessions may be called by the presiding elder after consultation with the pastor of the charge, or by the pastor with the written consent of the presiding elder. The purpose of such a special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purposes stated in the call. ~~Any such special session may be convened as a church conference.~~

PETITION 1162

¶438.7

New Section to Allow Electronic Charge Conferences

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The BDD does not currently have provisions for Charge Conferences to be held electronically. This type of provision exists for General Conference and Annual Conference, so we recommend borrowing from that language to extend the same possibility to Charge Conferences. This new section would fit best as #7, with the other sections being renumbered afterwards.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶438.7 AND RENUMBERS SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

7. Where necessary due to local conditions that prevent physical assembling, the Presiding Elder may, with a two-thirds vote of the church council, call for a charge or church conference via electronic or other digital means.

PETITION 1163

¶438.8

Clarify Ability to Call a Local Charge Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

If a charge consists of two or more churches, Presiding Elders need the flexibility to call a charge or church conference for only one of the churches. Also, a joint charge conference needs the flexibility to be a joint church conference with all the members of each church available to participate.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.8

8. A joint charge or church conference for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the presiding elder may determine. A local charge or church conference, consisting of the members of the charge or church conference from only one church in a pastoral charge, may be called by the Presiding Elder to address the needs of that church.

PETITION 1164

¶438.9

Clarify the Regulations About Church Conferences

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

For churches with multiple pastors, it would help to clarify that only the pastor in charge may make the request to convene a charge conference as a church conference and must be notified. Also, "additional regulations" is confusing and should simply be "all regulations". This would also allow us to delete the last two sentences since they are covered in ¶438.7 & .8, respectively.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶438.9

~~9. The Church Conference. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the presiding elder or following a written request to the presiding elder by one of the following: the pastor, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing members of the local church. In any case, a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Additional regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference shall apply also to the church conference. A joint church conference for two or more churches may be held at the same time and place as the presiding elder may determine. A church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority with adequate provision being made for translation.~~

9. The Church Conference. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the presiding elder or following a written request to the presiding elder by one of the following: the pastor in charge, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing members of the local church. In any case, a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor in charge. All regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference shall apply also to the church conference.

PETITION 1416

¶438.9

Charge Conference Authority and Church-wide Votes

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Unnecessary. The charge conference is the governing board for a local church (437.1). All members of the church council are voting members of the charge conference (438.2) , for which the presiding elder presides (438.3). “Church conferences” and church-wide votes set aside the authority of the charge conference and shift decision-making to a congregational form of administrative approval. Open meetings and the presence of the presiding elder ensure that major decisions are made with transparency and oversight. No special provision is necessary for property sales since there is no trust clause and property belongs to the local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶438.9

~~9. The Church Conference. To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may be convened as a church conference, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. It shall be called at the discretion of the presiding elder or following a written request to the presiding elder by one of the following: the pastor, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing members of the local church. In any case, a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Additional regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference shall apply also to the church conference. A joint church conference for two or more churches may be held at the same time and place as the presiding elder may determine. A church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority with adequate provision being made for translation.~~

PETITION 1200

¶439.2

Clarify Membership and Duty of the Charge Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

¶ 443.5 states that the Pastor is a member of the Church Council, and ¶ 438.2 states that all members of the Church Council are members of the charge conference, therefore including the pastor in ¶ 439.2 is unnecessary and confusing. Also, .2 gives local churches the ability to organize differently from what it laid out in the BDD. When this happens, we need to make it clear that all the functions of the leaders, committees and councils described in ¶¶ 442-447 are assigned to a person or committee.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.2

2. ~~The charge conference, the presiding elder, and the pastor shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~ The charge conference and the presiding elder shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the presiding elder, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶¶ 436–437 are observed and all the functions of ¶¶ 442-447 are assigned.

PETITION 1201

¶439.4

Electing a Secretary for the Charge Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

When the church council secretary is not present, the charge conference needs the ability to elect another secretary for its work.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.4

4. The charge conference recording secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and shall be the custodian of all records and reports and, with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the presiding elder, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files. When there is only one local church in a charge, the secretary of the church council shall be the secretary of the charge conference. When there is more than one church in a charge, one of the secretaries of the church councils shall be elected by the charge conference to serve as its secretary. When the secretary of the church council is not in attendance, the charge conference shall elect its secretary from the professing members present.

PETITION 1379

¶439.4

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Charge Conference Record-Keeping

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes detailed procedural requirements regarding record distribution and selection of the recording secretary that are not essential for global governance. The revision preserves the core responsibility for accurate record-keeping while allowing flexibility in implementation across diverse contexts. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶439.4

~~The charge conference recording secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and shall be the custodian of all records and reports and, with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the presiding elder, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files. When there is only one local church in a charge, the secretary of the church council shall be the secretary of the charge conference. When there is more than one church in a charge, one of the secretaries of the church councils shall be elected by the charge conference to serve as its secretary.~~

The charge conference recording secretary shall maintain accurate records of proceedings and serve as custodian of official records, in accordance with the policies of the annual conference.

PETITION 1203

¶439.5

Clarify Power of the Charge Conference over Church Committee Membership

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The power of the Charge Conference over church committee membership is unclear. We recommend changing ¶439.5 to ensure it applies to all committees and groups in the church, instead of just applying to the Church Council. We also recommend clarifying ¶439.6 to ensure charge conferences have flexibility to set term limits for committees that are lower than what is listed in the BDD, but not higher.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.5 AND ¶439.6

5. ~~Each charge is encouraged to be inclusive in the makeup of the council so that all segments of the congregation are represented.~~ Each charge is encouraged to be inclusive in the makeup of all boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces so that all segments of the congregation are represented.

6. ~~The charge conference may establish a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any or all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, unless the Book of Doctrines and Discipline sets a specific limit.~~ The charge conference may establish a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any or all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, which does not exceed the limit for that office specified in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same office.

PETITION 1204

¶439.7

Clarify Responsibility of the Charge Conference in Candidacy

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

By including requirements for ministerial candidates in this paragraph, we risk setting requirements that conflict with those in ¶505 and ¶506.1. It would be better to refer the Charge Conference to ¶505 and ¶506.1 when examining candidates. Also, the phrase "faithfully adhering" to the BDD should always be assumed, especially if we state the paragraph numbers to be followed, and does not need to be written here. Finally, .8 states that the charge conference should annually renew the candidacy of candidates for ordained ministry, however, ¶506 does not contain a provision for this. Unless ¶506 is changed to include instructions to a charge conference, we recommend deletion of this sentence.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.7 AND DELETES ¶439.8

7. ~~The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the board of ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline, candidates for ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least one year; whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and call to the ministry clearly establish them as candidates; and who have met the educational requirements~~. The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the board of ministry candidates for ordained ministry who meet the requirements in ¶505 and ¶506.1. It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for ordained ministry, providing for spiritual and financial support, and for their education and formation as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.

~~8. The charge conference shall examine and recommend, faithfully adhering to the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline, renewal of candidacy of candidates for the ordained ministry.~~

PETITION 1377

¶439.7

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Clarifying Candidate Recommendation Process

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph combines governance requirements with theological and aspirational language that is not enforceable or necessary for global governance. The revision preserves the essential function of the charge conference in recommending candidates while removing descriptive and instructional content better suited for teaching or guidance materials. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶439.7

~~The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the board of ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline, candidates for ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least one year; whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and call to the ministry clearly establish them as candidates; and who have met the educational requirements. It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for ordained ministry, providing for spiritual and financial support, and for their education and formation as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.~~

The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the board of ministry candidates for ordained ministry in accordance with the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1205

¶439.10

Clarifying Reports at the Charge Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

.10 requires charge conferences to submit mission teams reports with the annual statistical report. However, all other references to the statistical report only require a membership report. Also, classifying the report in .13 as a "pastor's report" is confusing. It should be classified as a membership report from the pastor and make references to the paragraphs that describe what should be contained in the report. Finally, in .13, the only reason a Charge Conference acts upon a membership report is if the pastor is recommending persons to be removed according to ¶422.4 or if they desire to have every member renew their vows annually according to ¶422.5, so we recommend clarification on the necessity of approval.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.10 AND ¶439.13

10. The charge conference shall receive reports annually on all local church-organized mission teams ~~and shall forward the combined report through the regular annual local church statistical report~~.

13. ~~The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the church's membership.~~ The charge conference shall receive and, if necessary, act on the annual membership report from the pastor (¶ 422.4-5 and ¶ 430).

PETITION 1206

¶439.11

Clarify Power of the Charge Conference to Set Pastoral Compensation

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph only currently requires a charge conference to set the compensation of the appointed clergy of the church. Since many churches are served by assigned lay ministers, the charge conference should set their compensation as well. Also, for churches with multiple pastors, this needs to be clear that all pastors assigned or appointed to the church shall have their compensation set by the Charge Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.11

11. ~~The charge conference shall, in consultation with the presiding elder, set the compensation of the appointed clergy.~~ The charge conference shall, in consultation with the presiding elder, set the compensation of all appointed clergy and assigned lay ministers.

PETITION 1207

¶439.12

Clarify Duty of Charge Conference to Explain Connectional Funding

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This currently assigns the role of explaining Connectional Funding at Charge Conferences to too many people. ¶449.9 states that the pastor and church leadership should be explaining Connectional Funding all throughout the year, so during the charge conference, the PE or their designee should do this by focusing on ministries supported by CF at the annual and general conference level. Also, while Connectional Funding is important and all churches should pay it (see ¶449), the final line about CF being the first benevolent priority of the local church is not reiterated anywhere else in the BDD and gives the impression that local churches exist to support the Annual and General Conferences, so we recommend deletion.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶439.12

12. ~~In preparation for and at the charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the presiding elder, the pastor, and the lay member(s) of the annual conference and/or the church lay leader(s) to interpret to each charge conference the importance of connectional funding, explaining the causes supported and their place in the total program of the church. Payment in full of connectional funding (¶ 449) by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church.~~ At the charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the presiding elder or their designee to explain the importance of connectional funding and highlight ministries supported by connectional funding by the annual and general conference.

PETITION 1165

¶440

Clarify Terms of Local Church Leaders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph repeats information contained in ¶ 437.2 which can be deleted here.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶440

¶ 440. ELECTION OF LEADERS. ~~The charge or church conference shall elect by simple majority vote leaders who shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where they would be serving as needed to fulfill the mission of the church.~~ The charge or church conference shall elect by simple majority vote all leaders needed to fulfill the mission of the church. In filling the offices of the church, special attention should be given to the inclusion of women, men, youth, young adults, persons over sixty-five years of age, persons with disabilities, and persons of various racial, ethnic, or tribal identities. Local church offices may be shared between two persons.

PETITION 1374

¶440

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Election of Church Leaders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes prescriptive and culturally specific guidance regarding representation that is not consistently applicable across global contexts and is not essential for governance. The revision preserves the core requirement for election of qualified leaders while removing advisory language that is non-enforceable and addressed elsewhere in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶440

~~The charge or church conference shall elect by simple majority vote leaders who shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where they would be serving as needed to fulfill the mission of the church. In filling the offices of the church, special attention should be given to the inclusion of women, men, youth, young adults, persons over sixty-five years of age, persons with disabilities, and persons of various racial, ethnic, or tribal identities. Local church offices may be shared between two persons.~~

The charge or church conference shall elect by simple majority vote leaders who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where they serve, as needed to fulfill the mission of the church.

PETITION 1166

¶441

Clarify Terms of Local Church Leaders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Since Charge Conferences can be called with as little as 10 days' notice, and PEs have many responsibilities that may prevent them from responding immediately to a request, when someone needs to be removed from office, the NLDC needs the flexibility to meet before the PE officially calls the Charge Conference, if necessary. Also, this paragraph uses the term "church local conference" that is not contained anywhere else in the BDD, which is confusing. We have submitted a petition for ¶ 438.8 which defines this idea as a "local charge or church conference", so we are using that term here as well.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶441

If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the presiding elder may call a special session of the charge conference. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as "Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies)." ~~The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or another group charged with that responsibility shall meet as soon as possible after the special session of the charge conference has been announced and shall propose person(s) who may be elected if vacancy(ies) occur at the charge conference.~~ In preparation for the charge conference, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or another group charged with that responsibility shall propose person(s) who may be elected if vacancy(ies) occur at the charge conference. If the charge conference votes to remove a person or persons from office, the vacancy(ies) shall be filled in the manner prescribed for elections. ~~When a local church trustee is under consideration for removal and the pastoral charge consists of two or more churches, a church local conference shall be called instead of a charge conference.~~ When a local church trustee is under consideration for removal and the pastoral charge consists of two or more churches, a local charge or church conference shall be called instead of a charge conference.

PETITION 1167

¶442

Clarify Duties of Local Church Leaders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

All descriptions of positions in this paragraph should have a standardized format that describes the duties first, then gives the election process, then outlines the responsibilities, then provides other information, if needed. A few other changes are: (1) In 1.c, the mention of charge conference is redundant since all members of the Church Council are members of the charge conference. (2) The note in .3 about the Council Chair being a professing member of the church they are serving is unnecessary because it's covered in ¶ 437.2. (3) We also need to clarify that if the Lay Leader has family members on staff or appointed to the church, they cannot be part of the S/PPRC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶442 IN ITS ENTIRETY, REPLACING IT WITH THE FOLLOWING

¶ 442. DUTIES OF LEADERS. Out of the professing membership of each local church, the following leaders shall be elected by the charge conference:

1. The lay leader, who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church. In instances where more than one church is in a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church, sharing the responsibilities. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay minister and may, at the local church's discretion, serve as the chairperson of the church council or other governing body.

The Lay Leader shall have the following responsibilities:

fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;

meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;

serving as a member of the church council, the Finance Committee, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, unless restricted from membership by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline due to being employed by the church or having immediate family relationships with other committee members, pastor(s), or staff. Along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter to the local church of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general church (To be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that the lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);

continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to strengthen his or her work and to develop a growing understanding of the church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the church's mission;

advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;

informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference.

2. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, who shall participate in regular and called sessions of the annual conference on behalf of their charge and shall serve, along with the pastor, as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference, reporting to the church council as soon as possible after an annual conference session. Alternates may be elected so that, if a charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in their place. All lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of the local church they serve for at least two years and shall have been active participants in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessor for at least four years preceding their election, except in a newly organized church. Churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference.

3. The chairperson of the church council or governing board, who shall have the following responsibilities:

leading the council in fulfilling its responsibilities;

preparing and communicating the agenda of the council meetings in consultation with the pastor(s), lay leader, and other appropriate persons;

reviewing and assigning responsibility for the implementation of actions taken by the council;

communicating with members of the council and others as appropriate to permit informed action at council meetings;

coordinating the various activities of the council;

providing initiative and leadership for the council as it engages in planning, establishing objectives and goals, and evaluating ministry;

participating in leadership training programs as offered by the annual conference and/or district.

The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The chairperson is encouraged to attend annual conference.

4. In congregations with an alternate system of governance, individuals shall be named to represent all the roles described in the paragraph, along with all the functions fulfilled by a Pastor-Parish Relations and Finance Committee and a Board of Trustees.

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PETITION 1168

¶442

Clarify Necessity of Treasurer and Financial Secretary

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

At this time, the offices of Treasurer and Financial Secretary are buried in the Finance Committee description, but need to be listed in ¶ 442 as required positions in the church to remove any ambiguity as to what roles they serve and whether they are required. We recommend placing them as subparagraphs 4 & 5 and renumbering the current #4 as #6.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442 BY ADDING NEW ¶¶442.4 & 442.5 AND RENUMBERING REMAINING SUBPARAGRAPHS

4. A Financial Secretary who shall supervise the work of those persons counting the offering, ensure all funds received are deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the Finance Committee, and keep records of all contributions and funds received. A charge conference may choose to hire someone to perform some or all of the duties of a Financial Secretary. Anyone hired to perform these duties shall not serve with vote on the church council, Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Finance Committee or Trustees. The Financial Secretary position shall not be combined with the Treasurer and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions shall not be immediate family members. No immediate family member of any pastor may serve as financial secretary in the church or charge where the pastor serves.

5. A Treasurer who shall disburse all undesignated funds according to the local church budget, distribute all designated funds received by the church according to the designation, remit all denominational and conference benevolence and connectional funding amounts each month to the conference treasurer or appropriate organization, and make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the Finance Committee and the church council. The treasurer(s) shall be adequately insured or bonded, as determined by the local church. A charge conference may choose to hire someone to perform some or all of the duties of a Treasurer. Anyone hired to perform these duties shall not serve with vote on the church council, Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Finance Committee or Board of Trustees. The Treasurer position shall not be combined with the Financial Secretary and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions shall not be immediate family members. No immediate family member of any pastor may serve as Treasurer in the church or charge where the pastor serves.

PETITION 1124

¶442.1

Lay Leader CLM Requirement

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett

Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

In our current wording it seems to imply that becoming a CLM is a requirement for local church Lay Leader. This change would clarify that it is not necessarily a requirement.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442.1.f

1.f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities to strengthen his or her work. ~~The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay minister.~~ In instances where more than one church is in a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church, sharing the responsibilities.

PETITION 1296

¶442.1

Establishing Term Limits for Local Church Lay Leader

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Virginia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The role of lay leader is vital to the life and spiritual health of our local churches, serving alongside the pastor as a partner in ministry. To ensure this role functions in a healthy way, this petition proposes term limits around the role of lay leader which would bring it in line with term limits already established in the Discipline for roles such as SPRC and Trustee members, the difference being that the lay leader will be elected annually.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442.1

¶ 442. DUTIES OF LEADERS. 1. ~~Out of the professing membership of each local church, there shall be elected by the charge conference a lay leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:~~ Out of the professing membership of each local church, there shall be elected annually by the charge conference a lay leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church. The lay leader is eligible to be elected for no more than six consecutive years at which point the person would need to vacate the office for at least one year before being eligible to again be elected as a lay leader. The lay leader shall have the following responsibilities:

PETITION 1372

¶442.1

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying the Role of Lay Leader

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains extensive advisory language, role descriptions, and programmatic expectations that are not essential for global governance and are not consistently enforceable across diverse contexts. The revision preserves the core requirement for the election and recognition of a lay leader while removing detailed duties that are better determined at the local or annual conference level. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶442.1

~~Out of the professing membership of each local church, there shall be elected by the charge conference a lay leader who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities: (a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries; (b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry; (c) serving as a member of the charge conference and the church council, the Finance Committee, the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general church (To be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that the lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference.); (d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the church's mission; (e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community; (f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay minister. In instances where more than one church is in a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church, sharing the responsibilities. (g) The lay leader, at each local church's discretion, may also serve as the chairperson of the church council or other governing body.~~

Out of the professing membership of each local church, the charge conference shall elect a lay leader who serves as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church.

PETITION 1303

¶442.2

Remove Membership Duration from Lay Delegate to Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This is the only office in the local church where a membership duration is required by the BDD. It seems redundant. The local church and Charge Conference is capable of determining whom they would have present from their congregation at Annual Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442.2

The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates may be elected annually or to coincide with the conferences of the general church. If the charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in their place. ~~Both the lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessor for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election, except in a newly organized church.~~ Churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session. These persons shall report to the church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible.

PETITION 1371

¶442.2

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Representation to Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains detailed procedural, eligibility, and protective provisions that are not essential for global governance and are better addressed at the annual conference level. The revision preserves the core requirement for lay representation while removing context-specific and non-enforceable details that limit flexibility across diverse settings. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶442.2

~~The lay member(s) of the annual conference and alternates may be elected annually or to coincide with the conferences of the general church. If the charge's lay member of the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in their place. Both the lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessor for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election, except in a newly organized church. Churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session. These persons shall report to the church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible.~~

The charge conference shall elect a lay member to represent the local church at the annual conference in accordance with the provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1298

¶442.3

Establishing Term Limits for Church Council Chair

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Virginia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The church council chair is a key leadership role in the local church. To ensure healthy systems functioning and an adequate rotation of leadership, this petition proposes a term limit of six years for the role of church council chair which would bring it into alignment with term limits for SPRC and Trustees, the difference being that the church council chair will continue to be elected annually.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442.3

3. The church council or governing board chairperson shall be elected by the charge conference annually. The church council or governing board chairperson is eligible to be elected for no more than six consecutive years at which point the person would need to vacate the office for at least one year before being eligible to again be elected as the church council or governing board chairperson. The chairperson shall be a professing member of the Global Methodist Church in the local church where he or she would be serving, and shall have the following responsibilities:

PETITION 1079

¶442.4

Clarification for Membership Standards for Alternative Forms of Governance

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

When local churches have an alternative form of governance, they need more clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶442.4

In congregations with an alternate system of governance, individuals shall be named to represent the functions fulfilled by a Pastor-Parish Relations and Finance Committee and a Board of Trustees. Such individuals must meet the same qualifications as if separate Pastor-Parish Relations and Finance Committees and Board of Trustees existed. If no individuals are named to represent the functions fulfilled by a Pastor-Parish Relations and Finance Committee and a Board of Trustees, then qualifications for all three committees must be met by all members of that governing body.

PETITION 1169

¶443.1

Clarify Role of Church Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The third sentence in this section is mostly redundant and can be added to the first sentence to clarify the role of the Church Council. Also the inclusion of "its" in the second sentence makes it hard to tell whether this is referring to the church council or to the church. Since the organization of the church council is determined by the charge conference and the last sentence states that the church council is the administrative agency of the charge conference, the second sentence is not only confusing, but also mostly unnecessary. We recommend rewriting the final sentence to ensure the "temporal life" from the second sentence is included and the rest can be deleted.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶443.1

~~1. The church council, or its equivalent governing body, shall provide for planning, and implementing a ministry of evangelizing and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference.~~

1. The church council, or equivalent governing body, shall provide for envisioning, planning, implementing, and annually evaluating the ministry of evangelism, discipleship, and spreading scriptural holiness through nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference by providing for the temporal life of the church.

PETITION 1370

¶443.2

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Programmatic Ministry Descriptions

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph provides detailed descriptions of ministry areas and programmatic expectations that are not essential for global governance and are not consistently applicable across diverse cultural and organizational contexts. These descriptions are better suited for teaching, guidance, or local adaptation rather than inclusion in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶443.2

~~Mission and Ministry—Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include: (a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages. (b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. (c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; certified lay ministers; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ. (d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church.~~

PETITION 1170

¶443.3

Clarify Who Can Call Special Meetings of the Church Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

For churches that have multiple pastors, it helps to specify that only the pastor in charge can call a special meeting of the Church Council, instead of any pastor at the church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶443.3

a. The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor in charge may call special meetings.

PETITION 1369

¶443.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Church Council Meetings

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes prescriptive scheduling requirements and advisory language regarding decision-making that are not essential for global governance and are not consistently applicable across diverse contexts. The revision preserves the authority of the church council to meet and conduct business while allowing flexibility in scheduling and decision-making practices. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶443.3

~~The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. It is recommended that the council make decisions by trying to achieve a consensus driven by the Holy Spirit. If, in the opinion of the chair, a consensus cannot be achieved, then the Council may make a decision by voting with a simple majority as the standard.~~

The church council shall meet as needed to conduct the business of the church and may make decisions in accordance with its established procedures.

PETITION 1172

¶443.4

Clarify Review of Housing and Benefits

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current denominational retirement benefit is strictly US-centric (and is not a "pension"). Unless and until the denomination creates a world-wide benefit plans, we recommend removing the final phrase and encourage annual conferences to publish housing policies that comply with local laws.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶443.4.(e)

Review the recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. ~~Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.~~

PETITION 1368

¶443.4

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Responsibilities of the Church Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes detailed procedural requirements and context-specific provisions that are not essential for global governance. The revision preserves the core administrative and financial responsibilities of the church council while removing duplicative, highly specific, and non-uniform provisions that are better addressed at the annual conference or local level. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶443.4

~~It will also be the responsibility of the church council to: (a) Review the membership of the local church; (b) Fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference; (c) Establish the budget on recommendation of the Finance Committee or its equivalent body and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church; (d) Recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the Pastor-Parish (or Staff-Parish) Relations Committee or its equivalent body; (e) Review the recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.~~

The church council shall fill interim vacancies among lay officers, establish the budget of the church, and recommend compensation for pastoral and staff positions to the charge conference.

PETITION 1171

¶443.4

Clarify Review of Housing and Benefits

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The current denominational retirement benefit is strictly US-centric (and is not a "pension"). Unless and until the denomination creates a world-wide benefit plans, we recommend removing the final phrase and encourage annual conferences to publish housing policies that comply with local laws.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶443.4

Review the recommendation of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. ~~Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.~~

PETITION 1367

¶443.5; 443.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Council Membership and Quorum

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

These paragraphs include numerical requirements, structural assumptions, and detailed composition guidelines that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts. The revision preserves the authority of the charge conference to determine council membership and maintains a clear quorum standard while removing non-essential and restrictive provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶443.5 & ¶443.6, ADDS NEW ¶443.5

~~The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eight persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The membership shall include but not be limited to the chairs of the committees responsible for pastor-parish relations, the finances of the church, the management of the church's properties and assets, the lay leader, the lay member(s) of the annual conference, and all appointed clergy. Members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.~~

The charge conference shall determine the membership of the church council. A quorum shall consist of those present and voting at a duly called meeting.

PETITION 1173

¶444

Clarify Membership and Purpose of Nominations and Leadership Development Committee

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The first section currently states that the NLDC does not guide the church council on matters concerning employed staff, but we need to add pastors to that prohibition for clarity. The second section is confusing and wordy, so we have tried to clarify the meaning and simplify the wording. The fourth section needs clarity on when and how the Lay Leader can serve on the committee because it is currently unclear whether the rules for members of the NLDC apply to the Lay Leader. We believe the term should not, while the family restrictions should.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶444.1, ¶444.2, & ¶444.4

1. The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council on matters regarding the leadership (other than the pastors and employed staff) of the congregation, so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the church council in assessing changing leadership needs.

~~2. The committee shall recommend to the charge conference, at its annual session, the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries of the church council required for the work of the church and as the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the church requires or as the charge conference deems necessary to its work.~~

2. The committee shall recommend to the charge conference, at its annual session, people to serve as officers of the church required by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, along with leaders of any church ministries desired by the church council or charge conference.

3. The pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee shall serve as the vice chairperson of the committee.

4. To secure experience and stability, the membership may be divided into three classes, one of which would be elected each year for a three-year term. The lay leader is exempt from the three-year term on this committee. Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. The lay leader shall not serve as a member of the committee if they are restricted by the above family relationships. When vacancies occur during the year, successors shall be elected by the church council.

5. In the identification and selection process, care shall be given that the leadership of ministries reflects inclusivity and diversity.

PETITION 1366

¶444

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Leadership Development Structure

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This contains extensive aspirational, theological, and programmatic language that's not enforceable & not essential for global governance. It includes detailed structural requirements & prescriptive expectations that are not consistently applicable across diverse cultural contexts. Revision preserves core function of recommending leadership &the pastoral oversight of that function while removing non-essential, duplicative, and overly prescriptive provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should 1) require global uniformity 2) strengthen the local church 3) align with disciple-making 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission 5) be clear and enforceable

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶444

~~As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Nominations and Leadership Development Committee or its equivalent that is composed of professing members of the local church or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. The responsibility of this committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the local congregation. Members of the committee shall engage in and be attentive to developing and enhancing their own Christian spiritual life in light of the mission of the church. In conducting its work, the committee shall engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church. It shall provide a means of identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the church's members. The committee shall work with the church council or equivalent body, to determine the diverse ministry tasks of the congregation and the skills needed for leadership. 1. The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council on matters regarding the leadership (other than employed staff) of the congregation, so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the church council in assessing changing leadership needs. 2. The committee shall recommend to the charge conference, at its annual session, the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries of the church council required for the work of the church and as the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the church requires or as the charge conference deems necessary to its work. 3. The pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee shall serve as the vice chairperson of the committee. 4. To secure experience and stability, the membership may be divided into three classes, one of which would be elected each year for a three-year term. Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. When vacancies occur during the year, successors shall be elected by the church council. 5. In the identification and selection process, care shall be given that the leadership of ministries reflects inclusivity and diversity.~~

The charge conference may establish a committee or assign responsibility to a group to recommend leaders for the ministries of the local church. The pastor shall serve as chairperson.

PETITION 1080

¶445

Require Written Statement and Vote for Pastoral Change

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

It has not been made clear that the process for clergy replacement should require written concerns be presented to the pastor(s) and presiding elder. And it is not clear that a request for pastoral change needs to be approved via a vote.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶445.8.(i)

(i) To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and/or pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the presiding elder, and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the presiding elder and the bishop shall be advisory only. The committee shall not recommend to the presiding elder or bishop a change of pastor(s) without first discussing its concerns with the pastor(s) involved and providing a written summary of those concerns to the pastor(s) and the presiding elder.

(i-1) Any request from the committee for a pastoral change shall require a written statement approved by at least two-thirds of the committee members present and voting.

PETITION 1209

¶445.1

Clarify Membership of PPRC

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We recommend 4 changes: (1) We need to be clear that even if the PPRC does not exist as a committee, the duties need to be assigned to a person or group. (2) When configured as a SPRC, they should be able to have oversight of all staff, not just the program staff. (3) The requirement to be attentive to spiritual development should be an expectation for all leaders of the church, not just those on PPRC. (4) In .2, the current rule states that the Lay Leader is "automatically" a member of the PPRC. However, this can conflict with the rules preventing family members from serving on the PPRC. We believe that the restrictions on membership due to family connections should apply to Lay Leaders, which also necessitates a change in .4.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶445.1, ¶445.2, AND ¶445.4

1. ~~As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent composed of professing members of the local church or charge, or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group.~~ The charge conference shall elect annually a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent composed of professing members of the local church or charge, or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. Where the church employs additional ~~program~~ staff beyond the pastor in charge, the committee may be structured as the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, with the same responsibilities. ~~People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their Christian spiritual development to give proper leadership in the committee's responsibilities.~~ In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry. It shall engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the church, the primary task and ministries of the local church, and ~~on~~ the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.

2. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. ~~The lay leader is automatically a member of the committee.~~ The lay leader shall be a member of the committee, unless prohibited by the above requirements.

4. ~~In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative and the lay leader from each local church.~~ In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least two representatives from each local church. The lay leader of each local church shall be one of the representatives, unless prohibited by the requirements in ¶445.2.

PETITION 1362

¶445.1

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Pastor-Parish Relations Structure

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes discipleship expectations, theological reflection, and programmatic language that are not enforceable and not essential for global governance. The revision preserves the core function of maintaining the relationship between pastoral leadership and the congregation while removing non-essential, descriptive, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶445.1

~~As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent composed of professing members of the local church or charge, or the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. Where the church employs additional program staff beyond the pastor in charge, the committee may be structured as the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, with the same responsibilities. People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their Christian spiritual development to give proper leadership in the committee's responsibilities. In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry. It shall engage in biblical and theological reflection on the mission of the church, the primary task and ministries of the local church, and on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities.~~

The charge conference may establish a Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or its equivalent, or assign its responsibilities to a group, to support the relationship between the pastor, staff, and congregation.

PETITION 1210

¶445.5

Clarify Meetings of PPRC

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We recommend 4 changes: (1) PPRCs in cooperative parishes should meet at least annually. (2) In .6 and other places, when it refers to "pastor", it should be generally be the "pastor in charge" to account for churches that have multiple pastors. (3) In .6, the CS needs to be added to the list of those who can call a meeting of the PPRC and meet with them without the pastor in charge. It would also be helpful to allow the PE designate another elder to meet and work with the PPRC without the pastor being present. (4) In .7, the rules for the members of only one church on a charge that are meeting to discuss issues should be the same as those for the full committee. We can accomplish this by referring to .6, rather than duplicating it.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶445.5, ¶445.6, AND ¶445.7

5. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committees of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together at least annually to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry as a whole, or one parish-wide Pastor-Parish Relations Committee may be formed.

6. ~~The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the presiding elder, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee, except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may meet with the presiding elder without the appointed clergy under consideration being present. However, the appointed clergy under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the presiding elder and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the presiding elder, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee.~~ The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor in charge. The pastor in charge shall be present during the entirety of each meeting of the committee, except when he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. Other than the pastor in charge, any person accountable to the committee may be excluded from a meeting at any time. The committee may meet with the bishop, conference superintendent, presiding elder, or their designee, without the pastor in charge being present. However, any pastor under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

7. ~~In the event that only one congregation on a charge containing more than one church has concerns it wishes to share, its member(s) in the committee may meet separately with the pastor or any other person accountable to the committee or the presiding elder, but only with the knowledge of the pastor.~~ In the event that only one congregation on a charge containing more than one church has concerns it wishes to share, its member(s) in the committee may meet separately by following the requirements in ¶445.6.

PETITION 1360

¶445.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Committee Meeting Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes detailed procedural requirements and redundancies regarding scheduling, attendance, and consultation that are not essential for global governance. The revision preserves the authority of the committee to meet, maintains pastoral oversight, and retains the critical requirement of confidentiality while removing non-essential and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶445.6

~~The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the presiding elder, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor. The pastor shall be present at each meeting of the committee, except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee may meet with the presiding elder without the appointed clergy under consideration being present. However, the appointed clergy under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the presiding elder and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.~~

The committee shall meet as needed to conduct its work. Meetings shall be held with the knowledge of the pastor, who shall be present unless excused, and shall be conducted in closed session with all information kept confidential.

PETITION 1211

¶445.8

Clarify Duties of PPRC

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Numerous duties of the PPRC need to be clarified and brought into accordance with the rest of the BDD: (1) .8.h describes annual renewal for CLMs, candidates, and missionaries. However, the 500 paragraphs do not currently have a corresponding requirement, so we recommend deletion of this requirement here. (2) In .8.h, the list of qualities of persons that shall not be excluded from ministry is unnecessary because it is listed in the paragraphs describing those ministries. (3) .8.i needs to better match the process of appointment making in ¶610. (4) .8.k currently requires recommendations on health insurance and severance for all lay employees, and requires pension benefits for all at half time or more. We recommend more flexibility.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶703.8.d, ¶703.8.f, ¶703.8.h, ¶703.8.i, ¶703.8.j, ¶703.8.k, AND ¶703.8.m

8. The duties of the committee shall include the following:

To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(ies).

To promote unity in the church(es).

To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to their effectiveness in ministry; assessing their unique gifts and abilities; priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time; relationships with the congregation; the person's health and self-care, including conditions that may impede their effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry to the congregation, while interpreting the congregation's needs, values, and traditions to the pastor(s) and staff.

~~To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff to enhance their effective ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans.~~ To provide for annual evaluation of the pastor(s) and staff to enhance their effectiveness in ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans.

To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the Global Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy and the preparation for ordained ministry.

~~To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor.~~ To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the pastor in charge. The term associate pastor is used as a general term to indicate any pastoral appointment in a local church other than the pastor in charge. Committees are encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.

To arrange with the church council for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the pastor and/or staff at such continuing education, self-care, and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth, and to encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields of specialization.

To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend ~~annually~~ to the charge conference lay ministers and persons

for candidacy for ordained ministry and to enlist and refer to the appropriate board or commissions persons for candidacy for missionary service~~, recognizing that the Global Methodist Church affirms the biblical and theological support of persons regardless of gender, race, ethnic or tribal origin, or disabilities for these ministries~~. Neither the pastor nor any member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee shall be present during the consideration of a candidacy application ~~or renewal~~ for a member of their immediate family. The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of persons from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, lay ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these persons, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each person.

~~To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and/or pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the presiding elder, and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the presiding elder, and the bishop shall be advisory only (¶610.7). The committee shall not recommend to the presiding elder or bishop a change of pastor(s) without first discussing its concerns with the pastor(s) involved.~~ To confer with the pastor in charge and/or associate pastor(s) if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and/or pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the presiding elder, the conference superintendent, and the bishop in securing pastoral leadership. Its relationship to the presiding elder, the conference superintendent, and the bishop shall be consultative (¶610.7). The committee shall not recommend a change of pastor(s) without first discussing its concerns with the pastor(s) involved.

After consultation with the pastor, to communicate with the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee when there is a need for other leaders, and/ or the church council when there is a need for employed staff or other pastors, to work in areas where utilization of the gifts of the current pastor(s) or staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time (cf. Acts 6:2).

~~The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policies and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not ordained clergy subject to episcopal appointment. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss non-appointed personnel. The committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance and severance pay for all lay employees. In addition, the committee shall recommend that the church council provide an equitable pension with local church contribution for lay employees serving at least half-time. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through a denominational pension program.~~ The committee and the pastor in charge shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policies and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff who are not pastors. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor in charge shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss anyone who is not a pastor. The committee shall further consider provisions for adequate health and life insurance, severance pay, and equitable retirement benefits with local church contributions for lay employees. All recommendations for staff benefits shall be made to the church council, who shall have authority to provide such benefits through a denominational program.

Committee members shall keep themselves informed of personnel matters related to the denomination's policies, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law. They are responsible for communicating and interpreting such matters to staff. Committee members should make themselves available for educational and training opportunities that will enable them to be effective in their work.

To consult on matters pertaining to pulpit supply, proposals for compensation, travel expense, vacation, health and life insurance, pension, housing (which may be a church-owned parsonage or housing allowance in lieu of parsonage if in compliance with the policy of the annual conference), continuing education, and other practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the Finance Committee. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family. The committee will follow up to assure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health of the pastor or pastor's family. ~~The chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being.~~ The chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of any church-owned parsonages to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being.

PETITION 1246

¶445.8

Clarifying Pastor-Parish Relations Committee Duties

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Removes excessive procedural and descriptive detail while preserving the committee's essential responsibilities for support, consultation, evaluation, staffing, and compensation. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶445.8 BY REPLACING ¶¶445.8.a-m

~~The duties of the committee shall include the following:~~

~~To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(ies).~~

~~To promote unity in the church(es).~~

~~To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to their effectiveness in ministry; assessing their unique gifts and abilities; priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time; relationships with the congregation; the person's health and self-care, including conditions that may impede their effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry to the congregation, while interpreting the congregation's needs, values, and traditions to the pastor(s) and staff.~~

~~To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff to enhance their effective ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans.~~

~~To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the Global Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy and the preparation for ordained ministry.~~

~~To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor.~~

~~To arrange with the church council for continuing education and support.~~

~~To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually persons for ministry.~~

~~To confer with the pastor regarding pastoral changes.~~

~~To communicate leadership needs.~~

~~To recommend policies related to hiring and staff.~~

~~To remain informed on personnel matters.~~

~~To consult on compensation and benefits.~~

Replace ¶445.8(a–m) with:

The duties of the committee shall include supporting the pastor(s), staff, and their families; promoting unity in the church; consulting regarding ministry effectiveness, pastoral leadership, staffing needs, personnel policies, evaluation, compensation, benefits, and other matters affecting the work of the pastor(s) and staff.

PETITION 1301

¶445.8

SPRC/Presiding Elder Cooperation on Local Church Pastor Evaluations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Virginia
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Rationale for Petition: ¶609 mandates the Presiding Elder (PE) to oversee and supervise district clergy. As a professional peer, the PE's presence at SPRC evaluations will ensure an accurate, fulsome assessment. The Presiding Elder as a supervisory presence in partnership with the SPRC, reflects the Wesleyan understanding of the pastor as shepherd, not hireling, and affirms ordained ministry as a sacred calling within the Church's covenantal life. This clarifies that clergy are accountable to the Church's doctrine and mission through connectional oversight.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶445.8.d

8. The duties of the committee shall include the following:

To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff to enhance their effective ministry and to identify continuing educational needs and plans. The evaluation will be presented to the Presiding Elder for review prior to the discussion of the evaluation with the appointed pastor (s). The Presiding Elder will also be invited to participate in the discussion of the evaluation with the appointed pastor (s).

PETITION 1358

¶446

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Board of Trustees Structure

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes numerical requirements, demographic expectations, and civil law provisions that are not consistently enforceable across diverse global contexts and are addressed elsewhere in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The revision preserves the essential governance structure of the Board of Trustees and the participation of the pastor while removing non-essential and redundant provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶446

~~Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of at least five professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The pastor of the congregation(s) shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority.~~

Each local church shall have a Board of Trustees composed of professing members of the church. The pastor shall serve as a member without vote.

PETITION 1435

¶446

Updating the Membership of the Board of Trustees to Allow Non Members

Petitioner: Adebowale Onabanjo
Organization: Lancaster Mt Zion (US: Allegheny West)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Whereas large sized churches are able to identify and elect current members as Trustees who have the required diverse professional skills and experience to serve on this important committee, small sized churches, especially those in suburban and rural areas struggle to identify qualified individuals with required skills from their current membership. Allowing for the election of non-professing members who are exploring membership will assist in the election of qualified individuals who are otherwise not eligible for election as Trustees under current language.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶446

¶ 446. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. ~~Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of at least five professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law.~~ Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of not fewer than three nor more than five persons, and at least two-thirds shall be professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The pastor of the congregation(s) shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority.

PETITION 1212

¶446.1

Membership and Purpose of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We recommend 4 changes to clarify and strengthen the membership and purpose of the Trustees: (1) Only requiring 3 members will allow for even division into three-year classes and ensure every church can find enough qualified members. (2) A note mirroring ¶1006 helps explain the relationship between the Trustees and Board of Directors. This would also allow us to remove other references to the Board of Directors in this paragraph. (3) "Exclusion" from membership is not a term used anywhere else in the BDD. "Removal" is discussed in ¶422, so we recommend changing to this term. (4) the notes about election of new members can be made more concise.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶446 & ¶446.2

¶ 446. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. ~~Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of at least five professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law.~~ Unless otherwise provided for in the governance structure of a local church, within each congregation of the Global Methodist Church there shall be a Board of Trustees, consisting of at least three professing members of the church representing the gender, race, and age of the congregation, provided that all members shall be of legal age as determined by the relevant and controlling civil law. The pastor of the congregation(s) shall be a member with voice but without vote of the Board of Trustees and may not be counted for the purpose of achieving a quorum or calculating a majority. The Board of Trustees shall serve as the Board of Directors for the church, unless the charge conference designates another body to serve as the Board of Directors (¶ 1006).

1. Election of Trustees. Members of the Board of Trustees of each local congregation may be elected by the charge or church conference to a three-year term, equally divided into three classes, with one-third elected each year. A member of the Board of Trustees may be reelected for no more than one additional term, and no member may serve longer than six consecutive years.

2. Vacancies and Removal of Trustees. ~~Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the local church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee of a local church or a director of an incorporated local church be unable to carry out their responsibilities, or when he or she refuses to execute properly a legal instrument relating to any property of the church when directed to do so by the charge conference, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the charge conference may by majority vote declare the trustee's or director's membership on the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors vacated. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term. Such election shall be held in the same manner described in as for Trustees (¶ 446.1). A vacancy other than the preceding that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.~~

Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the local church or be removed therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or removal. Should a trustee of a local church be unable to carry out their responsibilities, or refuse to execute properly a legal instrument relating to any property of the church when directed to do so by the charge conference, the charge conference may by majority vote declare the

trustee's membership on the Board of Trustees vacated and elect by majority vote a member of the church to fill the unexpired term. A vacancy other than those caused by withdrawal or removal that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.

PETITION 1357

¶446.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Election of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes time-limit constraints, structural rotation requirements, and term limits that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts. These provisions prescribe specific organizational models rather than essential governance requirements. The revision preserves the authority of the charge or church conference to elect trustees while allowing flexibility in terms of service and structure. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶446.1

~~Members of the Board of Trustees of each local congregation may be elected by the charge or church conference to a three-year term, equally divided into three classes, with one-third elected each year. A member of the Board of Trustees may be reelected for no more than one additional term, and no member may serve longer than six consecutive years.~~

Members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the charge or church conference.

PETITION 1356

¶446.2

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Trustee Vacancies and Removal

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes extensive legal and procedural detail that is not consistently enforceable across diverse global contexts and often governed by applicable civil law. The revision preserves the essential governance authority for removal of trustees and the filling of vacancies while removing redundant, overly specific, and legally dependent provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶446.2

~~Should a trustee withdraw from the membership of the local church or be excluded therefrom, trusteeship therein shall automatically cease from the date of such withdrawal or exclusion. Should a trustee of a local church or a director of an incorporated local church be unable to carry out their responsibilities, or when he or she refuses to execute properly a legal instrument relating to any property of the church when directed to do so by the charge conference, and when all legal requirements have been satisfied in reference to such execution, the charge conference may by majority vote declare the trustee's or director's membership on the Board of Trustees or Board of Directors vacated. Vacancies occurring in the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election for the unexpired term. Such election shall be held in the same manner as for Trustees (¶ 446.1). A vacancy other than the preceding that occurs ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.~~

Trustees may be removed by the charge or church conference. Vacancies on the Board of Trustees shall be filled by election.

PETITION 1213

¶446.3

Clarify Organization of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The organization of the Board of Trustees does not need to be a suggestion. Instead, the way Trustees are organized needs to be required. Note: There are already numerous exceptions for occasions when local law requires a different organization. The intent here is to create a standard model that shall be followed unless local law dictates otherwise.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶446.3

3. Organization. ~~The Board of Trustees may organize as follows~~: The Board of Trustees shall organize as follows:

PETITION 1355

¶446.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Organization of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes detailed procedural requirements, structural prescriptions, and legal accommodations that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts. The revision preserves the authority of the Board of Trustees to organize and elect officers while removing non-essential, time-bound, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶446.3 IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH:

The Board of Trustees shall organize itself and may elect officers as needed to conduct its work.

PETITION 1214

¶446.4

Clarify Meetings and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We recommend five changes to this section: (1) Associate pastors should be able to call a meeting of the Trustees. (2) There are two notes in 5.c about fixing issues in a parsonage. We recommend removing one. (3) In .6.a and .b, the charge conference does not need the full legal description and grantor of conveyance on every piece of property every year. They only need a short description and valuation of existing property, and the details whenever new property is added. (4) In .6.c, an annual inventory of all church-owned property should not be required as this would be cumbersome for anything more than a small church. (5) 6.j is repetitive of 5.e and only needs to state Annual Accessibility Audit and refer back to the previous section.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶446.4, ¶446.5, AND ¶446.6

4. Meetings. The board shall meet at the call of the pastor in charge or of its chairperson at least three times per year at such times and places as designated in the meeting notice at least one week prior to the appointed time of the meeting. Waiver of notice may be used as a means to validate meetings legally where the usual notice is impracticable. A majority of the members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

5. Powers and Limitations. The board shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

a. Oversight, inventory, and care of all real property owned by the local church and of all property and equipment acquired directly by the local church or by any group, board, class, commission, or similar organization connected with it. The board shall not, however, violate the rights of any local church organization elsewhere granted in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, nor prevent or interfere with the pastor in the use of any of the said property for religious services or other proper meetings or purposes recognized by the law, usages, and customs of the church. Reflecting the historic understanding of Methodism, pews in the Global Methodist Church shall always be free.

b. The use of a local congregation's facilities or properties by an outside organization may be granted by the Board of Trustees after consideration of whether the purposes and programs of that organization are consistent with the values of the congregation and the Global Methodist Church.

c. ~~Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to the pastor for housing, the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson or designee of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance and to give immediate resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family's health and well-being.~~ Should the congregation possess a parsonage offered to a pastor for housing, the chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, the chairperson or designee of the Board of Trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family (¶ 445.8m). ~~The Board of Trustees are responsible to ensure timely resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health and well-being of the pastor or pastor's family and shall provide that the parsonage be maintained in good condition.~~ The Board of Trustees shall ensure immediate resolution of parsonage problems affecting the health and well-being of the pastor or pastor's family and shall provide that the parsonage be maintained in good condition.

d. Subject to the direction of the charge conference, the Board of Trustees shall receive and administer all bequests made to the local church, shall receive and administer all trusts, and shall invest all trust funds of the local church in conformity with laws of the country, state, or political unit in which the local church is located. ~~Nevertheless, upon notice to the Board of Trustees, the charge conference may delegate the power, duty, and authority to receive, administer, and invest bequests, trusts, and trust funds to a permanent endowment committee or to a local church foundation.~~ Nevertheless, upon notice to the Board of Trustees, the charge conference may delegate the power, duty, and authority to receive, administer, and invest bequests, trusts, and trust funds to another entity, including a permanent endowment committee or a local church foundation.

e. The board shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any existing physical, architectural, or communication barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers.

6. Annual Report. ~~The board shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, in which shall be included the following:~~ The board shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, which shall include the following:

~~The legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church.~~ A description and reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church. When new real estate is acquired, the full legal description and specific name of the grantor in each deed of conveyance shall also be part of the report;

~~The specific name of the grantor in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church;~~

~~An inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the local church;~~ The reasonable valuation of all moveable property owned by the local church;

The amount of income received from any income producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;

The amount received during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures;

Outstanding capital debts, payoff date, and how contracted;

A detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by coinsurance or other limiting conditions and whether adequate insurance is carried;

The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local church, and where they are kept;

A detailed list of all trusts in which the local church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested, if known;

~~An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, and when applicable, a plan and timeline for resolving barriers to accessibility (¶ 446.5e).~~ The annual accessibility audit and when applicable, a plan and timeline for resolving barriers to accessibility (¶ 446.5e).

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PETITION 1354

¶446.4

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Meetings of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes fixed meeting frequency, notice requirements, and legal provisions that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts and are often governed by local civil law. The revision preserves the authority of the Board of Trustees to meet and establishes a clear quorum standard while removing time-bound, procedural, and legally dependent provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶446.4 IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH:

The Board of Trustees shall meet as needed to conduct its work. A quorum shall consist of those present and voting at a duly called meeting.

PETITION 1353

¶446.5; 446.6

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Powers and Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph contains extensive legal, procedural, and operational detail that is not consistently enforceable across diverse global contexts and is often governed by applicable civil law and local policy. The revision preserves the essential responsibilities of the Board of Trustees while removing non-essential, duplicative, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶446.5 AND ¶446.6 IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH:

The Board of Trustees shall oversee and care for the property and assets of the local church, administer gifts and trusts, and report to the charge or church conference.

PETITION 1174

¶447

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of the Finance Committee

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

There are numerous parts of this that need to be clarified. Notable examples are: 1. The offices of Treasurer and Financial Secretary (.1, .4, and .5) are better placed in ¶442 to require each church to have them, especially in churches where the duties of the Finance Committee are assigned to another committee. 2. In .6, the only financial policies that need to come to the charge conference annually are any new policies or those that have been changed. 3. .7 currently contains a reference to the wrong subsection. 4. The rule in .8 about deposits is mostly a repetition of .4, so we recommend combining these and deleting .8. 5. .11 does not currently give information about what should be contained in the designated fund report.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶447.1, ¶447.4, ¶447.6, ¶447.7, ¶447.8, & ¶447.11 AND DELETES ¶447.5

¶ 447. FINANCE COMMITTEE.

1. As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Finance Committee or its equivalent composed of the committee chairperson, the pastor(s), a lay member of the annual conference, the chairperson of the church council, the chairperson or designee of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, a representative of the Board of Trustees to be selected by that board, the chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship (if any), the lay leader, the financial secretary, the treasurer, the church business administrator (if any), and other members ~~to be added~~ as the charge conference may determine. Alternatively, the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. The chairperson of the Finance Committee shall be a member of the church council or equivalent. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator, if paid employees, shall be members without vote. ~~The positions of treasurer and financial secretary may not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members. No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, Finance Committee chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves.~~ No immediate family members of any pastor may serve on the Finance Committee or in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee, including counter. These restrictions apply only to the church or charge where the pastor serves.

2. The Finance Committee shall oversee the stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year, seeking as part of the ministry of discipleship to move members toward tithing and beyond, with an attitude of generosity.

3. All financial requests to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The Finance Committee shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council. The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.

4. The committee shall designate at least two persons not of one immediate family residing in the same household to count the offering. They shall work under the supervision of the financial secretary. A record of all funds

received shall be given to the financial secretary and treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the local church in accordance with the procedures established by the Finance Committee. ~~The financial secretary shall keep records of the contributions and payments.~~

~~5. The church treasurer(s) shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the local church budget, and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The treasurer(s) shall remit each month to the conference treasurer all denominational and conference benevolence funds then on hand. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the Finance Committee and the church council. The treasurer(s) shall be adequately bonded.~~

6. The Finance Committee shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church. ~~The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the Finance Committee and submitted as a report to the charge conference annually.~~ The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the Finance Committee and any new policies or changes in existing policies shall be reported to the annual charge conference.

7. The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report of the latest audit to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons. The audit shall be conducted to reasonably verify the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting; determine whether assets are being safeguarded; and determine compliance with local law, local church policies and procedures, and the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The audit may include:

a review of the cash and investment reconciliations;

interviews with the treasurer, financial secretary, pastor(s), Finance Committee chair, business manager, those who count offerings, church secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures;

a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account; and

other procedures requested by the Finance Committee.

~~The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in 2 above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.~~ The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in (b) above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.

8. The committee shall recommend to the church council proper depositories for the church's funds. ~~Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the local church.~~

9. Contributions designated for specific causes and objects shall be promptly forwarded according to the intent of the donor and shall not be retained or used for any other purpose.

10. After the budget of the local church has been approved, additional appropriations or changes in the budget must be approved by the church council.

11. The committee shall prepare at least annually a report to the church council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget, including the total amount in each fund, and all funds received and spent since the last report.

PETITION 1352

¶447.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Finance Committee Structure

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes extensive structural requirements, role definitions, and restrictions that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts. The revision preserves the essential function of financial oversight while removing non-essential, restrictive, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶447.1

~~¶ 447. FINANCE COMMITTEE. 1. As the charge conference determines, there may be elected annually by that conference a Finance Committee or its equivalent composed of the committee chairperson, the pastor(s), a lay member of the annual conference, the chairperson of the church council, the chairperson or designee of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, a representative of the Board of Trustees to be selected by that board, the chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship (if any), the lay leader, the financial secretary, the treasurer, the church business administrator (if any), and other members to be added as the charge conference may determine. Alternatively, the committee's responsibilities may be assigned to a different group. The chairperson of the Finance Committee shall be a member of the church council. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator, if paid employees, shall be members without vote. The positions of treasurer and financial secretary may not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members. No immediate family members of any appointed clergy may serve as treasurer, Finance Committee chair, financial secretary, counter, or serve in any paid or unpaid position under the responsibilities of the Finance Committee. These restrictions would apply only to the church or charge where the clergy serves.~~

The charge conference may establish a Finance Committee or its equivalent, or assign its responsibilities to a group, to provide oversight of the financial resources of the local church.

PETITION 1351

¶447.2

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Financial Stewardship Responsibilities

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes aspirational and discipleship-oriented language that is not enforceable and extends beyond governance into ministry formation. The revision preserves the essential responsibility of financial oversight while removing subjective and programmatic expectations. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶447.2

~~447.2. The Finance Committee shall oversee the stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year, seeking as part of the ministry of discipleship to move members toward tithing and beyond, with an attitude of generosity.~~

The Finance Committee shall oversee the financial resources of the local church.

PETITION 1350

¶447.3

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Budget and Financial Oversight

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes procedural requirements and operational strategies, particularly related to fundraising and implementation, that are not essential for global governance and are not consistently applicable across diverse contexts. The revision preserves the core responsibilities of budget preparation, financial administration, and accountability to the church council while removing non-essential and strategy-based provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶447.3

~~3. All financial requests to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The Finance Committee shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council. The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.~~

<u>The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit a budget to the church council and administer funds in accordance with its direction.</u>

PETITION 1349

¶447.6

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Financial Policy Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes time-based requirements, subjective evaluation standards, and reporting expectations that are not essential for global governance and may not be consistently applicable across diverse contexts. The revision preserves the requirement for financial policies and internal controls while removing non-essential procedural and evaluative language. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶447.6

447.6. ~~The Finance Committee shall establish written financial policies to document the internal controls of the local church. The written financial policies should be reviewed for adequacy and effectiveness annually by the Finance Committee and submitted as a report to the charge conference annually.~~

The Finance Committee shall establish and maintain financial policies that provide for appropriate internal controls.

PETITION 1348

¶447.7

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Financial Audit Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes extensive instructional, procedural, and structural detail that is not essential for global governance and is not consistently applicable across diverse contexts. The revision preserves the requirement for independent financial review and accountability while removing prescriptive and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶447.7

447.7. ~~The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the financial statements of the local church and all its organizations and accounts. The committee shall make a full and complete report to the annual charge conference. A local church audit is defined as an independent evaluation of the financial reports and records and the internal controls of the local church by a qualified person or persons. The audit shall be conducted to reasonably verify the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting; determine whether assets are being safeguarded; and determine compliance with local law, local church policies and procedures, and the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The audit may include: (a) a review of the cash and investment reconciliations; (b) interviews with the treasurer, financial secretary, pastor(s), Finance Committee chair, business manager, those who count offerings, church secretary, etc., with inquiries regarding compliance with existing written financial policies and procedures; (c) a review of journal entries and authorized check signers for each checking and investment account; and (d) other procedures requested by the Finance Committee. The audit shall be performed by an audit committee composed of persons unrelated to the persons listed in 2 above or by an independent certified public accountant (CPA), accounting firm, or equivalent.~~

The Finance Committee shall provide for an independent review of the financial records and reporting of the local church.

PETITION 1347

¶447.11

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Reporting and Committee Formation

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes time-based reporting requirements and advisory language, along with a detailed and non-exhaustive list of potential committees that are not essential for global governance. The revision preserves financial accountability for designated funds and the authority to establish additional committees while removing procedural, descriptive, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES IN ITS ENTIRETY ¶447.11 WITH

~~The committee shall prepare at least annually a report to the church council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget. The church council may recommend such other committees it deems advisable, whose members are to be elected by the charge conference, including but not limited to: communications committee, discipleship committee, records and history committee, missions committee, memorial gifts committee, and ministries that address the unique needs and interests of both women and men.~~

The Finance Committee shall provide oversight of designated funds separate from the current expense budget. The church council may recommend additional committees as needed.

PETITION 1176

¶450

Clarify Requirements for Organizing a New Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

The parts of this paragraph that need to be clarified and refined include: 1. In .1, "group of local churches" is repeated in the second sentence and may be deleted. 2. In .3, the PE should not be able to call a meeting to charter a church until the criteria for chartering set by the Annual Conference have been met. 3. Many new churches start without a pastor, so we need flexibility in .3 for laity to call for the chartering meeting. 4. There is no reason to require that the elder designated by the PE to hold a chartering meeting be a member of that district. Any elder should be able to perform this function.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶450.1 AND ¶450.3

¶ 450. ORGANIZATION OF A NEW CHURCH.

1. With the sponsorship of a Global Methodist local church or group of churches, a new local church may be planted by any lay person or clergyperson of the Global Methodist Church. ~~A sponsoring local church, or group of local churches or group of churches shall provide accountability for the project.~~ A sponsoring local church or group of churches shall provide accountability for the plant. In the absence of a sponsoring church or group of churches, an annual conference, through its designated leadership, may authorize the planting of a new local church and provide accountability.

2. Each annual conference shall determine the criteria required for the chartering of a new local church. The conference superintendent shall designate the district to which the new church shall belong.

3. ~~Upon the request of the organizing pastor, the presiding elder shall call the interested people to meet at an appointed time for the purpose of organizing them into a chartered local church or may by written authorization designate an elder in the district to call such a meeting.~~ After the criteria for chartering have been met, upon the request of the organizing pastor or laity, the presiding elder shall call the interested people to meet at an appointed time and place for the purpose of organizing them into a chartered local church or may by written authorization designate another elder to call such a meeting. Following a time of worship, an opportunity shall be given to those in attendance to present themselves for membership, whether by transfer or profession of faith. Upon organization, the new local church shall function under the provisions of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1178

¶452

Closure of Local Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

While there are numerous references to what should happen when a local church closes, there is currently no mechanism in the BDD to govern the process of closing a church. This would give churches that option. It should be placed after the current ¶451 – Transfer of a Local Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶452 AND RENUMBERS SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS AND SECTIONS

New Section Heading: Section XII: Closure of a Local Church

¶ 452 CLOSURE OF A LOCAL CHURCH

If a local church determines that it cannot continue to exist as a local church, it may choose to close by majority vote of a Church Conference. As part of the resolution for closure, the closing church shall indicate how and where all property and assets shall be distributed. The Presiding Elder will ensure that the provisions in ¶¶428 & 429.7 are upheld.

PETITION 1345

¶452.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Cooperative Parish Structure

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph prescribes an expanded governance structure, including multiple layers of councils and committees, that increases institutional complexity and is not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts. The revision preserves the ability of local churches to cooperate in ministry under appropriate leadership while removing non-essential structural requirements and bureaucratic expansion. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶452.1

¶ 452. ~~COOPERATIVE PARISH. 1. A cooperative parish is a designated geographical area containing two or more local churches that have agreed to work together under unified parish leadership. The pastor and any other appointed clergy or employed staff work as a unified ministry team. Each local church has its own church council, but there is also a parish council consisting of representatives from each local church council that governs the coordinated efforts of the cooperative parish. There will also be a parish-wide Pastor-Parish or Staff-Parish Relations Committee. There may also be other parish-wide committees where financial support, property, or program ministry are shared parish-wide. The presiding elder, with the approval of the bishop, may form a cooperative parish in any suitable ministry setting with the consent of the local churches concerned.~~

A cooperative parish may be formed by the presiding elder, with the approval of the bishop and the consent of the local churches, to enable shared ministry among two or more congregations.

PETITION 1179

¶452.2

Clarify Creation of Cooperative Parishes

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Currently, ¶ 452.1 states that the PE and Bishop can "form" a cooperative parish, then ¶ 452.2 states that the Cabinet can "organize" them separately from creating the policies and procedures. Stated this way, it makes the locus of control confusing. Leaving the authority of forming a cooperative parish with the PE and Bishop, but making it clear that the Cabinet creates and approves policies and procedures on how to organize cooperative parishes is better.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶452.2

~~2. The cabinet may organize cooperative parishes and may create appropriate policies and procedures as fits their ministry context.~~

2. The cabinet may create appropriate policies and procedures to organize cooperative parishes as fits their ministry context.

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Ecumenical Congregation Definition

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes aspirational language, descriptive purpose statements, and an informational taxonomy of ecumenical arrangements that are not essential for governance and are not enforceable. The revision preserves the authority to form ecumenical congregations and maintains the necessary doctrinal standard while removing non-essential, descriptive, and classification-based content. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶453.1

~~¶ 453. ECUMENICAL CONGREGATIONS. 1. Definition. Ecumenical congregations may be formed by a local Global Methodist church and one or more local congregations of other Christian traditions, provided that the doctrine and mission of the other denomination does not conflict with those of the Global Methodist Church. Such congregations are formed to enhance ministry, make wise stewardship of limited resources, and live out the ecumenical spirit in creative ways responsive to the needs of God's people, as well as responsive to opportunities for expanded mission and ministry. Forms of ecumenical shared ministries include: (a) a federated church, in which one congregation is related to two or more denominations, with persons choosing to hold membership in one or the other of the denominations; (b) a union church, in which a congregation with one unified membership roll is related to two or more denominations; (c) a merged church, in which two or more congregations of different denominations form one congregation that relates to only one of the constituent denominations; (d) a yoked parish, in which congregations of different denominations share a pastor (see ¶ 453.3).~~

Ecumenical congregations may be formed by a local Global Methodist church and one or more congregations of other Christian traditions, provided that the doctrine and mission of the participating bodies are not in conflict with those of the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1342

¶453.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Simplifying Covenant Requirements for Ecumenical Congregations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes detailed legal and procedural requirements that are not consistently applicable across diverse global contexts and are more appropriately determined at the local or annual conference level. The revision preserves the requirement for a formal agreement and connectional oversight while removing non-essential, prescriptive, and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶453.2

453.2. ~~Covenanting. Congregations forming an ecumenical congregation shall develop a clear covenant of mission, set of bylaws, or articles of agreement that address financial and property matters, church membership, denominational support and funding, committee structure and election procedures, terms and provisions of the pastorate, reporting procedures, relationship with the parent denominations, and matters related to amending or dissolving the agreement. Congregations shall notify the presiding elder of any amending of the covenant agreement and shall consult with the presiding elder prior to dissolving the covenant agreement.~~

Congregations forming an ecumenical congregation shall establish a written agreement governing their shared ministry, in consultation with the presiding elder.

PETITION 1341

¶453.3

Global Unity, Local Clarity: Simplifying Connectional Responsibilities

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This paragraph includes descriptive and institutional language that outlines relational practices rather than enforceable governance requirements. The revision preserves connectional accountability while removing non-essential and context-specific provisions. The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶453.3

453.3. ~~Connectional Responsibilities. Cabinets, conference staff, and other leaders shall work with ecumenical congregations at their inception to maintain ongoing avenues of vital relationship and connection to the denominational church, while recognizing that such avenues must also be maintained with the other denominational partners in that congregation.~~

Ecumenical congregations shall maintain appropriate connection with the Global Methodist Church and participating partner denominations.

PETITION 1180

¶455

Clarify Process of Ensuring Congregational Fidelity

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Currently, the process of ensuring congregational fidelity is required to be led by the bishop, but with the non-residential nature of our episcopacy, this is better led by the Presiding Elder (or their designee) with support from the Bishop and Cabinet.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶455.1, ¶455.2, ¶455.3, ¶455.4, & ¶455.5

¶ 455. CONGREGATIONAL FIDELITY. Central to the integrity of both local congregations and the Global Methodist Church as a whole, the doctrines and discipline of the denomination as outlined in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall be voluntarily and joyfully embraced and practiced by all. Additionally, local congregations covenant to provide connectional funding as set forth in ¶ 449. Congregations that for reason of conscience find themselves unable to do so are accordingly encouraged to affiliate with another Christian denomination more in keeping with their beliefs or practices or disaffiliate from the Global Methodist Church under the provisions of ¶ 1003. Should a congregation consistently advance doctrines or engage in practices not in conformity with this Book of Doctrines and Discipline or fail to remit in full the connectional funding set forth in ¶ 449, the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent shall have the authority to effectuate such a change independently, provided that the following provisions are met:

~~1. If the current pastor of the congregation is promoting doctrines or practices contrary to those of the Global Methodist Church, the bishop shall remove the pastor and appoint a pastor who will promote and defend the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church. The bishop shall then allow time for the new pastor to bring the congregation into conformity.~~

1. If the current pastor of the congregation is promoting doctrines or practices contrary to those of the Global Methodist Church, the Cabinet shall ask the bishop to remove the pastor and appoint a pastor who will promote and defend the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church. The new pastor shall then be given time to bring the congregation into conformity.

~~2. If step one proves unfruitful or the pastor is not contributing to the problem, the bishop and presiding elder shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) or a larger group of the congregation to identify areas of disagreement over Global Methodist Church doctrines or practices, seeking a resolution of such disagreements and restoration of conformity by the local church. The bishop shall winsomely defend and teach the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church in such engagements.~~

2. If step one proves unfruitful or the pastor is not contributing to the problem, the presiding elder or their designee shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) or a larger group of the congregation to identify areas of disagreement over Global Methodist Church doctrines or practices, seeking a resolution of such disagreements and restoration of conformity by the local church. The presiding elder or their designee shall winsomely defend and teach the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church in such engagements.

3. If the local congregation fails to remit its connectional funding in full as calculated annually, the presiding elder

or their designee shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) to encourage remittance.

~~4. If a resolution of the disagreement proves unattainable or the local church does not remit its connectional funding in full following the meeting with the presiding elder, the local church may be involuntarily disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent, by agreement of the bishop, and by an affirmative vote of the presiding elders of the conference in which the local church is located.~~

4. If a resolution of the disagreement proves unattainable or the local church does not remit its connectional funding in full following the meeting with the presiding elder or their designee, the local church may be involuntarily disaffiliated from the Global Methodist Church by a two-thirds vote of the annual conference connectional council or its equivalent, by agreement of the bishop, and by an affirmative vote of the Cabinet.

5. The congregation shall receive timely written notice of the involuntary disaffiliation and may appeal the decision to the Connectional Council on Appeals within sixty days, providing ~~whatever~~ explanations or other details to support their case. During the pendency of any appeal, the involuntary disaffiliation shall be stayed. The determination of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be final. If no appeal occurs or if the involuntary disaffiliation is affirmed on appeal, the disaffiliation shall take effect immediately.

PETITION 1304

¶455.2

Flexibility Regarding Bishop Participation

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

This allows for both maximum flexibility when dealing with difficult situations but without requiring the bishop to be personally in attendance when appropriate.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶455.2

2. If step one proves unfruitful or the pastor is not contributing to the problem, the bishop and/or conference superintendent and presiding elder shall meet with the church council (or its equivalent) or a larger group of the congregation to identify areas of disagreement over Global Methodist Church doctrines or practices, seeking a resolution of such disagreements and restoration of conformity by the local church. The bishop and/or conference superintendent shall winsomely defend and teach the doctrines and practices of the Global Methodist Church in such engagements.

PETITION 1099

¶456

Clarifying the Process for a Local Church Joining the Global Methodist Church in Areas Where an Annu

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

Current language assumes that an annual conference has already been established and details the process for a church to join the GMC in an existing conference. This would add a new subparagraph 6 and clarify the responsible body in the global church to receive the local church in those areas where an annual conference as yet to convene and harmonizes with language provided in ¶ 814.4.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶456 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶456.6

6. In those areas where an annual conference has not been convened approval of local church affiliations shall be the responsibility of the Conferences Commission as provided in ¶ 814.4.

PETITION 1181

¶456

Clarify Process for Churches to Join the GMC

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Local Church

RATIONALE:

We currently have different processes for churches seeking to align with the GMC based on whether that church was part of the UMC or not. Moving forward, since we are no longer in a "transitional" mode, we need to hold all churches to the same standard.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶456 IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH THE FOLLOWING

Section XIV. Christian Congregations Aligning with the Global Methodist Church

¶ 456. CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS ALIGNING WITH THE GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH. 1. Christian congregations may align with the Global Methodist Church through a majority vote of the professing members of the congregation present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting to endorse the doctrinal standards and Social Witness (¶¶ 101–108; 301–302) in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline and express a desire to be connected and accountable to the Global Methodist Church. The church council shall forward their decision to the annual conference connectional council (or its equivalent) of the annual conference to which the local church seeks to relate. It is the responsibility of the annual conference connectional council (or its equivalent) to verify the legality of the process used by the local congregation and the congregation's viability prior to their request being approved. The effective date of alignment shall be established by the annual conference connectional council (or its equivalent.

2. Beginning on the effective date of affiliation, local churches shall function in their annual conferences and districts under this Book of Doctrines and Discipline and shall submit connectional funding according to ¶ 449.

3. Where both a congregation and its pastor affiliate with the Global Methodist Church and both desire to continue the pastoral appointment or lay assignment, the bishop may maintain the current pastoral appointment or lay assignment for the sake of stability and continuity in the church.

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PETITION 1096

¶502 / ¶405

Certified Lay Ministers

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education
Organization: Global Methodist Church

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The current placement and wording of ¶502 create confusion regarding the role of Certified Lay Ministers (CLMs), particularly whether they are intended as a pathway to ordained clergy or as a form of ministry rooted in the local church. Ambiguity also exists concerning the structure of the required training. This legislation clarifies the role, purpose, and preparation of CLMs. Relocating these provisions from the ¶500 series to the ¶400 series more appropriately situates CLMs within the ministry of the local church rather than aligning it with processes and requirements related to ordained clergy.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶502 AND CREATES A NEW ¶405, RENUMBERING SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

¶ 405. CERTIFIED LAY MINISTERS.

1. A certified lay minister (CLM) is a professing member of a local congregation who has received special training in Wesleyan doctrine and our denominational polity, has deep knowledge of scripture, and is endorsed by the church body as a whole in order to serve their local church as an equipped layperson. A CLM seeks to use his/her gifts in service to Christ and to strengthen their local Church. CLMs may work in any area of the church's ministry, including but not limited to leading, teaching, proclaiming/preaching, evangelizing, worship, and caring ministry.

2. Within the Global Methodist Church, CLMs are raised up by their local churches and are encouraged to pursue this path by their pastor, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the charge conference.

3. Qualifications. Persons desiring to be certified lay ministers must fulfill the following qualifications:

a. Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least one year.

b. Satisfactory completion of a program for lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, including an overview of ministry in the Global Methodist Church (covering call, spiritual gifts, discipleship, missions, evangelism, and ethics), our church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.

c. National background check (or regional equivalent where applicable).

d. Written recommendation by the pastor and endorsement by majority vote of the pastor-parish relations committee and the charge conference.

e. Interview and approval by the annual conference board of ministry. A public service of commitment recognizing the certification is recommended.

f. Any of these requirements may be waived at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry upon request of the individual due to exigent circumstances.

4. Qualifications for Course Requirements. Each course should have components that include face-to-face hours, reading or listening to primary resources, and some form of evaluation to prove their acquired knowledge. These requirements will be established by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission.

5. Renewal of Certification. Certification for lay ministry should be renewed every three years by the annual conference board of ministry based on the following:

a. An annual report to the charge conference and annual conference board of ministry outlining what ministry was done during the year.

b. Endorsement by majority vote of the charge conference annually.

c. Written recommendation for renewal by the pastor.

d. Completion of an additional national background check every three years (or regional equivalent where applicable).

e. Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, in an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.), in the last three years. Coursework or training in other settings may be counted to meet this requirement at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry.

f. Any of these requirements may be waived at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry upon request of the individual due to exigent circumstances.

6. The work of a Certified Lay Minister beyond their local church. As laity, a certified lay minister are subject to the annual conference board of ministry. While only clergy are appointed by the bishop, they may request the lay minister to serve as an assignment in a ministry capacity outside his or her own local church.

7. Conditions of service beyond their local church.

a. A certified lay minister serves as a volunteer, but an honorarium and expenses for pulpit supply or other specialized ministries outside one's own local church are appropriate.

b. A certified lay minister serving as a lay staff member of a church or other ministry should be equitably compensated for their work.

c. Those who have received the CLM certification may serve as Church Planters, Interim Ministers, Lay Preachers, or Missionaries and therefore may be assigned to a local church so long as there is also a local Elder who is appointed alongside them to care for the administrative leadership, ordering the life of that local context, and administering the sacraments.

8. Transferring CLM Credentials. Those who have completed a CLM program approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission may transfer to another annual conference if the person relocates.

Those certified in an approved program may be received.

Those certified in a program not currently approved may apply for transfer with an interview and subsequent approval by the receiving Annual Conference Board of Ministry.

Subsequent renewals in that new annual conference will be in accordance with ¶ 402.5.

9. Transition to Clergy. Any person certified as a CLM who later discerns a call to ordained ministry may, at the discretion of the annual conference Board of Ministry, grant equivalency of some or all steps in the candidacy process, declare them a certified candidate and recommend them to the annual conference for ministry, and permitted to proceed toward meeting the requirements for ordination.

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PETITION 1309

¶5XX

Clarifying the Nature of Ordained Ministry and Clergy Relationship to the Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Virginia
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church affirms a Wesleyan, connectional understanding of ordained ministry in which clergy are called by God, set apart by the Church, and appointed within the annual conference. While this is reflected in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, confusion persists in some contexts regarding clergy as employees. This addition clarifies that ordained ministry is a sacred calling, not an employment relationship, while acknowledging limited civil classifications. Grounded in Christ as the Good Shepherd, it strengthens clergy identity, protects the appointment system, and promotes clarity and unity in the Church's understanding of ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶503, RENUMBERING SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

ADD NEW Paragraph 503

¶503 – Clergy Relationship to the Church. Ministry in the Christian church flows from Christ's ministry. Jesus identifies himself as the Good Shepherd and not a hireling (John 10:11–15). In keeping with this understanding, the Global Methodist Church calls and ordains clergy to serve as shepherds of Christ's flock within the covenantal and connectional life of the Church.

Clergy do not serve as employees of a local church, district, or annual conference. The Church appoints clergy to serve, and clergy remain accountable to its doctrine, discipline, and mission.

Civil authorities and other entities may classify clergy as employees for limited legal or regulatory purposes such as taxation, benefits, or insurance. These classifications do not define the nature of ordained ministry or alter the relationship between clergy, the annual conference, and the congregations they serve.

Ordained ministry therefore represents a sacred calling under the authority of Christ and his Church rather than an employment relationship.

Renumber current paragraph 503 and all subsequent paragraphs in part 5 to reflect the insertion of a new paragraph 503.

PETITION 1449

¶501.2

Incorporating Missionaries Within the Denominationally Recognized Offices of Ministry

Petitioner: Kingdom Advancement Commission
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition incorporates missionaries into the BOD and denominationally recognized offices of ministry, and brings alignment with the BOD paragraph devoted to The Ministry of Missionaries.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶501.2

¶501. MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH.

2. With the exception of the offices of bishop and presiding elder, which are reserved for elders, all laity and clergy may serve in various offices. Offices of ministry refer to what followers of Christ do for the general building up of the body of Christ. ~~Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:28).~~ Offices include, but are not limited to, apostles, prophets, missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers, administrators, miracle workers, healers, and helpers (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:28). The Holy Spirit works in and through a call to ministry and the subsequent discernment and affirmation of that call by the church.

PETITION 1339

¶502.1

Certified Lay Minister Areas of Work

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This petition removes unnecessary language, while still defining that certified lay ministers can work in any area of a church's ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.1

CERTIFIED LAY MINISTERS. 1. A certified lay minister is a professing member of a local congregation who has received special training in Wesleyan doctrine and our denominational polity, and endorsement by the church in order to serve the church as laity. This category encompasses all those who were previously named certified lay servants, certified lay speakers, certified lay ministers, deaconesses, home missioners, and lay missioners. ~~Certified lay ministers may work in any area of the church's ministry, including leading, teaching, proclaiming/preaching, evangelizing, worship, and caring ministry.~~ Certified lay ministers may work in any area of the church's ministry. As laity, a certified lay minister is not subject to the approval or appointment of the bishop or presiding elder, although they may request the lay minister to serve a ministry capacity outside his or her own local church.

PETITION 1001

¶502.2

Certified Lay Ministers - Clarity of Approved Training

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: South Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Inserting the phrase “that meets the standards” prior to “approved by the Commission on Higher Education and Ministry” provides flexibility to annual conference lay ministry training teams to develop their own programs and courses that meet the needs of their context, while also adhering to denominationally approved standards. This will allow the Commission on Higher Education and Ministry to focus on key standards and guidelines for uniformity, while empowering local implementation.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.2

2. Qualifications. Persons desiring to be certified lay ministers must fulfill the following qualifications:

a. Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least two years.

b. Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, that meets the standards approved by the Commission on Higher Education and Ministry, covering the church’s doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.

c. Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, that meets the standards approved by the Commission on Higher Education and Ministry, on an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.). Coursework or training in other settings may be counted to meet this requirement at the discretion of the board of ministry.

d. National background check.

e. Written recommendation by the pastor and endorsement by majority vote of the pastor-parish relations committee and the charge conference.

f. Interview and approval by the annual conference board of ministry. A public service of commitment recognizing the certification is recommended.

PETITION 1297

¶502.2

Clarifying CLM Course Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Provide clarification that the courses are to be provided by programs approved by the MHEC and being more specific to what the courses entail.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.2.b

Qualifications. Persons desiring to be certified lay ministers must fulfill the following qualifications:

~~Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, covering the church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.~~ Satisfactory completion of courses in lay ministry, from a program approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, covering the following:

Understanding one's calling to ministry

GMC doctrine, history, and polity

Basic Bible knowledge

Mission and evangelism

Caring for all of God's people

PETITION 1337

¶502.2

Certified Lay Minister Background Check

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The current wording of paragraph 502.2 (d) is U.S.-centric and does not meet the needs of our global body. Therefore, this petition reflects the changes needed to reflect our global movement for every local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.2.d

~~National background check.~~

The same background check that is required for conference clergy.

PETITION 1338

¶502.2

Certified Lay Minister Qualifications

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The congregational membership requirement for certified lay ministers should be the same as that of ordained clergy (reference ¶506.1) and as that of certified lay and clergy evangelists (reference ¶514.1)

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.2.a

~~Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least two years.~~

Professing member of a local Global Methodist congregation (or its predecessor) for at least one year.

PETITION 1343

¶502.2

Local Administration of Certified Lay Minister Formation and Certification

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Organization: US: Heartland
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church is connectional and structured from the local church outward, entrusting leadership development to annual conferences. Certified Lay Ministry is inherently local and contextual, arising from the ministry needs of congregations and regions. Training, formation, and certification should remain close to those who understand these contexts best. This petition transfers responsibility for Certified Lay Minister training to annual conferences, aligning lay ministry with the Church's bottom-up structure. Annual conferences are best positioned to provide doctrinally faithful, contextually relevant training that strengthens lay leadership and advances the mission of the Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶502.2

(b) ~~Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, covering the church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.~~ Satisfactory completion of a course in lay ministry, approved by the annual conference board of ministry, covering the church's doctrine, history, polity, and basic Bible knowledge.

(c) ~~Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission, on an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.).~~ Satisfactory completion of at least one advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the conference board of ministry, on an area of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship leading, caring ministry, etc.). Coursework or training in other settings may be counted to meet this requirement at the discretion of the annual conference board of ministry.

(e) ~~Satisfactory completion of at least one additional advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the Commission on Ministry, in the last three years.~~ Satisfactory completion of at least one additional advanced course in lay ministry, approved by the conference board of ministry, in the last three years.

PETITION 1135

Clergy Orders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Great Lakes
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition aligns the calling, ministry, and polity of the clergy orders to effectively discern calling, equip, and deploy within calling. ¶503.1 is the root revision of the petition. Service to the general church according to call is addressed in ¶207.4 and ¶208, impacting GC delegate elections (¶709.6). Revised educational requirements (¶507.3) stem from the revised ¶503.1, requiring a change in ¶507.2 and ¶509.1 for consistency, and in ¶507.4 as not to alter elder education. Changes to ¶504.2 match oversight language, which cascades to ¶413, ¶409.3, ¶509.4, ¶512.1, and ¶512.2 enabling elders to carry out their revised ministry of oversight and for consistency. ¶509.5 is removed for redundancy and incompatibility after revisions.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶503.1, ¶207.4, ¶208, ¶709.6, ¶504.2, ¶507.2, ¶507.3, ¶507.4, ¶509, ¶509.4, ¶409.3, ¶413, ¶512.1, & ¶512.2 AND DELETES ¶509.5

¶503.1. *Order of Deacons*. Within the people of God, some persons are called to the ministry of deacon, which is a ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice. The words deacon, deaconess, and diaconate all spring from a common Greek root—diakonos, or "servant," and diakonia, or "service." ~~This ministry exemplifies and leads the Church in the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and in the world. Deacons are to witness to the Word in their words and actions, and to embody and lead the community's service in the world for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice.~~ This ministry models for the church the servanthood every Christian is called to live both in the church and in the world. Deacons witness to the Word in their words and actions, offer service and compassion to the church body, serve the laity in their service to the world for the sake of enacting God's compassion and justice, and serve the elders in their ministry to the church.

Within and beyond a local church, deacons may, among other ministries, lead in worship, preach and teach, conduct marriages, bury the dead, care for the sick and needy, and interpret the needs of the world to the church. Deacons may also consecrate or assist with the sacraments in accordance with ¶ 413. Deacons may serve in a variety of offices within and beyond a local church, including, but not limited to, serving as pastor of a local church under the oversight of an elder appointed as senior pastor to the charge. Deacons retain their call and responsibility as laity to witness and service in the world. ~~Ordination as a deacon is for life, whether a person is subsequently ordained an elder or not; persons may remain as deacons should they desire to do so.~~ Ordination as a deacon is for life, whether a person is subsequently ordained an elder or not.

¶ 207.4. ~~To elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference as per the number determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection and in good standing. Lay delegates shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.~~

To elect elder and lay delegates to the General Conference as per the number determined by the General Conference. Elder delegates shall be members in full connection and in good standing. Lay delegates shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Both elder and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority with clergy (deacons and elders) voting for elder delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

¶ 208. *Article VII. The General Conference* — As per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall initially meet for a convening General Conference,

then as a General Conference approximately two years thereafter. ~~Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference.~~ Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be elders and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference. The General Conference may at its discretion include within its number a limited number of delegates, with or without voice and vote, from other autonomous Methodist bodies. A special session of the General Conference to deal with a particular issue or need may be called by a majority vote of the General Conference or of its episcopal leadership. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors. Where necessary, the General Conference may meet virtually with the approval of the bishops of the church and the Connectional Council.

¶ 709.6. ~~Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.~~

Elect elder and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference. Elder delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders shall be members in full connection and may serve as elder delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years. Both elder and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy (deacons and elders) voting for elder delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

¶ 504.2. *The Ministry of Oversight (Apostolic Ministry).* Elders who are called and appointed to oversee the work of others are a part of the ministry of oversight or the apostolic ministry of the Global Methodist Church. Upon their election to the office, elders may serve as a bishop of the church to defend the faith and to provide oversight and discipline to the churches and clergy that compose the annual conference. In turn, bishops may call and appoint other elders as presiding elders to give guidance and direction to those serving as clergy within their district, organize new churches, and assist, discipline, and provide sacramental support to laity, deacons, and elders in located ministry. Furthermore, all elders are called to the ministry of oversight and should expect to serve by overseeing deacons' and supply pastors' service to the church and laity's ministry to the world among multiple congregations, class meetings, etc. within the elder's pastoral charge.

¶ 507.2 *Pathways to Ordination.* While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination as elders within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of

Divinity (M.Div.), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (M.A.) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (M.Min.), a Master's in Theology (M.Th.), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a non-degree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school. The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued.

¶ 507.3 ~~Deacons' Educational Requirements. A total of ten courses (approximately 30 credit hours) are required for those ordained as deacons. These ten courses are:~~

Deacons' Educational Competencies. Competency is required in ten (10) areas of history, polity, theology, and ministry for those ordained as deacons. Deacon candidates shall demonstrate their competency in the ten areas through a written or oral examination developed by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. The examinations shall be evaluated by the annual conference board of ministry using rubrics produced by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. The annual conference shall facilitate a course of study for deacon candidates to prepare to demonstrate their competency in the ten (10) areas listed in this paragraph and the ordination questions for deacons (¶ 509) using minimum standards developed by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education.

These ten (10) competency areas are:

- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to New Testament
- Systematic Theology
- Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine
- Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church
- Basics of Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Evangelism and Mission
- Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship

• Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics

¶ 507.4 *Elders' Educational Requirements.* ~~Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the GMC may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the GMC following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required courses as follows:~~

Deacons in the Global Methodist Church may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the Global Methodist Church following the completion of at least twenty (20) courses, including eighteen (18) required courses as follows:

• Introduction to Old Testament

• Introduction to New Testament

• Systematic Theology

• Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine

• Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church

• Basics of Preaching

• Pastoral Care

• Evangelism and Mission

• Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship

• Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics

• History of Christianity through the Reformation

• History of Christianity, Reformation to the present

• Apologetics

• Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation

• Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution

• An additional Old Testament Class

• An additional New Testament Class

• Ministry of The Holy Spirit

Elective Courses may be chosen from among the following areas:

- Mission of the Church and Church Renewal
- Cross Cultural Ministry and Evangelism
- Advanced Preaching
- Hebrew or Greek language studies
- Pastoral Counseling
- Church Finance and Administration
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a hospital or similar setting
- Philosophy of Religion
- Field Study in Israel
- Theology Electives
- Theology of Worship
- Children or Youth Ministry
- Gospel Vision for Justice
- Mission and Church Renewal
- Media and Modern Applications
- Directed Internship or independent study

¶ 509. ORDINATION AS DEACON. Within the Global Methodist Church, certified candidates must first be ordained as deacons and, after ordination as deacons, may be ordained as elders. 1. *Ordination Questions*. ~~Upon completion of the educational requirements of ¶507.3, a candidate for ordination as deacon shall be interviewed by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent.~~ Upon completion of the educational competencies of ¶507.3, a candidate for ordination as deacon shall be interviewed by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. Prior to the interview, the candidates shall be asked to respond in writing to the following questions:

(*a) What is your personal experience of God?*

(b) What is your understanding of evil?

(c) What is your understanding of grace?

(d) How do you understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and in the Church?

(e) What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God?

(f) What significance do you believe that the resurrection holds?

(g) What is your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?

(h) What is your understanding of the nature and mission of the Church?

(i) What gifts and graces do you bring to the work of ministry?

(j) What is the meaning of ordination?

(k) What is the role and significance of the sacraments?

(l) Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity and will you support and maintain it?

(m) For the sake of the church's witness, are you willing to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, exercising self-control in your personal habits, integrity in all of your relationships and if married, fidelity in your covenant with your spouse, or if single, chastity in your personal conduct?

The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church.

¶ 509.4. Deacons may be appointed to serve as part of a ministry team in a local church (including as a pastor) within the charge and under the oversight of an elder or another ministry setting by the bishop, or they may secure their own position with the approval and appointment of the bishop.

~~¶ 509.5. Deacons considering a call to ordination as an elder, or in whom the gifts and graces for the ministry of elder are recognized by a bishop or presiding elder, may be appointed to the office of pastor in a local church. If such an appointment is more than temporary, a deacon who accepts such an appointment must declare candidacy for ordination as an elder and begin the process toward such ordination following the completion of all educational requirements as a deacon.~~

¶ 409.3.

~~When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an ordained or licensed minister, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge.~~ When a pastoral charge is not able to be served by an elder, the bishop, upon recommendation of the cabinet, may assign a qualified and trained layperson to do the work of ministry in that charge. In such cases, the charge shall be incorporated into another pastoral charge to be overseen by an elder. ~~The layperson is accountable to the presiding elder or another ordained minister appointed to oversee the charge, who will make provision for sacramental ministry. If the assignment is to continue longer than one year, the layperson will begin the process of becoming a certified candidate for ministry, coming under the care of the conference board of ministry. The layperson assigned is also accountable to the policies and procedures of the annual conference where assigned.~~

¶ 413. SACRAMENTAL AUTHORITY. During the English Reformation, the church was defined as the community

where the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered (Methodist Articles of Religion XIII). In keeping with the historic practice of the Christian church, elders are ordained to oversee the sacramental life of the church and thus have full authority and responsibility to preside at celebrations of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Bishops may extend sacramental authority to deacons appointed to the office of pastor in a local church or to another specialized ministry setting for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments. Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the appointed ministry setting and is exercised under the oversight and authority of a presiding elder. Elders may extend sacramental authority to deacons serving within the elder's charge. Such sacramental authority for a deacon is limited to the ministry setting of the extending elder's charge and is exercised under the direction, oversight, and authority of the extending elder.

¶ 512.1 ~~Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.~~

Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the charge and oversight of an elder. Supply pastors appointed to or serving a church plant not part of an existing pastoral charge are accountable to the sponsoring body according to the provisions of ¶ 450.

¶ 512.2.

~~In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate.~~

In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes training by the annual conference board of ministry about the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments under the direction of the elder overseeing the charge. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.

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PETITION 1128

¶505

Character and Competency of the Ordained.

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

A MHED Commission petition to replace Para. 507 includes a line that says all education is to ensure that clergy "meets the qualifications of Para. 505". Education must be aimed at developing unique competencies and character that translate into our international connections. Boards of ministry, then, can use both Paras. 505 and 507 as evaluative tools for ordination discernment. Specific language from Wesley's 1756 address was kept to stay anchored in our rich history.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶505 IN ITS ENTIRETY

¶505. CHARACTER AND COMPETENCY OF THE ORDAINED. Those to be ordained must meet the following qualifications In the same spirit as John Wesley's 1756 Address to the Clergy, before clergy are ordained, they are to demonstrate a distinct formation and competency. All education (Para. 507) seeks to serve these formative competencies:

Deacons and Elders

Proficiency with the Old and New Testaments, an understanding of the arc of Scripture, and commitment to the authority of Scripture

Grounding in Wesleyan Theology

General understanding of Wesleyan history and polity

Confirmation of call to set apart ministry to the Church

Humility and Self-Denial

Emotional maturity within systems of accountability

Intention to glorify God and save souls

Eminent love for God and all people

Understanding of the Sacramental and worship life of the church

Gifts in communication and the care of souls

Freedom from love of money, praise, ambition, sensuality, and diversions

Devotion to God in word and deed

Careful abstinence from all evil and its appearance

20 Elders

21 Understanding of and surrender to the Order of Elders, ministerial offices, and call

22 Ability to defend the orthodox faith

23 Comprehensive knowledge of Scripture

24 Thorough grounding in the mystery of the sacraments

25 Conviction for and thorough understanding of our polity

26 Commitment to Wesleyan spiritual formation

27 Demonstrated gifts in preaching and proclamation

28 Fluency in the work, person, fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit

29 Gifts in ordering the life of the local and connectional church

30 Demonstrated ability to empower laity and raise up future clergy

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PETITION 1412

¶505

Covenantal Connections: Clergy

Petitioner: Kenneth "Toby" Chastain
Organization: Russellville (US: North Alabama)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It establishes shared expectations for clergy to participate in Wesleyan discipleship, strengthen their local congregations and conferences, protect the vulnerable, and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. It ensures every charge receives faithful pastoral oversight and calls all leaders to pursue the highest standards of training and ministry excellence. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶505

¶ 505. BASIC QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORDAINED. Those to be ordained must meet the following qualifications:

1. Have a personal faith in Jesus Christ and be committed to Christ as Savior and Lord.

2. Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the General Rules, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationships, fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God.

3. Have a call by God and the people of God to devote themselves to the work of ministry.

4. Be able to effectively communicate the Christian faith.

5. Give evidence of God's gifts for ordained ministry and promise of future usefulness in the mission of the church.

6. Accept the authority of Scripture; be competent in the disciplines of Scripture, theology, church history and polity; possess the skills essential for the practice of ministry, and lead in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

7. Be accountable to the church, accept its doctrinal standards, discipline, and authority, accept the supervision of those appointed to the ministry of oversight, and live in covenant with its ordained ministers.

8. Be persons of integrity who have shown themselves to be faithful to the covenant fellowship of their local congregation and willing to submit to increased standards of covenantal fellowship among clergy.

9. Be persons who demonstrate holy lives.

(NEW) ¶ 506. CLERGY COVENANT FELLOWSHIP. This clergy covenant fellowship is defined by the annual conference board of ministry and shall include at minimum a contextual understanding of the following:

1. Reporting to one another annually, through our charge conference of record, how we are living out our faith.

2. Submitting ourselves to peer review for living, leading, and teaching this covenant life together at least once in every six year period.

3. Living in covenant accountability with one another through Wesleyan classes and bands.

4. Living as faithful members of our covenant fellowship by using our gifts, talents, and resources to strengthen the ministries of our annual conference.

5. Living lives of holiness as we seek to protect the vulnerable among us, taking serious the need for appropriate policies, procedures, training, and covenant protections to be in place when these policies and procedures break down or fail (where applicable by national or local laws, all clergy serving in any capacity in the Global Methodist Church shall insure themselves with a package of insurance coverage of professional liability and misconduct. Each clergyperson shall annually submit a certificate of insurance.

6. Submitting to the spiritual leadership at least annually for accountability (including but not limited to bishops, conference superintendents, presiding elders, and supervising elders).

7. Seeking to attain the highest level of training and learning appropriate to their office including participating in regular opportunities for spiritual growth and annual continuing education.

(renumber afterwards)

To further align the Book of Doctrines and Discipline with these proposed changes, the following changes are needed for clarity and congruency.

¶ 517. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

1. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint clergy in good standing in other Christian denominations to serve appointments or ecumenical ministries while retaining their denominational affiliation. Their appointment shall be as a Valid Deacon or Valid Elder as long as they continue to maintain accountability to the covenant fellowship under the guidelines of their annual conference board of ministry. Clergypersons retaining their affiliation with other denominations while receiving appointment in the Global Methodist Church shall meet the following criteria:

Complete an application prepared by the board of ministry, including the following:

Testimony to their Christian faith and call to ministry.

Permission and release of any required psychological tests, a criminal background and credit check, reports of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

Either a notarized statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse, OR a notarized statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

A statement agreeing to teach, support and maintain Global Methodist Church doctrine.

Give evidence through an interview with the board of ministry that they have read the Book of Doctrine and Discipline and will support and maintain Global Methodist Church discipline and polity.

Present suitable credentials as an ordained clergyperson from another Christian denomination,

Present evidence of completion of education equivalent to that required for deacons in the Global Methodist Church. Clergypersons holding ordination from another denomination or congregation, but not meeting the required educational standards of the Global Methodist church may be appointed provisionally, with full educational requirements for deacon to be completed within three years of the start of the appointment. Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown annually.

2. ~~Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference on all matters except the following:~~

Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote in the annual conference, as long as they continue to maintain accountability to the covenant fellowship under the guidelines of their annual conference board of ministry, on all matters except the following:

constitutional amendments;

election of delegates to General or annual conferences; and

all matters of ordination character, and conference relations of ministers. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may serve on any board, commission or committee of the annual conference, except the board of ministry and the board of trustees. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may not be elected as delegates to General or annual conferences.

3. Between conference sessions, the board of ministry may approve such persons for appointment pending their approval at the next regular clergy session of the annual conference. The bishop may make ad interim appointments of such persons once approved by the board of ministry. In every case, prior examination and on-going review shall be made of such person's understanding, acceptance, and willingness to support and maintain the doctrine, discipline, and polity of the Global Methodist Church. Such individuals must show willingness to submit to and maintain accountability to the covenant fellowship under the guidelines of their annual conference board of ministry as a requirement of receiving the appointment by the bishop.

¶ 908. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS.

1. Chargeable Offenses – A bishop or clergy member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:

e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

f. forsaking the covenant fellowship (¶ 505 & ¶ 506).

(renumber afterwards)

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PETITION 1022

¶505.2

Clarifying Ordination Standards in Light of the Church's Teaching on Sexual

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline establishes expectations for ordained clergy, including fidelity in Christian marriage between one man and one woman and chastity in singleness (¶505). However, questions have arisen regarding how these standards apply in cases involving homosexual practice, transgender identity, or abstention without repentance and transformation. The Wesleyan tradition teaches that holiness is not merely restraining sin but the transforming work of God's grace leading to repentance, obedience, and new life in Christ. Ordained ministry therefore requires clarity, consistency, and faithfulness to the Church's doctrine.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶505.2

~~(2) Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the General Rules, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationships, fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God.~~

(2) Nurture and cultivate spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the General Rules, including responsible self-control by exhibiting personal habits that are conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all relationshipsand faithfulness to the Church's teaching on Christian marriage and sexual holiness, including fidelity in a Christian marriage between one man and one woman, chastity in singleness, social responsibility, and the knowledge and love of God (¶302.7, 302.8). Candidates for ordination must demonstrate a life of repentance, obedience, and ongoing transformation consistent with biblical holiness, rather than merely managing or justifying sin.

PETITION 1008

¶505.8

Statement Opposing the Ordination of Homosexuality

Petitioner: Springfield Oaks
Organization: US: South Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

We believe it is important to clarify that the Global Methodist Church according to God's Word opposes the ordination of gay celibate people and self avowed, practicing homosexuals.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶505 BY ADDING ¶505.8

(8) While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, no person who identifies as a gay celibate person or as a self-avowed practicing homosexual shall be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The Global Methodist Church.(Leviticus 18:22-24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Romans 1:24-28, Jude 1:7)

PETITION 1009

¶505.9

Opposition to Ordination of Transgendered People

Petitioner: Springfield Oaks
Organization: US: South Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

We live in a culture that affirms transgenderism as supported by God's Word. We believe it is important for the Global Methodist Church to clarify that the practice of transgenderism and the ordination of transgendered people are incompatible with God's Word.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶505.9 BY ADDING ¶505.9

(9) While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. The practice of transgenderism is incompatible with Christian teaching. Therefore, no person who identifies themselves as transgendered shall be certified as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The Global Methodist Church. (Leviticus 18:22-24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Romans 1:24-28, Jude 1:7)

PETITION 1003

¶506

Entrance into Ordained Ministry Traditional and Alternative Pathways

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Establishes the critical role of the PPRC in clarifying the call to ordained ministry with resources by the Board of Ministry. The GMC is a growing movement, however, there exist many geographic areas where a local GM church does not exist. It is often on college campuses & seminary where people hear & discern a call into ordained ministry. Their religious life often looks different than the average person. This provides an alternative approach for persons discerning a call into ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶506.1a AND ADDS A NEW ¶506.2

¶ 506. ENTRANCE INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY.

1. Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with their local pastor or presiding elder (district superintendent) to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership in a local Global Methodist church (or its predecessor) for at least one year and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent. They must supply a written call to ministry to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. Upon recommendation by two-thirds secret ballot of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent, the person is presented to the charge conference for a vote by simple majority on whether to approve them for candidacy.

a. The Board of Ministry of each annual conference should provide the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent resources to assist the discerning a call to ordained ministry for persons seeking to be approved as a candidate for ministry.

2. Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry who reside in geographic areas where there does not exist a local Global Methodist church or are attending college or are attending seminary should meet with the presiding elder (district superintendent) or Board of Ministry chairperson (or their designee) for the annual conference to which they wish to join. They must have held membership in a local church or for those enrolled in college or seminary been active in a campus/chapel ministry for at least one year. They must demonstrate theological alignment with the Global Methodist Church and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent and receive approval from the presiding elder, Board of Ministry chairperson (or their designee). They shall fulfill all other requirements as stated in this 406 and must be approved by the Board of Ministry for consideration as a candidate for ministry.

~~2~~ 3. *Candidacy Discernment*. After local church approval or alternative approval under ¶ 406.2, the candidate shall spend a minimum of six months under the supervision of the annual conference Board of Ministry in discernment, which must include a supervised internship or employment in a ministry setting. During this time, the candidate shall:

a. Engage in discernment, including but not limited to, completion of a guidebook, mentoring, and participation in a small group with other candidates;

b. Undergo a psychological evaluation, and background and credit check; and

c. Upon completion of the minimum of six months of discernment, the candidate shall write a formal, updated statement detailing his or her call to ordained ministry and submit it to the annual conference Board of Ministry.

~~3~~ 4. The annual conference Board of Ministry, or subgroup thereof, shall interview the candidate and the annual conference Board of Ministry shall then vote on whether to certify the candidate by majority vote.

~~4~~ 5. A certified candidate must undergo a period of spiritual formation under the supervision of the annual conference Board of Ministry until such time as the person is ordained a deacon.

PETITION 1112

¶506

Clarity in Process of Candidacy and Entrance to Ministry

Petitioner: Burt Palmer
Organization: Kingwood (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The current language for candidates for ministry does not specifically address the stages of a candidate for ministry, the timing of background checks or specifying annual renewal by a board of ministry. We also need to open up the pathway into ministry for persons who have served in church ministry in a way that specifies clarity of theology and honors years of service serving as a season of discernment. This petition also for persons outside the GMC to enter a pathway of minstry through an interview process that allows one to be a certified candidate to be appointed while education is completed; however, it also requires an annual renewal as with all candidates for ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶506 IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACES IT WITH THE FOLLOWING

¶ 506. ENTRANCE INTO ORDAINED MINISTRY.

1. Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with their local pastor or presiding elder to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership in a local Global Methodist church for at least two years and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

a. Where no Global Methodist Church exists and/or where persons have served in representative ministry or on a pastoral staff in other denominations, a person may be presented by a presiding elder to an annual conference board of ministry, or subgroup thereof, to be interviewed to become a certified candidate.

b. The person being recommended will supply the most recent background check, psychological evaluation, and reference for ministry to the board of ministry. . They will submit written answers to the question in ¶506.2.d. The purpose of the interview is to confirm doctrinal alignment with the Global Methodist Church.

c. The board of ministry may require any such additional documentation, references, and credentials as deemed necessary to fulfill this expectation. If approved, the person shall be a certified candidate and are amenable to the standards stated here in ¶ 506.3 and ¶ 506.4.

2. *Candidacy Process and Status*

a. *Inquiring Candidate* – an inquiring candidate is a person sensing a call to ordained ministry in the Global Methodist Church. This candidate should contact their local pastor and presiding elder to discuss the process and requirements of ¶ 506.

b. *Recommended Candidate* – a recommended candidate is a person who has completed the following requirements:

i. Be interviewed by and recommended by a two-thirds secret ballot of the pastor-parish relations committee or equivalent.

ii. Be presented to the charge conference for a vote by simple majority on whether to approve them for candidacy.

iii. Completed a background and credit check contracted by the local church or annual conference; outside the United States the background and credit check is determined by the board of ministry.

c. After local church approval, the candidate shall spend a minimum of six months under the supervision of the annual conference board of ministry in discernment, which must include a supervised internship or employment in a ministry setting. During this time, the candidate shall:

i. Engage in discernment, including but not limited to, completion of the Global Methodist Church's *Candidacy Guidebook*, mentoring, and participation in a small group with other candidates;

ii. Undergo a psychological evaluation contracted by the annual conference; outside the United States the evaluation is determined by the board of ministry.

d. Upon completion of the minimum of six months of discernment, and prior to being interviewed for certification, the recommended candidate shall provide to board of ministry or subgroup thereof, written responses to the following questions:

i. How has the candidacy process shaped your understanding of your call to ministry?

ii. What is your understanding of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church?

iii. What are your beliefs about Scripture?

iv. What is your understanding of the biblical and Wesleyan way of salvation?

3. The annual conference board of ministry, or subgroup thereof, shall interview the candidate and the annual conference board of ministry shall then vote on whether to certify the candidate by majority vote.

a. *Certified Candidate* – a certified candidate is one who has completed all of the requirements in ¶ 506 and has been approved by the board of ministry and the annual conference.

4. A certified candidate must be approved annually by the clergy session of annual conference and continue spiritual formation under the supervision of the annual conference board of ministry until such time as the person is ordained a deacon. The board of ministry report to the clergy session of annual conference shall include the list of certified candidates and the year in which they were certified.

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PETITION 1295

¶506.1

Provide Flexibility in Transitioning Pastors from Other Denominations

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

There are those who wish to become clergy from outside of the denomination, such as they have been serving as clergy in another tradition. This requirement means that they must first join a local congregation and satisfy this membership requirement before beginning the candidacy process. This makes them unable to serve during that year per this paragraph unless as "pulpit supply" or be unemployed. This has resulted in increased friction when recruiting pastors from other traditions. The proposed flexibility allows pastors seeking to join the GMC and serve as clergy while moving through the GMC candidacy process. This does not require a Board of Ministry to waive this requirement, it only allows them to do so.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶506.1

1. Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with their local pastor or presiding elder to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership in a local Global Methodist church (or its predecessor) for at least one year and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent. The Board of Ministry may determine to waive this requirement and/or require an alternative means to evaluate their commitment to the Global Methodist Church on a case by case basis. Upon recommendation by two-thirds secret ballot of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent, the person is presented to the charge conference for a vote by simple majority on whether to approve them for candidacy.

PETITION 1460

¶506.1

Permit Nomination of Candidates for Ordination by a Presiding Elder or Conference Superintendent

Petitioner: Jonathan Diggs

Organization: Williamsburg Daybreak (US: Virginia)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Paragraph 506 requires candidates for ordained ministry to hold membership in a local Global Methodist church for at least one year prior to entering candidacy. While intended to support discernment, this requirement can delay or prevent otherwise qualified candidates, including seminary graduates and others who are theologically aligned with the Global Methodist Church, from entering the process. Allowing a presiding elder or conference superintendent to nominate persons who have not yet satisfied the one-year requirement creates an additional pathway into candidacy without weakening existing standards for ordination.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶506.1

Persons who hear a call to ordained ministry should meet with their local pastor or presiding elder to inquire about candidacy. They must have held membership in a local Global Methodist church (or its predecessor) for at least one year and have a secondary school diploma or equivalent. Upon recommendation by two-thirds secret ballot of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent, the person is presented to the charge conference for a vote by simple majority on whether to approve them for candidacy. Alternatively, a presiding elder or conference superintendent may nominate a person who has not yet satisfied the one-year membership requirement for candidacy, as warranted by the ministry needs of the conference, subject to approval by a two-thirds vote of the conference cabinet. Any candidate so nominated must complete all requirements for candidacy as set forth in this paragraph.

PETITION 1070

¶507

Clarification on Educational Requirements

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

With an increasing number of approved educational programs around the world, there is a need to ensure consistency between what is being offered in various institutional courses and cultures. In addition, adding brief descriptions of each required course clarifies for both laity and clergy what the expectations are with respect to preparation and study for the ministry. And for those not versed in theological or biblical backgrounds, the use of identifying language is also helpful with regard to such terms as "hermeneutics."

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507.3 AND ¶507.4

507.3 *Deacons' Educational Requirements*. A total of ten courses (approximately thirty credit hours or its nondegree equivalent) are required for those ordained as deacons.

These ten courses are:

· Introduction to the Old Testament:the geography, history, religious, and cultural contexts of the Old Testament, as well as key characters and events and how they contribute to a cohesive story of the unfolding covenant and plan of God for the world.

· Introduction to the New Testament: the authorship and genres, as well as the key characters, events, and themes in individual books. Study should also result in a clear understanding of the mission of Jesus and the biblical call to holy living.

· Systematic Theology: key doctrines of Christian thinking, including the existence and nature of God, the nature of salvation and grace, the work of the Holy Spirit, eschatology (end-times), Christian morality and ethics, and the connection between belief and practice.

· Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine: Wesleyan views of creation, original sin, the authority of scripture, the types of grace, as well as the doctrine of perfection and emphasis on holiness and the purpose and calling of the church, as seen in the sermons and hymns of the Wesleys.

· Methodist History and the Polity of the Global Methodist Church: the rise of Methodism and its growth around the world, including key individuals, as well as the features of GMC polity such as itineracy, episcopacy, connectionalism, conferences, clergy accountability, and shared governance with laity.

· Basics of Preaching: equipping clergy to faithfully and successfully proclaim the Christian faith, addressing the human condition and engaging the scriptures in a meaningful and impactful way through sermons, studies, and other teaching or preaching occasions.

· Pastoral Care: basic counseling skills, crisis intervention and referral, pre-marital and family marital dynamics, processing grief and bereavement, making pastoral calls and hospital visits, weddings and funerals, and identifying healthy boundaries as well as self-care.

· Evangelism and Missions:understanding conversion, and clearly and persuasively articulating the hope believers have in Christ, as well as developing congregational and personal strategies to bring others to faith and fulfill the Great Commission to all the world.

· Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship: the use of the ordinances of God and the meaning of the sacraments within the Wesleyan tradition, as well as conducting the public worship of God in a congregational setting. (Those intending to remain a deacon but not serve as a pastor of a local church, or as a staff member in the area of worship, may substitute another elective course in the area of their specialization.)

· Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics: principles of Biblical interpretation and study, including manuscripts, translations, textual issues, cultural contexts, and transmission of the Word of God across the centuries.

4. Elders' Educational Requirements. Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the Global Methodist Church may be eligible to be ordained an elder in the Global Methodist Church following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required classes as follows:

· History of Christianity Through the Reformation: the beginnings and growth of the Christian movement, including the persecution of the early church, the formation of creeds, the role of ecumenical councils, the rise of the papacy, church-state relations, and the Great Schism between Eastern and Western Christianity.

· History of Christianity, the Reformation to the Present: the work of reformers such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Arminius, as well as the Catholic Counter-Reformation, the age of missions, and key thinkers such as Locke, Edwards, Newton, Kant, Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Lewis leading to the modern era.

· Apologetics: identifying a biblical worldview and an understanding of competing views and ideologies, including other belief systems and those embracing no beliefs, developing the ability to "contend for the faith once entrusted to the saints." (Jude 3)

· Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation: personal and shared growth in the understanding of what it means to follow Christ, particularly within a Wesleyan context of class-bands and other meetings.

· Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution: identifying various biblical leadership models, team and staff dynamics, organizational change and development, stewardship, and the incorporation of biblical principles in the resolution of church or interpersonal conflicts.

· An additional Old Testament Class: in-depth study of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, or other biblical writings, or another Old Testament topic.

· An additional New Testament Class:in-depth study of the Gospels, Life of Christ, the Pauline epistles, or other biblical writings, or another New Testament topic.

· Ministry of the Holy Spirit: the theology of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) and its practical outworkings in the life of the believer and the church, including the rise of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement.

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PETITION 1085

¶507

Clarification on Educational Pathways

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The current language evokes the UMC with respect to the Course of Study program. Changing the nomenclature to refer to a Pastoral Studies Program helps distinguish the alternative educational plan within the Global Methodist Church. Similarly, the specification of 72 required hours in that program follows the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education, bringing consistency across programs. And the addition of the words "or its nondegree equivalent" in 507.3 clarifies the requirement for those in programs not offering academic credit hours. Finally, the petition adds flexibility for boards of ministry outside of the US to consider candidates with less than a secondary education.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507.2 AND ¶507.3

507.2 *Pathways to Ordination*. While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (MDiv), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (MA) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (MMin), a Master's in Theology (MTh) or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (BA) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. ~~In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a nondegree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.~~ In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, or with approval of a conference board of ministry, complete a nondegree certificate in a Pastoral Studies Program, consisting of at least of 72 required hours per course, from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

507.3 *Deacons' Educational Requirements*. A total of ten course (approximately thirty credit hours or its nondegree equivalent) are required for those ordained as deacons.

PETITION 1131

¶507

Educational Requirements for Ordaination

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

These edits to the original language clarify established processes, designated educational pathways, course prescription requirements, the need for assessment, and educational requirements based on matriculation dates for candidates in deacon and elder ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507 AND ALL SUBPARAGRAPHS

¶507. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORDINATION. *1. Educational Objectives.* Following the admonition of John Wesley to unite both knowledge and vital piety, candidates for ordination as a deacon or elder within the Global Methodist Church must fulfill basic educational requirements as a part of their preparation process. ~~As a global church, the specific requirements may vary in different regions of the world (¶507.2), but all shall be aimed at ensuring that our clergy everywhere have studied to "present themselves to God as one approved, as workers who do not need to be ashamed and who correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).~~ As a global church, the specific requirements may vary in different regions of the world (¶507.2), but all shall be aimed at ensuring that our clergy everywhere meet the requirements of ¶505 and have studied to "present themselves to God as one approved, as workers who do not need to be ashamed and who correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). *2. Pathways to Ordination.* ~~While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (MDiv), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (MA) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (MMin), a Master's in Theology (MTh), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (BA) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a nondegree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.~~ a. The Global Methodist Church expects those called to serve God's people through ordination to pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible, in accordance with educational systems throughout the world. Prior to pursuing education for clergy credentialing, the candidate for ordained ministry shall have completed at least a secondary education or its equivalent. b. Once certified by the annual conference board of ministry (¶506.3), the candidate for ministry will share in writing with the board of ministry their planned pursuit of education requirements. The Board of Ministry shall maintain a connection with the candidate for educational and formative progress annually. c. Three recognized approved programs of study fulfill the needed educational requirements for credentialing as an ordained clergy person: (1) DEGREED educational programming, (2) COURSE OF STUDY certificate programming, or (3) GLOBAL METHODIST SCHOOL OF MINISTRY programming as stipulated in ¶507.7.b. d. All programming in ¶507.2.c. (degreed, course of study, and school of ministry) shall include the prescribed courses toward ordination as stipulated in ¶507.3 for deacon and also ¶507.4 for elder. All programs approved to train candidates for ordination shall be designated as such by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission upon recommendation of its Committee on Approval, according to ¶810.

~~A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry~~

~~and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination.~~ A listing of approved schools and programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. As of January 1, 2026, students beginning their studies are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school. The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued. Students who are engaged in or have completed a theological degree or its equivalent prior to joining the Global Methodist Church will have their transcripts audited by the Board of Ministry for equivalency. All such students should be expected to take additional courses for theological and polity congruence. *3. Deacons' Educational Requirements.* ~~A total of ten courses (approximately thirty credit hours) are required for those ordained as deacons.~~ A total of 10 courses are required for those ordained as deacons. These ten courses are: • Introduction to Old Testament • Introduction to New Testament • Systematic Theology • Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine • Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church • Basics of Preaching • Pastoral Care • Evangelism and Mission • Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship • Inductive Bible Study or Hermeneutics *4. Elders' Educational Requirements.* ~~Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the Global Methodist Church may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the Global Methodist Church following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required courses as follows:~~ Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the Global Methodist Church may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the Global Methodist Church following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required courses listed below. Courses may be combined/distributed by approved schools and programs.

• History of Christianity Through the Reformation • History of Christianity, Reformation to the Present • Apologetics • Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation • Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution • An additional Old Testament Class • An additional New Testament Class • Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Elective Courses may be chosen from among the following areas:

• Mission of the Church and Church Renewal • Cross-Cultural Ministry and Evangelism • Advanced Preaching • Hebrew or Greek language studies • Pastoral Counseling • Church Finance and Administration • Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a hospital or similar setting • Philosophy of Religion • Field Study in Israel • Theology Electives • Theology of Worship • Children or Youth Ministry • Gospel Vision for Justice • Media and Modern Applications • Directed Internship or independent study

Candidates may petition the Board of Ministry to exercise discretion to grant equivalency to these requirements based on applicable life experience or education. These exceptions shall not exceed 20% of the overall education requirements.

~~*5. Global Education Committee.* A Global Education Committee shall be formed as part of the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education that shall serve to encourage and connect Wesleyan theological education in the varying regions around the world, ensuring consistent standards for training clergy that align with the missional and theological aims of the Global Methodist Church.~~ *5. Assessments.*In addition to the written requirements and Board of Ministry interviews, Deacon and Elder ordination candidates shall demonstrate their competency through a written or oral examination developed by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. The examinations shall be evaluated by the Annual Conference Board of Ministry using rubrics produced by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. *6. Continuing Education for Clergy.* Following ordination as a deacon or elder, clergy are

expected to continue learning throughout their lifetimes by means of classes, retreats, seminars, and study leaves on at least an annual basis wherever possible. Time in continuing education shall not be counted as vacation or personal time. *7. Certification of Classes and Nondegree Certificate of Pastoral Studies Programs.* ~~The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education will determine whether courses at a given institution meet the requirements listed in this paragraph. Each annual conference board of ministry shall certify that the courses taken by a person correspond sufficiently to these areas. The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education will recommend competencies and courses for ministerial training, as well as establish standards for and supervise approved nondegree certificate of pastoral studies programs in conjunction with the annual conference boards of ministry.~~ a. The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Approval, will determine whether courses at a given institution meet the requirements listed in this paragraph. The Ministry and Higher Education Commission will recommend competencies and courses for ministerial training, as well as establish standards for and supervise approved degree and non-degree certificate of pastoral studies programs in conjunction with the annual conference boards of ministry. These standards shall be listed on the Global Methodist Church website annually. b. The Global Methodist Church takes into consideration the exceptional circumstances of distance from approved theological institutions, language barriers or technological challenges which prevent the completion of theological education. Provided these exceptional circumstances exist, those pursuing educational credentialing may pursue fulfullment of their educational requirements at a Global Methodist School of Ministry approved by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. *8. Changes in Requirements.* ~~In the event of a change in educational requirements within the Global Methodist Church, candidates in process shall be allowed to complete their educational program as per the requirements specified in the Book of Doctrine and Disciplines (including the Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline) in effect at the time they began their studies, provided that the candidate demonstrates adequate progress toward the completion of their education.~~ In the event of a change in educational requirements and/or institutional approval within the Global Methodist Church, candidates in process shall be allowed to complete their educational program in the institution in which they began their program, provided it received either full or provisioanl status at the time of their matriculation as per the requirements specified in the Book of Doctrine and Disciplines (including the Transitional Book of Doctrine and Discipline) in effect at the time they began their studies, provided that the candidate demonstrates adequate progress toward the completion of their education. *9. Review of Courses.* ~~The Commission on Ministry and Higher Education shall complete a review of the courses required for ordination in consultation with the Advisory Committee to the Committee on Approval and representatives from the boards of ministry and bring recommendations to the 2026 General Conference.~~ The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall complete a review of the courses required for ordination in consultation with the Advisory Committee to the Committee on Approval and representatives from the boards of ministry and bring recommendations to the General Conference.

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PETITION 1148

¶507

Elders Requirement of Finance and Administration Training

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett
Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

If we are going to say that Elders are to "order the life of the church," then we need to make sure that they have the skills necessary to handle the administrative and financial responsibility that comes with that calling.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507.2 AND ¶507.4

2. Pathways to Ordination. While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (M.A.) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (M.Min.), a Master's in Theology (M.Th.), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition, individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a non-degree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

~~A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school.~~

A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination.

The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued. Candidates may petition the Annual Conference Board of Ministry to exercise discretion to grant exceptions to these requirements based on applicable life experience or education. These exceptions should not exceed twenty percent of the overall educational requirements.

4. Elders' Educational Requirements. ~~Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the GMC may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the GMC following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including eight required courses as follows:~~

Individuals who have been previously ordained as a deacon in the GMC may be eligible to be ordained as an elder in the GMC following the completion of at least ten additional courses, including nine required courses as follows:

History of Christianity through the Reformation

History of Christianity, Reformation to the present

Apologetics

Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation

Christian Leadership and Conflict Resolution

An additional Old Testament Class

An additional New Testament Class

Ministry of The Holy Spirit

Church Administration and Finance

~~Elective Courses may be chosen from among the following areas:~~

The remaining elective course may be chosen from among the following areas:

Mission of the Church and Church Renewal

Cross Cultural Ministry and Evangelism

Advanced Preaching

Hebrew or Greek language studies

Pastoral Counseling

~~Church Administration and Finance~~

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in a hospital or similar setting

Philosophy of Religion

Field Study in Israel

Theology Electives

Theology of Worship

Children or Youth Ministry

Gospel Vision for Justice

54 Mission and Church Renewal

55 Media and Modern Applications

56 Directed Internship or independent study

PETITION 1294

¶507.2

Remove Superfluous Information About Degrees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

If we believe that an M.Div. is required for faithful leadership, we should write in language that requires an M.Div. If we believe that someone can achieve the requisite training through alternative means, we should allow that without making comments that imply otherwise. History shows abundant examples of people with M.Divs. who are fundamentally unfruitful in kingdom work and equally many who lack such a degree who are profoundly fruitful. Clearly, everyone must pass interviews by the Board of Ministry, but this implied hierarchy of training will only impede the GMC. We got rid of permanent local pastors because we did not want a two-tiered structure of pastoral leadership. This commentary brings it back in.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507.2

2. Pathways to Ordination. While educational programs and opportunities may be different based upon geography and life circumstances, those wishing to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible. ~~The historic degree in North American settings, designed to prepare an elder for a lifetime of ministry, is generally the Master of Divinity (MDiv), though an equivalent education is possible through such degrees as a Master of Arts (MA) in biblical studies, a Master's in Ministry (MMin), a Master's in Theology (MTh), or, for persons residing other than in the United States and Europe, a Bachelor's degree (BA) in the practice of ministry including biblical studies. In addition,~~ Individuals whose setting, age, or life circumstances make such formal academic degree programs difficult or impracticable may, with a secondary diploma, complete a nondegree certificate of pastoral studies from an educational program or programs approved by the Commission on Ministry, requiring the completion of at least the core classes outlined below.

A list of approved schools or programs for ministry education will be maintained by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. Beginning January 1, 2026, candidates for ordination are required to choose from the list of approved institutions or programs to complete educational requirements for ordination. Students who have completed their studies or enrolled prior to January 1, 2026, are not required to complete their studies at an approved school.

The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any of the above listed degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued.

PETITION 1346

¶507.2

Educational Pathways

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Organization: US: Heartland

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church should prioritize the formation of called and Spirit-led pastors rather than prescribing a single academic degree path. What matters most is not the specific degree pursued, but the completion of the required courses for ordination at institutions approved by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education. This approach maintains doctrinal integrity and educational accountability while allowing multiple pathways for candidates whose life circumstances, geography, or finances make traditional degree programs difficult. This proposal preserves educational standards while creating accessible and flexible pathways for called individuals to pursue ordination.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶507.2 IN ITS ENTIRETY

2. *Pathways to Ordination.* While educational programs and opportunities may vary by geography and life circumstances, those seeking to serve God's people through ordination within the Global Methodist Church should pursue the highest level of learning and preparation possible through an approved school or program as determined by the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education.

The Global Methodist Church will accept courses, singly or in combination, from any approved degree or certificate programs, so long as the required courses are successfully completed for the level of ordination being pursued. In instances where a candidate receives an undergraduate degree from an approved institution of higher education, a local annual conference board of ministry may choose to count four of the courses completed at an undergraduate level toward the candidate's ordination completion if the course meets the required parameters.

PETITION 1431

¶507.6

Continuing Education Requirements to Promote Theological Unity

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidSouth
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Within a global context that promotes diversity of expression, the church nonetheless experiences unity when it proclaims the same scriptural truths and Wesleyan emphases across the world. Intentional teaching in this regard is necessary to keep clergy members in alignment with the Global Methodist tradition. This proposal both promotes unity (the same learning objectives set for all churches across the globe) as well as contextualization (the manner in which these objectives are met will be determined within the annual conference). Clergy are held accountable for completing this continuing education through annual reporting.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶507.6

6. *Continuing Education for Clergy.* Following ordination as a deacon or elder, clergy are expected to continue learning throughout their lifetimes by means of classes, retreats, seminars, and study leaves on at least an annual basis wherever possible. Time in continuing education shall not be counted as vacation or personal time.

a. As a part of that lifelong learning, within any four-year period, clergy must receive training in at least these three areas:

biblical interpretation;

Methodist history and theology;

practical ministry.

b. The Commission on Doctrine, Discipleship, and Just Ministry and the Commission on Ministry and Higher Education will work together to set learning objectives for each of the training topics listed in ¶507.6.a and provide suggestions for resources.

c. Each Annual Conference Board of Ministry will determine the curriculum to fulfill these learning objectives.

d. Each Annual Conference Board of Ministry will keep a record of completion of the required training and will report the completion status of its clergy members to the conference superintendent, as well as each clergy member's presiding elder and charge/ local church.

e. When a clergy member is being considered for a new appointment, the conference superintendent will include the clergy member's record of completion as a part of the consultation process.

PETITION 1442

¶508

Clarify Doctrinal Expectations for Clergy

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The creeds and articles of the doctrinal paragraphs before Paragraph 107 are relatively succinct, clear, and understandable. Wesley's much longer Sermons and Notes are different categories of documents. These documents' main theological themes and doctrinal teachings should continue to shape us, but we do not need to rigorously insist on conformity with all of these documents' occasional statements on non-essential issues (like the ears of babies in the womb allegedly not hearing sound, per II.4 of "The New Birth"). To build a new church in which we take our doctrine seriously, we must help people have greater clarity about what we do and do not actually expect in terms of doctrinal boundaries, loyalty, and conformity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶508 BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING TO THE END OF THE PARAGRAPH

Here and elsewhere, whenever individuals are asked to affirm their loyalty to the doctrines of the Global Methodist Church, it is understood that while agreement with each of the distinct doctrinal affirmations in the Normative Documents and Normative Standards (¶¶105-106) is expected, John Wesley's *Standard Sermons* and *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* are a different category of documents. These two sets of Wesleyan Standards must also be respected as key shapers and definers of what it means to be theologically Methodist. But given the length of these documents, great range of topics covered, and occasional statements of personal opinions or speculations on non-essential issues, the Global Methodist Church understands such promises of loyalty to our Church's doctrine to allow for a range of opinions on some statements made by Wesley in his *Sermons* and *Notes*, as long as such opinions do not "strike at the root" of historic Christian faith, do not contradict the main theological themes or doctrinal teachings of the *Sermons* and *Notes* (see ¶102, the Wesleyan Way of Salvation), and are consistent with our other standards of doctrine.

PETITION 1408

¶508.2

Restoring the Historic Questions for Elder Ordination

Petitioner: Katherine Reiley
Organization: Lexington St Luke (US: MidTexas)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The subparagraph heading describes these questions for elder ordination as “historically asked by bishops since the time of John Wesley.” However, the question, “Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?” is not part of the historic Methodist ordination questions and was never asked of elders. It was introduced only in the 1996 "United Methodist Book of Discipline,", where it appears among the questions posed to deacons. Given that deacons are called to “Word and Service,”, this addition possibly intended to emphasize the service dimension of the diaconal office, but it has never been included in the questions for elders. This petition seeks to align the list with its own stated standard, consistent with the spirit of historic Methodism.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES THE FOLLOWING FROM ¶508.2

1 ~~*(n) Will you exercise the ministry of compassion?*~~

PETITION 1413

¶509

Covenantal Connections: Deacons

Petitioner: Kenneth "Toby" Chastain
Organization: Russellville (US: North Alabama)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It establishes shared expectations for the role of Deacons as they participate in Wesleyan discipleship, strengthen their local congregations and conferences, protect the vulnerable, and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. It stresses the role of a Deacon within the pastoral oversight of the local church as under that of an Elder and calls all leaders to pursue the highest standards of training and ministry excellence. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶509.3, ¶509.4, & ¶509.5, AND REPLACES ¶509.6

¶ 509. 3. ~~Deacons are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relation of elders. Deacons not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall have no voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 520.~~

Deacons are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters except the ordination and conference relation of elders as long as they continue to maintain covenant accountability under the guidelines of their Annual Conference Board of Ministry.

4. ~~Deacons may be appointed to serve as part of a ministry team in a local church (including as a pastor) or another ministry setting by the bishop, or they may secure their own position with the approval and appointment of the bishop.~~

Deacons may be appointed by the bishop to serve as part of a ministry team in a local church, submitting to the elder appointed to oversee the local church. This appointment may include an additional ministry setting beyond the local congregation.

5. ~~Deacons considering a call to ordination as an elder, or in whom the gifts and graces for the ministry of elder are recognized by a bishop or presiding elder, may be appointed to the office of pastor in a local church. If such an appointment is more than temporary, a deacon who accepts such an appointment must declare candidacy for ordination as an elder and begin the process toward such ordination following the completion of all educational requirements as a deacon.~~

Deacons considering a call to ordination as an elder, or in whom the gifts and graces for the ministry of elder are recognized by a bishop or presiding elder, may be appointed to the office of pastor in a local church under the servant spiritual leadership of an appointed elder, either as the appointed pastor or through the oversight of a Supervising or Presiding Elder.

6. ~~Where applicable by national or local laws, inactive deacons serving in a ministry setting outside the connectional structure of the Global Methodist Church shall insure themselves with a package of insurance coverage (including limits) determined by their conference board of ministry and cabinet. Such insurance shall include, but not be limited to professional liability and misconduct. Each inactive deacon shall annually submit to the cabinet and board of ministry a certificate of insurance showing their annual conference listed as an additional~~

~~insured.~~

When individuals who understand that their particular clergy calling is to become a permanent deacon, they may petition the annual conference board of ministry to replace no more than one of the ten required courses that is outside the scope of their ministry specialization for another class within their specialization. Deacon candidates must show a strong sense of call to that ministry and must explain in writing when the change of requirement is warranted. This request is not a guarantee of acceptance, only an attempt to fully explain why they feel called towards a permanent deacon as opposed to elder's orders. If this path is accepted and the course requirements are modified and then candidates later discern a call to elder's orders, then they will be required to take the full twenty courses included the originally waived course.

PETITION 1229

¶509.1

Addition of Christological Question to Ordination as Deacon Examination

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: West Plains
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The current ordination questions for deacons lack an explicit Christological question. While Christ is implicitly referenced in questions about the Kingdom, resurrection, and the sacraments, no question invites ordinands to articulate their understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ or their personal experience of him as Lord and Savior. This omission is inconsistent with the Wesleyan theological tradition and the GMC's Christocentric doctrinal commitments.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶509.1

¶509.1. Ordination Questions. Upon completion of the educational requirements of ¶ 507.3, a candidate for ordination as deacon shall be interviewed by the annual conference board of ministry or equivalent. Prior to the interview, the candidates shall be asked to respond in writing to the following questions:

(a) What is your personal experience of God?

(b) What is your understanding of evil?

(c) What is your understanding of grace?

(d) How do you understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and in the Church?

(e) What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God?

(f) What significance do you believe that the resurrection holds?

(g) What is your understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ, and what is your personal experience of him as Lord and Savior?

(~~g~~h) What is your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?

(~~h~~i) What is your understanding of the nature and mission of the Church?

(~~i~~j) What gifts and graces do you bring to the work of ministry?

(~~j~~k) What is the meaning of ordination?

(~~k~~l) What is the role and significance of the sacraments?

(~~l~~m) Have you studied our form of church discipline and polity and will you support and maintain it?

(~~m~~n) For the sake of the church's witness, are you willing to dedicate yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life, exercising self-control in your personal habits, integrity in all of your relationships and if married, fidelity in your covenant with your spouse, or if single, chastity in your personal conduct?

The annual conference board of ministry shall evaluate whether the candidate evidences a sufficient foundation in and commitment to the doctrine, ethical principles, and discipline of the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1415

¶510

Covenantal Connections: Elders

Petitioner: Kenneth "Toby" Chastain

Organization: Russellville (US: North Alabama)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition affirms the GMC's commitment to a covenant life marked by mutual love, accountability, and holy living. It establishes shared expectations for elders at all levels to participate in Wesleyan discipleship, strengthen their local congregations and conferences, protect the vulnerable, and submit to the Church's servant leadership structure. It ensures every charge receives faithful pastoral oversight and calls all leaders to pursue the highest standards of training and ministry excellence. By recentering ourselves on a Wesleyan understanding of theological covenant as opposed to structures, it realigns our polity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶510

¶ 510. ORDINATION AS ELDER.

2. ~~Elders are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters. An elder not serving under appointment shall be classified as inactive and shall not have voting rights in the annual conference, except as provided for in ¶ 520. Elders may be appointed by the bishop as a presiding elder, to local ministry as pastor in charge, to the staff of a local church, as a chaplain, as an evangelist, or to other ministry settings. Elders are eligible to be elected to the office of bishop.~~

Elders are clergy members in full connection of the annual conference with full voice and vote on all matters as long as they continue to maintain covenant accountability under the guidelines of their annual conference board of ministry. Elders may be appointed by the bishop as a presiding elder, to local ministry as pastor in charge, to the staff of a local church, as the elder over other local congregations that have an appointed deacon or assigned certified lay minister, as a chaplain, as an evangelist, or to other ministry settings. Elders are eligible to be elected to the office of bishop.

To further align the Book of Doctrines and Discipline with these proposed changes, the following changes are needed for clarity and congruency.

¶ 602. ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS. Bishops are elected from among those within the order of elders and set apart for a ministry of visionary servant leadership, general oversight, and supervision in support of the Church in its mission. As followers of Jesus Christ, bishops are charged with guarding the faith, order, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the Church. The basis of such discipleship of leadership lies in a life characterized by personal integrity, rigorous discipleship, and the anointing and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Bishops shall be persons of genuine faith, and upstanding moral character. As elders they live within the covenantal fellowship and therefore must maintain accountability. They should possess the gift of encouragement, a vital and renewing spirit, and possess a commitment to the vision of the Church adopted by the General Conference. Candidates for the episcopacy should also have a strong record of effectiveness in leading the church in evangelism, discipleship, and mission, and bishops shall be unwaveringly committed to uphold the doctrines and polity of our church, and able to communicate the historic Christian faith from a Wesleyan perspective. (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

¶ 607. CONFERENCE SUPERINTENDENTS.

1. A conference superintendent shall lead their conference out of a life lived in covenantal fellowship and have the following responsibilities:

Encourage, inspire, and motivate the clergy, laity, and churches of the annual conference to embrace and implement the vision and missional strategy of the annual conference including setting standards for maintaining the covenantal fellowship of all clergy.

2. There shall be an annual conference superintendency committee or its equivalent elected to foster a healthy covenantal relationship between the conference and conference superintendent. Each conference superintendent shall be evaluated annually in a process approved by the bishop that takes into account their personal faithfulness to our covenantal fellowship.

¶ 608. SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT. An elder in full connection and living in covenant fellowship may be appointed to lead a district (or its equivalent) by the bishop as a presiding elder upon recommendation by the conference superintendent. A presiding elder is appointed annually after evaluation for effectiveness. A presiding elder may not serve more than twelve years in the aggregate, unless extended annually by the annual conference connectional council (or equivalent) and approved by the conference superintendent. In the selection of presiding elders, bishops and conference superintendents shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of the Global Methodist Church (¶ 406).

¶ 613. STATUS OF BISHOPS EMERITI.

3. A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice, subject to the annual conference guidelines for maintaining covenant fellowship, and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (¶ 520).

¶ 908. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS.

1. Chargeable Offenses – A bishop or clergy member of an annual conference, including senior clergy and clergy on honorable or administrative location, may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations listed below) with one or more of the following offenses:

e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

f. forsaking the covenant fellowship (¶ 505 & ¶ 506)

(renumber afterwards)

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PETITION 1084

¶511

Ministerial Training Fund

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education

Organization: Global Methodist Church

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Due to the Global Methodist Church's limited administrative staff, we are unable to administer loans through the denomination. This legislation proposes allocating funds to Annual Conferences to provide scholarships to candidates seeking to fulfill the educational requirements for ordination. This legislation also removes the loan-forgiveness clause and allows Annual Conferences to set their own requirements for receiving the allocated funds.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶511 IN ITS ENTIRETY

A fund for ministerial education shall be maintained by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church. The Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits Commission will annually assess the fund and recommend the total amount available for distribution. Funds shall be allotted to Annual Conferences in accordance with the policy established by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. A certified candidate or clergy person pursuing educational requirements for ordination may request a scholarship from their Annual Conference Board of Ministry to assist with educational expenses.

PETITION 1126

¶511

Ministerial Training Fund-corrected Format

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Due to the Global Methodist Church's limited administrative staff, we are unable to administer loans through the denomination. This petition removes the "loan" language with a repayment with service clause and replaces it with a scholarship to be administered by the Annual Conferences.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶511 IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~¶511. MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND. A fund shall be maintained for ministerial education by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church. Once certified, a candidate may request a loan to assist with educational requirements. A service commitment of five years duration after ordination is required of any clergy who receives such assistance, with 20 percent of the loan amount forgiven for each year of ministry within the Global Methodist Church.~~

¶511. MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND. A fund for ministerial education shall be maintained by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church. The Finance, Administration, Pension and Benefits Commission will annually assess the fund and recommend the total amount available for distribution. Funds shall be allotted to Annual Conferences in accordance with the policy established by the Ministry and Higher Education Commission. A certified candidate or clergy person pursuing educational requirements for ordination, may request a scholarship from their Annual Conference Board of Ministry to assist with educational expenses.

PETITION 1375

¶511

Amending the Ministerial Training Fund

Organization: US: North Georgia

Legislative Committee: Ministry

Submitter Type: Annual Conference

RATIONALE:

As we learn to live into being a global church, our desire is to allow many of the decisions to occur at the annual conference level and the local churches that comprise the annual conference rather than at the general church level. However, we must also take serious the idea of stewarding our gifts in ways that honor God. This petition allows flexibility for the many different contexts of the Global Methodist Church on the method of training of clergy. It also gives the responsibility of stewardship to the local annual conferences for better accountability of the funds allotted.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶511

A fund shall be maintained for ministerial education by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church. ~~Once certified, a candidate may request a loan to assist with educational requirements.~~ The grant funds shall be used to assist with educational opportunities within the ministry of the local annual conference. ~~A service commitment of five years duration after ordination is required of any clergy who receives such assistance, with twenty percent of the loan amount forgiven for each year of ministry within the Global Methodist Church.~~ Each annual conference shall develop their own guidelines for implementation of grant funds in order to be good stewards of the gifts given to the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1047

¶512

Petition to Amend Paragraph 512 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Allegheny West
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Authority to preside over the Sacraments is granted by the Church through ordination in accordance with "the historic practice of the Christian Church." (¶413). And serving as clergy is restricted only to those who are "both elected by their peers and ordained by the bishop" (¶503). This petition gives greater oversight of people who serve in clergy roles within the conference to the clergy of the conference, reinforces the goal of supply pastors meeting educational requirements, brings the Discipline in line with the historic church, and resolves conflicts between ¶¶413, 503, and 512 as well as clarifying how oversight is handled in accordance with ¶¶906 and 908.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶512.1, ¶512.2, ¶512.3, AND ¶512.4

¶ 512. SUPPLY PASTOR. 1. Upon a two-thirds approval of a conference board of ministry and by a two- thirds vote of clergy meeting in executive session, a bishop may appoint individuals who are certified candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.

2. ~~In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.~~ In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, the Bishop may extend sacramental authority to supply pastors appointed to the office of pastor of a local church under the provisions of ¶413. He or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.

3. ~~A supply pastor must be ordained as a deacon within five total years of their appointed service in that role. Extensions to complete the educational requirements of a supply pastor may be granted annually by the board of ministry. A supply pastor seeking an extension shall provide a written plan to the board of ministry detailing the reason for the request and the plan to complete the educational requirements.~~ A supply pastor must be ordained as a deacon within three total years of their being approved by the clergy session. Candidates for ordination who fail to meet the educational requirements as defined in ¶ 507.3 will be discontinued as supply pastors.

4. ~~Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, and shall have full voice and vote except regarding the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders.~~ Supply pastors are treated as clergy members of the annual conference for the purpose of oversight, judicial and administrative complaints,

administering the sacraments, and calculating lay delegates entitled to charges under ¶708.1. They shall have full voice, but not vote, on all matters.

PETITION 1083

¶512

Change of Name from Supply Pastor to Parish Pastor

Petitioner: Burt Palmer
Organization: Kingwood (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Recommended changes is to "Parish Pastor". Additionally, the current process for extending sacramental authority to Parish Pastors does not match the process for deacons in the BDD. The proposed changes in the name of this status and making it clear that the sacramental authority of Parish Pastors is limited to their appointed ministry setting consistent with Deacons. It extends the time period for completing the educational requirements from 5 to 7 years to allow time for completing required courses.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶512, ¶512.1, ¶512.2, ¶512.3, and ¶512.4

¶ 512. PARISH PASTOR

~~512. SUPPLY PASTOR~~

1. ~~Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church.~~ Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are certified candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a parish pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.

2. ~~In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church, he or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate. The board of ministry may consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training.~~ In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers," and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, a presiding elder may extend sacramental authority to a parish pastor who has satisfactorily completed a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church. The board of ministry may also consider any courses completed in a approved institution or program on the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training. This sacramental authority shall be exercised under the oversight and authority of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder and shall be limited to the appointed ministry setting of the parish pastor.

3. ~~A supply pastor must be ordained as a deacon within five total years of their appointed service in that role. Extensions to complete the educational requirements of a supply pastor may be granted annually the Board of Ministry. A supply pastor seeking an extension shall provide a written plan to the Board of Ministry detailing the reason for the request and the plan to complete the educational requirements.~~ A parish pastor must be ordained as a deacon within seven total years of their appointed service in that role. Extensions to complete the educational requirements of a deacon may be granted annually by the Board of Ministry. A parish pastor seeking an extension shall provide a written plan to the Board of Ministry detailing the reason for the request and the plan to complete

the educational requirements.

4. ~~Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, and shall have full voice and vote except the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders.~~ Parish pastors are clergy members of the annual conference and shall have full voice and vote except in the matters of the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders and the election of general conference delegates.

PETITION 1182

¶512.1

Clarifying Appointment of Supply Pastors

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Under the current rules, it is unclear whether a board of ministry needs to take a separate vote on a person who has already been approved as a certified candidate when the bishop seeks to appoint that person as a supply pastor, or if the vote for a person to become a certified candidate automatically allows the bishop to appoint that person as a supply pastor. In order to make sure that the appointment process led by the Cabinet and Bishop is separate from the credentialing process led by the BOM, we recommend making it clear that once the BOM has voted to make someone a certified candidate, the bishop is allowed to appoint that person as a Supply Pastor.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶512.1

1. ~~Upon approval of a conference board of ministry, a bishop may appoint individuals who are candidates for ordination under ¶ 506.3 to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church.~~ A person who has been approved as a certified candidate for ordination under ¶ 506.3 may be appointed by a bishop to serve as a supply pastor within the Global Methodist Church. It shall be the responsibility of the conference board of ministry to assign an elder to provide mentoring to that person.

PETITION 1183

¶512.2

Clarify Sacramental Extension for Supply Pastors

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

The current process for extending sacramental authority to Supply Pastors does not match the process for deacons in ¶ 413. Currently, Deacons are explicitly prohibited from celebrating the sacraments outside their appointed church/ministry, while the same prohibition does not exist for Supply Pastors in ¶ 512. This could result in someone having broad sacramental authority as a Supply Pastor (similar to what Elders have), then having that authority limited when they are ordained as a Deacon. We propose making it clear that the sacramental authority of Supply Pastors is limited to their appointed ministry setting, same as it for Deacons.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶512.2

2. ~~In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers,", and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, after a supply pastor who completes a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church., He or she may preside over the sacraments of baptism and holy communion under the direction of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder. The presiding elder may assign the supply pastor's candidacy mentor to this role where appropriate.~~ In recognition of the scriptural principle of the "priesthood of all believers,", and in order to provide the means of grace for the spiritual needs of those within all of our churches, a presiding elder may extend sacramental authority to a supply pastor who has satisfactorily completed a training by the annual conference board of ministry on the theology and practice of the sacraments in the Global Methodist Church. The board of ministry may also consider any courses taken in the theology of the sacraments within the Methodist tradition as meeting the requirement of the training. This sacramental authority shall be exercised under the oversight and authority of the presiding elder or another elder appointed by the presiding elder and shall be limited to the appointed ministry setting of the supply pastor.

PETITION 1459

¶514

Refined Qualifications of Lay and Clergy Evangelists, and the Appointing of Clergy Evangelists

Petitioner: Kingdom Advancement Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Current BOD language regarding the ministry of evangelists requires greater clarity for annual conference leaders. The proposed changes clarify qualifications of lay and clergy evangelists, and provide alignment with the appointment process of clergy who are called to the ministry of being vocational evangelists.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶514

¶ 514. THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELISTS.

Evangelism is the persuasive communication of the good news of Jesus Christ and his present and coming Kingdom in word, deed, and sign as an invitation to repent and believe in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus, the one true and living God. Effective evangelism leads people to call on Jesus as Savior and Lord and experience the new birth (Mark 1:15; Luke 24:19–32; Acts 2:22–47; Rom. 10:9; John 3:3–8). While every follower of Jesus is commanded to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ, God also calls and gives to the church some who are specifically anointed and gifted as evangelists (Eph. 4:11–13). These lay and clergy persons are effective at leading people to saving faith and equipping others in the body of Christ to evangelize and accelerate the spread of the Gospel. All believers need to be connected to a local church to be sanctified and formed into disciples who can make disciples (Matt. 4:19, 16:13–19, 28:18–20; Acts 8:4–40, 21:8; Eph. 4:11–13).

Qualifications of Lay and Clergy Evangelists. The Global Methodist Church recognizes and celebrates both lay and clergy evangelists. As ambassadors for Christ, evangelists are uniquely gifted to serve the local church. Persons who serve as evangelists must:

Effectively communicate the good news of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God, their conversion to Christ, as well as God's call to this ministry.

Bear fruit, showing that God has empowered them with gifts to lead others to saving faith in Christ and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Embrace and affirm the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church and have been a member of a Global Methodist church for one year before seeking the official role of evangelist.

Receive the endorsement of his or her local church by a majority vote of the church council, and the approval of the annual conference evangelism committee or the equivalent.

Evangelists must work closely with local churches in a team approach to evangelistic ministry so that new Christians are formed as mature disciples of Jesus Christ who also make disciples.

Submit an annual ministry report, including any continuing education to their charge conference, and to the annual conference evangelism committee or the equivalent.

Appointment of Deacons and Elders as Evangelists. Evangelists who meet the criteria as a deacon or elder may be appointed as an evangelist according to the requirements of ¶ 610.10.

PETITION 1450

¶515

Clarifying the Qualifications and Process for Commissioning Missionaries

Petitioner: Kingdom Advancement Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Provides greater clarity for annual conference leaders by identifying standardized educational requirements for lay missionaries, and facilitating alignment with BOD appointment-making considerations in relation to GMC clergy who are called to missionary service.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶515

¶515 THE MINISTRY OF MISSIONARIES. Throughout the history of the church, individuals have been called by God and sent by the church to share the good news of Jesus across cultures, make disciples in distant places, and equip emerging Christian communities for growth, faith-sharing, and deeds of mercy in Jesus' name. As ambassadors of Christ, these are vocational missionaries called to bring the message of peace and reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Qualifications and Commissioning of Lay and Clergy Missionaries. The Global Methodist Church recognizes and celebrates both lay and clergy missionaries. Commissioning to the office of missionary in the Global Methodist Church is approved by the annual conference missions committee or equivalent. It is recommended that missionaries be commissioned at annual conference sessions. Candidates who desire to serve as a Global Methodist Church missionary must:

Communicate God's call on their lives to cross-cultural vocational ministry;

Be able to testify to the good news of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God as well as their conversion to Christ;

Bear fruit, showing that God has empowered them with gifts to lead others to saving faith in Christ, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and a commitment to making disciples who make disciples;

Embrace and affirm the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* of the Global Methodist Church, with a commitment to the practices of spiritual disciplines and patterns of holiness consistent with the General Rules, and be a member in good standing of a Global Methodist congregation for at least one year;

Have received training for:

(1) Cross-cultural missions (such as *Perspectives*, or comparable training as approved by the annual conference missions committee or equivalent);

(2) Evangelism, disciple-making, and disciple making movements;

(3) Lay candidates must complete Certified Lay Ministry requirements (¶409) or a minimum 60 contact hour conference-approved equivalent;

Receive the endorsement of their local church by a vote of the church council, and also the endorsement of the

annual conference missions committee or the equivalent;

Provide evidence as to how they will receive ongoing pastoral/member care and support, to ensure personal and family well-being while in their field of service;

Serve with, and under the oversight of an approved Global Methodist Church ministry or an approved Global Methodist missional partner as determined by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church or its designee;

Submit a ministry report to their charge conference annually.

Appointment of Deacons and Elders as Missionaries. Missionaries who meet the criteria as a deacon or elder may be appointed as a missionary according to the requirements of ¶610.10.

PETITION 1233

¶516.1

Transfer of Clergy

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Organization: US: North Carolina
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

To provide the needed uniform standards for transferring clergy from one conference to another.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶516.1

Transfer of Clergy, ¶ 516

Global Methodist Church Clergy Transfer from Conference to Conference

GM Church Clergy applying to transfer to another conference within the Global Methodist Church will request the transfer through the Office of the Superintendency of the desired conference of new service, who will then following ¶ 607.1k of the 2024 BDD or subsequent renumbering in other actions of the 2026 General Conference, communicate with the Office of the Superintendency or other relevant leaders of the sending conference concerning information such as but not limited to the following: (a) Is the clergy in question leaving in good standing? (b) What were the circumstances in which the clergy in question left the last appointment? (c) Why is the clergy in question seeking to transfer? (d) Is there any other information that should be shared?

The clergy seeking transfer will submit to the following: (a) Undergo an interview with the receiving Board of Ministry; (b) Submit to a background check and/or Psychological Testing; (c) Authorize the release of personal records from the conference and/or General Church Database; (d) Authorize the release of the Presiding Elder evaluations and other Cabinet records; (e) any other items required by the receiving conference

The clergy seeking transfer will complete the clergy profile of the receiving conference.

The receiving Office of the Superintendency will send timely written notice of transfer to the secretaries of both conferences involved and to the boards of ministry. (refer to ¶ 607.1.k)

PETITION 1234

¶516.1

Transfer of Clergy Credentials

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Organization: US: North Carolina
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

To clarify and edit paragraph 516.1 to reflect a succinct pathway of the transfer of clergy from other denominations. (NOTE: This paragraph is to follow suit with a new addition of a paragraph 516.1. The numbering reflects this.)

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS THE CURRENT ¶516.1 AND RENUMBERS IT PER ANOTHER PETITION

2. Transfer from other Denominations.

Clergy applying to transfer to the Global Methodist Church from another Christian denomination *who wish to surrender their current ordination credentials to become Global Methodist clergy* must provide the following: (a) A formal resume with references; (b) Proof of ordination from a denomination with a formalized *in-person* vetting process. (c) Official transcripts of all post–high school education; and (d) Where available, a copy of all personnel files maintained by his or her former denomination to be sent to the board of ministry at the written request of the clergy person.

PETITION 1235

¶517

Appointment of Clergy from Other Denominations

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Organization: US: North Carolina
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

To further clarify Valid Deacon and Valid Elder conference entrance process, status and sacramental authority.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶517

¶ 517. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

1. Upon recommendation of the board of ministry and affirmation by the clergy session of the annual conference, a bishop may appoint clergy in good standing *and with a minimum of five years service* in other Christian denominations to serve appointments or ecumenical ministries while retaining their denominational affiliation. Their appointment shall be as a Valid Deacon *if approved by the boards of ministry*. *The approved Valid Deacon must within two years take the following classes; Wesleyan Theology and Doctrine, Methodist History and Polity of the Global Methodist Church, Wesleyan Understanding of the Sacraments and Worship, and Wesleyan Discipleship and Spiritual Formation. Upon completion of the required classes, the Valid Deacon will come before the boards of ministry for an interview to determine readiness to become a* Valid Elder. Clergypersons retaining their affiliation with other denominations while receiving appointment in the Global Methodist Church shall meet the following criteria: (a) Complete *the* application *for clergy membership in the Global Methodist Church which includes* the following: (1) Testimony to their Christian faith and call to ministry. (2) Permission and release of any criminal background and credit check, reports of sexual misconduct or child abuse. (3) A statement certifying that the candidate has not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or accused in writing of sexual misconduct or child abuse, *In case of offenses, a* statement detailing any convictions for felony or misdemeanor or written accusations of sexual misconduct or child abuse. (b) A statement agreeing to teach, support, and maintain Global Methodist Church doctrine. (c)*Agree to a Psychological examination. (d)* Give evidence through an interview with *a Presiding Elder and* the board of ministry that they have read*, understand, and will adhere to* the Book of Doctrine and Discipline and will support and maintain Global Methodist Church discipline and polity. *(e)*Present suitable credentials as an ordained clergyperson from another Christian denomination *with a formalized in-person vetting process. (f)*Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown *at the board of ministry annual interview.*

2. Clergy affirmed as Valid Deacons or Valid Elders may be accorded the right to vote *by the conference superintendent* in the annual conference on all matters except the following: (a) constitutional amendments; (b) election of delegates to General or annual conferences; and (c) all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations of ministers. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may serve on any board, commission, or committee of the annual conference, except the board of ministry and the board of trustees. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders may not be elected as delegates to General or annual conferences.

3. Between conference sessions, the board of ministry may approve such persons for appointment pending their approval at the next regular clergy session of the annual conference. The bishop may make ad interim appointments of such persons once approved by the board of ministry. In every case, prior examination and ongoing review shall be made of such persons' understanding, acceptance, and willingness to support and maintain the doctrine, discipline, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.

4. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders shall only have status as clergy while appointed. Valid Deacons and Elders who wish to become full clergy members of the Global Methodist Church must fulfill the requirements of ¶ 516.2.

5. Valid Deacons and Valid Elders shall only have sacramental authority within the setting to which they are appointed.

PETITION 1420 ¶517

Defining the Length of Time for Valid Elder and Valid Deacons in the Global Methodist Church

Petitioner: Burt Palmer
Organization: Kingwood (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

There is not clarity on the length of time the status of Valid Deacon and Valid Elder can be held; nor was there any consequences for one not completing the educational requirements. Where it is necessary for one to remain in their preceding denomination for financial and benefits purposes, there is a process to grant such exception on annual basis. Valid Deacons should be pursuing full membership in the Global Methodist Church rather than utilizing the Global Methodist Church for endorsement to serve. The petition provides for persons to be moved to the status of certified candidate for ministry.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶517.1.e AND ADDS ¶517.4

¶ 517. APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

1.e. Present evidence of completion of education equivalent to that required for deacons in the Global Methodist Church. Clergypersons holding ordination from another denomination or congregation, but not meeting the required educational standards of the Global Methodist Church may be appointed provisionally, with full educational requirements for deacon to be completed within three years of the start of the appointment. Progress toward completion of educational requirements shall be shown annually. If the educational requirements are not completed within three years, such persons will either a) be discontinued as a Valid Deacon; or b) be moved to the status of certified candidate for ministry and amenable to the requirements at stated in ¶506.

4. The status of Valid Elder may be granted for a maximum of 5 years from the date of annual conference date of approval. After 5 years, if such persons do not apply for ordination in the Global Methodist Church, they must make a written request to the board of ministry requesting an additional year of approval as a Valid Elder. If no written request is received, such persons shall be either be a) discontinued as a Valid Elder or b) be moved to the status of certified candidate for ministry and amenable to the requirements at stated in ¶ 506.

PETITION 1407

¶518

Leave Update

Petitioner: Lee Bushweiler

Organization: Wisconsin Dells Dells Delton (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

This petition seeks to bring clarity around how we handle leaves of absence and incorporates senior status as a form of leave (making paragraph 520 obsolete and needing to be deleted). This would then create a separate paragraph dealing specifically with involuntary leave for clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶518 IN ITS ENTIRETY, ADDS NEW ¶519, AND REMOVES ENTIRELY ¶520

¶ 518. VOLUNTARY STATUS CHANGES.

As we seek to look over one another in love by living out our covenant fellowship, there may be occasions where a clergy member can be in an appointive status (¶ 610), or a leave status. These statuses are to be affirmed by the executive session of the clergy at their annual conference session. Changes in conference status may be affected as follows:

Requesting. Clergy may request in writing a leave of absence from their ministerial duties due to medical needs, family circumstances, or other personal issues. Transitional leaves may be requested for clergy in good standing who are temporarily between appointments.

Process. A change in conference status may be granted or terminated by majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference upon recommendation by two-thirds of the annual conference board of ministry. Between sessions of annual conference, a leave of absence may be granted or terminated by a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry, with the recommendation of the bishop and a two-thirds majority of the presiding elders. Clergy who are appointed will be removed from any leave status except senior status.

Renewal. Renewal of leave may be made annually by the majority vote of the clergy session, for a period of up to five years, for those intending to return to an appointed status. Senior status is permanent and does not require renewal once granted.

Conditions. Clergypersons on leave shall have no claim on conference funds but may be eligible to continue in conference benefit programs through their own contributions, except as specified. They may serve on annual conference commissions, committees, or boards, as well as vote for clergy delegates to General Conferences.

Conference Relationship. Those on voluntary leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and the performance of ministry, and shall maintain their covenantal fellowship connection with the annual conference in all its provisions unless otherwise granted by the annual conference board of ministry. All clergy on leave retain the right to both voice and vote at annual conference, provided that they notify the conference secretary at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session of their intention to participate as a voting member and as long as they continue to maintain covenant accountability under the guidelines of their Annual Conference Board of Ministry.

Types of Leave:

Restorative. Clergy who have been serving in an appointment for six consecutive years may be granted leave for a program of study, travel, or renewal. Compensation for the clergy during a restoratively of three months or less shall be continued by the local church. Restorative leaves of three months or less may be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee, with the approval of the presiding elder.

Sabbatical. Leaves longer than three months and up to one year must be approved by the conference board of ministry. Compensation for the clergy during a sabbatical longer than three months shall be the responsibility of the individuals involved, though the support of congregations and others is encouraged.

Senior Status. Following the scriptural pattern, no one retires from the work of God's Kingdom; however, clergypersons may elect senior status leave to engage legal retirement status. There is no mandatory age for such status; however, senior status is considered permanent, removes the individual from appointment consideration, and does not require annual renewal. This status releases the clergy member from the need for an appointment while allowing for service in the local church or conference with consent as an unappointed clergyperson. All clergy in senior status are required to maintain covenant accountability under the guidelines of their annual conference board of ministry.

Maternity and Paternity. Any clergy member (including both spouses in a clergy couple) may request maternity or paternity leave for up to three months or for such time as mandated by the laws of the jurisdiction where the church is located, whichever is greater, at the birth or arrival of a child into the home due to adoption or fostering. Such leave shall be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee in consultation with the presiding elder. During the leave, the clergyperson's annual conference status will remain unchanged, and the health and benefit plans will remain in force. Compensation - which may include sick leave, vacation, or other time off - shall be provided by the salary-paying entity for an amount of time determined by the church, not less than two months, or in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction where the church served is located, whichever is greater.

Medical. Any clergy member may request medical leave for up to three months or for such time as mandated by the law of the jurisdiction where the church is located, whichever is greater, for any medical condition. Such leave shall be granted by the pastor-parish relations committee in consultation with the presiding elder. During the leave, the clergyperson's annual conference status will remain unchanged, and the health and benefit plans will remain in force. Compensation - which may include sick leave, vacation, or other time off - shall be provided by the salary-paying unit for an amount of time determined by the church, not less than two months, or in accordance with the law of the jurisdiction where the church served is located, whichever is greater. Medical leave can be renewed annually as long as there is an ongoing medical need and the clergy member maintains appropriate covenant accountability.

Transitional. Any clergy member can request or receive a transitional leave of absence, when leaving or changing appointments, for up to six months with the approval of their presiding elder. Leaves of absence longer than three months must follow the guidelines set by the annual conference board of ministry.

Honorable. Clergy may be placed on honorable leave by consent or request of the clergyperson. Their membership shall be held in a local church of their choice, with the written consent of the pastor in charge and, in the case of administrative location, the pastor-parish relations committee. Any ministerial service is limited to the church/charge where they hold membership and must be only with the written consent of the pastor in charge.

Absence. Any clergy member can request a voluntary leave of absence for up to three months with the approval of their pastor-parish relations committee in consultation with the presiding elder. Leaves of absence longer than

three months must be approved and overseen by the board of ministry and ratified by the clergy of the annual conference. Leaves of absence can be taken for any reason, including external opportunities like secular employment, military training and deployment, or serving in any other non-GMC ministry setting.

Change of Leave. Clergy can change from one voluntary leave status to another by requesting a change of status in writing and having it granted or terminated by majority vote of the clergy members of the annual conference upon recommendation by two-thirds of the annual conference board of ministry.

Termination of Leave. Clergy can voluntarily terminate leave by requesting a return to an appointive status, or withdrawing by surrendering or transferring their clergy credentials. If an individual has remained in covenantal fellowship, as determined by their annual conference, then their leave will be considered terminated. Any appointment fixed by the bishop (¶ 610) will terminate leave status, with the exception of senior status.

(NEW) ¶ 519. INVOLUNTARY STATUS CHANGES. A clergy member can be placed in a status that does not allow for appointment, suspends or terminates annual conference rights and initiates disciplinary process. Involuntary changes in conference status may be effected as follows:

Requesting. Involuntary leaves may be requested by the bishop, a two-thirds vote of the cabinet, and a two-thirds vote of the annual conference board of ministry. The board of ministry shall also determine what, if any, disciplinary action or other conditions are required (e.g., therapy, remedial education, suspension of ministerial duties, etc.)

Process. Placing a person on involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session. The fair process for administrative hearings shall be followed in any involuntary leave procedure (¶ 905-906 and JPP).

Renewal. Renewal of leave may be made annually by the majority vote of the clergy session, for a period of up to five years.

Conditions. Clergypersons on involuntary leave shall have no claim on conference funds but may, where specifically eligible, continue in conference health programs through their own contributions.

Conference Relationship. Clergy on involuntary leave shall not participate in the commissions, committees, or boards of the district or annual conference. They shall have no voice or vote at annual conference, unless specifically granted voice by the annual conference, they shall not be delegates to General Conference, and shall not vote for clergy delegates. Those on involuntary leave shall not participate in any official acts of ministry during the leave.

Types of Involuntary Leave:

Corrective. Clergy may be placed on corrective leave status pending the outcomes of administrative hearings and reviews to care for the clergyperson and the community. All clergy on corrective leave will be encouraged and assisted in restoring their relationship with the annual conference. Those on corrective leave shall continue to be amenable to the annual conference for their conduct and shall maintain covenantal connection with the annual conference.

Administrative. Clergy may be placed on administrative leave without consent by pending investigation, and

removal of credentialing or other disciplinary action pursuant to JPP guidelines (JPP 2.2c and 3.)

Termination. When an end to the involuntary leave is initiated by the bishop and a two-thirds vote of the cabinet, the annual conference board of ministry shall review the circumstances surrounding the imposing of the status to determine if the conditions of the leave have been met. If the board determines that such is not the case, it may continue involuntary leave of absence. If involuntary leave were to continue beyond five years from when it was first granted, then the board of ministry must pursue administrative location (¶ 518.7). Termination of involuntary leave shall require a two-thirds vote of the board of ministry present at the time of consideration and a two-thirds vote of the clergy members meeting in executive session.

PETITION 1328

¶518.6

Parental Leave Restoration

Petitioner: Hannah Hutchinson
Organization: Destin (US: Alabama Emerald Coast)

Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

To honor the sanctity of life and uphold God's design for the family, we advocate for the restoration of the original parental leave language. Welcoming a child is a precious yet often stressful transition; by reinstating the two-month compensation policy, which was removed from the Transitional Book of Doctrines and Disciplines by the Transitional Leadership Council on April 30, 2024, we provide a consistent denominational standard that supports and values our young clergy and families. This restoration affirms our biblical and theological commitment to the pastoral calling of both men and women, ensuring that mothers and fathers are empowered to thrive in both their pastoral ministry and parenthood.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶518.6

6. *Maternity and Paternity Leave*. Any clergy member (including both spouses in a clergy couple) may request maternity or paternity leave for up to three months or for such time as mandated by the law of the jurisdiction where the church is located, whichever is greater, at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption or fostering. Such leave shall be granted by the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee in consultation with the presiding elder. During the leave, the clergyperson's annual conference status will remain unchanged, and the health and benefit plans will remain in force. ~~Compensation, which may include sick leave, vacation, or other time off, shall be provided by the salary-paying unit for an amount of time determined by the church.~~ Compensation shall be provided by the salary-paying unit for no less than two months of leave or in accordance with the law of the jurisdiction where the church served is located, whichever is greater.

PETITION 1005

¶520

Senior Status Clergy Voting Rights Amendment

Petitioner: Marion Hanfield
Organization: US: Great Lakes
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Because according to ¶503 Ordination is a lifetime office, and because an ordained clergy person's primary connection is not in a local church, but rather remains with the conference (¶503), it is unjust to remove their ability to vote at annual conference. This removes the ability to have meaningful impact on the only body to which they are formally connected. After years of faithful service, Senior Status Clergy deserve better.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶520

¶ 520. SENIOR STATUS. Following the scriptural pattern, there is no retirement for clergy or laity from the work of God's Kingdom. However, clergy persons serving in appointments may choose senior status within the annual conference, with the approval of a majority of the board of ministry and a majority of the clergy session. There is no mandatory age for such status. Senior status releases clergy members from any obligation to accept an appointment to ministry from the bishop, though clergy in senior status may voluntarily accept an appointment from the bishop to any ministry setting for which they qualify. Because ordination to Deacon and Elder are lifetime offices (¶503) and, rather than a local congregation, the Annual Conference with which they are associated, remains the primary body to which the clergy are connected (¶503) Senior clergy, including bishop emeriti, retain their ~~active status and~~ right to both voice and vote at annual conference ~~if they fulfill either of the following conditions: a) they are within seven years of the effective date of their aligning with the Global Methodist Church or the end of their last appointment, whichever is later, provided that they notify the conference secretary at least ninety days prior to the annual conference session of their intention to participate as a voting member, or b) they are under appointment by the bishop for at least one-quarter time (no notification necessary). Senior clergy not qualifying under the preceding sentence retain voice, but not vote, at annual conference.~~ Those in senior status, whether active or inactive, may be elected as a delegate to General or Regional Conference and serve on district or annual conference commissions, committees, or boards.

PETITION 1419

¶520

Contingency Deletion of Paragraph

Petitioner: Burt Palmer
Organization: Kingwood (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

In the event that clergy Senior Status is addressed in legislation adopted by this General Conference, Paragraph 520 will be deleted

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶520

PETITION 1033

¶521

Charge Conference Connection for All Clergy

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Great Lakes
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Ministry

RATIONALE:

Requiring a connection to a local charge conference ensures all ordained clergy are accountable to the Global Methodist Church structure of oversight. ¶ 438.2 refers to senior clergy having a connection to a charge conference, but that connection is not required anywhere in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶521 AND REORDERS ALL SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

Propose adding this after ¶520 thus becoming ¶521 and renumbering all subsequent paragraphs.

All ordained clergy are required to connect to a local charge conference, including clergy appointed beyond the local church, senior clergy, and inactive clergy.

SUPERINTENDENCY

all ¶600s

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PETITION 1429

¶6XX

Providing Clarity to the Expectations of the Area Committees on Episcopacy

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The BDD lacks a description of the role of the Area Committees on Episcopacy.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶6XX

¶6XX. AREA COMMITTEES ON EPISCOPACY, add:

There shall be an area committee on episcopacy for each episcopal area in the Global Methodist Church.

Purpose. The area committee on episcopacy shall meet with the bishop assigned to the episcopal area to foster healthy and effective relationships in service to the mission of the Global Methodist Church. Area committees on episcopacy shall participate in the election of bishops as described in ¶604.

Composition. An area committee on episcopacy shall be constituted as follows:

An area committee on episcopacy shall be comprised of one lay and one clergy member from each annual conference in the episcopal area. Each General Conference delegation shall elect one lay and one clergy member from the annual conference to its area committee on episcopacy as described in ¶604.1b. Those elected need not be members of the delegation. Those who have accepted a nomination to the episcopacy are not eligible to serve on an area committee on episcopacy.

When an Annual Conference convenes after the Commission on General Conference fixes the allocation of delegates, the Conference shall elect one lay and one clergy to represent the Conference on the Area Committee on Episcopacy. Emerging Areas will not have representation on Area Committees on Episcopacy.

Anex officio member shall be supplied to each area committee on episcopacy by the Global Episcopacy Committee. This ex officio member shall have voice but not vote on the area committee on episcopacy. The assignment of this ex officio member shall alternate every six-year term between a lay and a clergy member. The purpose of this ex officio member is to provide linkage between the work of the area committee and the Global Episcopacy Committee.

An area committee on episcopacy shall elect its own officers.

Term. The term of a member of an area committee on episcopacy shall begin at the plenary gathering held within ninety days of the opening of a regularly scheduled General Conference (¶604.3). The term shall conclude at the opening of the plenary gathering before the subsequent regularly scheduled General Conference. No person may serve on an area committee on episcopacy more than two consecutive six-year terms. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall instruct General Conference delegations on the dates and deadlines associated with electing representatives to an area committee on episcopacy.

Duties. An area committee on episcopacy has the following responsibilities:

To foster productive and positive relationships between the assigned bishop and the annual conferences they serve.

To meet at least quarterly and prayerfully provide consultation to their assigned bishop.

To participate in the episcopal election process as described in ¶604.

To participate annually in the performance review of the bishop as directed by the Global Episcopacy Committee.

Ifa vacancy in the office of bishop occurs, the applicable area committee on episcopacy shall be consulted by the Global Episcopacy Committee on a plan for episcopal coverage. Bishops emeriti may be utilized, or the conferences in the area may be served by other bishops in a plan approved by the Global Episcopacy Committee. In cases where different conferences in an episcopal area may be temporarily assigned other bishops, the Global Episcopacy Committee may grant area committee members from affected conferences voice and/or vote in the area episcopacy committee related to a temporarily assigned bishop, provided that no area committee member shall concurrently hold privilege of vote in more than one area episcopacy committee.

Vacancies. Each annual conference is to maintain one lay and one clergy member on its area committee on episcopacy. If a vacancy occurs, the most recently elected General Conference delegation of the conference shall convene to fill the vacancy.

PETITION 1418

¶603

Updates to Part 6--The Superintendency

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Existing responsibilities lack expectation that bishops will attend meetings.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶603 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶603.14

¶603. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES, add new subparagraph 14

Cultivate a spirit of cooperation and collegiality active participation in assigned Commissions, Council, and Assembly of Bishops meetings and collaboration on matters pertaining to the overall flourishing of the Church.

PETITION 1051

¶603.5

Presiding over the General and Annual Conferences

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Bishops and Conference Superintendents offer team leadership to an annual conference. While it is important for Bishops to be present and preside at sessions of annual conferences, Conference Superintendents are appointed as the spiritual and temporal leaders of the conference. This legislation recognizes these values. It holds the historic role of Bishops serving as presiding officers while allowing Conference Superintendents the ability to preside over appropriate business within a plenary session under the authority of the presiding Bishop.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶603.5, ¶708.7, AND ¶708.8

¶ 603. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES. As general superintendents of the church, bishops are entrusted with the following responsibilities:

5. Preside over the General and annual conferences as assigned. ~~The bishop may delegate presiding over annual conference to a conference superintendent or bishop emeritus.~~ The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or shall arrange for another bishop or bishop emeritus to preside. The presiding bishop may delegate presiding duties over portions of the annual conference plenary and/or business sessions to the conference superintendent.

¶ 708. ORGANIZATION.

7. A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the presiding elders. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call, unless the annual conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted. If a bishop or bishop emeritus cannot be present, the assigned bishop may authorize the conference superintendent to preside over the special session of the annual conference. Such authorization does not empower the conference superintendent to ordain clergy.

8. ~~The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or, in case of inability, shall arrange for another bishop to preside. In the absence of a bishop, the bishop may delegate presiding to the conference superintendent or a bishop emeritus (¶ 603.5).~~ The bishop assigned shall preside over the annual conference or shall arrange for another bishop or bishop emeritus to preside. The presiding bishop may delegate presiding duties over portions of the annual conference plenary and/or business session(s) to the conference superintendent (¶ 603.5). Such delegation does not empower the conference superintendent to ordain clergy.

PETITION 1451

¶604

Election and Assignment of Bishops

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: North Alabama
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This proposed amendment seeks to clarify and solidify the Book of Doctrine and Discipline's position on the Election of Bishops via two means: 1) by clarifying the nature of contiguous conferences (¶ 604.2 and 604.3) and, 2) by establishing limitations upon any Episcopal Candidate's prior service within any conference to which they may be appointed as Bishop (¶ 604.4 and 604.5). Furthermore, it is proposed in ¶ 604.5 that this amendment be effective immediately upon adoption.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.2, ¶604.3, ¶604.4, AND ¶604.5

Amend ¶ 604.2 as follows: "The Global Episcopacy Committee shall compile and publish a list of all nominees to the episcopacy no later than ninety days prior to the opening session of a regularly scheduled General Conference. A listing of bishops eligible and willing to stand for reelection shall also be published. The lists shall identify the annual conference of which each person is or has been a clergy member."

Amend ¶ 604.3 as follows: "Within ninety days of the opening session of General Conference, a plenary body composed of all those selected to serve on area committees on episcopacy shall convene to define episcopal areas based on the number of bishops recommended by the Global Episcopacy Committee, with the guideline being areas composed of six to eight annual conferences each. The chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall serve as chair. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall recommend to the plenary body proposed episcopal areas, seeking to avoid, when possible, contiguous conferences in their composition. ~~Episcopal areas need not be geographically contiguous and may be international in composition.~~ Each recommended episcopal area shall be international in composition with at least one annual conference located on a different continent than the other conferences. No recommended episcopal area shall contain all of the annual conferences located in a particular country. In developing its recommended episcopal areas, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall consider the relative financial strength of the annual conferences and ensure that each proposed episcopal area includes annual conferences of diverse financial capacity. Active bishops and members of the Global Episcopacy Committee may participate in the plenary body with voice but not vote. The plan for episcopal areas shall be approved by simple majority vote of the plenary gathering of area committees on episcopacy. The plan for episcopal area alignment shall be revisited at each gathering of the plenary prior to General Conference.

Amend ¶ 604.4 as follows: "Individual area episcopacy committees shall convene, elect their own leadership, and conduct interviews with episcopal candidates as desired. Each individual area episcopacy committee shall not include in its list of candidates interviewed any nominee or bishop subject to reelection who has been a clergy member of an annual conference in the episcopal area or who has served within the bounds of this area within a previous denomination. Each area episcopacy committee shall produce a ranked list of up to five candidates that best match the leadership needs of the episcopal area and the Global Methodist Church. These ranked lists may include actively serving bishops so long as the actively serving bishop has not been or is not a clergy member of an annual conference in the episcopal area. To assist in this process, area committees on episcopacy shall have access to relevant confidential documentation released to them by the Global Episcopacy Committee. If the same candidate is the top choice of more than one area episcopacy committee, the Global Episcopacy Committee may issue a statement offering guidance to the General Conference delegates prior to the balloting process.

Amend ¶ 604.5 as follows: "Bishops shall be elected to each defined episcopal area by the full body of the General

Conference, except that a person may not be elected as bishop to a defined episcopal area in which there is an annual conference of which they have been or are a clergy member. Delegates may not vote for the same candidate for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot. At least 60 percent support shall be required to elect a bishop to an episcopal area. If a single candidate is the top choice for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot, the Global Episcopacy Committee may issue guidance to the delegates prior to the next ballot. [This amendment to ¶ 604.5 shall be immediately effective upon adoption.]

PETITION 1260

¶604.1

To Change the Nature of Nomination of Bishops

Petitioner: Danjuma Juji

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: GMCN Karim-Maundi (AF: Northeast Nigeria)

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

For the purpose of inclusiveness and general participation, the local church which is the bedrock of the Global Methodist Church need to have their voices in the choice of the episcopacy leadership. In view of this allowing the nomination of the episcopacy candidates during the annual conference session is necessary since the general conference delegates are the ones that will do the election.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.1

~~In the twelve months prior to a regularly scheduled General Conference, duly elected annual delegation shall: during the annual conference session delegates shall nominate up to one clergy from their conference to the episcopacy.~~

In the twelve months prior to a regularly scheduled General Conference, during the annual conference session, delegates shall nominate up to one clergy from their conference to the episcopacy.

PETITION 1292

¶604.1

Make Election of AEC Members Voted on by Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

It is fine to have the General Conference delegation of an annual conference elect these committee members as this is the first time the statute has been put in place and it was so soon after the convening conference and drafting the first BDD, but going forward these positions should be voted and approved by the annual conference itself as they represent the whole of the annual conference. The time frame to elect the AEC members is extended such that it will accommodate being done at the same time as the GC delegation is elected.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.1

1. ~~In the twelve months prior to a regularly scheduled General Conference,~~ In the eighteen (18) months prior to a regularly scheduled General Conference,

(a) ~~duly elected annual conference delegations shall:~~ The duly elected annual conference delegations shall: ~~nominate up to one clergy from their conference to the episcopacy and nominate up to one clergy from outside their conference to the episcopacy.~~ Nominate up to one clergy from their conference to the episcopacy and nominate up to one clergy from outside their conference to the episcopacy. These endorsements shall not include actively serving bishops. Each nomination will ideally be accompanied by appropriate evaluative and background information prescribed by the Global Episcopacy Committee. Nominations and supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Global Episcopacy Committee.

(b) ~~elect one lay and one clergy member to an area episcopacy committee.~~ The annual conferences shall elect one lay and one clergy member to an area episcopacy committee. Members so elected shall not be eligible for election as bishops.

PETITION 1261

¶604.3

To Reduce the Number of Annual Conference per Bishop ¶604.3

Petitioner: Danjuma Juji
Organization: GMCN Karim-Maundi (AF: Northeast Nigeria)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church as an emerging church needs effective general oversight and purposeful supervision. For a bishop to have six to eight annual conferences in a different geographical location to oversee will create a kind of vacuum that can affect the emerging church that need proper guidance. Moreover, the formation of Global Methodist Church in many places like Africa comes with various types of challenges including litigation hence the absences of bishops in such areas as a result of many places to cover affects the church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.3

~~Within ninety days of the opening session of the General Conference, a plenary body composed of all those selected to serve on area committees on episcopacy shall convene to define episcopal areas based on the number of bishops recommended by the Global Episcopacy committee, with the guideline being areas composed of six to eight annual conferences each.~~

Within ninety days of the opening session of the General Conference, a plenary body composed of all those selected to serve on area committees on episcopacy shall convene to define episcopal areas based on the number of bishops recommended by the Global Episcopacy committee, with guidelines being areas composed of four to five annual conferences each.

PETITION 1198

¶604.5

Amend Paragraph 604.5 to Indicate That at Least 75% Support Shall Be Required to Elect a Bishop

Petitioner: Julius Julukon Nelson Jr

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Refuge GMC (AF: Grain Coast (Liberia))

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Within the Global Methodist connection, nominees for the Episcopacy and interim bishops for re-election have equal standing ensuring equity and fairness in the Global Methodist Church, which encourages holy conferencing. Therefore, the episcopal election process ought to have the same proportion of vote percentages required for nominees to be elected bishops as for interim bishop and episcopal election processes. Henceforth, there is a need to change the percentage proportion for choosing a nominee to be bishop in paragraph 604.5 from 60% to 75%, as in paragraph 604.8 for choosing an interim bishop

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.5

5. Bishops shall be elected to each defined episcopal area by the full body of the General Conference. Delegates may not vote for the same candidate for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot. At least ~~60~~ 75 percent support shall be required to elect a bishop to an episcopal area. If a single candidate is the top choice for more than one episcopal area on the same ballot, the Global Episcopacy Committee may issue guidance to delegates prior to the next ballot.

PETITION 1076

¶604.8

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 600s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.8

8. A bishop may serve a maximum of two six-year terms, with any time served prior to 2026 not counting against those two terms. ~~except that Bishops Scott J. Jones and Mark J. Webb shall be permitted to stand for election at the 2026 General Conference. No person elected as bishop at the convening General Conference, with the exception of Bishops Jones and Webb, shall be permitted to stand for election to the episcopacy at the 2026 General Conference unless such person receives a three-fourths vote of the delegates present and casting ballots at the 2026 General Conference. No more than one-half of the newly elected bishops may be reelected to one six-year term. Bishops Webb and Jones will not be included in the new half number. In a circumstance where more than half of the bishops elected in 2024, excluding Bishops Webb and Jones, reach the three-quarter threshold necessary for inclusion on the ballot, the nominees eligible to stand for election shall be determined by the highest number of votes received until the one-half threshold is reached.~~

PETITION 1263 ¶604.8

To Reduce Year for the General Conference and Term of Office for Bishop ¶208 Article VII and ¶604.8

Petitioner: Danjuma Juji
Organization: GMCN Karim-Maundi (AF: Northeast Nigeria)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Six-year term in office for the bishop will be too long for the emerging church. However, the general can be maintained for after six years because of the financial implication but special session may be called for the election of bishop after every four years.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208 AND ¶604.8

208 - Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. Special sessions are to be called as needed to elect bishops per ¶604.8.

604.8 - ~~A bishop may serve a maximum of two six-year terms.~~ A bishop may serve a maximum of three four-year terms.

PETITION 1336

¶604.8

Election of Bishops

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

No longer necessary. 8. A bishop may serve a maximum of two six-year terms.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶604.8

~~8. A bishop may serve a maximum of two six-year terms, except that Bishops Scott J. Jones and Mark J. Webb shall be permitted to stand for election at the 2026 General Conference. No person elected as bishop at the convening General Conference, with the exception of Bishops Jones and Webb, shall be permitted to stand for election to the episcopacy at the 2026 General Conference unless such person receives a three-fourths vote of the delegates present and casting ballots at the 2026 General Conference. No more than one-half of the newly elected bishops may be reelected to one six-year term. Bishops Webb and Jones will not be included in the new half number. In a circumstance where more than half of the bishops elected in 2024, excluding Bishops Webb and Jones, reach the three-quarter threshold necessary for inclusion on the ballot, the nominees eligible to stand for election shall be determined by the highest number of votes received until the one-half threshold is reached.~~

PETITION 1034

¶605

Simplifying Vote Percentages

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

"Plus one" language is discouraged by the editors of Robert's Rules of Order because it creates unexpected tabulation results. A simple example: With 7 votes cast, 4 is the obvious majority. However, "fifty percent plus one" (50%=3.5 ~ plus one=4.5) would require 5 votes (which equals 71%). In the case of a 60% majority vote: With 7 votes cast, 60% is 4.2, so 5 votes would be sufficient. If the threshold is "sixty percent ... plus one", 4.2 1=5.2 so 6 votes would be necessary (which equals an 85% majority). With a threshold of 60% or simple majority, "plus one" language could create unexpected results when put into practice.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶605

Delegates to the General Conference may nominate additional persons from the floor. All nominees, with their consent, shall be included in a balloting process to elect six lay and six clergy members. All delegates shall be empowered to vote for both lay and clergy nominees. Election to the Global Episcopacy Committee shall require a sixty percent majority vote. ~~A minimum of sixty percent support plus one vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots shall be required for election.~~

PETITION 1424

¶605

GEC Membership Properly Located

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This property reallocates the membership to ¶605.1

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶605

~~There shall be a Global Episcopacy Committee consisting of twelve members elected by the General Conference.~~
There shall be a Global Episcopacy Committee elected by the General Conference.

PETITION 1155

¶605.1

Consistency of Nominations for Global Episcopacy Committee (3 of 3)

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline (BDD) is not clear and consistent in describing the source of nominations for service on Connectional Commissions, Councils and the Global Episcopacy Committee. This petition (along with two other accompanying petitions) provides uniform language and makes clear that nominations come from the duly elected annual conference delegations to General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶605.1

¶ 605. THE GLOBAL EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE

There shall be a Global Episcopacy Committee consisting of twelve members elected by the General Conference.

1. Each duly elected annual conference delegation shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to two persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for the Global Episcopacy Committee, with at least half being lay. ~~The Connectional Council shall receive nominations of persons to serve on the Global Episcopacy Committee and produce a slate of six lay and six clergy nominees diverse with respect to geography, ethnicity, and gender which shall be released publicly thirty days before the General Conference.~~ The Connectional Council shall, from the list of candidates received from annual conference delegations, produce a slate of six lay and six clergy nominees diverse with respect to geography, ethnicity, and gender which shall be released publicly thirty days before the General Conference. ~~Delegates to the General Conference may nominate additional persons from the floor.~~ Individuals nominated by annual conference delegations who do not appear on the slate may be renominated by their delegation as specified in the Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together. All nominees, with their consent, shall be included in a balloting process to elect six lay and six clergy members. All delegates shall be empowered to vote for both lay and clergy nominees. A minimum of sixty percent support plus one vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots shall be required for election. No one may serve more than two consecutive six-year terms. Following the conclusion of the election, the Connectional Council may add two additional clergy members and two additional lay members to the Global Episcopacy Committee to ensure diversity.

PETITION 1425

¶605.1

Aligning GEC Nominations with Commissions and Councils

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This aligns the nomination process with that of the commissions and councils of the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶605.1

~~1. The Connectional Council shall receive nominations of persons to serve on the Global Episcopacy Committee and produce a slate of six lay and six clergy nominees diverse with respect to geography, ethnicity, and gender which shall be released publicly thirty days before the General Conference. Delegates to the General Conference may nominate additional persons from the floor. All nominees, with their consent, shall be included in a balloting process to elect six lay and six clergy members. All delegates shall be empowered to vote for both lay and clergy nominees. A minimum of 60 percent support plus one vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots shall be required for election. No one may serve more than two consecutive six-year terms. Following the conclusion of the election, the Connectional Council may add two additional clergy members and two additional lay members to the Global Episcopacy Committee to ensure diversity.~~

1. The nomination and election process for the Global Episcopacy Committee shall be governed by the rules set forth in ¶803 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The committee shall consist of six lay and six clergy members, with attention to diversity in geography, ethnicity, and gender. The Connectional Operations Officer shall be a member with voice but no vote.

PETITION 1078

¶605.4

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 600s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶605.4

4. While those elected shall begin their term sixty days following the close of the General Conference session at which they are elected, those selected may participate with voice (not vote) in any sessions of the Global Episcopacy Committee held between their selection and the beginning of their term of service. ~~Those elected in 2024 begin service upon election.~~

The Global Episcopacy Committee submitted legislation proposing the exact same action.

PETITION 1427

¶605.5

Clarifying the Expectations of the GEC

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This clarifies the role of the GEC including preamble. The GEC should meet more regularly to fulfill responsibilities, c)clarifying the expectations of collaboration in the evaluation process, new i) explicitly state responsibility for personnel file maintenance, f) assuming JPP will now be included in BDD section 9, g) clarify role in setting of compensation including interface with F&A, h) delete to consolidate budgeting responsibilities with hew g, new h) define responsibilities to assign bishops to emerging areas and k) clarify responsibility to assign for vacancies.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶605 BY MODIFYING, REPLACING, OR ADDING THE FOLLOWING SUBPARAGRAPHS

5. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall meet at least quarterly to fulfill the following responsibilities

¶605.5(c), To evaluate each active bishop annually using input from the Area Committee on Episcopacy, Conference Superintendents, Conference Lay Leaders (when applicable), and the Assembly of Bishops. Evaluations shall establish goals and developmental support. If a bishop fails to meet the requirements of the office, that assessment shall be documented in the bishop's personnel file.

[NEW]¶605.5(i) To maintain personnel files on active bishops, former bishops, and bishops emeriti, which shall include results of a bishop's annual evaluations, any just resolution agreements to which the bishop is a respondent, the outcomes of any investigation against a bishop, and any other relevant documentation. Additional documents may be included in a bishop's personnel file at the discretion of the Global Episcopacy Committee.

¶605.5 (f) To receive and investigate complaints against bishops. The committee shall be empowered to suspend a bishop, arrange for responses aimed at resolution and, as necessary, provide for a trial for a bishop in keeping with The Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church

¶605.5(g), To establish compensation based on the bishop's residency at the time of nomination, adjusted for national cost of living differences and currency exchange rates. The general church shall fund compensation, benefits, and travel. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually develop a proposal for funding the episcopacy in accordance with the budgeting process directed by the Commission on Finance and Administration.

¶605.5(h), To assign Emerging Areas to Bishops when the Commission on Conferences determines a geographic area is developed to the point that episcopal leadership is deemed necessary to support future development. The bishop assigned to this Emerging Area will continue as assigned after the Emerging Area convenes as an Annual Conference. The Global Episcopacy Committee will allocate adequate travel expenses to the newly assigned bishop.

[NEW] ¶605.5(k) In the event an active bishop is temporarily or permanently unable to serve, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall assign episcopal leadership for the conferences affected using active bishops or bishops emerita. The area committee on episcopacy of the affected episcopal area(s) shall be consulted.

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PETITION 1219

¶607

Clarifying the Responsibilities of the Conference Superintendent

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following changes to .h, i, j, m, and o. The rest would remain the same: (1) Give the CS flexibility to delegate convening the Cabinet. (2) "Cabinet" is not defined elsewhere, so we added a definition. (3) We brought the statement on appointment-making in line with the process in ¶ 610. (4) We clarified language in .j to remove terms not defined anywhere in the BDD. (5) Creation or division of charges should require consultation with the PEs and local churches involved (6) .m should refer to the Nominations and Leadership Committee for clarity. (7) .o, should not refer to the JPP because the two committees are described in the BDD paragraphs referenced here.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶607.1.h, ¶607.1.i, ¶607.1.j, ¶607.1.m, AND ¶607.1.o

1. A conference superintendent shall have the following responsibilities:

Convene (or assign a designee to convene) together and supervise the cabinet of the annual conference. The cabinet shall include the Conference Superintendent and all Presiding Elders in the annual conference. The Conference Superintendent may also assign laity and other clergy to the cabinet.

~~In consultation with the presiding elders, present appointments in the annual conference(s) to be fixed and approved by the bishop as the Book of Doctrines and Discipline directs (¶ 610).~~ In consultation with the presiding elders, forward all requests for changes in appointments in the annual conference to the Bishop for approval (¶ 610).

~~Divide or unite circuits, charges, stations, or missions as judged necessary and to recommend appropriate appointments.~~ Divide or unite charges as judged necessary after consultation with the Presiding Elder(s) and local churches involved and to recommend appropriate appointments.

~~Chair the conference leadership team (or equivalent) as provided in the established rules of the conference.~~ Chair the conference Nomination and Leadership Development Committee (or equivalent).

Nominate the committee on investigation (¶ 710.6) and administrative review committee (¶ 710.7) ~~per the Judicial Practices and Procedures of the Global Methodist Church~~.

PETITION 1288

¶607

Align Conference Superintendt Term of Office with Bishop

Petitioner: Jay Therrell

Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Conference superintendents are an extension of the office of the bishop. For some reason, different terms of office were created, and they should be aligned. If a bishop may serve for two six-year terms, then, for missional alignment, the same should be true for the conference superintendent. No GMC clergy are guaranteed the right to an appointment, including the conference superintendent, and a bishop could always remove the CS if they needed to do so, regardless of the term of office.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶607

~~Conference superintendents serve an initial term of six years and may be extended annually for up to twelve total years of service.~~ Conference superintendents serve an initial term of six years and may be extended for an additional term of six years.

PETITION 1293

¶607.1

Flexibility for Conference Superintendent's Delegation of Duties

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

There are seventeen responsibilities listed. This is a lot, especially in conferences like ours where Conference Superintendents are part time and are also under appointment. The BoDD doesn't seem to include language that some of this material can be delegated. Not delegating any of this material may work in a conference where the Conference Superintendent is not also serving a church. In our context, greater flexibility is needed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶607.1

1. A conference superintendent shall have the following responsibilities (responsibilities may be delegated to other clergy with the knowledge and approval of the Bishop):

PETITION 1014

¶608

Clarifying the Role and Scope of Presiding Elders

Petitioner: Steven Taylor
Organization: Panama (US: Northeast)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This petition clarifies the identity and expectations of the Presiding Elder in a way that is faithful to connectional polity and adaptable across the global church. By identifying the role as primarily pastoral and supervisory, ordinarily exercised in a co-vocational manner alongside a pastoral appointment or other responsibilities, the amendment promotes sustainability and accountability in leadership. The added language affirms the global and connectional character of the Global Methodist Church and explicitly allows for contextual variation in responsibilities and patterns of service, while maintaining accountability to the doctrine, discipline, and mission of the Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶608

¶ 608. SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT. An elder in full connection may be appointed to lead a district (or its equivalent) by the bishop as a presiding elder upon recommendation by the conference superintendent. A presiding elder is appointed annually after evaluation for effectiveness, and ordinarily serves in a pastoral and supervisory role that supports the ministry of clergy and congregations within the district (or its equivalent). This role is typically a co-vocational position exercised in addition to a pastoral appointment or other responsibilities, unless otherwise determined by the annual conference.A presiding elder may not serve more than twelve years in the aggregate, unless extended annually by the annual conference connectional council (or equivalent) and approved by the conference superintendent. In the selection and assignment of presiding elders, bishops and conference superintendents shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness and the global and connectional character of the Global Methodist Church (¶ 406). The responsibilities, scope of authority, and patterns of service of presiding elders may vary according to the cultural, missional, organizational, and contextual needs of the annual conference (or its equivalent), while remaining accountable to the doctrine, discipline, and mission of the Church.

PETITION 1184

¶608

Clarifying the Annual Evaluation of Presiding Elders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Presiding Elders are not appointed annually in most conferences, but are appointed once and remain until they choose to step down or are removed by the bishop. Making the term of a PE appointment indefinite will match how we treat other appointments. Instead of being appointed annually, we believe a PE should be evaluated annually and if the evaluation is poor, we should give explicit authority for the bishop to remove them upon recommendation of the CS.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶608

¶ 608. SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT. An elder in full connection may be appointed to lead a district (or its equivalent) by the bishop as a presiding elder upon recommendation by the conference superintendent. ~~A presiding elder is appointed annually after evaluation for effectiveness.~~ A presiding elder shall be evaluated annually for effectiveness by the Conference Superintendent or their designee and may be removed by the bishop for poor performance upon recommendation of the conference superintendent. A presiding elder may not serve more than twelve years in the aggregate, unless extended annually by the annual conference connectional council (or equivalent) and approved by the conference superintendent and bishop. In the selection of presiding elders, bishops and conference superintendents shall give due consideration to the inclusiveness of the Global Methodist Church (¶ 406).

PETITION 1456

¶608

By Adding Paragraph 608.1 Creation of District Structure in Every Annual Conference

Petitioner: Rev Remember Masamba
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Nyamamowa (AF: Zimbabwe)
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Effective mission and ministry of the Church depend upon strong, accessible, and accountable leadership structures at every level. Circuits or districts have historically served as vital connections between local congregations and the wider Church, fostering pastoral support, administrative efficiency, and missional coordination. Establishing such a structure in every annual conference would strengthen oversight, clergy support, and enhanced collaboration among local churches where necessary/applicable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶608 BY ADDING A SUBPARAGRAPH

¶608.1. In every annual conference, there shall be a presiding elder with a lay leadership structure, including a lay leader, as well as coordinators for ministries for women, men, young people, and children as a lean structure to govern each circuit or district. This structure is intended to support the presiding elder's leadership in areas such as training, missions, and resource mobilization.

PETITION 1015

¶609

Consolidating and Clarifying the Responsibilities of Presiding Elders

Petitioner: Steven Taylor
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Panama (US: Northeast)
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This petition consolidates and clarifies the responsibilities of Presiding Elders to reflect a pastoral and supervisory role within the Global Methodist Church's connectional structure. By reducing duplication distinguishing pastoral oversight from administrative control and clarifying collaboration and escalation to the conference superintendent the revised paragraph strengthens accountability and role clarity. These changes establish sustainable and realistic expectations for Presiding Elders who also often serve in local church appointments while preserving necessary authority and flexibility across diverse annual conference contexts.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶609 & ¶¶609.1-6, AND DELETES ¶¶609.7-12

¶ 609. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS.

~~As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent the presiding elder shall oversee the ministry provide pastoral supervision and oversight of the ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district to which they are appointed within the district to which they are appointed.~~ As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent the presiding elder shall provide pastoral supervision and oversight of the ministry of the clergy and churches within the district to which they are appointed. ~~The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop or where no pastor is appointed shall serve as acting administrator of a pastoral charge only when directed by the conference superintendent in circumstances of pastoral vacancy or absence.~~ The presiding elder shall serve as acting administrator of a pastoral charge only when directed by the conference superintendent in circumstances of pastoral vacancy or absence. ~~The presiding elder has the following specific responsibilities:~~ The presiding elder has the following responsibilities:

(1) ~~Offer support care and counsel to churches and clergy concerning matters affecting their ministry.~~ Offer pastoral support care counsel and supervision to clergy and churches concerning matters affecting their ministry and maintain regular contact with clergy for encouragement accountability and guidance.

(2) Together with the bishop and conference superintendent guard transmit and proclaim the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and Tradition from a Wesleyan perspective communicating and defending the doctrines and discipline of the church as provided for in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

(3) ~~Be the district's chief missional resource providing missional accountability collaborating with congregations and communities within the district to assess and understand their context and develop their leadership needs to support the ministry of the local church.~~ Provide missional leadership within the district by encouraging faithfulness to the mission of the church fostering covenant discipleship through class meetings and other accountable forms of Christian community supporting congregations in discerning and responding to their local context encouraging the reaching of unserved communities and persons within the district and encouraging organized lay ministries within the district.

(4) ~~Collaborate with the bishop conference superintendent and cabinet in the process of appointing clergy and assigning qualified and trained lay ministers as defined by the conference board of ministry.~~ Collaborate with the

bishop conference superintendent cabinet and conference board of ministry in the process of appointing clergy assigning qualified lay ministers and on matters related to leadership development including identification of candidates for ordained and lay ministry.

(5) ~~Develop an effective system for recruitment of candidates for ministry.~~Maintain appropriate working relationships with clergy and lay leadership within the district to encourage effective ministry provide guidance in times of conflict or transition and refer matters requiring further action to the conference superintendent or cabinet. Receive written evaluations of clergy from Pastor Parish Relations Committees of the churches in the district.

(6) ~~Establish working relationships with lay leadership to develop faithful and effective systems of ministry within the district.~~ As assigned by the conference superintendent assist in ensuring the proper maintenance of required clergy charge and district records including matters related to appointments property and other connectional responsibilities.

~~(7) Encourage covenant groups class meetings and band meetings among the clergy and the laity of the district.~~

~~(8) Maintain regular contact with the clergy for counsel and supervision and receive written or electronic evaluations that include each appointed clergy or assigned layperson's continuing education spiritual practices current ministry work and goals for future ministry.~~

~~(9) As directed by the conference superintendent the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records of all persons appointed to the charges including clergy in extension ministry.~~

~~(10) As directed by the conference superintendent the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records dealing with property endowments and other tangible assets of the district.~~

~~(11) In consultation with the bishop conference superintendent and cabinet work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district including realignment of pastoral charges larger parishes cooperative parishes multiple staff configurations new church starts and ecumenical shared ministries.~~

~~(12) Assume other leadership responsibilities as determined by the conference superintendent and/or bishop supporting the health and effectiveness of the local churches in the district or annual conference.~~

PETITION 1220

¶609

Clarifying Responsibilities of Presiding Elders

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following changes, leaving 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 12 in their current form: (1) Reduce duplicative and unnecessary language. (2) Use "pastor" instead of "clergy" to encompass lay ministers (3) Give CS flexibility to delegate PE responsibilities to another elder if the PE temporarily incapable of carrying out their work. (4) Make the proclamation of apostolic faith the first priority (5) Make it clear that PEs work in cooperation with the CS and Cabinet in pastoral recruitment (6) What is listed in .8 is a report, not an evaluation. According to ¶ 445, the PPRC evaluates pastors, not the PE. (7) Make it clear that local churches are consulted in appointments according to ¶ 610.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶609.1, ¶609.2, ¶609.5, ¶609.8, ¶609.9, AND ¶609.11

¶ 609. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS. As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall oversee the ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district to which they are appointed. ~~The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed.~~ The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge where no pastor is appointed or assigned. The presiding elder has the following specific responsibilities, which may be delegated to another elder by the conference superintendent:

~~Offer support, care, and counsel to churches and clergy concerning matters affecting their ministry.~~ Together with the bishop and conference superintendent, guard, transmit, and proclaim the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and Tradition from a Wesleyan perspective, communicating and defending the doctrines and discipline of the church as provided for in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

~~Together with the bishop and conference superintendent, guard, transmit, and proclaim the apostolic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and Tradition from a Wesleyan perspective, communicating and defending the doctrines and discipline of the church as provided for in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~ Offer support, care, and counsel to churches and clergy concerning matters affecting their ministry.

~~Develop an effective system for recruitment of candidates for ministry.~~ In cooperation with the conference superintendent and cabinet, implement an effective system for recruitment of candidates for ministry.

~~Maintain regular contact with the clergy for counsel and supervision, and receive written or electronic evaluations of each pastor that include each appointed clergy or assigned layperson's continuing education, spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry.~~ Maintain regular contact with the pastors in the district for counsel and supervision, and receive annual written or electronic reports from each pastor that include each pastor's continuing education, current spiritual practices, current ministry work, and goals for future ministry.

~~As directed by the conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records of all persons appointed to the charges, including clergy in extension ministry.~~ As directed by the conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall facilitate the proper maintenance of the appropriate records of all pastors in their district, including clergy in extension ministry.

~~In consultation with the bishop, conference superintendent, and cabinet, work to develop the best strategic~~

~~deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges, larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new church starts, and ecumenical shared ministries.~~ In consultation with the bishop, conference superintendent, cabinet, and any churches or ministries affected, work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of pastoral charges, larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new church starts, and ecumenical shared ministries

PETITION 1290

¶609

Flexibility for Conference Superintent's Delegation of Duties

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

There are twelve responsibilities listed. This is a lot, especially in conferences like ours where presiding elders are part time and are also under full-time appointment. The BoDD doesn't seem to include language that some of this material can be delegated. Not delegating any of this material may work in a conference where the presiding elders are employed by the Annual Conference and supported by Connectional Giving. In our context, greater flexibility is needed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶609

609. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS. As an extension of the office of bishop and conference superintendent, the presiding elder shall oversee the ministry of the clergy and churches in the communities of the district to which they are appointed. The presiding elder is the acting administrator of any pastoral charge in which a pastoral vacancy may develop, or where no pastor is appointed. The presiding elder has the following specific responsibilities (responsibilities may be delegated to other clergy with the knowledge and approval of the Conference Superintendent):

PETITION 1285

¶610

Allowing Conference Superintendents to Fix Appointments

Petitioner: Jay Therrell
Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The current appointment process in which bishops formally "fix" appointments, often functions as a rubber stamp of recommendations by conference cabinets. This legislation transfers primary appointment to the conference superintendent with deep inclusion of the presiding elders—the leaders most actively engaged with local churches and clergy on a day-to-day basis. This moves decisions to the lowest effective level, consistent with the well-settled principle of subsidiarity: higher authorities should support and coordinate, not supplant, the work that can be done competently by those closer to the situation. The seven dying words of a church are, "We've never done it that way before." It's okay for us to change so that form follows function.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610, DELETES ¶603.8, ADDS NEW ¶607.1.i, AND AMENDS ¶609.4

¶ 610. CONSIDERATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENTS

To strengthen and empower the local church to effectively carry out its mission for Christ in the world, clergy shall be appointed by the conference superintendent, and these appointments reported annually to the conference.

Appointments are to be made with consideration to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, the gifts and evidence of God's grace of those appointed, and in faithfulness to our commitment to an open itinerancy. Open itinerancy means appointments are made without regard to race, tribal or ethnic origin, gender, disability, marital status, or age.

Appointment-making across conference lines shall be encouraged to resource churches and enable open itinerancy. Clergy in good standing are free to seek an appointment in any annual conference. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets should share information on supply and demand across the church.

Appointment-making will reflect the unique needs of a charge, the community context, and the gifts of a particular pastor. Criteria will be developed in each instance and then shared with pastors and congregations. These criteria may include profiles of the congregation, pastor, and missional setting.

Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are vital for the growth of our global church. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations of which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Where these appointments are made, the annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments through adequate training and support.

Each annual conference superintendency committee shall be responsible for working with the conference superintendent and the presiding elders to ensure compliance with the commitment to open itinerancy and the equitable and fair consideration of diverse pastors during the appointment process.

Annually, the conference superintendent of each annual conference shall deliver a report to the annual conference superintendency committee addressing the specific steps taken to ensure diverse persons were considered for appointments. Such a report shall enumerate the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments that were made and

the extent to which cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments were considered.

The annual conference superintendency committee shall annually report to the Global Episcopacy Committee the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling the commitment to open itinerancy, and the Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually provide direction to the annual conference committees on superintendency to enhance fulfillment of open itinerancy in each annual conference.

Clergy shall not have a guaranteed right to an appointment. Effort will be made to deploy all effective clergy. Deacons and elders who are not under appointment shall be considered inactive (¶¶ 509.3, 510.2).

The process of appointment-making is to be thoroughly consultative. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder confers with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to understand (a) the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation; (b) the gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and any spouse and family; and (c) the missional setting. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present for final interviews with the local church to give support and guidance in the appointment process.

The conference superintendent shall present proposed appointments to the Cabinet (composed of the conference superintendent and the presiding elders). Any proposed appointment may be overridden by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members of the Cabinet present and voting. In the event of an override, the conference superintendent shall propose an alternative appointment, which shall again be subject to Cabinet review and the same override process. The conference superintendent and cabinet should work toward multiyear (rather than annual) local church appointments to facilitate a more effective ministry.

Interim Ministers. To be faithful to the Great Commission and the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8) and to enable a church to move through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, there may be times when an interim minister is necessary. Churches may experience times of discontinuity. In these situations, a trained lay or clergy interim minister can foster healing and provide pastoral leadership. Conference superintendents and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit–led lay or clergy interim ministers to such congregations.

Extension Ministry Appointments. Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, the conference superintendent may appoint deacons and elders to extension ministries outside the local church upon approval of the setting by the board of ministry. The appointment should reflect the nature of ordained ministry, meeting needs in the world in keeping with the mission of the church (¶ 401). A process of consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church, as needed and appropriate. Such persons remain active clergy.

Appointments to School. Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, the conference superintendent may appoint deacons and elders to attend any recognized school, college, or theological seminary,

or to participate in an accredited program of clinical pastoral education. Such appointments are a separate category from appointments to extension ministries outside the local church. Such persons remain active clergy.

¶ 603.8 ~~Fix the clergy appointments in each conference in consultation with the conference superintendents and conference cabinet.~~

¶ 607 (1)(i) Fix and present appointments in the annual conference as the Book of Doctrines and Discipline directs in ¶ 610.

¶ 609 (4) Collaborate with the ~~bishop,~~ conference superintendent and cabinet in the process of appointing clergy and assigning qualified and trained lay ministers, as defined by the conference board of ministry.

PETITION 1025

¶610.5

Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Training

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee

Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

CR/CC appointments are vital to the health, mission, and global character of the GMC. To support this vision, the denomination has an opportunity to equip every Cabinet and congregation with consistent, theologically grounded, and culturally competent training that promotes unity, trust, and effectiveness in CR/CC ministry. By establishing a General Church team dedicated to developing and coordinating this training, working collaboratively with annual conferences, the GMC can ensure shared resources, strong accountability, and equitable support across the connection. This step will empower conferences of every size to thrive in the CR/CC ministry and strengthen our collective witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.5

~~5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are vital for the growth of our global church. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations of which the majority of their constituencies are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. Where these appointments are made, the annual conferences shall prepare clergy and congregations for cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments through adequate training and support.~~

~~a. Each annual conference superintendency committee shall be responsible for working with the bishop, the conference superintendent, and the presiding elders to ensure compliance with the commitment to open itineracy and the equitable and fair consideration of diverse pastors during the appointment process.~~

~~b. Annually, the bishop and/or the conference superintendent of each annual conference shall deliver a report to the annual conference superintendency committee addressing the specific steps taken to ensure diverse persons were considered for appointments. Such a report shall enumerate the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments that were made and the extent to which cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments were considered.~~

~~c. The annual conference superintendency committee shall annually report to the Global Episcopacy Committee the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling the commitment to open itineracy, and the Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually provide direction to the annual conference committees on superintendency to enhance fulfillment of open itineracy in each annual conference.~~

5. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are vital for the growth and witness of the Global Methodist Church. Cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations whose majority constituency is of a different racial/ethnic or cultural background than the pastor. To ensure the effectiveness and fruitfulness of these appointments, the Church shall prepare both clergy and congregations through adequate training and ongoing support.

a. Each annual conference's bishop and cabinet shall work together to ensure open itineracy and the equitable and fair consideration of diverse pastors during the appointment process.

b. To ensure consistency and effectiveness across the denomination, the General Conference shall establish a Denominational Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Training Team, funded through the General Church budget. This team

shall develop standardized curriculum, training modules, and assessment tools for use in all annual conferences.

c. The Denominational CR/CC Training Team shall provide training every four years for all Cabinets and shall also make resources available for local churches and SPRCs preparing for or engaged in CR/CC appointments. Each annual conference shall implement the denominational training and ensure its clergy, Cabinets, and congregations participate as appropriate.

d. The Assembly of Bishops shall oversee and report on the implementation of CR/CC training in all annual conferences and ensure equitable support for ethnic minority clergy, cross-racial appointments, and cross-cultural ministry settings.

PETITION 1335

¶610.5

Accountability for Open Itineracy

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: MidTexas

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Impractical. Conference superintendents make appointments. Bishops approve appointments. They are directly accountable to the Global Episcopacy Committee for this work. Conference Superintendency Committees do not report this information to the Global Episcopacy Committee. 5.b&c. The bishop and/or conference superintendent of each annual conference shall annually report to the Global Episcopacy Committee the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling the commitment to open itineracy, and the Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually provide direction to the bishop and/or conference superintendent to enhance fulfillment of open itineracy in each annual conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.5 BY DELETING ¶610.5.b & ¶610.5.c

~~610.5.b&c. Annually, the bishop and/or the conference superintendent of each annual conference shall deliver a report to the annual conference superintendency committee addressing the specific steps taken to ensure diverse persons were considered for appointments. Such a report shall enumerate the cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments that were made and the extent to which cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments were considered. c. The annual conference superintendency committee shall annually report to the Global Episcopacy Committee the progress of the annual conference in fulfilling the commitment to open itineracy, and the Global Episcopacy Committee shall annually provide direction to the annual conference committees on superintendency to enhance fulfillment of open itineracy in each annual conference.~~

PETITION 1024

¶610.7

The Process of Appointment-Making

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church is founded upon a connectional covenant that affirms open itinerancy, missional appointment, and the shared calling of clergy and congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ. However, as the denomination continues to grow and organize across diverse regions, conferences, and cultures, the current wording of ¶610 remains unchanged. 7—though well-intentioned—lacks sufficient clarity, structure, and accountability to ensure consistent, equitable, and Spirit-led appointments across the connection. This petition proposes a comprehensive yet practical revision that strengthens the consultative, transparent, and missionally focused nature of the appointment process.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.7

~~7. The process of appointment making is to be thoroughly consultative. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder confers with the pastor and the pastor-parish relations committee to understand (a) the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation, (b) the gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and any spouse and family, and (c) the missional setting. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Whenever possible, churches may be given 2-3 pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present for final interviews with the local church to give support and guidance in the appointment process. The Assembly of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the implementation of the consultative process in their respective areas.~~

7. The Process of Appointment-Making shall be thoroughly consultative, prayerful, and missionally focused, ensuring that every appointment advances the redemptive purpose of the Church and strengthens the witness of the Global Methodist connection.

a. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder confer with the pastor and the pastor-parish relations committee (or its equivalent) to discern together: (1) The needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation; (2) The spiritual gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and their family; and (3) The missional setting and community context in which the congregation and pastor will serve. Consultation shall be a continuing process throughout the pastoral term and shall become more intensive during seasons of pastoral transition.

b. Appointments shall be made through vision-based discernment, not by competitive comparison among pastors or through singular preaching events.The discernment process shall focus upon spiritual gifts, calling, and the alignment of vision between the pastor and the congregation. Whenever feasible, churches may be given two to three potential pastoral candidates for prayerful consideration and interview. However, the local church shall

consult withone pastor at a timein order to foster genuine spiritual discernment and to avoid direct comparison among candidates. Both churches and pastors shall have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice, understanding that available personnel and contextual realities may occasionally require temporary pulpit supply.

c. The presiding elder and/or the conference superintendent shall lead a clear and consistent consultation process with the pastor-parish relations committee (or equivalent), ensuring that both the church's missional profile and the pastor's ministry vision are prayerfully considered. No final interviews shall be scheduled without: (1) The approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the Board of Ministry, (2) The affirmation of the presiding elder, and(3) The authorization of the conference superintendent. Thepresiding elder or a cabinet designee must be present for all final interviews to provide support, guidance, and accountability within the covenant of appointment.

d. Appointments shall be made in a manner that reflects the Global nature of the Gospel and the calling of all God's people. Therefore, (1) Ethnic minority and women pastors shall receive equitable consideration for appointment in all congregations, regardless of size, geography, or history. (2) Annual conferences shall not restrict appointments for ethnic minority or women pastors to certain congregational types but shall base appointments upon gifts, readiness, and missional alignment. (3) The Superintendency Committee shall annually review and report on the equitable appointment of ethnic minority, women, cross-racial, and cross-cultural pastors, with such findings reported to the Assembly of Bishops for accountability and review. (4) The Assembly of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the consistent and faithful implementation of this consultative and equitable process within their episcopal areas. (5) Conference superintendents and presiding elders shall maintain written documentation of all consultations to ensure transparency, fairness, and historical integrity in appointment discernment.

e. Each annual conference shall provide ongoing training and support for pastors and congregations engaged in cross-racial, cross-cultural, ethnic minority, or women clergy appointments. Such preparation shall include instruction incross-cultural communication and reconciliation, awareness of implicit bias, conflict resolution and trust-building, andshared leadership models that foster unity in diversity. The presiding elder shall ensure that both pastors and congregations receive appropriate orientation and continuing support to sustain these appointments for long-term fruitfulness.

f. While most congregations will rely upon the cabinet to resource pastoral appointments, a local church may, with prior approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, lead its own search process for pastoral leadership. Such a process must adhere to all appointment standards of the Church, and final interviews or recommendations shall not occur without the required approvals as outlined in subsection c.

g. The Global Methodist Church affirms that pastoral appointments are a sacred covenant between clergy, congregations, and conference leadership. Therefore, all appointments shall be made with prayerful discernment, fairness, transparency, and a missional vision, ensuring that both pastors and congregations flourish in their shared calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ of all nations, who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

h.In the Global Methodist Church, the relationship between a pastor and a congregation is a sacred covenant grounded in trust, mutual accountability, and shared mission. Therefore, when concerns arise—whether from the SPRC, the pastor, or the presiding elder—the presiding elder shall notify both parties and begin a prayerful, structured discernment process in consultation with the Cabinet. A trained and spiritually mature facilitator shall

be appointed to guide the process fairly, confidentially, and in a Spirit-led manner. (1) When the situation involves personal or logistical needs, the presiding elder, SPRC, and pastor shall work together to plan a timely and orderly transition without requiring an extended discernment period. (2) When the concerns involve conflict, broken trust, or significant relational strain, the discernment process may extend up to six months. This period allows the facilitator to help the pastor and congregation name concerns, pursue healing and reconciliation, clarify expectations, and discern next steps without prolonging unhealthy tension. (3) At the conclusion of the process, the facilitator and presiding elder shall provide a written recommendation to the Cabinet. Any recommendation for pastoral change shall come through a duly called Church Conference, with the Cabinet making the final decision. All actions shall reflect the fruits of the Spirit and seek the unity and flourishing of Christ's Church.

PETITION 1052

¶610.7

Considerations and Criteria for Appointments

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The reference to two or three pastoral candidates to choose from sets up an expectation that every local church will be given two or three pastoral candidates which is not always possible. Also, the inclusion of the word, "choose," sets up an incorrect expectation that the local church makes the final decision.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.7

¶ 610. CONSIDERATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENTS.

7. The process of appointment-making is to be thoroughly consultative. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder confers with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to understand (a) the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation; (b) the gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and any spouse and family; and (c) the missional setting. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. ~~Whenever possible, churches may be given two or three pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews.~~ Whenever possible, churches shall be given more than one candidate for potential pastoral interviews. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present for final interviews with the local church to give support and guidance in the appointment process. The Assembly of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the implementation of the consultative process in their respective areas.

PETITION 1221

¶610.7

Clarifying Appointment Making

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

We recommend changes for flexibility and clarity: (1) The CS and PE need the ability to designate someone else from the cabinet for consultations when a PE is unavailable or has a conflict of interest. (2) The description of how a local church may design a pastoral search process muddies this section. We recommend making it a separate section. (3) It is not always practical for a PE to be present for final interviews. We need more flexibility to allow the PE to be present "throughout" the process to give guidance "when necessary". (4) Since the CS is the one who directs the implementation of the consultative process in their annual conference, they are the one who needs to be held accountable for it, not the Bishop.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.7 AND 610.8

7. The process of appointment-making is to be thoroughly consultative. Consultation is the process by which the conference superintendent and/or the presiding elder (or their cabinet designee) confers with the pastor and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to understand

the needs, characteristics, and opportunities for the mission of the congregation;

the gifts, evidence of God's grace, professional experience, and expectations of the pastor and any spouse and family; and

the missional setting.

Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Whenever possible, churches may be given two or three pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. ~~While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent. The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present for final interviews with the local church to give support and guidance in the appointment process. The Assembly of Bishops shall hold its members accountable for the implementation of the consultative process in their respective areas.~~ The presiding elder or their cabinet designee must be present with the local church throughout the appointment process to give support and guidance when necessary. The Bishop shall hold the Conference Superintendent accountable for the implementation of the consultative process in their respective areas.

8. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent. No appointment may be requested by a church without the approval of the pastor being considered by (a) the board of ministry, (b) the presiding elder, and (c) the conference superintendent.

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PETITION 1247

¶610.7

Consultation Appointment Process

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: MidTexas

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Current language articulates a “congregational call” rather than a “consultation” appointment process.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.7

~~7. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Whenever possible, churches may be given two or three pastoral candidates to choose from for potential pastoral interviews. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice—understanding there are factors like available personnel and available appointments that may extend the time when churches are served by pulpit supply. While most churches will rely upon the cabinet to resource their pastoral appointments, a church may choose to lead their own search process for pastoral leadership upon the approval of the presiding elder and conference superintendent, and final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered by the board of ministry, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent.~~

7. Consultation is both a continuing process and a more intense involvement during the period of a change in appointment. Whenever possible, churches may be given two or three pastoral candidates to preview for potential pastoral interviews. A church may suggest potential candidates to the presiding elder. Churches and pastors have the right to decline a proposed appointment without malice. Final interviews shall not be scheduled without the following: the approval of the pastor(s) being considered, the presiding elder, and the conference superintendent.

PETITION 1222

¶610.9

Clarifying Interim Appointments

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The section about Interim Ministry is wordy and does not describe all instances when an Interim minister may be utilized. We recommend condensing this section and making it apply to all situations.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.9

~~9. Interim Ministers. To be faithful to the Great Commission and the power of the Holy Spirit (*Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8)* and to enable a church to move through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, there may be times that an interim minister is necessary. Churches may experience times of discontinuity. In these situations, a trained lay or clergy interim minister can foster healing and provide pastoral leadership. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit–led lay or clergy interim ministers to such congregations.~~

9. Interim Ministers. When a church is moving through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit–led lay or clergy interim ministers to foster healing and provide pastoral leadership for a congregation while the search for the next pastor is ongoing.

PETITION 1334

¶610.9

Interim Ministers

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: MidTexas

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Unnecessary 9. Interim Ministers. To enable a church to move through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, there may be times that an interim minister is necessary. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit–led lay or clergy interim minsters to such congregations.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.9

610.9. Interim Ministers. ~~To be faithful to the Great Commission and the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8) and to enable a church to move through a period of transition of pastoral appointment, there may be times that an interim minister is necessary. Churches may experience times of discontinuity. In these situations, a trained lay or clergy interim minister can foster healing and provide pastoral leadership~~. Bishops, conference superintendents, and cabinets may want to provide Holy Spirit–led lay or clergy interim minsters to such congregations.

PETITION 1035

¶610.10

Keeping Extension Ministries Connected

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Great Lakes
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Endorsed ministers are also eligible to be appointed to ministries beyond the local church, and should be reflected in this paragraph. Clergy appointed to extension ministries are easily overlooked in annual conferences. Rather than creating a new structure, this proposal would incorporate extension ministries into the existing structure for a connection between conferences and clergy serving beyond the local church. Clergy appointed to extension ministries, need and deserve support and accountability as a part of our connectional structure. Assigning a Presiding Elder seems the logical existing structure to foster a meaningful connection.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.10

Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, bishops may appoint endorsed ministers, deacons, and elders to extension ministries outside the local church upon approval of the setting by the board of ministry. The appointment should reflect the nature of ordained ministry meeting needs in the world in keeping with the mission of the church (¶ 401). A process of consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church, as needed and appropriate. Such persons remain active clergy~~.~~ and shall be assigned a Presiding Elder for support and supervision.

PETITION 1223

¶610.10

Clarifying Extension Ministry Appointments

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The first sentence is unclear as to who is required and allowed to do what and when. We suggest a rewrite that preserves the requirements while enhancing clarity. We have also added ability for the Bishop to appoint any clergy as an extension minister, not just deacons and elders.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶610.10

10. Extension Ministry Appointments. ~~Upon the recommendation of the conference superintendent and cabinet, bishops may appoint deacons and elders to extension ministries outside the local church upon approval of the setting by the board of ministry.~~ Bishops may appoint clergy to extension ministries outside the local church upon the recommendation of the Conference Superintendent and Cabinet and the approval of the setting by the board of ministry. The appointment should reflect the nature of ordained ministry, meeting needs in the world in keeping with the mission of the church (¶ 401). A process of consultation shall be available to persons in appointments beyond the local church, as needed and appropriate. Such persons remain active clergy.

PETITION 1432

¶611

Limiting Transferring Bishops to Possible Emeritus Status

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Clarify that bishops do not transfer as active bishops and may be received as bishop emeritus through a process defined by GEC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ENTIRELY REPLACES ¶611 WITH THE FOLLOWING

¶611 TRANSFERRING BISHOPS, A bishop (active or retired) of a denomination that has its roots in the Wesleyan holiness tradition may join the Global Methodist Church as a clergy through transfer. Application for transfer shall include explicit written confirmation of their willingness to uphold and affirm the doctrines, Social Witness, and church government set forth in The Book of Doctrines and Discipline. In order to be received with the title bishop emeritus conferred, the transferring bishop must be approved by the Global Episcopacy Committee and the Assembly of Bishop through a process defined by the Global Episcopacy Committee. When a bishop emeritus is received between sessions of the General Conference, a denomination wide announcement shall be released. A bishop emeritus received by transfer may be nominated for the episcopacy and, if elected by the General Conference, shall be eligible to serve one six-year term.

PETITION 1291

¶611.1

Removing Allowance for Transfer Bishops to Be Assigned Episcopal Area

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

This paragraph implies that if bishops from other Methodist churches transfer into the GMC, they will automatically serve AS bishops in the GMC. We have made a point of making sure that all our Bishops are duly elected by the General Conference. This automatic process would undermine this process. Bishops in other Methodist denominations may have very different responsibilities and qualifications. To simply assume that they can faithfully lead in the GMC is shortsighted. They may stand for election at the next General Conference if nominated like everyone else.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶611.1

A bishop of an autonomous Methodist church may join the Global Methodist Church by clergy transfer. Application for transfer shall include an explicit written affirmation of the doctrines, Social Witness, and church government set forth in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Transferring bishops shall also agree to uphold The Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Such a transfer is subject to the approval of the global episcopacy committee and the Assembly of Bishops. ~~When a bishop is received between sessions of General Conference the Assembly of Bishops and global episcopacy committee shall inform the church of their episcopal assignment.~~ All transferred bishops must stand for election at the next General Conference and shall be eligible to serve one six-year term provided that they are elected at the next General Conference following their reception as a bishop by transfer.

PETITION 1185

¶611.2

Clarifying Status of Bishops Emeriti

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

The last sentence of ¶ 611.2 is repeated in ¶ 613 and is unnecessary here. We recommend deletion of that sentence and the addition of a reference to ¶ 613 in the first sentence.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶611.2

2. A retired bishop joining the Global Methodist Church shall become a senior elder and may bear the title of bishop emeritus (¶ 613), if granted by the Global Episcopacy Committee and Connectional Council. ~~A bishop emeritus shall be a clergy member of the annual conference of their choice and may serve in any capacity allowed for senior clergy (¶ 520).~~

PETITION 1433

¶612

Adding a Possible Reason for Vacancy

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Adds a missing circumstance under which there may be a vacancy.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶612

¶ 612. VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF BISHOP. A vacancy in the office of bishop may occur due to death, transition to senior status, resignation, suspension, removal by trial court, leave of absence, or medical leave. When the service of a bishop is interrupted by any of the above causes, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall approve an updated plan of coverage for the affected episcopal area(s) in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops. With their consent, bishops emeriti may be temporarily enlisted into active service by the Global Episcopacy Committee.

PETITION 1436

¶613

Removing Emeritus Status for Those Removed by Trial Court

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Bishops removed from office under charges and as penalty from trial should not be allowed to use this title.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶613 BY ADDING SUBPARAGRAPH ¶613.4

4. A bishop removed by trial court shall not use the title “bishop emeritus.”

PETITION 1438

¶614

Removing Unnecessary Redundancy in Leaves

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

Reducing unnecessary repetition

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶614.1 AND DELETES ¶614.2

1. Leave of Absence. A bishop may be granted a leave of absence for a justifiable reason for not more than six months by the Global Episcopacy Committee. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and an interim plan of episcopal coverage shall be approved and published by the Global Episcopacy Committee in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops. If the reason for the leave of absence was medical in nature, and if after the six month period the bishop is still unable to perform full work due to impaired health, the leave may be extended by the committee in one-month increments for an additional six months, or the bishop may apply emeritus status.

~~2. Medical Leave. Bishops who, by reason of impaired health, are temporarily unable to perform full work may be granted a leave of absence for not more than six months by the Global Episcopacy Committee. During the period for which the leave is granted, the bishop shall be released from all episcopal responsibilities, and an interim plan of episcopal coverage shall be approved and published by the Global Episcopacy Committee in consultation with the Assembly of Bishops. If, after the six-month period, the bishop is still unable to perform full work due to impaired health, the leave may be extended by the committee in one-month increments for an additional six months, or the bishop may apply for disability.~~

PETITION 1439

¶615

Properly Placing Complaint Information in Section 9

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Superintendency

RATIONALE:

to be included in Part 9

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶615 IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~**¶ 615. COMPLAINTS AGAINST BISHOPS**. 1. Episcopal leaders in the Global Methodist Church share with all other ordained persons in the sacred trust of their ordination. Whenever a bishop violates this trust or is unable to fulfill appropriate responsibilities, continuation in the episcopal office shall be subject to review. This review shall have as its primary purpose a just resolution of any violations of sacred trust, in hope that God's work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized. 2. Any complaint concerning the effectiveness, competence, or one or more offenses listed in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall be submitted to the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee. A complaint is a written statement claiming misconduct, unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties, or one or more of the listed offenses. 3. The complaint shall be administered according to the provisions of Judicial Administration (Part Nine). Any involuntary status change of a bishop must be recommended by a three-fourths vote of the investigative committee and approved by the Global Episcopacy Committee by a two-thirds vote (Judicial Practices and Procedures of the Global Methodist Church, 3), with the exception that a penalty following trial shall not require such a recommendation and approval and shall be implemented immediately, subject to any appeal.~~

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PETITION 1312

¶206

Specifying Allowance of Additional Charge Conferences

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The Constitution section should have a few more specifics that define the business, quorum, and allowance for additional charge conferences as needed beyond the annual charge conference. These changes are proposed to be more in-line with scope and detail of the Annual Conference section of the Constitution.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶206 BY ADDING ¶206.4

4. Additional Charge Conferences may be called for special purposes and arranged with the presiding elder.

PETITION 1463

¶606

Open Meetings

Petitioner: Jeffrey Rickman

Organization: Yazoo City (US: Mississippi-West Tennessee)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

If trust is to be given to an institution, that institution should behave in trustworthy ways. Secret meetings behind closed doors foster distrust. If the Global Methodist Church is to be responsive to its people and deserving of the trust it hopes to be given, then it is incumbent upon the denomination to have open meetings at all levels of leadership. This petition works to ensure a timely and transparent culture of publicizing and opening meetings to the people of our covenant body.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶705 BY ADDING MULTIPLE SUBPARAGRAPHS

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶708 BY ADDING MULTIPLE SUBPARAGRAPHS

¶705. ORGANIZATION

Open Meetings— A notice of all official meetings of administrative bodies of the general conference shall be published on the GMC or general conference website 10 days before the meeting. If a multi-day meeting is planned (for example, meeting each day of the general conference gathering), that can be indicated on a single notice.

An agenda for each meeting must be published on a general conference website the day before the meeting.

All meetings of official administrative bodies of the general conference shall be open to all professing church members to the extent that the venue allows. The only exception to this rule is if the committee is dealing with personnel, legal, or contractual issues and a majority of the body votes to close the meeting only for the portion of time needed for discussion of those specific issues. Decisions reached during these executive sessions must be reported in the open meeting after the executive session ends.

Meetings should be live-streamed whenever possible.

Only official members of administrative bodies and their invited guests can speak during meetings of the administrative bodies or to the assembled general conference.

A record of all administrative bodies of the general conference meetings shall be posted within one week on the GMC website.

No secret/unknown groups can be established with the power to make decisions on behalf of the general conference.

¶ 708. ORGANIZATION.

10. A notice of all official meetings of administrative bodies of the annual conference shall be published on the conference website 10 days before the meeting. If a multi-day meeting is planned (for example, meeting each day of an annual conference gathering), that can be indicated on a single notice.

11. An agenda for each meeting must be published on the conference website the day before the meeting.

12. Open Meetings. All meetings of official administrative bodies of the annual conference shall be open to all professing church members [of the annual conference] to the extent that the venue allows. The only exception to this rule is if the committee is dealing with personnel, legal, or contractual issues and a majority of the body votes to close the meeting only for the portion of time needed for discussion of those specific issues. Decisions reached during these executive sessions must be reported in the open meeting after the executive session ends.

13. Meetings must be live-streamed whenever possible.

14. Only official members of administrative bodies and their invited guests can speak during meetings of the administrative bodies or to the assembled annual conference.

15. A record of all administrative bodies of the annual conference meetings shall be posted within one week on the conference website.

16. No secret/unknown groups can be established with the power to make decisions on behalf of the annual conference.

PETITION 1464

¶611

Minimum Standards for Annual Conference Websites

Petitioner: Jeffrey Rickman
Organization: Yazoo City (US: Mississippi-West Tennessee)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

When standards for reporting vary from conference to conference, certain expectations become unreasonable. If a connexion is to function, then our covenant bodies should all co-relate at the same minimum standards. While there should be a great deal of variation among the cultures, worship styles, and other facets of our connexion, it is important that all areas of the church maintain reliable data, notifications, and records.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.11

¶ 709. POWERS AND DUTIES.

11. Maintain the records of the annual conference, including the records of closed churches (¶ 328.7) and annual statistical reports from all local churches (¶¶ 330, 339.10).

Every annual conference shall design, implement, and faithfully maintain a website. Conference websites can be designed and maintained by general church employees and/or budgets. Conference employees and officers will be responsible for submitting and updating all required information in a timely fashion. Each of these required items will be assigned to employees and officers as explicit parts of their jobs or offices, subject to review. Every annual conference website shall include:

An interactive map of all churches, designed to aid individuals in finding a local church community

A conference map, demarcating districts (simple PDF, not interactive)

A page for every local church, tied to a search option for all churches

A page for every clergy, tied to a search option for all clergy

A conference calendar with all meetings listed, along with location, groups involved, and agenda, or a link to where these things are posted.

A list of all conference employees & officers, with contact info for each

A list of all committees, task forces, work groups, commissions, and any other groups operating under the aegis and authority of the annual conference, designating the leader of each group, with contact information for said leader

Monthly fund balance reports and annual audits. All restricted and directed funds, endowments, and reserves will be regularly posted by the conference treasurer or whoever else might have access to such reports. Financial analysis will be optional. Transparent, regular reports will be mandated. All members of the Global Methodist Church in an annual conference are entitled to transparent financial information. Every dollar should be accounted for in the open.

A list of all restricted funds and the restricted language associated with each

A record of all newsletters posted. May not be password protected

A record of all conference journals, with free downloads to PDFs of all of them. May be password protected.

A function to make donations

Links to all official social media accounts

All information posted to the website should be made accessible and readily available to members of the denomination in that conference without charge, as well as any general church employees and officers.

PETITION 1224

¶703

Clarifying the Power and Authority of the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following for clarity: (1) Since the Constitution will be fully adopted in 2026, the role of the General Conference will only be to amend. (2) We do not have "boards" and "agencies", but do have "commissions" and "councils". (3) Laity need to be named in this paragraph as leaders in the church. (3) Note – sections 5, 6, and 7 will remain as written.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶703.1, ¶703.2, ¶703.3, ¶703.4, AND ¶703.8

¶ 703. POWERS. The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:

1. ~~Adopt a constitution for the Global Methodist Church and amendments to such constitution.~~ Vote on any amendments to the constitution for the Global Methodist Church and forward all affirmed amendments to the annual conferences for further votes.

2. ~~Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, agencies, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church.~~ Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, commissions, councils, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church. In doing so, the General Conference shall remember that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church. The General Conference shall endeavor to keep as many resources at the local church level as possible, so that the mission of the Global Methodist Church can be achieved.

3. ~~Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those who serve as deacons, elders, supply pastors, and other leaders within the Global Methodist Church.~~ Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of laity and clergy who serve within the Global Methodist Church, including deacons, elders, supply pastors, bishops, and laity who lead in the local church and beyond.

4. ~~Establish the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, which shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.~~ Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, including an assurance that it shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.

8. ~~Establish and give oversight to general boards, program agencies, or commissions and form ministry partnerships as shall be deemed necessary for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Global Methodist Church through the local church.~~ Establish and give oversight to general commissions and councils and form ministry partnerships as shall be deemed necessary for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Global Methodist Church through the local church.

PETITION 1225

¶703.1

Clarifying the Power and Authority of the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following for clarity: (1) Since the Constitution will be fully adopted in 2026, the role of the General Conference will only be to amend. (2) We do not have "boards" and "agencies", but do have "commissions" and "councils". (3) Laity need to be named in this paragraph as leaders in the church. (3) Note – sections 5, 6, and 7 will remain as written.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶703.1, ¶703.2, ¶703.3, ¶703.4, AND ¶703.8

¶ 703. POWERS. The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:

1. ~~Adopt a constitution for the Global Methodist Church and amendments to such constitution.~~ Vote on any amendments to the constitution for the Global Methodist Church and forward all affirmed amendments to the annual conferences for further votes.

2. ~~Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, agencies, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church.~~ Ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all of the ministries, commissions, councils, clergy, laity, and officers of the Global Methodist Church. In doing so, the General Conference shall remember that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church. The General Conference shall endeavor to keep as many resources at the local church level as possible, so that the mission of the Global Methodist Church can be achieved.

3. ~~Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those who serve as deacons, elders, supply pastors, and other leaders within the Global Methodist Church.~~ Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of laity and clergy who serve within the Global Methodist Church, including deacons, elders, supply pastors, bishops, and laity who lead in the local church and beyond.

4. ~~Establish the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, which shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.~~ Define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of church membership, including an assurance that it shall be open to all who believe, irrespective of race, color, ethnic or tribal identity, gender, or disability.

8. ~~Establish and give oversight to general boards, program agencies, or commissions and form ministry partnerships as shall be deemed necessary for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Global Methodist Church through the local church.~~ Establish and give oversight to general commissions and councils and form ministry partnerships as shall be deemed necessary for strengthening and promoting the mission of the Global Methodist Church through the local church.

PETITION 1100 ¶703.9

Clarify the Power of the General Conference to Define and Establish a Connectional Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The current paragraph contains antiquated language and is not consistent paragraph 208 in the constitution. A rewrite of subparagraph 9 will provide greater clarity and bring the two into alignment.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶703.9

9. ~~Define and establish a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference, subject to such limitations as the General Conference may from time to time impose and subject to ratification of its actions taken between General Conferences by the General Conference.~~

9. Define and give oversight to a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference subject to the limitations imposed upon it by the General Conference. All actions of the Connectional Council shall be subject to ratification by the next General Conference.

PETITION 1226

¶703.9

Clarifying the Authority of the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following for clarity: (1) GC should have explicit oversight of the Connectional Council like it does for the other commissions and councils. (2) In .10, the current language tells the GC to delegate authority to the Connectional Council and then copies the beginning of ¶ 807.4.d. Instead of forcing the GC to do something, we should write this from the perspective of what GC desires to do. This line also needs to mention Connectional Funding, since that seems to be implied. (3) .11 copies much of the language in ¶ 711.2. It would be better to only include the formula in one place to make sure the language is clear, so we recommend deletion of the copied portion.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶703.9, ¶703.10, AND ¶703.11

9. Define and give oversight to a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference subject to the limitations imposed upon it by the General Conference. All actions of the Connectional Council shall be subject to ratification by the next General Conference.

10. Give priorities and directions to the Connectional Council for the development of a program for raising and distributing the funds that are necessary for the work of the church, including, but not limited to, collecting Connectional Funding and establishing the general church budget annually.

11. Fix the ratio of representation to the General Conference.

PETITION 1227

¶703.14

Clarifying the Legislative Authority of the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

For clarity, we recommend combining the rules in .14, .15, .16, and .18 into one subsection. These rules also need to be adjusted to comply with the requirements on amendments and resolutions included in the Constitution. Note - .17 will remain as written

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶703.14, DELETES ¶703.15, ¶703.16, & ¶703.18, AND RENUMBERS ¶703.17

14. Act upon legislation it determines would be helpful to the mission and ministry of the Global Methodist Church, including all petitions properly received dealing with church doctrine, organization and polity, and all resolutions properly received dealing with non-disciplinary matters.

All petitions dealing with the statement of "Our Social Witness" (Part Three) shall require a three-fourths vote of the General Conference.

All petitions dealing with church doctrine (Part One) shall be subject to the Restrictive Rule (¶ 212).

All resolutions shall require the support of three-fourths of the General Conference and shall remain in effect only until the next General Conference convenes, when they may or may not be revised or reapproved.

17. Provide for the oversight and/or governance of institutions related to the church such as hospitals, schools, or other such entities.

~~18. Enact other legislation it determines would be helpful to the mission of the Global Methodist Church.~~

PETITION 1071

¶705.1

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 700s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes an unnecessary reference to the convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶705.1

1. Rules. The General Conference shall operate under Robert's Rules of Order and such supplemental rules as are adopted by the ~~convening~~ General Conference.

PETITION 1314

¶705.3

Allowance for Flexibility for Hybrid General Conferences

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This suggestion comes from protecting delegations' participation from potential harm due to war, disease, and even fiscal hardship, along with being more flexible when preparing to conduct a General Conference. Without the provision of flexibility, the paragraph comes across as all or nothing.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶705.3

Virtual Sessions. Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of delegates, with the approval of the Assembly of Bishops, the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church may, with a two-thirds vote, authorize the conducting of the conference via electronic or other digital means (¶208). Where necessary and can be reasonably accommodated, a delegation from a given Annual Conference to the General Conference, up to and including the entire set of Annual Conference delegations, may meet virtually with the approval of the bishops of the Church and the Connectional Council.

PETITION 1186

¶706

Clarifying the Petition and Resolution Submission Process

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The BDD does not currently have a submission process for resolutions. Also, we believe that only the basic structure of the submission process for petitions and resolutions should be outlined in the BDD, while giving the Plan of Organization and Covenant developed for each General Conference the authority to specify the details of the process. This will ensure we have boundaries in place to govern the process while giving flexibility and adaptability to the Connectional Council to make changes as needed. Also, in .5, "Principal languages" is undefined in the BDD. The GMC typically uses the term "official languages", so we recommend that term here. Note: the final three subparagraphs need to be renumbered due to our recommended additions.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶706

¶ 706. PETITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. Any official organization, clergy member, or lay member of the Global Methodist Church may submit a petition or resolution to the General Conference according to the process laid out in the Plan of Organization and Covenant. The process shall contain the following:

~~1. The petition must be sent to the General Conference Secretary or a designated petitions secretary. It shall be in typed or printed or electronic form, or other means approved by the General Conference Secretary, and shall follow a format determined by them.~~

1. The petition or resolution must be sent to the General Conference Secretary or a designated petitions secretary in electronic form, or other means approved by the General Conference Secretary or designee, and shall follow a format determined by them.

~~2. Each petition must address only one issue if the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* is not affected; if the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, except that, if two or more paragraphs are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another. Petitions dealing with more than one paragraph in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* that do not meet these criteria are invalid. Petitions that meet these criteria (composite petitions) shall not be separated into pieces.~~

2. Each petition must address only one paragraph of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, except that, if two or more paragraphs are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another. Petitions dealing with more than one paragraph in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* that do not meet these criteria shall be designated invalid by the General Conference Secretary or the petitions secretary. Petitions that meet these criteria (composite petitions) shall not be separated into pieces.

3. Each resolution must address only one issue concerning the global church. Resolutions must be in harmony with the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Any resolutions that do not meet these criteria shall be designated invalid by the General Conference Secretary or the petitions secretary.

~~3. Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, organization, or annual conference. Any petition submitted by an individual must also be signed by at least ten other professing or clergy members. Each petition submitted digitally must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.~~

4. Petitions or resolutions submitted by individuals must provide valid contact information for the individual and all ten cosigners. Petitions and resolutions submitted on behalf of official Global Methodist organizations must contain valid contact information for the person submitting on behalf of the organization. Meeting minutes or other attesting documentation (approved by the General Conference Secretary or their designee) must be submitted with the petition or resolution.

5. In situations where a constituent of the GMC lacks access to the technology needed to submit a petition or resolution, the office of the annual conference in which the constituent resides shall work with the constituent to ensure access to the submission process.

4. Petitions and resolutions must be received by the General Conference Secretary or their designee no later than 120 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

5. ~~Petitions properly submitted shall be distributed in advance of the General Conference in all the principal languages of the church and made available to delegates at least 60 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.~~ Petitions and resolutions properly submitted shall be distributed in advance of the General Conference in all the official languages of the church and made available to delegates at least sixty days prior to the opening session of the General Conference. Where the content of petitions or resolutions is essentially the same, the petition or resolution will be published once, with the first author named and the number of additional copies received noted. Upon publication, all translations of the advance publication shall be made available as a downloadable file, free of charge, on the denominational website. ~~Petitions and/or resolutions received after the deadline may be printed and/or distributed to all the delegates upon the approval of each for distribution by the General Conference.~~ Petitions and/or resolutions received after the deadline may be considered by the General Conference upon a 2/3 vote of the delegates present and voting.

6. The secretary of the General Conference or designee shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference actions and the resulting impact on the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, throughout the General Conference session. This access shall be available at least until the publication of the new edition of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Implementation shall be according to guidelines established by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1036

¶706.6

Updating Title Reference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Every other reference to this position in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline is titled General Conference Secretary.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶706.6

~~The secretary of the General Conference shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference actions and the resulting impact on the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, throughout the General Conference session.~~

The General Conference Secretary shall arrange for electronic access to all petitions, including General Conference actions and the resulting impact on the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, throughout the General Conference session. This access shall be available until the publication of the new edition of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. Implementation shall be according to guidelines established by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church.

New ¶708. Financial Matters of the General Conference

Petitioner: Sterling Allen
Organization: Houston Cornerstone (US: Trinity)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This proposed paragraph establishes a financial ceiling for the cost of the General Conference and clarifies the responsibility for funding delegates from both United States and non-United States annual conferences. This proposal is also designed to scale alongside the growth of the denomination. The petition also provides transparency in the funding mechanisms for the General Conference and defines the role of the Commission on Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits in designating funds for the gathering. The use of Gross National Income (GNI), a widely recognized economic indicator that reflects the total income of a nation's financial realities, sets expectations in a way that is sensitive to differing economic realities.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶708, RENUMBERING ALL SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

¶708. Financial Matters of the General Conference

General Conference Budget.

The total cost of convening a meeting of the General Conference shall not exceed 10% of the previous six years combined Total Connectional Funding. Funding for the General Conference shall be provided from funds designated by the Commission on Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits.

Responsibility of United States Annual Conferences.

Each annual conference in the United States shall be responsible for covering the expenses of its elected delegates, alternate delegates, and such reserve delegates as it determines to send, including but not limited to travel, lodging, meals, and other related costs.

Support for Non-United States Annual Conferences.

For annual conferences outside the United States, the General Conference shall provide financial support for the participation of their elected delegates, alternates, and reserve delegates as follows:

Governmental visa costs

Ground transportation

Hotel accommodations (dual occupancy)

A meal per diem determined by the Commission on the General Conference based on the location of the conference

Additional Support for Non-United State Annual Conference with Financial Challenges. For annual conferences outside the United States of America in countries with a GNI (Gross National Income) per capita less than $2500, their full expenses shall be paid for by the Commission on the General Conference. Other conferences outside of the United States of America with a GNI per capita above $2500, however with definable economic challenges

may request for additional funding assistance from the Commission of the General Conference at their discretion up to 50% for economy class roundtrip airfare.

Spousal Expenses.

When a spouse shares hotel accommodations with a delegate, the portion of lodging costs attributable to the spouse shall be paid by the delegate and not by the denomination.

Reserve Delegates.

Financial support provided by the General Conference for reserve delegates from annual conferences outside the United States shall not exceed the number of alternates elected by that annual conference.

Economic and Geo-Political Disruption.

In the case of a true global political or economic crisis effecting the proposed location of the general conference or member nations attempting to send delegates, the Connectional Council may vote with a 2/3 majority to temporarily (for one general conference) adjust any provision of this paragraph to better serve the mission and ministry church.

PETITION 1037

¶708.1

Consistency with Supply Pastor Voting

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This petition brings ¶ 708 into consistency with previous updates to ¶ 512. ¶ 512.4 "Supply pastors are clergy members of the annual conference with full voice, and shall have full voice and vote except the ordination and conference relations of deacons and elders." Supply pastor voting privilege is clarified in ¶ 512.4, but the phrase "supply pastors" was not inserted into the list of voting membership of the annual conference in ¶ 708.1.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶708.1

The voting membership of an annual conference shall be composed of those elders, deacons, supply pastors, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited elsewhere in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520, as well as at least an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference.

PETITION 1187

¶708.1

Clarifying Lay Membership of an Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The rules about lay membership of an Annual are confusing. One sentence says annual conferences are to have "at least" an equal numbers of lay members, but other sentences speak of "equalizing" lay members and clergy members. We recommend removing the "equalizing" language to make it clear that annual conferences must have "at least" an equal number of laity of clergy. The rule for who can vote for additional lay members is also confusing, because in some places it gives the power to the entire annual conference, but also states that "only laity shall vote" on the additional members. Each annual conference should be free to choose the best way to elect additional members.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶708.1

1. Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. A special annual conference or district that is not geographically bound and overlaps the boundaries of other annual conferences or districts can be formed by the decision of General Conference at the request of a group of churches. The voting membership of an annual conference shall be composed of those elders, deacons, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited elsewhere in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶ 520, as well as at least an equal number of lay members ~~elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference~~. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as it has appointed clergy. The annual conference may add lay members of the annual conference who are serving in conference leadership positions, and other lay members as it chooses. ~~The annual conference shall determine the method of electing additional lay members to equalize the number of clergy members. Only laity shall vote in the election of equaling laity.~~ The annual conference shall determine the number of additional lay members and the method of election. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district conference, laity session of the annual conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed.

PETITION 1136

¶708.9

Election of a Conference Lay Leader by the Annual Conference

Petitioner: Gene Floore

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Destin (US: Alabama Emerald Coast)

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Whereas the Global Methodist Church affirms the essential role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church; Whereas scripture teaches the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9), affirming the calling and responsibility of the laity in ministry; Whereas consistent and recognized lay leadership at the Annual Conference level strengthens the connection between local churches, the annual conference, and the broader denomination; Whereas The Conference Lay Leader or equivalent will ensuring the voice of the laity is present in key leadership discussions and decision-making.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶708.9

708.9. The annual conference shall elect a secretary, a Lay Leader or Equivalent, and such other officers as it may determine.

PETITION 1188

¶709.2

Clarifying Financial Responsibilities of an Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The current description of the financial responsibilities of an Annual Conference is inadequate. We need more specificity on how a conference expects to fund itself, along with an explicit requirement to pass a budget. Finally, since the work and mission of an annual conference often extends further than "its region" through international partnerships (not to mention that some annual conferences are not "regional", but affinity-based), the distribution of funds should simply be for "the work and mission of the annual conference".

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶709.2

~~2. Determine a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work and mission of the church in its region.~~

2. Determine the connectional funding rate for the annual conference (¶ 711.1), identify other methods of funding the annual conference, and pass a budget describing how funds may be distributed to conduct the work and mission of the annual conference.

PETITION 1027

¶709.6

Order of Election Required

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church

Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The addition makes it clear that voting must be for individual delegates, and that they serve in the order elected. This protects the right of the annual conference to elect whom it desires to represent it, without undue influence from conference leaders.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.6

AMEND Par. 709.6 by reformatting into sections and adding language to section c as follows:

(6) Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference.

a. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors.

b. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years.

c. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates. Delegates, alternates, and reserves shall serve in the order elected by their annual conference. Conferences may not recommend a slate of delegates, but voting must be for individuals.

PETITION 1028

¶709.6

Petition Clarifying Clergy Eligible for Election as Delegates to the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This change clarifies and puts in one place all the provisions for who may serve as a clergy delegate to the General Conference. It also clarifies gray areas and questions not answered elsewhere in the BDD.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.6

AMEND Par. 709.6 as follows:

(6) Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula and allocation determined by the General Conference and Connectional Council. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. ~~Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors.~~

Clergy eligible to serve as delegates consist of the following categories:

Active elders under appointment to ministry or school (Par. 510.2, 610.11)

Active deacons under appointment to ministry or school (Par. 509.3, 610.11)

Transitional local pastors approved for ordination and under appointment to ministry or school (Par. 521.2a-b)

Senior clergy appointed at least one-quarter time or within the first seven years of taking senior status (Par. 520)

Clergy on voluntary leave of up to six months (Par. 518.2)

Clergy on sabbatical leave (Par. 518.3)

Clergy on maternity or paternity leave (Par. 518.6)

Clergy under administrative or judicial complaint whose complaint has been forwarded to a committee on investigation or trial process are not considered in good standing and shall not serve as delegates (Judicial Practices and Procedures 2.2, 6)

Inactive clergy are not considered in good standing and shall not serve as delegates

Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

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PETITION 1189

¶709.6

Defining an Annual Conference Delegation to General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The BDD currently lists "annual conference delegation" as a group which can perform certain functions. However, there is no definition of an annual conference delegation, so we have created one in this paragraph. Also, the BDD currently states in ¶ 711 that the denominational Connectional Council approves the formula for delegate allocation, not the General Conference, we have made that change here as well.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.6

6. ~~Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference.~~ Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula approved by the Connectional Council of the general church. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶ 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates. Once elected, all clergy and lay delegates shall constitute the annual conference delegation for General Conference. Delegates may also choose to allow Alternate and Reserve delegates to serve on the annual conference delegation as well.

PETITION 1287

¶709.6

Allowance for Delegates from Newly Formed Churches

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Upper Midwest
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The proposed update allows for newly organized church lay members to be included as a voice of the annual conference to the General Conference. It gives the annual conference the freedom to determine who would be their delegates from all churches within its oversight.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.6

Elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference according to the formula determined by the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection in good standing of the Global Methodist Church who have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Under the provisions of ¶! 521.2a, transitional local pastors who have been approved for ordination as elders or deacons shall be members in full connection and may be clergy delegates provided that they are in good standing and have served a minimum of two years preceding their election in the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors. Lay delegates shall have been professing members of the Global Methodist Church or its predecessors for at least two years, unless the lay delegate is a member of a newly formed church. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority of votes cast, with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

PETITION 1002

¶709.9

Empowers the Annual Conference to Provide for the General Wellbeing of Its Clergy

Petitioner: Siloam Springs
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Brings paragraph into harmony with other parts of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline authorizing the annual conference to care for the wellbeing of its clergy in connection with the work of the local church, specifically the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶709.9

¶ 709. POWERS AND DUTIES. Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. In addition to coming together for edification, fellowship, and inspiration, the annual conference is charged with the following responsibilities:

9. Establish minimum standards for the general welfare of its clergy (i.e. health and life insurance, pension, parsonages, and other ministry housing), if desired (¶¶ 443.4e, 445.8m).

PETITION 1069

¶710

Annual Conference Prayer Network Committee

Petitioner: Laura Ballinger
Organization: Lawrenceburg Dearborn Hills (US: Great Lakes)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Jesus said: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." We believe it is the Lord's desire and vision that every local Global Methodist Church increases in becoming a house of prayer to the great glory of God. It is safe to say that the Lord also desires that all people in the GM Church become people of prayer to His great pleasure and our great good! Toward this end, the Lord's vision for His Church, the Annual Conference Prayer Network Committee seeks to further develop a prayer and intercession network of praying conferences and local churches to fuel God's work in the Church and into the world. The AC Prayer Network also seeks to further develop prayer leaders who will stand in the gap on behalf of God's work through the GM Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710 BY ADDING A NEW ¶710.6

710.6. *Prayer Network Committee.* Each annual conference or emerging area may form a Prayer Network Committee to seek God through prayer and intercession and to facilitate prayer within the annual conference or area to fuel God's work in and through the Global Methodist Church and into the world.

The annual conference connectional council or other leadership body may identify and elect or appoint by its own rules one or more regional prayer coordinator(s) for the conference or area. Such coordinator shall relate to the Global Prayer Network Committee for coordination and support. Such coordinator shall lead the work of the conference or area Prayer Network Committee. The coordinator may serve as an ex officio member of the conference connectional council or other leadership body to ensure optimal prayer coverage of the important deliberations and direction of the connectional council.

The Prayer Network Committee shall encourage each local church to identify a Prayer Point Person to coordinate and facilitate intentional prayer and intercession in that local church. The committee shall resource and mentor the Prayer Point Persons.

PETITION 1132

¶710

Annual Conference Prayer Network Committee

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Great Lakes
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Jesus said: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." We believe it is the Lord's desire and vision that every local GM Church increase in becoming a house of prayer to the great glory of God. It is safe to say that the Lord also desires that all people in the Global Methodist Church become people of prayer to His great pleasure and for our great good! Toward this end, the Lord's vision for His Church, the Annual Conference Prayer Network Committee seeks to further develop a prayer and intercession network of praying conferences and local churches to fuel God's work in the Church and into the world. The AC Prayer Network also seeks to further develop prayer leaders who will stand in the gap on behalf of God's work through the GM Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶710.6 AND RENUMBERS ALL SUBSEQUENT SUBPARAGRAPHS

¶ 710.6. *Prayer Network Committee.* Each annual conference or emerging area may form a Prayer Network Committee to seek God through prayer and intercession and to facilitate prayer within the annual conference or area to fuel God's work in and through the Global Methodist Church and into the world.

The annual conference connectional council or other leadership body may identify and elect or appoint by its own rules one or more regional prayer coordinator(s) for the conference or area. Such coordinator shall relate to the Global Prayer Network Committee for coordination and support. Such coordinator shall lead the work of the conference or area Prayer Network Committee. The coordinator may serve as an ex officio member of the conference connectional council or other leadership body to ensure optimal prayer coverage of the important deliberations and direction of the connectional council.

The Prayer Network Committee shall encourage each local church to identify a Prayer Point Person to coordinate and facilitate intentional prayer and intercession in that local church. The committee shall resource and mentor the Prayer Point Persons.

PETITION 1202

¶710

Establishment of the Board of Laity in the Annual Conference

Organization: AF: Grain Coast (Liberia)

Legislative Committee: Conferences

Submitter Type: Annual Conference

RATIONALE:

The lay members of the Global Methodist Church are significant to the vision, mission, ministry, service and witness of the Church. They make up over 90% of the congregations, circuits, and districts of the Global Methodist Church. Their active participation enhances the numerical growth and spiritual depth of the church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGAPH ¶710.9

Create a new paragraph in 710 by adding to 710.

There shall be a Board of Laity at the Annual Conference level chaired by the Conference Lay Leader. And all other member shall be elected by the Annual Conference upon nomination by the Conference Committee on Nomination. The size of the Board of Laity, comprising lay representation, inclusive of person of all ages such as youth, young adults, men, women, and people with disabilities as well as ethnic/tribal minorities identified at Annual Conferences shall be determined by the Annual Conference at its Annual Session.

PETITION 1141

¶710.1

Membership of Annual Conference Committees

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett
Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

While striving to have equal clergy and lay representation is a lofty goal, it often means that some of the most skilled individuals for the task are not able to serve because the threshold for lay or clergy has already been met. Therefore since we are seeking to keep to a manageable size, by requiring a minimum of one third of each, lay and clergy, it allows us to have the best possible people on these committees.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710.1.a

¶ 710. ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. Annual conferences shall create the following boards and committees:

1. Connectional Council or Equivalent Body — The Connectional Council shall meet at least one time per year face-to-face (absent exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) for the purpose of communication and coordination of ministry among the boards and committees of the annual conference.

a. Membership of the Connectional Council shall consist of the following:

~~An equal number of clergy and lay members as elected by the annual conference in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference;~~

Shall strive to have an equal number of clergy and lay members, while not having less than one third clergy and one third laity, as elected by the annual conference in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference;

The bishop or conference superintendent;

One presiding elder as a representative of the cabinet;

The annual conference secretary;

The annual conference lay leader, if any;

Any other conference officers elected by the annual conference;

Any members at large elected by the annual conference to promote diversity or to obtain specific gifts, skills, or expertise, if any, upon nomination by the Nominations and Leadership Committee;

Appropriate conference staff persons as the conference superintendent determines may serve as members of the council with voice but without vote.

PETITION 1190

¶710.1

Separating the Councils, Boards, and Committees of the Annual Conference into Distinct Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

This section would be much clearer if it were set up like the local church section, with each council, board and committee in its own paragraph. In order to do that, we need to create an introductory paragraph, so we are proposing changing ¶ 710 to be the introduction and renumbering the subsections 1-7 in this paragraph, which describe committees, boards, and councils, into separate paragraphs. What is currently subparagraph 8, with a few modifications, remains as part of the introduction, but is renumbered to 2.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES CURRENT ¶710 IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACES IT WITH THE FOLLOWING

¶ 710. ANNUAL CONFERENCE COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.

1. Annual conferences shall create the following boards and committees:

a. Connectional Council

b. Board of Ministry

c. Superintendency Committee

d. Finance and Administration Committee

e. Committee on Investigation

f. Administrative Review Committee

2. The annual conference may create additional boards, committees, task forces, and other groups to accomplish its work, as it deems appropriate.

PETITION 1228

¶710.1

Clarifying Meetings and Membership of the Annual Conference Connectional Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

We recommend the following changes for clarity and flexibility: (1) Connectional Councils should meet at least quarterly. (2) We should make it clearer who shall be a member and who may be a member. (3) The Bishop should not be a member of the CC, but the CS should. (4) The Conference should have the ability to nominate anyone on the Cabinet to the CC. (5) The conference secretary is listed as an "officer" in ¶708.9, so they should be listed in .a.6, which covers all officers. (6) In conferences with more than one Lay Leader, all of them should be able to serve on the CC. (7) At-large members should have term limits. (8) We need guidance on who may or may not be Chair of the CC and how to elect one.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710.1

~~1. *Connectional Council or Equivalent Body* — The Connectional Council shall meet at least one time per year face-to-face (absent exigent circumstances that would require electronic or other forms of meeting) for the purpose of communication and coordination of ministry among the boards and committees of the annual conference. a. Membership of the Connectional Council shall consist of the following: 1) An equal number of clergy and lay members as elected by the annual conference in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference; 2) The bishop or conference superintendent; 3) One presiding elder as a representative of the cabinet; 4) The annual conference secretary; 5) The annual conference lay leader, if any; 6) Any other conference officers elected by the annual conference; 7) Any members at large elected by the annual conference to promote diversity or to obtain specific gifts, skills, or expertise, if any, upon nomination by the Nominations and Leadership Committee; 8) Appropriate conference staff persons as the conference superintendent determines may serve as members of the council with voice but without vote.~~

1. Connectional Council or Equivalent Body. The Connectional Council shall meet at least quarterly and is strongly encouraged to hold at least one face-to-face meeting per year. The purpose of the Connectional Council is to communicate and coordinate ministry among the boards and committees of the annual conference.

a. Membership of the Connectional Council shall consist of an equal number of clergy and lay members as elected by the annual conference in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference.

Members shall include:

The conference superintendent;

One representative of the cabinet;

The annual conference lay leader(s), if any;

All conference officers elected by the annual conference, including the Annual Conference Secretary;

Any at-large laity and clergy nominated by the Nominations and Leadership Committee and elected by the annual conference to promote diversity or to obtain specific gifts, skills, or expertise. At large members shall serve up to six years and may succeed themselves once;

Members may also include conference staff persons as the conference superintendent determines who shall serve with voice but without vote.

The Chair and other officers of the Connectional Council shall come from the members listed above and shall be elected in a manner consistent with the standing rules of the annual conference.

PETITION 1064

¶710.4

Financial Audits in Annual Conferences

Petitioner: Finance and Administration Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Financial integrity is essential to the trust local churches place in their annual conference. An annual audit provides independent verification that conference funds are received, managed, and disbursed according to policy and law, giving churches and ministry partners confidence that connectional giving is being stewarded faithfully. Audits also help prevent error, mismanagement, and fraud. As the Global Methodist Church grows around the world, clear and consistent financial accountability is vital to maintaining credibility, protecting assets, and honoring our shared calling to wise stewardship at every level of the church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710.4

¶ 710. ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOARDS AND COMMITTEES. Annual conferences shall create the following boards and committees:

...

4. *Finance and Administration Committee.* The finance and administration committee shall be responsible to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, budgets, procedures, and management services for the annual conference. The committee shall provide for an annual audit of the financial statements of the annual conference, including all funds, organizations, and accounts thereof, and shall make a full and complete report to the annual conference. The audited financial statements shall be published in a public platform and made available to the members of the annual conference. An audit shall be defined as an independent evaluation of financial reports, records, and internal controls, conducted by a qualified person or persons. Such audit shall be performed to provide reasonable assurance as to the accuracy and reliability of financial reporting; to determine that assets are properly safeguarded; and to ascertain compliance with applicable law and with the policies and procedures of the annual conference.

Selection Process and Operating Guidance for Annual Conference Nominations and Leadership Committees

Petitioner: Daniel Fuller
Organization: Binghamton Hawleyton (US: Northeast)

Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

It is important to ensure that all laity and clergy have a participatory voice in choosing their leadership, and that all geographic areas and constituencies of Annual Conferences are well represented. Our current polity does not ensure this, since all Annual Conference Nominations and Leadership Committee members are currently appointed by the Conference Superintendent, creating the potential for entrenchment of a top-down leadership model. Nominations and Leadership Committees have a key role in steering the future of annual conferences. Although it involves a level of complexity, ensuring that committee members are elected at the grassroots level will help keep these committees responsive to the laity and clergy that they represent.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710 BY REPLACING ¶710.5.a & ¶710.5.b, ADDING ¶710.5.c-f & ¶710.5.h, AND RENUMBERING ¶710.5.c

Amend Paragraph 710.5 as follows:

¶ 710.5 *Nominations and Leadership Committee.* The nominations and leadership committee shall be responsible for nominating clergy and laity to serve on annual conference committees and boards.

~~a. Members shall be nominated by the conference superintendent and elected by the annual conference. The committee shall include equal numbers of clergy and laity. The annual conference shall set the number of members of the committee. Members shall serve six years and may not succeed themselves. The conference superintendent and one presiding elder shall also serve on the committee with voice and vote, in addition to the clergy and laity elected by the annual conference.~~

~~b. If a member of the committee cannot serve for any reason, the conference superintendent shall appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.~~

a. The committee shall be composed of one representative elected from each district of the annual conference. Annual conferences with more than 20 districts may optionally combine neighboring districts into regions for purposes of electing a representative, so that at least 10 representatives are elected. (In such cases, the language in ¶ 710.5 relating to districts shall apply to these regions, and their Presiding Elders shall jointly facilitate elections.) The Conference Superintendent and up to five members at-large will also be members of the committee, with voice and vote. The committee shall be composed such that:

i. Half of the districts (plus or minus one) will be represented by a clergy person from the district who is elected by the clergy in the district (this may include a presiding elder).

ii. Half of the districts (plus or minus one) will be represented by a lay person from the district who is elected by the professing lay members of the churches in the district.

iii. Up to five additional members at-large may be nominated by the Conference Superintendent to promote

diversity or to obtain specific gifts, skills, or expertise. At least one of these member-at-large shall be a presiding elder if one wasn't elected from a district. The member-at-large positions will be distributed between laity and clergy such that the total number of positions on the committee (including the Conference Superintendent) is equally divided between laity and clergy for each election cycle. The members-at-large nominated by the Conference Superintendent shall be confirmed by the Annual Conference and may be replaced by nominees from the floor.

b. For each district, an election shall be held to determine the representative. This election may be held at an in-person or online district meeting, with the method being chosen by the Presiding Elder. At least 30 days prior to the election, the district's Presiding Elder shall publically solicit volunteers/nominees, which may submit statements of no longer than 300 words on why the candidate is appropriate for the position. These statements shall be published to the district at least 15 days prior to the election. Votes shall be taken by concealed ballot at in-person meetings and at online meetings when technology allows. The person receiving the most votes shall be the representative for the district.

c. The representative for each district shall alternate between laity and clergy when their terms of office expire. The committee shall be divided into two classes and the initial term lengths staggered by three years to produce a uniform rotation. Following the initial rotation, all terms will be for a period of 6 years. Elected and appointed members may not succeed themselves. Members' terms shall end on June 30th of their class year.

d. The initial type of representative for each district (lay or clergy) and initial classes shall be proposed by the existing Nominations and Leadership Committees to their 2027 annual conferences for approval. Initial district elections of representatives to populate the committee shall be held prior to December 31, 2027 and those elected, along with the members at-large, shall begin service immediately following the conclusion of the 2028 Annual Conference, replacing the existing committee.

e. If the number of districts changes, the Nominations and Leadership Committee shall, as terms expire, recommend to the annual conference adjustments in the rotation to approximately maintain an equal lay/clergy ratio and balanced classes.

f. If a vacancy of a district representative occurs for any reason mid-term, an election of a representative of the same type (lay/clergy) to serve the remainder of the unused term may be held at the next district meeting. If a vacancy of a member-at-large occurs mid-term, the conference superintendent may appoint an interim member to serve the remainder of the unused term. The annual conference shall confirm the interim appointment at its next meeting.

~~c.~~g. The conference superintendent shall serve as the chair of the committee. The committee shall elect from its members a vice-chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary. Election shall be by simple majority and shall be for a term of years to be determined by the annual conference.

h. Operating Guidance - During the annual nominations process, the Nominations and Leadership Committee is encouraged to seek input from: presiding elders, annual conference committee chairs, and lay leaders; and issue an annual survey for nominees and volunteers to the full annual conference contact list. As the committee makes nominations, they are encouraged to be mindful of promoting diversity, specific gifts, skills, or expertise.

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PETITION 1265

¶710.5c

Annual Conference Boards and Committee ¶710:5c

Petitioner: Danjuma Juji
Organization: GMCN Karim-Maundi (AF: Northeast Nigeria)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The Conference Superintendent cannot nominate as well as chair the same committee he nominated its members hence it will be good after he nominates the committee he then becomes an ex officio to the committee not chairman

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710.5.c

~~The Conference Superintendent shall serve as a chairman of the committee. The committee shall elect from its members vice chair, secretary, and any other officers it deems necessary.~~

The Conference Superintendent shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. The committee shall elect from its members any other officers it deems necessary.

PETITION 1191

¶710.6

Clarifying Language on the Committee on Investigation

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The introduction to ¶ 710 requires annual conferences to have a Committee on Investigation. However, ¶710.6.f provides guidance on appointing one if the conference fails to elect one. Since it is a required committee, and there are provisions guiding its election, we do not believe there should be provisions giving the CS authority to appoint one. We recommend deletion.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶710.6 BY DELETING ¶710.6.f

~~f. If an annual conference has not yet elected a committee on investigation, the conference superintendent or president pro tempore shall appoint the members of the committee in consultation with the cabinet.~~

PETITION 1192

¶710.7

Clarifying Language on the Administrative Review Committee

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

The introduction to ¶ 710 requires annual conferences to have an Administrative Review Committee. However, ¶710.7.f provides guidance on appointing one if the conference fails to elect one. Since it is a required committee, and there are provisions guiding its election, we do not believe there should be provisions giving the CS authority to appoint one. We recommend deletion.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶710.f

~~f. If an annual conference has not yet elected an administrative review committee, the conference superintendent shall appoint the members of the committee in consultation with the cabinet.~~

PETITION 1055

¶710.9 (NEW)

Petition to Amend ¶ 710 Annual Conferences Boards and Committees

Petitioner: Conferences Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Some Annual Conferences experience growth in ministry & mission ahead of their administrative & committee structures. Current expectations for the organization of Annual Conferences are sound, but in some areas around the globe not all committees can always be constituted immediately without delaying ministry that is already active and bearing fruit. This permits the Conferences Commission to evaluate and recommend for approval alternative organizational structures that permit the annual conference to operate while ensuring core functions & systems of accountability are in place. Current language in the discipline preserves the review of the Connectional Council and the supervisory authority of the General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS ¶710.9

Add New ¶ 710.9

9. In annual conferences where the number of clergy and laity or where distances and insufficient technology prevents the regular administration of the above-mentioned annual conference committees, an annual conference with the endorsement of its bishop may submit a plan for the approval of an alternative annual conference structure to the Conferences Commission.

PETITION 1193

¶711

Separating the Connectional Funding from Delegate Formula

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Connectional Funding and the Delegate Allocation formula should not be combined into one paragraph, so we recommend separation into two different paragraphs. We also recommend a few changes to the wording of these paragraphs: 1. .1 currently does not allow CF to support "ministries". However, everything the Annual Conference does should be ministry, which makes this confusing. We recommend deletion of this sentence to give flexibility for Annual Conferences to fund anything within the requirements listed in the rest of the paragraph and BDD. 2. We believe the formula for delegate allocation to General Conference would be better served by using worship attendance instead of the current process of using FTEs and number of churches.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶711 AND REPLACES IT WITH NEW ¶711 AND ¶712

~~¶ 711. ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL FUNDING AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION FOR ALLOCATION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE.~~

~~1. The annual conference should establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference. Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. Support for ministries within and beyond the annual conference should not be included in such funding percentage but be raised as mission giving from individuals and local churches. The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the General Conference without adjustment by the annual conference.~~

~~2. In order to allocate delegates to the General Conference, the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church shall establish a deadline by which time the annual conference must submit a list of those churches in the annual conference and the number of full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments in the annual conference. Delegates for the General Conference shall be allocated based on the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments an annual conference has as compared to the total number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments of the Global Methodist Church as of the deadline.~~

¶ 711. ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL FUNDING.

The annual conference shall establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference. Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the General Conference without adjustment by the annual conference.

¶ 712. ALLOCATION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Delegates to General Conference shall be allocated to annual conferences at least 180 days before a regular session of General Conference according to the formula approved by the Connectional Council of the Global

Methodist Church. The formula shall be based on the average in-person worship attendance of all churches in an annual conference from the two years preceding the year prior to a regular session of General Conference.

The Connectional Council or their designee shall issue guidance on calculating worship attendance at local churches and establish a deadline by which each annual conference must submit the worship attendance number to the Secretary of the General Conference. Any annual conference which does not report its average worship attendance by the deadline or which convenes or joins the Global Methodist Church less than three years after the last day of the year the previous General Conference convened shall be allocated 2 delegates.

PETITION 1041

¶711.1

Annual Conference Connectional Funding

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: North Georgia
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

As a movement we desire to be permission giving and not restricting flexibility for ministry. Many annual conferences desire to invest in Kingdom advancing ministries such as missional partnerships or disaster relief in their conference budget and many are doing so. Confusion over this language has also led some annual conferences to form 501c3 organizations adding layers and complexity. Removing this language allows freedom for annual conferences to decide the most effective way to do mission and ministry in their context.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶711.1

1. The annual conference should establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference. Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. ~~Support for ministries within and beyond the annual conference should not be included in such funding percentage but be raised as mission giving from individuals and local churches.~~ The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the General Conference without adjustment by the annual conference.

PETITION 1063

¶711.1

Empowerment of Annual Conferences to Support Work and Ministries of the Annual Conference

Petitioner: Finance and Administration Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Annual conferences are best positioned to understand the ministry needs and financial realities of their local churches. Empowering annual conferences to determine how annual conference connectional funding is distributed honors the Wesleyan principle of connectionalism while preserving local accountability. This petition frees annual conferences to direct resources where they believe they will have the greatest and most strategic impact, whether that means using normal connectional funding or raising additional missional support from individuals and local churches.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶711

¶ 711. ANNUAL CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL FUNDING AND REPORTING OF INFORMATION FOR ALLOCATION OF DELEGATES TO GENERAL CONFERENCE.

1. ~~The annual conference should establish a funding percentage for its local churches to support the work of the conference. Efforts should be made to minimize conference funding in order to allow maximum resources to remain in local churches. Support for ministries within and beyond the annual conference should not be included in such funding percentage but be raised as mission giving from individuals and local churches. The conference should take into consideration any guidelines offered by the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church on the setting of the funding percentage. The general church funding percentage shall be set by the General Conference without adjustment by the annual conference.~~ Connectional funding amounts are set in accordance with ¶ 449.

PETITION 1059

¶711.2

Fair and Equal Delegate Representation at General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidSouth

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Equal delegate allocation reflects the Global Methodist Church's connectional identity by ensuring every annual conference—regardless of size—has a meaningful voice in shaping our shared future. As a global denomination, this approach honors diverse contexts and guards against marginalizing newer or smaller conferences. It promotes equitable discernment, drawing on the collective wisdom of the whole church rather than concentrating influence among larger bodies. This model aligns with existing governance practices that value broad participation and shared responsibility. Ultimately, it affirms that faithfulness, mission, and global vision—not numerical strength—guide our life together.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶711.2 IN ITS ENTIRETY

¶ 711.2. ~~In order to allocate delegates to the General Conference, the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church shall establish a deadline by which time each annual conference must submit a list of those churches in the annual conference and the number of full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments in the annual conference. Delegates for the General Conference shall be allocated based on the number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments an annual conference has as compared to the total number of churches and full-time equivalent pastoral appointments and assignments of the Global Methodist Church as of the deadline.~~

Delegates to the General Conference shall be allocated by assigning an equal number of delegates to each annual conference, regardless of size, in order to ensure fair and global connectional representation. The maximum number of delegates per annual conference shall be recommended by the General Conference Commission and set by the Connectional Council in accordance with the guidelines of ¶ 208, Article VII, The General Conference.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This petition would allocate an equal number of delegates to each annual conference. The Constitution, at ¶208 (Article VII, The General Conference), provides that General Conference delegates are "elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis." Equal allocation is incompatible with the word "proportional" in ¶208. For this petition to take effect, the legislative committee would need to propose a corresponding amendment to ¶208 removing the proportional-basis requirement.*

PETITION 1244

NEW ¶7XX

Protection of Existing Young People's Structures

Petitioner: Frank Webere

Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Conferences

RATIONALE:

Predecessor denominations demonstrate that young people's ministries dependent solely on appointed leadership are vulnerable to dissolution when priorities shift. This petition protects existing structures by requiring written consent from affected young people's leadership—and the Connectional Young People's Council where it exists—before any unilateral action. It embodies the church's call to "watch over one another in love" (¶ 103) by creating accountability that prevents abrupt takeover or defunding. Young people have already organized effective ministries like the GMC African Youth Network; this provision ensures their work is respected and sustained rather than subject to the discretion of individual officers.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶7XX

No conference superintendent, bishop, or connectional officer shall unilaterally establish, dissolve, assume control of, or redirect the funding of a young people's ministry structure without the written consent of the affected young people's leadership and, where a Connectional Young People's Council exists, the consent of that Council.

CONSTITUTION, CONNECTIONAL ORGANIZATION, AND FINANCE

¶449 · all ¶200s, ¶800s, and ¶1000s

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PETITION 1313

¶201

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of ¶201

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. Paragraph 201 is informational and not instructive and is expressed in other locations. It should be removed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶201

~~From its earliest days, the Christian church has been marked as one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic. These four qualities, inseparably joined with one another, bear witness to the origin, nature, and mission of the church as the Body of Christ called to reflect Christ's Lordship. As those who have experienced the redeeming love of God, the church exists to reflect God's holy and perfect love to all, to boldly proclaim God's Word, to edify all those who believe, and to work for the redemption of the world. Following in the Methodist tradition of organizing together under a common discipline, the Global Methodist Church has adopted the following Constitution to enable us to "watch over each other in love."~~

PETITION 1086

¶204

Grammatical Edit

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Since “professing”, “being” and “demonstrating” are present participles, “repentance” needs to change to “repenting” to match the others.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶204

¶ *204. Article III. A Church For All*—All persons are made in God’s image and are loved by him. ~~All are thus welcome within our churches to join with others in the worship of God, to participate in its ministries, and upon repentance~~ repenting ~~of their sin, professing faith in Jesus Christ, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and demonstrating a sincere desire for a holy life, to become members in any local church within the connection.~~ All are thus welcome within our churches to join with others in the worship of God, to participate in its ministries, and upon repenting of their sin, professing faith in Jesus Christ, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and demonstrating a sincere desire for a holy life, to become members in any local church within the connection.

PETITION 1239

¶204

Make Honoring the Image of God in All a Core Constitutional Value

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Our Social Witness can further spell out the implications and details of these basic principles and broad categories. But putting this carefully worded language into our Constitution makes these values foundational for Global Methodism, and more difficult for anyone to ever roll back later. This makes very clear that we truly honor and recognize the image of God in ALL people, with no exceptions. There is particular value in our Constitution thus affirming the God-given dignity of women as well as men, and in explicitly stating our strong opposition to racism.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶204

¶ 204. *Article III. A Church For All* — All persons, male and female, from the moment of conception, are made in God's image and are loved by him. All are thus welcome within our churches to join with others in the worship of God, to participate in its ministries, and upon repentance of their sin, professing faith in Jesus Christ, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and demonstrating a sincere desire for a holy life, to become members in any local church within the connection. We stand firmly against all sinful practices anywhere that attack or refuse to respect the *imago dei* in any human being, including exploitation, abuse, bullying, and racism.

PETITION 1087

¶206

Definition of a Local Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Constitution does not currently contain a definition for a local church. This is problematic given the emphasis the Global Methodist Church has placed on the local church and its primacy in the role of disciple making.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶206.1

1. ~~The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, overseen and governed by the charge conference.~~ The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, which is a group of peoplewho under the Lordship of Jesus Christcommit to organize themselves under the Book of Doctrines and Discipline so they can proclaim the gospel message of Jesus Christ contained in scripture, worship God together regularly,make disciples of Jesus Christ, and serve the world with the love of Christ. Local churches are overseen and governed by the charge conference. The purpose of all Global Methodist Church organization is to strengthen and support the work of the local church.

PETITION 1310

¶206

Clarification of Opening Statement About Charge Conferences

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Constitution section should have a few more specifics that define the business, quorum, and allowance for additional charge conferences as needed beyond the annual charge conference. These changes are proposed to be more in-line with scope and detail of the Annual Conference section of the Constitution.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶206

206. Article V. Charge Conferences— ~~The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church, the annual conference, and the general church~~ The purpose of all Global Methodist Church organization is to strengthen and support the work of the local church. The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church, the annual conference, and the general church. The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, overseen and governed by the charge conference.

PETITION 1316

¶206.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of Language in ¶206.1

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The extraneous words "overseen and" in ¶206.1 are unnecessary, unclear, and should be removed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶206.1

~~The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, overseen and governed by the charge conference.~~

The ministry of the Global Methodist Church happens primarily through the local church, governed by the charge conference.

PETITION 1088

¶207

Clarifying the Work and Purpose of the Annual Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There are numerous parts of this paragraph that need to be clarified, streamlined, and brought into accordance with the rest of the BDD. A few notable examples are: The definition of Annual Conference membership "senior" vs. "retired" clergy and the ability for annual conferences to add as many lay people as they desire to ensure all churches and groups within the AC are represented. Additionally, consistent language in .1 and .2 are needed. .3 needs revision to offer greater flexibility, .4 to minimize confusion, .6 deletion to clarify work of the clergy session, .8 offers ACs flexibility to provide for insurance & benefits programs, especially in parts of the world outside the U.S., and .10 clarifies charge conference report.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶207

Article VI. Annual Conferences—Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability. The annual conference shall be composed of clergy and laity. All clergy who meet the requirements in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall be members. At least an equal number of lay members shall be elected by charges. Annual Conferences may choose to elect additional lay members through districts or the conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as there are appointed clergy.

In addition to coming together for edification, fellowship, and inspiration, the annual conference shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. To create a program of ministry within its boundaries that can fulfill the mission of the church and enhance its witness, including forming such commissions or agencies as may be required, specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof.

2. To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work and mission of the church within its boundaries.

3. To establish the number of districts or similar subordinate subunits within the annual conference.

4. To elect clergy and lay delegates to the General Conference. Clergy delegates shall be members in full connection and in good standing. Lay delegates shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church. Both clergy and lay delegates shall be elected by a simple majority with clergy voting for clergy delegates and laity voting for lay delegates.

5. To vote on all constitutional amendments as approved by the General Conference and distributed to the annual conferences for ratification.

6. To hold an executive session of clergy members to approve the ordination of persons as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry and to approve clergy status changes as recommended by the annual conference board of ministry.

7. To encourage and facilitate the planting of new churches, including the authorization of sponsorship by existing congregations, and to charter new congregations.

8. To establish minimum standards for the well-being of its clergy which may include minimum compensation, parsonages and housing standards, health insurance, and other benefits if desired.

9. To approve by simple majority vote, the transfer of a congregation into or out of the annual conference to or from another annual conference.

10. To maintain the records of the annual conference, including the record of closed churches and annual reports from all charge conferences.

11. To adopt rules for its own governance, provided they do not conflict with the requirements of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1317

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of ¶207.1

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. ¶207.1 is vague and unnecessary. It should be removed

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶207.1

~~To create a program of ministry within its area that can fulfill the mission of the church and enhance its witness, including forming such commissions or agencies as may be required, specifying the composition of each body and electing the members thereof.~~

PETITION 1318

¶207.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of Part of Sentence in ¶207.2

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The extra words in ¶207.2 are vague and unnecessary. The new sentence is clearer.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶207.2

~~To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work and mission of the church in its region of the annual conference.~~

To create and administer a program for raising and distributing funds necessary to conduct the work of the annual conference.

PETITION 1245

¶207.4

Procedure for Electing Delegates General Conference

Petitioner: Simon Mafunda

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Genesis (AF: Zimbabwe)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This petition seeks to strengthen the integrity of delegate elections by ensuring that all voting members have equal access to candidate information. The requirement of a brief biography and photograph will enable voters to know the candidates better, evaluate them on merit rather than personal familiarity, and informed decisions. Because the election of delegates to the General conference is a spiritual discipline and a solemn responsibility, this process will help annual conferences invest in representatives who will faithfully add value to the denomination's policy-making body.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶207.4 BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING

Amend by addition to 207.4

During each session of annual conference in which delegates to the General Conference are to be elected, all clergy and lay members who are in good standing and willing to stand for election shall be required to submit in advance to the conference secretary a brief biographical statement together with a current passport-size photograph. The said statement shall include the reasons the member believes they are best suited to represent their annual conference. The conference shall ensure that all such biographical statements and photographs are compiled and published for distribution to the voting members of the annual conference in a pre-conference journal or equivalent official document. This publication shall be made available not later than twenty-one (21) days prior to the opening of the annual conference session.

PETITION 1319

¶207.8

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of ¶207.8

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. ¶207.8 is unnecessary. Annual conferences will do this if they desire anyway. It doesn't need to be in the BDD.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶207.8

~~To establish minimum standards for parsonages and other ministry housing if desired~~

PETITION 1048

¶208

Petition to Amend Paragraph 207 and 208 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Allegheny West

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

"The implicit goal of the Constitution is to create and sustain a system which encourages, promotes, and protects the interdependence which is at the heart of connectionalism" (Keith Boyette). By not limiting the legislative powers of the General Conference we have created an entirely top down structure which severely limits what Annual Conferences can do. To truly be a global church, different Conferences around the world need freedom to make policies which care for the clergy that hold their membership in the Conference, and best strengthen and support the work of the local church in their area. This amendment would shift the non-restricted power back to the Annual Conference while keeping them under the supervision of the General Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208 AND ¶207

¶208 Article VII. [...] ~~The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:~~ The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, and in the exercise of this power shall have authority as follows:

¶207 Article VI 11. To adopt rules for its own governance and for such other rights as have not been delegated to the General Conference under the Constitution, provided they do not conflict with the requirements of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, in order to strengthen and support the work of the local church.

PETITION 1089

¶208

Clarifying Meetings of the General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The section on the Convening Conference is no longer relevant. The two references to "episcopal leadership" and "bishops of the church" need be standardized to "Assembly of Bishops"

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804.1

~~*Article VII. The General Conference*—As per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall initially meet for a convening General Conference, then as a General Conference approximately two years thereafter. Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference. The General Conference may at its discretion include within its number a limited number of delegates, with or without voice and vote, from other autonomous Methodist bodies. A special session of the General Conference to deal with a particular issue or need may be called by a majority vote of the General Conference or of its episcopal leadership. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors. Where necessary, the General Conference may meet virtually with the approval of the bishops of the church and the Connectional Council.~~

Article VII. The General Conference—As per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference. The General Conference may at its discretion include within its number a limited number of delegates, with or without voice and vote, from other autonomous Methodist bodies. A special session of the General Conference to deal with a particular issue or need may be called by a majority vote of the General Conference or of its Assembly of Bishops. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors. Where necessary, the General Conference may meet virtually with the approval of Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council.

PETITION 1241

¶208

Avoid Conflicts of Interest at General Conference

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This sets a lasting foundation for the future of basic, standard good-governance principles, preserving accountability, the independence of the judiciary, checks and balances in governance, and the General Conference's role in directing other parts of our connection. General Conference delegates necessarily decide matters on which faithful Global Methodists may disagree, like contested elections or controversial legislative proposals. Our denomination-wide staff can be most effective in working with all Global Methodists when they are protected from even perceptions of favoring one "side," faction, or candidate over others. This is carefully worded to NOT apply to annual conference staff or local church staff.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208

¶ 208. *Article VII. The General Conference* — As per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall initially meet for a convening General Conference, then as a General Conference approximately two years thereafter. Subsequently, the General Conference shall meet once every six years. It shall be composed of no fewer than 200 nor more than 700 delegates, one half of whom shall be clergy and one half of whom shall be laity, elected by the annual conferences on a proportional basis as determined by the General Conference. No active bishop, member of the Connectional Council on Appeals, or general church staff may serve as General Conference delegates. The General Conference may at its discretion include within its number a limited number of delegates, with or without voice and vote, from other autonomous Methodist bodies. A special session of the General Conference to deal with a particular issue or need may be called by a majority vote of the General Conference or of its episcopal leadership. Such special session of the General Conference shall be composed of the delegates to the preceding General Conference or their lawful successors. Where necessary, the General Conference may meet virtually with the approval of the bishops of the church and the Connectional Council.

The General Conference shall have full legislative power over all matters that are distinctly connectional, including, but not limited to:

...

PETITION 1320

¶208

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of Part of a Sentence in ¶208

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This is updating the opening of ¶208 to reflect that the convening General Conference has already happened.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208

~~The General Conference—as per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference approximately two years thereafter, the General Conference shall meet once every six years.~~

The General Conference – as per the Methodist tradition of "conferring together," there shall be a General Conference of the Global Methodist Church that shall meet once every six years.

PETITION 1090

¶208.1

Clarifying Lay Leadership in the Church

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Laity need to be named here to give them a more prominent role as leaders in the church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208.1

~~(1) To define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of those laity and clergy who serve within the church, including as deacons, elders, other clergy categories, bishops, and other leaders within the church.~~

(1) To define the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of laity and clergy who serve within the church, including deacons, elders, other clergy categories, bishops, and laity who lead within the church.

PETITION 1262

¶208.1

To Reduce Year for the General Conference and Term of Office for Bishop ¶208 Article VII and ¶604.8

Petitioner: Danjuma Juji

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: GMCN Karim-Maundi (AF: Northeast Nigeria)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The general and global best practices of governance and administration is democratically used and observed. This is done to curtail the excessive use of power; the Global Methodist Church needs to meet after four years to enable the church guides it members and observe the operation of the church across globe. Six-year term in office for the bishop will be too long for the emerging church. However, the general can be maintained for after six years because of the financial implication but special session may be called for the election of bishop after every four years.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶604.8

~~Subsequently, the general conference shall meet once every six years.~~ Subsequently, the general conference shall meet once every four years.

PETITION 1091

¶208.5

Clarifying the Power and Authority of the Connectional Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Connectional Council is already established, so this word can be deleted. This sentence has 5 instances of "General Conference" and they get confusing. Removing 1 of them and rewriting this subparagraph into two sentences will provide greater clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208.5

(5) ~~To define and establish a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference subject to such limitations as the General Conference may from time to time impose and subject to ratification of its actions taken between General Conferences by the General Conference.~~

(5) To define a Connectional Council with delegated authority from the General Conference to address all matters entrusted to it between meetings of the General Conference subject to the limitations imposed upon it by the General Conference. All actions of the Connectional Council shall be subject to ratification by the General Conference.

PETITION 1281

¶208.9

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Addition to ¶208.9

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. Updating ¶208.9 to specify the language to the General church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208.9

~~To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing the funds that are necessary for the work of the church.~~

To determine and administer a program for raising and distributing the funds that are necessary for the work of the General church.

PETITION 1280

¶208.10

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Cleaning Language of ¶208.10

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. Cleaning up the language of ¶208.10.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208.10

~~To ensure the mission of the church is kept foremost by all ministries, commissions, clergy, laity, and officers of the church, affirming that disciples of Jesus are made at the level of the local church, and endeavor to keep as many resources as possible at the local church level.~~

To affirm that disciples of Jesus are made by the local church, and endeavor to keep as many resources as possible at the local church level.

PETITION 1279

¶208.13

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Cleaning Language of ¶208.13

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. Cleaning up the language of ¶208.13 to remove unnecessary language about resolutions.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶208.13

~~To act upon petitions received dealing with church organization and polity and resolutions dealing with non-disciplinary matters in order to effectively speak on behalf of the whole church, resolutions shall require the support of three quarters of the General Conference and shall remain in effect only until the next General Conference convenes.~~

To act upon petitions received dealing with church organization and polity.

PETITION 1092

¶209

Defining the Assembly of Bishops

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Defining the Assembly of Bishops

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶209

Article VIII. The Episcopacy—The general superintendency of the Global Methodist Church shall be entrusted to bishops who shall provide spiritual leadership to the church and exercise temporal authority as adopted by the General Conference. Bishops shall be elected as per the procedures established by the General Conference and shall serve at its pleasure to guard the faith, order, unity, liturgy, doctrine, and discipline of the church. All active bishops shall be members of the Assembly of Bishops.

PETITION 1093

¶210.1

Clarifying the Powers and Responsibilities of the Connectional Council on Appeals

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

.1 and .2 of this paragraph need to match. I also recommend that all language in the Constitution dealing with active bishops be standardized to "Assembly of Bishops".

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶210.(1)

~~(1) To determine the constitutionality, or the meaning, application, or effect of any action or decision of the General Conference upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of that conference present and voting, or upon a majority of the active episcopal leaders of the church.~~

(1) To determine the constitutionality or the meaning, application, or effect of any action or decision of the General Conference upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of that conference present and voting, or upon a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

PETITION 1049

¶210.3

Petition to Amend Paragraph 210 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Allegheny West

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Currently, there is no mandate from the Constitution to require bishops to rule on questions of law, which inadvertently gives bishops the freedom to choose the questions on which they will rule. This gives bishops the unintended power to veto the appeals process by simply not ruling on questions that are properly placed before them. This veto power is violative of Article XI of the Constitution which guarantees clergy's and member's right to appeal. This amendment mandates the right and responsibility that the rulings must be made, it stipulates the parameters of how they may be made, and instructs the limitations of those rulings. By passing this amendment we will bring our Constitution back in line with our Restrictive Rules.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶210.3

¶210.3 To review and affirm, modify, or reverse any decision of law made by any bishop. A bishop presiding over an annual or regional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing. The decision shall be recorded by the conference secretary in the journal of the conference. Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative, except in the pending case, until it shall have been passed upon by the Connectional Council of Appeals. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Connectional Council on Appeals, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them.

PETITION 1094

¶211

Amend Right to Appeal to Include Language from Restrictive Rule and Delete a Rule

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Restrictive Rules have historically been established for the protection of our doctrinal foundation as a Church. While the protection of clergy and member right to appeal should be constitutionally protected, this subparagraph better fits in an amended ¶ 211. Article X. Right of Appeal

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶211 AND DELETES ¶212.2

¶ 211. *Article X. Right of Appeal* — ~~The General Conference shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy and to our members a right to trial and appeal.~~

~~¶ 212.2 The General Conference shall not do away with the privileges of our clergy right to trial by a committee and of an appeal; neither shall it do away with the privileges of our members of right to trial before the church, or by a committee, and an appeal.~~

¶ 211. *Article X. Right of Appeal* — The General Conference shall establish for the Church a judicial system that shall guarantee to our clergy and to our members a right to trial and appeal and shall not revoke the privileges of our clergy right to trial by a committee and of an appeal; neither shall it revoke the privileges of our members of right to trial before the church, or by a committee, and an appeal.

PETITION 1095

¶212.1

Amend Rule to Harmonize it with the Doctrinal Standards Being Proposed at 2026 General Conference

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Should the 2026 General Conference adopt a combined Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith it will be necessary to clarify that the new document replaces the Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith in the Restrictive Rules and removes antiquated language.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶212.1

1. ~~The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our *Articles of Religion*, *Confession of Faith*, Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, *The Standard Sermons* of John Wesley or any other of our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards, or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our existing standards. This restrictive rule shall not apply to the development of a combined *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* as approved by the church. Any successor document to the *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* shall be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the General Conference.~~

1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our *Articles of Faith,* Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, *The Standard Sermons* of John Wesley or any other ~~of~~ our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards, or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our existing standards.

PETITION 1444

¶212.1

Allow GC to Clarify Understanding of Wesley's Sermons and Notes

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Some Global Methodist leaders believe that this Restrictive Rule already does not apply to these explanatory statements surrounding these Wesleyan Standards, but this is not clear to everyone. If delegates would like to adopt the separate petition, "Clarify Understanding of Wesley's Sermons and Notes" (amending part of one such explanatory statement in Paragraph 107), but this is deemed to be blocked by the present language of Paragraph 212.1, then 2026 General Conference delegates may adopt both that petition and this one. Then, per Paragraph 213.2, the adoption of the other petition can become effective upon ratification of this petition by voting in annual conferences. This is a very narrow, time-limited exception.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶212.1

1.1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our *Articles of Religion*, *Confession of Faith*, Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, *The Standard Sermons* of John Wesley or any other of our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards, or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our existing standards. This restriction shall not limit the ability of the 2026 General Conference to amend the explanatory statements in Paragraph 107, which are distinct from the listings of specific sermons of John Wesley and from the naming of John Wesley's "*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*" as Wesleyan Standards, provided that such amendments do not remove any of the specific sermons listed or the *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* from our Foundational Wesleyan Standards for Christian Discipleship. This restrictive rule shall not apply to the development of a combined *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* as approved by the church. Any successor document to the *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* shall be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the General Conference.

PETITION 1447

¶212.1

Allow Adopting Clear Doctrinal Standard on Marriage

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

In case delegates would like to adopt the separate petition, "Adopt Clear Doctrinal Standard on Marriage" (adding such an article to Paragraph 106), but this is deemed to be blocked by the present language of Paragraph 212.1, then 2026 General Conference delegates may adopt both that petition and this one. Then, per Paragraph 213.2, the adoption of the other petition can become effective upon ratification of this petition by voting in annual conferences. This exception to the First Restrictive Rule is intentionally written to be extremely narrow, so that it would not allow changes to our doctrinal standards on other topics and would not have any direct impact for any future General Conferences.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶212.1

1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our *Articles of Religion*, *Confession of Faith*, Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, *The Standard Sermons* of John Wesley or any other of our doctrinal foundations as established by the Church and embodied within our constitutive standards, or establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our existing standards. This restrictive rule shall not apply to the development of a combined *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* as approved by the church. Any successor document to the *Articles of Religion* and *Confession of Faith* shall be adopted by a three-fourths vote of the General Conference. This restrictive rule shall not apply by any action of the 2026 General Conference to amend our Normative Standards for Wesleyan Witness (Paragraph 106) by adding an additional article that affirms the ethic of celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage between one man and one woman.

PETITION 1097

¶213

Clarifying the Amendment Process and Removing Antiquated Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The current .1 and the beginning of .2 are antiquated and need to be deleted. The two different categories of amendments would be better placed in two separate sections. The sentences on announcing the results of a vote on an amendment needs more specificity, needs standardization of language, and needs to be its own section.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶213 BY DELETING ¶213.1 AND AMENDING ¶213.2 & ¶213.3

Article XII. Amendments—Amendments to the Constitution may originate in the General Conference or an annual conference.

1. Amending the Restrictive Rules shall require a three-fourths majority of General Conference delegates present and voting (excluding abstentions) followed by three-fourths affirmative vote of the aggregate number of delegates of the annual conferences present and voting (excluding abstentions).

~~1. Other than to the Restrictive Rules, amendments to the Constitution shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the General Conference until the close of the 2026 General Conference.~~

2. ~~After the close of the 2026 General Conference,~~ Other than the Restrictive Rules, amendments shall require a two-thirds majority of General Conference delegates present and voting (excluding abstentions) followed by two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of delegates of the annual conferences present and voting (excluding abstentions).

3. All annual conferences shall vote on each amendment affirmed by General Conference within 18 months of the close of General Conference. Within one month of the last annual conference vote, the General Conference Secretary shall announce the results of the aggregate vote. When an amendment reaches the threshold specified above, ~~Following its ratification, the amendment voted upon~~ it shall become effective upon the announcement of its ~~approval~~ affirmation. Where appropriate, the General Conference may choose to enact enabling legislation for an amendment that shall be contingent upon the ~~ratification~~ affirmation of the amendment by the required vote of the General Conference and the annual conferences.

PETITION 1004

¶449

Local Church Connectional Funding and Benefits

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

All local churches are required to provide funding for the prosperity of the connection both at the general and local church level as well as the general welfare of its clergy. Payments of connectional funding along with pension and insurance is often remitted together by the local church. This harmonizes the fiduciary responsibility of the local church with other areas of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449 AND ADDS A NEW ¶449.10

¶ 449. LOCAL CHURCH CONNECTIONAL FUNDING AND BENEFITS. 1. Each local church of the Global Methodist Church contributes financially to the ministry of the Church beyond the local church through connectional funding. The local church treasurer or designee shall calculate the amount to be remitted in accordance with ¶¶ 449.3 and .4 by January 30 of each calendar year based on the prior year's local church operating income.

...

10. Local churches shall promote that the general welfare of its appointed or assigned pastors are cared for, which may include adequate health insurance (for which the means may be determined by the annual conference), pension, and life insurance.

PETITION 1215

¶449.1

Clarify Wesleyan Value of Connectional Funding

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The inclusion of "while" in the first sentence here seems to apologize for accountability and the necessity of connectional funding. This is not something we should apologize for, but something we should stand firm on! This section would better reflect our values by starting with the historical notes and then stating that we will continue them with grace and accountability.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.1

1. Wesleyan Value of Connectional Funding. ~~The Global Methodist Church, while grace-filled, recognizes that there is a season of accountability throughout our personal and public lives. John Wesley's societal structure of using mutual accountability groups indicates the responsibilities placed upon each of us in how we perceive and manage the assets with which God has entrusted us. From its earliest days, the Methodist movement has been one of mutual support within a connectional system. A connectional system allows churches to work together to make larger kingdom impacts, ensure proper accountability and credentialing, and maintain theological integrity. In short, we are better together. The Global Methodist Church values its connectional system and wishes to see it thrive in its support and oversight role for local churches.~~

From its earliest days, the Methodist movement has been one of mutual support within a connectional system, which allows churches to work together to make larger kingdom impacts, ensure proper accountability and credentialing, and maintain theological integrity. In short, we are better together. The Global Methodist Church continues this connectional system for local churches through grace and accountability.

PETITION 1278

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Eliminating ¶449.1

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The language of ¶449.1 is vague and unnecessary.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶449.1

~~Wesleyan Value of Connectional Funding. The Global Methodist Church, while grace-filled, recognizes that there is a season of accountability disciples are accountable throughout their personal and public lives. John Wesley's societal structure of using mutual accountability groups indicates the responsibilities placed upon each of us in how we perceive and manage the assets with which God has entrusted us. From its earliest days, the Methodist movement has been one of mutual support within a connectional system. A connectional system allows churches to work together to make larger kingdom impacts, ensure proper accountability and credentialing, and maintain theological integrity. In short, we are better together. The Global Methodist Church values its connectional system and wishes to see it thrive in its support and oversight role for local churches.~~

PETITION 1216

¶449.2

Clarify Calculation of Connectional Funding

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

We recommend 3 changes to the calculation of Connectional Funding: (1) Give annual conferences the option to calculate CF at the annual conference level by having churches report their operating income each year. (2) Make it clear that the prohibition on using CF funds to cover benefits plans does not mean that local church payments to benefits plans shall be excluded from CF calculations. (3) In the list of excluded income, it would help to clarify that the note on benevolences applies to donations designated by the giver as a benevolence and not general fund income that may be spent on benevolences by the local church, and that any school or daycare operated by the church shall have their income excluded as well.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.2, ¶449.3, AND ¶449.4

2. ~~Each local church of the Global Methodist Church contributes financially to the ministry of the church beyond the local church through connectional funding. The local church treasurer or designee shall calculate the amount to be remitted in accordance with ¶¶ 449.4 and .5 by January 30 of each calendar year based on the prior year's local church operating income.~~

Each local church of the Global Methodist Church shall contribute financially to the ministry of the church beyond the local church through connectional funding. The annual conference shall calculate the amount to be remitted from each local church in accordance with ¶ 449.5. To facilitate this calculation, each local church shall report their prior year's operating income by January 30 of each calendar year in accordance with ¶ 449.4. Annual conferences may also choose to allow local churches to calculate their connectional funding in accordance with ¶¶ 449.4 and .5 and report that amount to the annual conference.

3. ~~Connectional funding shall include amounts due from the local church for insurance benefits and pension contributions for its pastor(s) and any additional staff who are part of such plans of the Global Methodist Church. Such payments for insurance benefits and pension contributions for plan participants are due in addition to connectional funding remittances by the local church.~~ Connectional funding shall not be used by the annual conference or general church to fund benefits plans, including insurance and retirement plans, for any local church pastor or staff. Any such payments for benefit plans shall be made by local churches in addition to connectional funding remittances.

4. In calculating the amount of connectional funding to be remitted, a. the following items are to be included in local church operating income: giving from identified and unidentified donors, investment income utilized for operations, building use fees and rental income, and other unrestricted operating income. b. the following items are to be excluded from local church operating income: giving designated for benevolences (outside ministries supported by the local church); capital campaign receipts; borrowed funds; fundraisers for nonoperating expenses; receipts for reduction of indebtedness; memorials, endowments, and bequests whether restricted or nonrestricted; receipts for Global Methodist Church special mission programs; grants and support from other organizations; sales of land, buildings, or other church assets; receipts from any school or daycare operated by the local church; and other nonoperating income received.

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PETITION 1277

¶449.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Eliminating ¶449.3

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The language of ¶449.3 may have been necessary previously, but it is not globally applicable and is no longer needed.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶449.3

~~Such payments for insurance benefits and pension contributions for plan participants are due in addition to connectional funding remittances by the local church.~~

PETITION 1217

¶449.6

Clarify Procedures for Setting, Remitting, and Explaining Connectional Funding

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Numerous changes need to be made to this paragraph, including: (1) Making it clear that the percentage referred to in .6 is the amount set by the General Conference or Annual Conference, and not the limits on the percentage set in .5. (2) Allowing annual conferences to collect general church CF payments from local churches and forward the money to the General Church. This will be especially helpful for non-US churches that cannot easily transfer money to a US bank account. (3) Making .9 less repetitive.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.6, ¶449.7, AND ¶449.9

6. ~~The percentage in ¶ 449.5a shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the General Conference. The percentage in ¶ 449.5b shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the relevant annual conference.~~ The percentage set through the provisions of ¶ 449.5a shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the General Conference. The percentage set through the provisions of ¶ 449.5b shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the relevant annual conference.

7. ~~Each month the local church shall remit one-twelfth of the annual sum of general church connectional funding to the treasurer of the Global Methodist Church and one-twelfth of the annual conference connectional funding to the respective annual conference.~~ Each month the local church shall remit at least one-twelfth of the annual sum of the general church connectional funding and at least one-twelfth of the annual conference connectional funding to the respective annual conference. Each month, the annual conference treasurer shall remit all general church connectional funding collected from local churches to the treasurer of the Global Methodist Church.

9. ~~The pastor(s) and leadership of the local church shall interpret connectional funding to the members of the local church so that connectional funding is embraced by such membership and regularly share information with the members of the local church to educate and interpret such connectional funding.~~ The pastor(s) and leadership of the local church shall regularly share information with the members of the local church to explain the purpose of connectional funding so that it is embraced by every church.

PETITION 1276

¶449.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Adding an Adjective to ¶449.6

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. There has been some confusion globally on the percentages. Prayerfully, the addition of the adjective to ¶449.6 will enhance clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.6

~~The percentage in ¶449.5a shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the General Conference.~~

The maximum percentage in ¶449.5a shall only be increased upon the vote of two-thirds of the General Conference.

PETITION 1065

¶449.7

Local Church Connectional Funding Remittance Options

Petitioner: Finance and Administration Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Local churches across the Global Methodist connection want to support the ministries of their annual conference and the wider global Church. Yet the current structure often makes that difficult. Most congregations outside the United States lack the financial systems to send connectional funding directly to the general Church, and many do not have the guidance needed to do so. Annual conferences are best positioned to bridge that gap. They have the relationships, trust, and organizational capacity to receive, coordinate, and transmit these gifts. Routing connectional funding through annual conferences reflects how the connection already functions and ensures churches across the GMC can share in funding our common mission.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.7

¶ 449. LOCAL CHURCH CONNECTIONAL FUNDING

7.~~Each month the local church shall remit one-twelfth of the annual sum of general church connectional funding to the Treasurer of the Global Methodist Church and one-twelfth of the annual conference connectional funding to the respective annual conference.~~ The local church shall periodically remit, no less than annually, general church connectional funding to the general church or to its respective annual conference for forwarding to the general church. Annual conferences shall report to the general church a detailed listing of local churches and period(s) for funds received as remitted. The local church shall also periodically remit, no less than annually, annual conference connectional funding to its respective annual conference.

PETITION 1218

¶449.8

Clarify Procedure for Designating Missional Churches

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The section on designating missional churches is confusing as to whether annual conferences can exempt a local church from paying CF to either the denomination OR the annual conference, or whether they can exempt a local church from paying both. This section could also give more leeway to annual conferences to exempt a church from paying a portion of their CF, rather than only being able to exempt it from all.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶449.8

8. ~~The annual conference connectional council or its equivalent may designate a local church as a missional church and exempt such a church from paying general church or annual conference connectional funding for up to five years from the date of designation. Missional churches shall be church plants, church restarts, or churches located in or serving economically disadvantaged communities.~~ The annual conference connectional council or its equivalent may designate a local church as a missional church and exempt such a church from paying all or a portion of its connectional funding to either the general church or annual conference or both for up to five years from the date of designation. Missional churches may be church plants, church restarts, or churches located in or serving economically disadvantaged communities.

PETITION 1275

¶449.9

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Eliminating ¶449.9

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. There is no reason for ¶449.9 to be in the BDD. It's unnecessary and unenforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶449.9

~~The pastor(s) and leadership of the local church shall interpret connectional funding to the members of the local church so that connectional funding is embraced by such membership and regularly share information with the members of the local church to educate and interpret such connectional funding.~~

PETITION 1465

¶708

Restricting Grounds for Establishing Annual Conferences

Petitioner: Jeffrey Rickman

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Yazoo City (US: Mississippi-West Tennessee)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church has a fundamental commitment to the doctrine of the imago dei, the radical and otherworldly doctrine that all humans equally inhabit God's image in the world. As such, we realize that grouping along ethnic/racial lines unhelpfully perpetuates separation, competition, and resentment along inalienable characteristics. This petition removes such an option from the structures of the denomination, requiring that all voices are treated equally in every region.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶708.1 AND REMOVES ¶451

¶ 708. ORGANIZATION. 1. *Composition*. Annual conferences shall be formed for the purpose of connecting clergy and laity for shared ministry and accountability across a geographical region. An annual conference shall be organized based solely on geographical area. The boundaries of each annual conference shall not overlap those of another. No annual conferences shall be established based on race/ethnicity, theological faction, missional agenda, or any other differences within the population of the denomination. ~~A special annual conference or district that is not geographically bound and overlaps the boundaries of other annual conferences or districts can be formed by the decision of Transitional Leadership Council at the request of a group of churches~~. The voting membership of an annual conference shall be composed of those elders, deacons, and transitional local pastors under appointment (except as limited by ¶ 519.2b) and senior clergy who meet the qualifications of ¶520, as well as at least an equal number of lay members elected by each charge or by the district or annual conference. Each charge shall be entitled to as many lay members as it has appointed clergy. The annual conference may add lay members of the annual conference who are serving in conference leadership positions. The annual conference shall determine the method of electing additional lay members to equalize the number of clergy members. Only laity shall vote in the election of equaling laity. Such members may be elected by a charge conference, district conference, or the annual conference, but they must be elected and not appointed.

DELETE ¶451

PETITION 1026

¶8XX

Global Unity Commission

Petitioner: Jonathan Lee

Organization: Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

We submit this petition because, as the Global Methodist Church grows worldwide, we must intentionally cultivate Spirit-led unity across cultures. Shared doctrine alone does not guarantee relational trust or equitable leadership. We face real challenges—ethnic division, tribalism, and cultural misunderstanding—that can weaken our witness if left unaddressed. A Commission on Global Unity would help equip our denomination with biblical teaching, cross-cultural formation, and relational structures that strengthen trust, reconciliation, and collaboration so that we may faithfully embody Christ's love and oneness in a divided world.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

GLOBAL UNITY COMMISSION.

1. Rooted in the transformative unity of the early Church at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–12) and the vision of Revelation 7:9–10 where every nation, tribe, people, and language gather at the throne, this commission will equip leaders and congregations to overcome divisive barriers, practice love and mission as commanded in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37–40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20), and advance God's Kingdom worldwide. Through Bible study and theological reflection, the Global Unity Commission will seek to address global ethnic divisions, ethnocentrism, tribalism, and sexism through a Holy Spirit-led prayer movement and robust cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry education and training.

2. This commission shall initially consist of 14 members, plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission, with equal representation from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, North America, and the Pacific Islands. The balance of the membership shall be elected at large by the General Conference.

3. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas: a. Initiate a global prayer campaign, encouraging congregations to engage in regular intercessory prayer for unity, reconciliation, and the eradication of tribalism, sexism, and ethnocentrism. b. The implementation of a biblically grounded, Holy Spirit-led leadership training program for pastors, presiding elders, and lay leaders, equipping them to confront the spiritual and cultural strongholds of tribalism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and ethnic division.

4. Commission qualitative research to assess the impact of the prayer movement and cross-racial/cross-cultural training, using interviews, prayer journals, and surveys to refine strategies for cultural transformation.

5. Encourage annual conferences worldwide to integrate prayer-based cross-ethnic/cross-cultural education and practices, sharing best practices across regions to eradicate tribalism, sexism, and ethnocentrism, and build a Kingdom-focused culture of holiness.

6. Provide resources to interim ministers and interim minister organizations to engage congregations in conversation to consider how the Holy Spirit might be preparing them to receive a minister of a different ethnicity

or a woman.

7. To ensure the Commission on Global Unity fulfills its Spirit-led mission with measurable results, will develop phased goals to guide its work, supported by clear oversight, accountability, and transparent reporting.

PETITION 1068

¶8XX (NEW)

Global Prayer Network Committee

Petitioner: Laura Ballinger

Organization: Lawrenceburg Dearborn Hills (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Jesus said: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." We believe it is the Lord's desire and vision that every local GM Church increases in becoming a house of prayer to the great glory of God. It is safe to say that the Lord also desires that all people in the Global Methodist Church become people of prayer to His great pleasure and for our great good! Toward this end, the Lord's vision for His Church, the Global Prayer Network Committee seeks to further develop a prayer and intercession network of praying conferences and churches to fuel God's work in the Church and into the world. The prayer network also seeks to further develop prayer leaders who will "stand in the gap" on behalf of God's work through the Global Methodist Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

8XX. GLOBAL PRAYER NETWORK COMMITTEE. There shall be a Global Prayer Network Committee to seek God through prayer and intercession and to facilitate prayer within the denomination to fuel God's work in and through the Global Methodist Church and into the world.

The Committee shall work in cooperation with the Connectional Council for support and accountability. All processes and procedures related to composition and responsibilities of the Committee shall be posted publicly.

PETITION 1115

¶8XX (NEW)

Petition Regarding Good Standing

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This clarifies the definition of "in good standing," which is used several places in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. It applies the requirement of good standing equally for clergy and laity. It makes provision for carrying out a determination that a person is not in good standing and the implications of that determination on their voluntary service on elected bodies or in an appointed position. It also clarifies how good standing can be restored.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

8XX. REQUIREMENT OF "GOOD STANDING." Service in any elected or appointed capacity at any level of the Global Methodist Church shall require that the person be in good standing. Christian leaders are required to be "above reproach," "have a good reputation with outsiders," and "be worthy of respect" (I Timothy 3:2, 7, 8, 11). Certain paragraphs in the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* require someone to be "in good standing" to qualify to serve (Par. 207.4, 423, 439.7, 442.2, 515.1e, 517.1, 518.1, 610.3, 709.6, 710.6b, 710.7b, 906.2, 910.3).

"In good standing" for clergy means not being on inactive status or on involuntary leave (Par. 509.3, 510.2, 518.2, 518.5). Senior status clergy are eligible to serve even if they are on inactive status (Par. 520). For laity being "in good standing" means not being on the inactive member list of a local church or removed from professing membership (Par. 420, 422).

"In good standing" also means not being under investigation after the failure to reach a just resolution agreement for an administrative or judicial offense (Par. 906-908, 910-911). In such a case, the person administering the complaint has determined that there is enough evidence of a violation of the lay membership or clergy covenant that an investigative process is warranted. Any offense deemed serious enough to lead to a potential trial or administrative action is serious enough to suspend the person's good standing. In addition, there is a need for the respondent to prepare their defense through the investigation and potentially trial process, which will constitute a distraction from their service.

"In good standing" also means not subject to the terms of a just resolution agreement that has resolved administrative or judicial charges. The person needs to have the time and energy needed to work on the issues identified in the just resolution and move toward restoration of good standing.

A person not in good standing shall be ineligible to serve in any voluntary (non-paid) elected or appointed capacity and shall immediately resign or be removed by their conference superintendent or bishop.

Good standing is restored either through exoneration of all charges or the satisfactory completion of any terms imposed by a just resolution agreement or a trial court, as determined by the person or body charged with overseeing those terms. Once resigned or removed from a body or office, the person shall not automatically return to that position. If and when good standing is restored, they shall be eligible once again to be newly elected or appointed to any position for which they qualify.

The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to the appointment of clergy to pastoral or other ministry positions, as a clergy member's eligibility for pastoral appointment is governed by the processes in Par. 901 ff,

where the right to trial is protected.

PETITION 1133

¶8XX (NEW)

Global Prayer Network

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Jesus said: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." We believe it is the Lord's desire and vision that every local GM Church increases in becoming a house of prayer to the great glory of God. It is safe to say that the Lord also desires that all people in the Global Methodist Church become people of prayer to His great pleasure and for our great good! Toward this end, the Lord's vision for His Church, the Global Prayer Network Committee seeks to further develop a prayer and intercession network of praying conferences and churches to fuel God's work in the Church and into the world. The prayer network also seeks to further develop prayer leaders who will "stand in the gap" on behalf of God's work through the Global Methodist Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

8XX. GLOBAL PRAYER NETWORK COMMITTEE. There shall be a Global Prayer Network Committee to seek God through prayer and intercession and to facilitate prayer within the denomination to fuel God's work in and through the Global Methodist Church and into the world.

The Committee shall work in cooperation with the Connectional Council for support and accountability. All processes and procedures related to composition and responsibilities of the Committee shall be published on the Global Methodist website.

PETITION 1177

¶8XX (NEW)

Creating the Council of Annual Conference Lay Leaders

Petitioner: Gene Floore
Organization: Destin (US: Alabama Emerald Coast)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

A formal, recognized, connectional structure for lay leaders will foster collaboration, shared vision, and communication across the denomination and Annual Conferences; ensuring decisions are informed by the lived leadership experience of the laity in the local church and conference. Scripture teaches the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9), affirming the calling and responsibility of the laity in ministry; The council would provide a cohesive, experienced voice with shared insight on matters of equipping, training, and developing tools and resources for local church lay leadership. The council would support, encourage, and strengthen the work of each Conference Lay Leader through mutual collaboration and shared responsibility;

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

There shall be a Council of Annual Conference Lay Leaders composed of the Conference Lay Leader(s) or equivalent from each Annual Conference of the Global Methodist Church.

The Council shall organize itself and elect its own officers.

The Council shall meet at least once a quarter, by means determined by the council.

The Council shall have no legislative, executive, or judicial authority.

Each Lay Leader shall be responsible for their own expenses, if any, as members of this council.

The Council may provide strategic insight and recommendations to appropriate leadership bodies across the denomination, and may collaborate on initiatives and strategies developed by the council.

The council will foster the creation of tools and resources to equip lay leadership in the local church.

The council will help ensure lay inititives are aligned with the broader mission and leadership of the Global Methodist Church.

The council will provide an annual detailed report to the Connectional Council of its work.

PETITION 1283

¶8XX (NEW)

Conflicts of Interest for Connectional Commissions

Petitioner: Jay Therrell
Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

It is important to safeguard the integrity of commission decisions. GMC members who could gain financially from the decisions of a commission or other general church body should not participate in those decisions. It also protects the denomination's tax exemption.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

¶ 8XX. Conflicts of Interest and Recusal Policy

Purpose. All members of connectional commissions, councils, committees, and subcommittees of the Global Methodist Church shall conduct themselves with the highest standard of integrity and shall avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest that could compromise their ability to serve the best interests of the church impartially. This policy governs participation in any deliberation, discussion, or decision-making process.

Definition of Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest exists whenever a member, or a member of the member's immediate family (spouse, parent, child, sibling, or any person residing in the member's household), has:

A direct or indirect financial interest (including compensation, investment, ownership, or potential gain or loss) in any entity, contract, grant, program, or matter under consideration by the commission or other body; or

Any other personal, professional, or relational interest that could reasonably be expected to impair the member's objectivity or independence of judgment.

Duty of Disclosure. Before the consideration of any matter, each member shall disclose fully and promptly to the chair (or, if the chair has a conflict, to the vice-chair or the body as a whole) any actual or potential conflict of interest. Disclosure shall be made in writing and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. All members shall complete and submit an annual disclosure statement to the secretary of the commission or board identifying any employment, contracts, financial holdings, or other relationships that could give rise to a conflict.

Mandatory Recusal for Financial Interest. If a member or a member of the member's immediate family has a financial interest in any entity, contract, grant, program, or matter being considered, the member shall recuse himself or herself from all discussion, debate, and voting on that matter. The recused member shall leave the room (or disconnect from any virtual meeting) during consideration of the item unless the body, after full disclosure and by two-thirds vote of the remaining members, determines that the interest is so remote or insignificant that it does not pose a conflict. Recusal shall be noted in the minutes.

Employment or Contractual Relationships. No person who has an ownership interest or is currently employed by, serves as a consultant to, or is under contract with an entity, program, or agency whose funding, oversight, policies, or decisions are before the commission or board shall participate in any deliberation, discussion, or vote concerning that entity, program, or agency. Such persons may serve as members of the commission or board only if they agree in writing, upon election or appointment, to recuse themselves from all such matters and to refrain

from advocating for or against decisions involving their employer or contractor. Continued employment or contractual relationship after election shall not disqualify service entirely, but shall trigger mandatory recusal on all affected matters. Failure to recuse shall constitute grounds for removal from the commission or board.

Annual Conference-Specific Matters. A member of a general commission or board who is a clergy member, lay member, or resident of a particular annual conference shall not participate in any discussion, debate, or vote on any matter that specifically and uniquely affects only that annual conference (including, but not limited to, targeted funding allocations, disciplinary actions, property dispositions, or programmatic decisions applicable solely to that conference). This provision does not apply to matters of general application to all annual conferences or to routine budgetary or policy decisions that affect the connection as a whole. The member shall recuse himself or herself, and the recusal shall be recorded in the minutes.

Procedure for Recusal and Quorum.

Recusal is the responsibility of the individual member, but any member may raise a question of conflict concerning another member. The chair (or the body in the chair's absence) shall rule on the question, subject to appeal to the full body. The decision of the body shall require a majority vote and shall be final.

A member who has recused shall not be counted toward a quorum for the specific item but shall be counted for purposes of determining a quorum for the remainder of the meeting.

Minutes shall clearly record all disclosures, recusals, and any votes taken under this paragraph.

Violations and Remedies. Any knowing violation of this policy shall be reported to the chair and to the Connectional Council. Upon investigation, the Connectional Council may, by a 2/3 vote, remove the member. If a knowing violation of this policy occurs by a member of the Connectional Council, it shall be reported to the Assembly of Bishops. Upon investigation, the Assembly of Bishops may, by a 2/3 vote, remove the Connectional Council member.

Applicability. This policy shall apply to all connectional commissions, councils, committees, subcommittees, and agencies of the Global Methodist Church. Annual conferences and local churches are encouraged to adopt substantially similar policies for their own boards and committees.

PETITION 1333

¶8XX (NEW)

Establishment of Young People Commission

Organization: AF: Northern Nigeria

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

Submitter Type: Annual Conference

RATIONALE:

Young people make up a large proportion of the church worldwide, bringing passion, innovation, and strong missional energy. However, despite their importance, there is no unified global structure within the church to coordinate, empower, or address their grassroots needs. Their voices have often been overlooked, especially at foundational levels, due to the absence of a clear platform for engagement in the church's mission. Notably, none of the eight existing councils and commissions of the Global Methodist Church specifically focus on youth development, engagement, or accountability. This petition therefore calls for the establishment of a Commission on Young People's Ministry to provide a structured platform for their active participation

TEXT:

THIS PETITION WOULD ADD A NEW ¶8XX

The General Conference of the Global Methodist Church hereby establishes a new commission to be known as the Global Young People's Commission.

This commission be recognized alongside other councils and commissions of the church and be mandated to organize, coordinate, and support the activities, concerns, and leadership development of young people within the Global Methodist Church worldwide.

The General Conference of the Global Methodist Church shall appoint an interim board to begin the formation, structuring, and operational setup of the Global Young People's Commission until the next General Conference.

PROPOSED MANDATE OF THE GLOBAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMISSION

The Commission shall:

Coordinate youth ministries across episcopal areas of the Global Methodist Church.

Support and strengthen national and regional young people's structures.

Organize global programs, conferences, and leadership development initiatives.

Provide platforms for global fellowship among Methodist young people.

Conduct research and provide guidance on issues affecting young people globally.

Collaborate with other church agencies on matters concerning discipleship, missions, education, and community outreach.

Ensure that young people have representation in the councils and decision-making bodies of the denomination.

PETITION 1274

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Rewrite of ¶801

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The rewrite of ¶801 provides more clarity and emphasizes the importance of the local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶801

~~CONNECTIONAL LIFE. Reflecting the shared mission of each of our congregations, connectional entities may be formed at the general and annual conference levels to effectively support the task of making disciples and spreading scriptural holiness. These organizations shall prioritize resourcing the work of local churches, functioning where possible in and through partnerships with existing ministries, congregations, annual conferences, and other bodies, rather than creating new structures. They may set standards and share best practices in adapting to fit the context and changing circumstances across the church and globe. While providing secure and reliable funding channels where appropriate, connectional entities shall nonetheless be frugal, with minimal structures and staff, so as not to burden local congregations with extra financial demands, embodying the call of Jesus not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20.28).~~

CONNECTIONAL LIFE. Connectional entities may be formed at the general and annual conference levels to effectively support the tasks of making disciples and spreading scriptural holiness. Entities formed shall prioritize resourcing the work of local churches. They shall function, where possible, in and through partnerships with existing ministries, congregations, annual conferences, and other bodies, rather than creating new structures. Connectional commissions shall provide such value to the local church that no more than 50% of their funding may come from general church collections and at least 50% comes from fees for service from local churches, annual conferences, and donations from individuals, foundations, and other donors.

PETITION 1038

¶801.2 (NEW)

Open Meetings on Connectional Commissions

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

In general, open meetings foster transparency and trust. In general, closed meetings foster suspicion and distrust. ¶437.3 establishes an 'open meeting' principle for local church bodies, but the principle being applied to the General Church Commissions was overlooked.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶801.2 AND RENUMBERS SUBSEQUENT SUBPARAGRAPHS

Proposing to add this after ¶ 802.1 as ¶ 802.2, thus renumbering the remaining subparagraphs.

2. Open Meetings. All meetings of Connectional Commissions shall be open meetings. The only exception to this rule is if the committee is dealing with personnel, legal, or contractual issues and a majority of the body votes to close the meeting only for the portion of time that deals with those specific issues. The vote shall be taken in public session and recorded in the minutes. Closed sessions should be used as seldom as possible.

PETITION 1273

¶802

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Rewrite of ¶802

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The existing language of ¶802 is superfluous. This petition aims for greater clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶802

~~CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. Working on behalf of local congregations and conferences, the connectional commissions of the Church provide for essential functions in an efficient, fiscally responsible, and cooperative manner, conducive to the needs of our collective ministry. To this end, they exist to serve the Church, whether embodied in resourcing its members, clergy, local churches, missions, or conferences; or embodied in the exercising of authority on behalf of the Church and its constituent bodies. At all times the connectional commissions exist to serve and facilitate the mission and ministry of the Church, which in turn exists to serve the Lord.~~

CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. Connectional commissions provide essential functions of the church in an efficient, fiscally responsible, transparent, and cooperative manner. Thereby, they serve the Lord.

PETITION 1101

¶802.3

Clarify the Nomenclature of the Connectional Commissions

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The current paragraph contains language which is either antiquated or inconsistent in use throughout the subparagraph. A rewrite provides greater clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶802.3

~~3. The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization, and Disaster Response Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.~~

3. The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Kingdom Advancement Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and Conferences Commission.

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Rewrite of ¶802.3

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This petition removes three Commissions and slightly adjusts another (we have no pension program, we have a retirement program) in ¶802.3. We believe the functions of the eliminated Commissions are either completed, do not apply globally, or are best handled at a more local level.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶802.3

~~3. The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization, and Disaster Response Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.~~

The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Finance, Administration, Retirement, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission; Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.

PETITION 1452

¶802.3

Commission Name Change: Kingdom Advancement Commission

Petitioner: Kingdom Advancement Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Following the 2024 General Conference, the Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Mission Mobilization, and Disaster Response Commission received multiple requests from key GMC constituencies, including members of the Assembly of Bishops and Connectional Council, to change the name of the commission to a shorter, compelling name. The name "Kingdom Advancement Commission" was approved for provisional use by the Connectional Council in February 2025 pending final approval by the 2026 General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶802.3

¶ 802. CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

3. ~~The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization, and Disaster Response Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.~~

Replace with:

3. The following connectional commissions are established within the Global Methodist Church: Kingdom Advancement Commission; Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry Commission; Ministry and Higher Education Commission; Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission; General Conference Commission, Ecumenical Relationships Commission; and the Conferences Commission.

PETITION 1102

¶802.7

Remove Duplicative Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Everything contained in ¶ 802.7 is also included in ¶ 805.1. I recommend deletion here.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶802.7

~~7. All general church staff shall be employed by the Connectional Council and assigned to support and resource the various commissions as needed by the connectional operations officer. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits it has set.~~

PETITION 1194

¶803

Simplify Nomination & Election Process for All Commissions, Councils, and Committees

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The nomination and election process for all Commissions, Councils, and Boards should be the same. At this time, the 7 Commissions and the Connectional Council have one process, while the Connectional Council on Appeals and Global Episcopacy Committee have different processes. This is intended to supersede the nomination and election process in ¶ 920 & ¶ 605.1, so we are also recommending deletion of the relevant portions of those paragraphs.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803.1, ¶803.3, ¶803.4, ¶920.5, & ¶605.1, DELETES ¶803.2, AND ADDS NEW ¶803.2

¶ 803. ~~MEMBERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS.~~ NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS FOR CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS, COUNCILS, AND COMMITTEES.

Except as provided otherwise in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, the members of all connectional commissions, councils, and committees shall be elected by the General Conference.

1. ~~At the 2024 convening General Conference, persons shall be nominated for each of the connectional commissions in the manner set forth in the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together adopted at the convening General Conference and serve for two years or until their successors are elected. Persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the term limit specified in ¶ 803.2.~~

~~2. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, persons recommended by the annual conferences shall serve as the pool from which nominees are selected.~~ The term of service for all persons elected or appointed to serve on commissions, councils, and committees shall be six years, with members eligible to be reelected or reappointed once for a total of twelve years. Persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the above term limits. ~~Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the procedure for election shall be as follows:~~

2. The procedure for nominations and election shall be as follows:

a. ~~Each annual conference shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to sixteen persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for connectional commissions with at least half being lay. Each nominee shall be designated for one or two connectional commissions based on gifts, training, and experience.~~ Each annual conference delegation may nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to twenty persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for connectional commissions, councils, and committees. At least half of the nominees shall be lay. Each nominee shall provide consent to the nomination, then shall be designated by the delegation for one connectional commission, council or committee based on gifts, training, and experience. If less than twenty persons are nominated, the delegation may designate persons for up to two commissions, councils, or committees until the total number of designations equals 20, with at least half of the designations being for lay persons. Care shall be taken to include persons from a broad range of racial, ethnic, tribal, gender, economic, and age characteristics.

b. Persons eligible for nomination shall have been members of a local church or annual conference within the

Global Methodist Church (or its predecessor) for a period of at least two years at the time of their nomination.

c. The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from the annual conference delegations, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the connectional commissions, councils, and committees of the church for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conferences who do not appear on the slate may be nominated from the floor. ~~The slate for each connectional commission shall include the number of members specified by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, as well as the person the committee nominates to serve as the connectional commission chair.~~ The slate for each connectional commission, council, and committee shall include the number of members specified by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline. The committee shall also nominate a person to be the chair of each commission, council, and committee, unless the Book of Doctrines and Discipline specifies a different process for naming chairs.

3. ~~The General Conference shall elect two-thirds of the members of each connectional commission. The remaining one-third of the members of each connectional commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.~~ The General Conference shall elect the specified number of members for each commission, council, and committee by simple majority without discussion or debate. The remaining members of each connectional commission, council, and committee shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant connectional commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the connectional commission's work. Unless otherwise specified, excluding any bishop serving on a connectional commission and the chair, the membership of each connectional commission shall be at least one-half lay.

4. ~~With the exception of bishops, no person may serve simultaneously on more than one connectional commission (not including the Connectional Council).~~ With the exception of bishops, no person may serve simultaneously on more than one connectional commission, council, or committee. Members of connectional commissions, councils, and committees, including the chair, shall serve without remuneration. Travel and meeting expenses shall be paid for connectional commission, council, and committee members by each connectional commission, council, and committee out of its budget.

¶ 920.5

~~5. *Nominations*. In advance of the General Conference, the administrative Nominations Committee shall nominate by majority vote a total of 21 persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories. On the first day of the General Conference, nominations of clergy or laity may be made from the floor. Name, annual conference membership and biographical information not to exceed 100 words shall be published for review by delegates to the General Conference at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election. Election shall occur without discussion or debate, by ballot and majority vote.~~

¶ 605.1

~~1. The Connectional Council shall receive nominations of persons to serve on the Global Episcopacy Committee and produce a slate of six lay and six clergy nominees diverse with respect to geography, ethnicity, and gender which shall be released publicly thirty days before *2024 Book of Doctrines and Discipline* 83 the General Conference. Delegates to the General Conference may nominate additional persons from the floor. All nominees, with their consent, shall be included in a balloting process to elect six lay and six clergy members. All delegates shall be~~

~~empowered to vote for both lay and clergy nominees. A minimum of sixty percent support plus one vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots shall be required for election. No one may serve more than two consecutive six-year terms.~~ Following the conclusion of the election of members by General Conference, the Connectional Council may add two additional clergy members and two additional lay members to the Global Episcopacy C

PETITION 1072

¶803.1

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 800s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803.1

~~At the 2024 convening General Conference, persons shall be nominated for each of the connectional commissions in the manner set forth in the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together adopted at the convening General Conference and serve for two years or until their successors are elected.~~ Persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the term limit specified in ¶ 803.2.

Consistency of Nominations for Connectional Commissions and Connectional Council (1 of 3)

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline (BDD) is not clear and consistent in describing the source of nominations for service on Connectional Commissions, Councils and the Global Episcopacy Committee. This petition (along with two other accompanying petitions) provides uniform language and makes clear that nominations come from the duly elected annual conference delegations to General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803.2.a AND¶803.2.c

¶ 803. MEMBERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

Except as provided otherwise in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, the members of connectional commissions shall be elected by the General Conference.

...

2. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, persons recommended by the annual conferences shall serve as the pool from which nominees are selected. The term of service shall be six years, with members eligible to be reelected once for a total of twelve years. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the procedure for election shall be as follows:

~~Each annual conference shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to sixteen persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for connectional commissions, with at least half being lay.~~ Each duly elected annual conference delegation shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to sixteen persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for the connectional commissions and/or the Connectional Council, with at least half being lay. Each nominee shall be designated for one or two connectional commissions based on gifts, training, and experience. Care shall be taken to include persons from a broad range of racial, ethnic, tribal, gender, economic, and age characteristics.

Persons eligible for nomination shall have been members of a local church or annual conference within the Global Methodist Church (or its predecessor) for a period of two years at the time of their nomination.

~~The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from the annual conferences, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the connectional commissions of the church for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conferences who do not appear on the slate may be nominated from the floor.~~ The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from annual conference delegations, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the connectional commissions and Connectional Council of the church for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conference delegations who do not appear on the slate may be renominated by their delegation as specified in the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together. The slate for each connectional commission shall include the number of members specified by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, as well as the person the committee nominates to serve as the connectional commission chair.

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PETITION 1153

¶803.2

Administrative Nominations Committee Restriction

Petitioner: Dennis Rader

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Ocean View Mariners Bethel (US: Northeast)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This provision strengthens the integrity, fairness, and credibility of the nominations process for connectional commissions. Because the Administrative Nominations Committee and its Advisory Team review candidates and shape leadership slates, prohibiting members from nominating themselves or being included on slates they help develop prevents real or perceived conflicts of interest. In the past, members have nominated themselves or appeared on their own committee's slate, raising concerns about preferential access. This restriction affirms that discernment of leaders serves the Church rather than personal advancement while preserving the General Conference's authority to nominate qualified committee members from the floor.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803.2 ADDING THE FOLLOWING

Members of the Administrative Nominations Committee or the Advisory Team shall not nominate themselves, nor be nominated by the committee, to serve on any connectional commission during the term in which they serve on or with the Administrative Nominations Committee; however, members and advisors of the Administrative Nominations Committee shall remain eligible to be nominated from the floor of the General Conference.

PETITION 1143

¶803.3

Membership of General Commissions

Petitioner: Samuel Padgett

Organization: Olney (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

While striving to have equal clergy and lay representation is a lofty goal, it often means that some of the most skilled individuals for the task are not able to serve because the threshold for lay or clergy has already been met. Therefore since we are seeking to keep to a manageable size, by requiring a minimum of one third of each, lay and clergy, it allows us to have the best possible people on these commissions.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803.3

3. ~~The General Conference shall elect by simple majority two-thirds of the members of each connectional commission. The remaining one-third of the members of each connectional commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant connectional commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the connectional commission's work. Unless otherwise specified, excluding any bishop serving on a connectional commission and the chair, the membership of each connectional commission shall be at least one-half lay.~~

The General Conference shall elect by simple majority two-thirds of the members of each connectional commission. The remaining one-third of the members of each connectional commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant connectional commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the connectional commission's work. Unless otherwise specified, excluding any bishop serving on a connectional commission and the chair, the membership of each connectional commission shall strive to have an equal number of clergy and lay members, while not having less than one third clergy and one third laity.

PETITION 1073

¶804.1

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 800s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: Global Methodist Church

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804.1

Commission Chair. The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶803.2b. ~~Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for reelection following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, t~~ The chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c. Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.

PETITION 1103

¶804.1

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of Commission Chairs

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The current paragraph contains antiquated language. Additionally, a rewrite of the first two sentences provides greater clarity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶804.1

1. *Commission Chair.* ~~The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be the presiding officer of each connectional commission. subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 803.2b. Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for reelection following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c. Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.~~

1. *Commission Chair.* The chair of each connectional commission may be lay or clergy and shall be the presiding officer of their connectional commission. The chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c. Each chair shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.

PETITION 1134

¶804.1

Election of Commission Officers

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This change places officer election and replacement in the hands of leaders with the most expertise in each commission's area. This will also be a more expedient process.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804.1 AND DELETES ¶804.2

¶ 804. LEADERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS. 1. *Commission Chair* — The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 803.2b. Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for re-election following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, each commission shall elect officers from its members (chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary). ~~the chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c.~~ Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years. Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. In the event of an officer vacancy, each commission shall elect a replacement officer from its members.

~~2.*Officers* — The connectional commission shall elect a secretary and may elect other officers to facilitate its work.~~

PETITION 1157

¶804.1

Leadership of Connectional Commissions

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

At present, chairs of connectional commissions are elected by General Conference. This is not true for Connectional Council, Council on Appeals, Assembly of Bishops, or the Global Episcopacy Committee, as these bodies choose leadership from within its members. Additionally, the current system of chairs being proposed by the nominations committee leaves open the question of what happens when the proposed chair is not elected by General Conference. These changes allow connectional commissions the ability to choose leadership from within its elected members while maintaining oversight by the Connectional Council.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804.1 AND ¶803.2.c

¶ 804. LEADERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

1. Commission Chair — The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 803.2b. ~~Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for re-election following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c. Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years.~~ Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of six years. ~~Time served as a connectional commission member shall count toward the total term limit for the chair.~~ Beginning with the 2032 General Conference, each connectional commission shall nominate, from within its members, a chair and such other officers as may be needed. The leadership nominations shall come before the Connectional Council for election. Any vacancy in the chair position shall be filled by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.

¶ 803. MEMBERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

...

2. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, persons recommended by the annual conferences shall serve as the pool from which nominees are selected. The term of service shall be six years, with members eligible to be reelected once for a total of twelve years. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, the procedure for election shall be as follows:

...

c. The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from the annual conferences, propose a diverse slate of individuals to serve on the connectional commissions of the church for election by the General Conference, provided that individuals nominated by annual conferences who do not appear on the slate may be nominated from the floor. ~~The slate for each connectional commission shall include~~

~~the number of members specified by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, as well as the person the committee nominates to serve as the connectional commission chair.~~ The slate for each connectional commission and the Connectional Council shall include the number of members specified by the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1123

¶804.2

Election of Commission Officers

Petitioner: Beth Ann Cook

Organization: Poseyville St Pauls UMC (US: Great Lakes)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This change places officer election and replacement in the hands of leaders with the most expertise in each commission's area. This will also be a more expedient process.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804.1

¶ 804 LEADERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS 1.*Commission Chair* —The presiding officer of each connectional commission shall be the chair of the connectional commission. The chair may be lay or clergy and shall be subject to the membership requirement of ¶ 803.2b. Following the 2024 convening General Conference, the Connectional Council shall elect the chair for each connectional commission from the persons elected to each connectional commission. Each chair elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for a term of two years or until their successor has been elected and shall be eligible for re-election following the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference,each commission shall elect officers from its members (chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary).~~the chair of each connectional commission shall be elected as provided in ¶803.2c~~. Each chair elected at the 2026 General Conference and thereafter shall serve for a term of six years, with eligibility to be reelected once for a second term of six years. In the event of an officer vacancy, each commission shall elect a replacement officer from its members.

PETITION 1282

¶804.4

Adding Conference Superintendent to Connectional Commissions

Petitioner: Jay Therrell

Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

To allow for better coordination, communication, and implementation of decisions, all of the conference superintendents around the globe unanimously offer this petition.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶804 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶804.4 THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶803 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶803.4

¶ 804. LEADERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

4. *Role of Conference Superintendents.* Each connectional commission will have at least one conference superintendent as a member, selected by the Assembly of Bishops, serving with voice and vote to help maintain communication and coordination among the annual conferences. In the event the conference superintendent cannot serve for any reason, the Assembly of Bishops will nominate another conference superintendent to fill the vacancy.

¶803. MEMBERSHIP OF CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

4. The General Conference shall elect by simple majority two-thirds of the members of each connectional commission. The remaining one-third of the members of each connectional commission shall be elected by the Connectional Council upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission. Persons interested in serving may apply to the relevant connectional commission. Members elected by the Connectional Council are for the purpose of securing greater inclusiveness, experience, or special skills needed for the connectional commission's work. Unless otherwise specified, excluding any bishop or conference superintendent serving on a connectional commission and the chair, the membership of each connectional commission shall be at least one-half lay.

PETITION 1458

¶805.1

Operational Excellence: Granting Commissions Direct Personnel Responsibility and Authority

Petitioner: James Wesley Griffin Jr

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Center Point GMC (US: North Georgia)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Connectional commissions are granted authority to order the "work and business" in their distinct ministry areas. Currently, the BOD assigns hiring, supervision, and evaluation of commission staff to the Connectional Operations Officer, limiting the ability of commissions to exercise direct leadership over their own personnel. Effective organizational leadership requires clear lines of accountability between those responsible for a mission and those executing it. This petition requests that Commissions be granted both the responsibility and authority to pursue operational excellence for the sake of fulfilling our mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ and spreading scriptural holiness across the globe."

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶805.1

¶ 805. OPERATIONS. Except as provided herein, each connectional commission shall have the authority to structure its own work and business.

1. Staff. Each connectional commission may request such staff as is required for the pursuit of its mission. All staff positions must be approved by the Connectional Council, subject to the budget limits it sets. ~~Except for the connectional operations officer, all staff are hired, assigned, and evaluated by the connectional operations officer (¶ 815) and serve as at-will employees.~~

All staff serving a connectional commission shall be hired, supervised, and evaluated by that commission or its designated leadership, in alignment with policies and procedures established by the Connectional Council. Such staff shall serve as at-will employees of the Global Methodist Church. The Connectional Operations Officer shall provide administrative support and ensure compliance with denominational policies but shall not exercise direct supervisory or evaluative authority over commission staff.

PETITION 1286

¶805.2

Need for Appeals to Rule

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Upper Midwest

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

We cannot simply assume that the entire church will always agree whether an outside group is "consistent with the GMC." There needs to be a mechanism to appeal these relationships.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶805.2

2. Connectional commissions may contract with organizations, missions, and denominational entities within the denomination, other ecclesiastical bodies, or parachurch organizations and ministries for the purpose of fulfilling their mission or coordinating on a particular project, provided that no contract will be made with an organization whose mission and/or theological position is inconsistent with those of the connectional commission or of the Global Methodist Church. Contracts that have financial implications beyond the commission's budget must be approved in advance by the Connectional Council. Appeals as to whether such a group is inconsistent with the Global Methodist Church shall be made to the Connectional Council.

PETITION 1470

¶805.5

The Celebration of Holy Marriage

Petitioner: Stewart Kouba

Organization: Atlanta (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The TBDD has not defined marriage, thus a description of Biblical marriage is helpful and clear. The words "understood to be" are ambiguous, apart from a previous definition of marriage. The addition of the word "monogamous" echoes qualifications of overseers and deacons presented in 1 Timothy 3.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶805.5

5. *Nondiscrimination*. The Global Methodist Church is committed to open and fair processes in its commissions and institutions, including in the hiring, retention, compensation, promotion, and retirement of staff. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, disability, current or potential pregnancy, or chronic or potentially terminal illnesses, provided that the individual is able to adequately discharge the duties assigned to her or him. ~~As a part of our witness, individuals employed by the church shall subscribe to the doctrinal and moral standards of the Global Methodist Church and give evidence of the same in their life and ministry, including faithfulness in marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman, or chastity in singleness.~~ As a part of our witness, individuals employed by the church shall subscribe to the doctrinal and moral standards of the Global Methodist Church and give evidence of the same in their life and ministry, including faithfulness in a monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, or chastity in singleness.

PETITION 1039

¶807.1

Open Meetings on Connectional Council

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

In general, open meetings foster transparency and trust. In general, closed meetings foster suspicion and distrust. ¶437.3 establishes an 'open meeting' principle for local church bodies, but the principle being applied to the General Church Commissions and Connectional Council was overlooked.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW SUBPARAGRAPH TO ¶807.1.a

Propose adding as ¶ 807.1.a

a. *Open Meetings and Minutes.* All meetings of the Connectional Council shall be open meetings and minutes shall be regularly published of all non-confidential discussions. The only exception to this rule is if the committee is dealing with personnel, legal, or contractual issues and a majority of the body votes to close the meeting only for the portion of time that deals with those specific confidential issues. The vote to temporarily close the meeting shall be taken in public session and recorded in the minutes. Closed sessions should be used as seldom as possible.

PETITION 1050

¶807.2

Connectional Commissions Represented on Connectional Council

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Presently, only four (4) of the connectional commissions have representation on the Connectional Council. The Connectional Council desires presence and input from one (1) additional commission. This change adds representation from the Conferences Commission.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.2

¶ 807. CONNECTIONAL COUNCIL

2.a. ~~Each connectional commission identified in ¶¶ 808-811 shall elect one clergy, who is not a bishop, and one layperson, to represent the commission on the Connectional Council.~~ Each connectional commission identified in ¶¶ 808-811 and ¶814 shall elect one clergy, who is not a bishop, and one layperson, to serve on the Connectional Council. Members shall be elected by each commission at the first commission meeting following the General Conference and shall serve until their successors are elected or their membership on the commission ceases, whichever comes first. In case of a vacancy, a commission shall elect a replacement member.

PETITION 1074

¶807.2

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 800s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.2.c

c. The General Conference shall elect four clergy and four laity, from persons nominated ~~in accordance with the Plan of Organization and Covenant of Our Life Together adopted by the 2024 convening General Conference, and beginning with the 2026 General Conference~~ as specified in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline (¶ 803). ~~Those elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve a two-year term or until their successors are elected.~~ ~~Beginning in 2026, t~~Those elected shall serve a six-year term or until their successors are elected at the next General Conference. In case of a vacancy, the Connectional Council shall elect a replacement.

PETITION 1053

¶807.4

Filling Vacancies on the Connectional Council on Appeals and the Global Episcopacy Committee

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There is no current guidance in the BDD for filling vacant alternate positions on the Connectional Council of Appeals. There is also incomplete guidance on filling vacant positions on the Global Episcopacy Committee. These changes provide a mechanism by which the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council can fill positions becoming vacant between General Conferences.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.4.l, ¶920.2, & ¶605.3, AND ADDS NEW SUBPARAGRAPH TO ¶605

¶ 807. CONNECTIONAL COUNCIL

4. The Connectional Council shall have the following specific authority and responsibilities:

l. ~~To fill vacancies among the members of a connectional commission that occur between General Conferences, upon nomination by the relevant connectional commission.~~ To fill vacancies among the members of a connectional commission, Global Episcopacy Committee, and alternates on the Connectional Council on Appeals that occur between General Conferences. Connectional commissions may nominate individuals to serve on its commission for consideration and election by the Connectional Council. The Global Episcopacy Committee may nominate individuals to serve on its committee for consideration and election by the Connectional Council. The Assembly of Bishops may nominate individuals to serve as alternates to the Connectional Council on Appeals for consideration and election by the Connectional Council.

¶ 920. MEMBERSHIP

2. *Alternates.* Clergy and laity shall be elected to serve as alternates in a number equal to the number to serve on the Connectional Council on Appeals during the ensuing six-year term. Alternates shall serve in their category at any session of the Council in the absence of a member of the Council in the order of their election. In the event a member of the Council cannot serve the balance of a term, the next elected alternate in the category impacted shall serve the balance of the term and such service shall not count against the maximum time of serving. In the event the pool of elected alternates should be reduced to three or fewer, the Assembly of Bishops may nominate individuals to serve as alternates on the Connectional Council on Appeals for consideration and election by the Connectional Council.

¶ 605. THE GLOBAL EPISCOPACY COMMITTEE.

3. If a member of the Global Episcopacy Committee is nominated to serve as a bishop of the Church, that member's service on the Global Episcopacy Committee shall terminate upon nomination to the episcopacy. ~~The remaining members of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall elect a clergy person to serve the remainder of that person's term.~~

New sub-paragraph under 605.

In the event of any vacancy, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall nominate replacements, clergy or lay as appropriate to maintain balance, for consideration and election by the Connectional Council.

PETITION 1066

¶807.4

Removal of 90 Percent Limitation for the General Church Budget

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Global Methodist Church is the fastest-growing Wesleyan denomination in the world, with ministry expanding across the globe. As it supports annual conferences, plants churches, and serves congregations in many contexts, faithful and flexible financial stewardship is essential. Connectional funding reflects the generosity of local churches given to advance the work of the global Church, not to build excessive reserves. A 90% budgetary ceiling limits resources entrusted for ministry. Full access to connectional funding ensures that every dollar given can serve the Church's mission faithfully and effectively.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.4.d

¶ 807. CONNECTIONAL COUNCIL

4. The Connectional Council shall have the following specific authority and responsibilities:

...

d. ~~To establish the general church budget annually in accordance with the priorities and directions established by the General Conference, provided that each annual budget shall not exceed 90% of the average of general church connectional funding received in the prior two years, except that the 2025 budget shall not exceed 90% of the total sum received in general church connectional funding in 2024.~~ To establish and approve the general church budget annually, upon consideration of the recommendations presented by the Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission (FAPBC), in accordance with the priorities and directions provided by the General Conference. ~~In establishing the general church budget, the Connectional Council shall be guided by the following financial values:~~ In establishing the general church budget, the Connectional Council and the FAPBC, in recommending same, shall be guided by the following financial values:

i. Accountability to ensure that the assets God has entrusted to us are responsibly managed.

ii. Transparency to create trust throughout the connection of the Global Methodist Church.

iii. Local church centric as the strategic base for optimizing the mission of the Church.

iv. Nimble and lean structure of connectional entities to ensure adaptability to the ministry needs of conferences and local churches.

v. Limited and sustainable policies so as not to restrict, but enable ministry to flourish.

PETITION 1075

¶807.4

Petition Deleting Outdated References in 800s Paragraphs

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This petition deletes unnecessary references to the 2024 convening General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.4.(d)

(d) To establish the general church budget annually in accordance with the priorities and directions established by the General Conference, provided that each annual budget shall not exceed 90 percent of the average of general church connectional funding received in the prior two years, ~~except that the 2025 budget shall not exceed 90 percent of the total sum received in general church connectional funding in 2024~~. In establishing the general church budget, the Connectional Council shall be guided by the following financial values:

PETITION 1121

¶807.4

Delete Connectional Council Role in Denominational Benefits

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The denomination needs to get out of the Benefits business because it is unable to govern benefits at the global level.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶807.4.(i)

~~i. To evaluate and authorize such changes in the pensions and benefits programs of the Global Methodist Church upon recommendation of the Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission.~~

PETITION 1122

¶807.4

Remove "Pension" from Denominational Benefits

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

"Pension" is inaccurate because our current retirement benefits program does not provide a true "pension". It would be better to simply state "benefits programs", because that would include retirement benefits along with everything else. This also limits the Connectional Council to only authorize benefits programs for general church employees.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶807.4.(i)

i. ~~To evaluate and authorize such changes in the pensions and benefits programs of for the Global Methodist Church upon recommendation of the Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission.~~

i. To evaluate and authorize such changes in the benefits programs and policies for general church employees upon recommendation of the Finance, Administration, and Benefits Commission.

PETITION 1270

¶807.4

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶807.4.i

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This language is not globally applicable and the function can be handled more locally.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶807.4.i

~~To evaluate and authorize such changes in the pensions and benefits programs of the Global Methodist Church upon recommendation of the Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission.~~

PETITION 1271

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶807.4. D. 4-5

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: MidTexas
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This language is superfluous and can be eliminated.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶807.4.d.4 AND ¶807.4.d.5

~~iv. Nimble and lean structure of connectional entities to ensure adaptability to the ministry needs of conferences and local churches. v. Limited and sustainable policies so as not to restrict, but enable ministry to flourish.~~

PETITION 1104

¶808

Clarifying the Role of the Kingdom Advancement Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This commission goes by the name of Kingdom Advancement. The BDD should reflect that: In 2., it is unclear which "strategic plan" the commission is to follow. This makes it clear that it is the strategic plan developed and passed by the Connectional Council per ¶ 807.4.b. The current language on Evangelists is much longer than the language on Missionaries. Deleting most of the details will match what is in the Missionary section. For disaster response, this would clarify that the role of Kingdom Advancement is to support annual conferences and local churches.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶808

¶ 808. KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT COMMISSION.

1. This commission shall consist initially of 14 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of 21 members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall fulfill the strategic plan developed and approved by the Connectional Council by offering resources to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in the following ministry areas:

a. *Evangelism*. Train and equip both individuals and congregations to lead others to know Christ and to foster spiritual renewal across the denomination~~,~~ by developing and recommending resources for evangelism~~,~~ and encouraging every person and church to engage in evangelism. The commission shall also recommend standards for the ministry and office of evangelist for both laity and clergy, and interpret and advocate for those serving in such appointments to bishops, annual conferences, and local congregations.

b. *Church Multiplication*. Identify and provide resources for church planting and multiplication in various cultural contexts, consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, and local churches to plan and strategize for planting and multiplying churches, identify, recruit, and train church planters, and encourage the planting and multiplication of churches.

c. *Missional Mobilization*. Deepen biblical understanding and passion in local churches for mission outreach; promote active mission engagement, multiplying disciples across linguistic, national, and geographic boundaries globally; provide resources and training to equip local churches for effective mission service~~,~~ and to develop missionally-healthy partnerships; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences with vetted and approved Global Methodist missional partners; develop commissioning standards for the ministry and office of missionary, equipping annual conferences for the recruiting, training, and deploying of GM Church missionaries; consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, churches and missional partners to develop and coordinate strategic mission mobilization; foster holistic mission strategies and gospel-centered community development, addressing both spiritual and physical needs.

d. *Disaster Response*. Collaborate with annual conferences in the development of disaster response, relief, and recovery ministries in the annual conferences; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences with vetted and approved Global Methodist disaster response partners who can

train, credential, resource, and equip churches and volunteers to respond to communities affected by disaster; collaborate in deployment of response services when invited by the annual conference, always seeking to empower local churches and volunteers to lead response activities for their communities, aided by the support of the annual conference, extended GMC connection, and approved disaster response partners.

e. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned by the Connectional Council related to Evangelism, Church Multiplication, Missional Mobilization and Disaster Response.

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PETITION 1242

¶808.2

Continued Commitment to Unreached People Groups

Petitioner: John Lomperis

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Adds clause to ensure Unreached People Groups (UPGs) remain an important, standing priority in Global Methodist missions. Per many leading missions organizations, more than 3 billion people are currently part of ethnic people groups with no critical mass of born-again believers and with minimal to no access to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should view this as unacceptable. Where a person is born should not limit their access to the Gospel. Yet studies have shown that only very tiny minorities of Christian missions expenditures have been devoted to UPGs. Since Christ died for people of every tribe and tongue, us fully commit ourselves to the Great Commission of taking the Gospel to ALL nations!

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶808.2.c

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in the following ministry areas:

...

c. *Missional Mobilization*. Deepen biblical understanding and passion in local churches for mission outreach; promote active mission engagement, multiplying disciples across linguistic, national, and geographic boundaries globally; provide resources and training to equip local churches for effective mission service, and to develop missionally-healthy partnerships; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences with vetted and approved Global Methodist missional ministries and strategic partners; develop commissioning standards for the ministry and office of missionary, equipping annual conferences for the recruiting, training, and deploying of GM Church missionaries; consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, churches and missional partners to develop and coordinate strategic mission mobilization; foster holistic mission strategies and gospel-centered community development, addressing both spiritual and physical needs<u>; spread awareness about the needs of and promote missions among unreached people groups</u>.

...

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of Part of ¶808.2c and All of ¶808.2d

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The functions eliminated above are best performed at more local levels of the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶808.2.c AND DELETES ¶808.2.d

~~c. Missional Mobilization. Deepen biblical understanding and passion in local churches for mission outreach; promote active mission engagement, multiplying disciples across linguistic, national, and geographic boundaries globally; provide resources and training to equip local churches for effective mission service, and to develop missionally-healthy partnerships; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences with vetted and approved Global Methodist missional ministries and strategic partners; develop commissioning standards for the ministry and office of missionary, equipping annual conferences for the recruiting, training, and deploying of GM Church missionaries; consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, churches and missional partners to develop and coordinate strategic mission mobilization; foster holistic mission strategies and gospel-centered community development, addressing both spiritual and physical needs. d. Disaster Response. Coordinate the development of disaster response, relief, and recovery ministries in the annual conferences; train, credential, resource, and equip churches and volunteers to respond to communities affected by disaster; collaborate in deployment of response services, empowering local churches and volunteers to lead response activities for their communities, aided by the support of the annual conference and extended GMC connection.~~

c. Missional Mobilization. Deepen biblical understanding and passion in local churches for mission outreach; promote active mission engagement, multiplying disciples across linguistic, national, and geographic boundaries globally; provide resources and training to equip local churches for effective mission service, and to develop missionally-healthy partnerships; foster connection and partnerships between local churches, districts, and annual conferences.

PETITION 1269

¶808.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶808.2.A.1-5 and ¶808.2.b

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The functions in these sections are best performed at more local levels of the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶¶808.2.a.1-5 AND ¶808.2.b

~~(1) establish standards for the ministry and office of evangelist and the certification of those called to serve as approved evangelists in the Church, (2) recommend structures and polices to ensure that those who are appointed to evangelistic ministries function with transparency and accountability, and that they receive professional and pastoral support, (3) interpret and advocate for those serving such appointments to bishops, annual conferences, and local congregations, (4) work to identify quality continuing education opportunities for those appointed as evangelists, and (5) liaise with other Christian faith groups, evangelistic organizations, colleges, theological seminaries and conferences to share the vision and opportunities for evangelists.~~

~~b. Church Multiplication. Identify and provide resources for church planting and multiplication in various cultural contexts, consult with bishops, annual conference leaders, and local churches to plan and strategize for planting and multiplying churches, identify, recruit, and train church planters, and encourage the planting and multiplication of churches.~~

New Commission: GMC Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid Ministry Commission

Petitioner: Ronald Toole
Organization: Destin (US: Alabama Emerald Coast)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid, currently situated within Kingdom Advancement (whose primary purposes include evangelism, discipleship, and church multiplication), requires a more direct and uniquely focused leadership dedicated to the complex and dynamic needs of these areas as it relates to both implementation and supporting the needs of the local church and annual conferences as they engage in these areas of ministry. While Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Aid align with the broader Kingdom Advancement objectives and do, at times, create opportunities for sharing the Gospel and supporting church planting efforts, these unique ministries share the Gospel through tangible acts of service in response to significant human need.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶808 AND ADDS NEW ¶809

¶808. ~~EVANGELISM, CHURCH MULTIPLICATION, MISSIONAL MOBILIZATION, AND DISASTER RESPONSE COMMISSION.~~ EVANGELISM, CHURCH MULTIPLICATION, AND MISSIONAL MOBILIZATION COMMISSION.

The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in the following ministry areas:

~~Disaster Response. Coordinate the development of disaster response, relief, and recovery ministries in the annual conferences; train, credential, resource, and equip churches and volunteers to respond to communities affected by disaster; and collaborate in deployment of response services, empowering local churches and volunteers to lead response activities for their communities, aided by the support of the annual conference and extended Global Methodist Church connection.~~

¶809. GLOBAL METHODIST CHURCH DISASTER RESPONSE AND HUMANITARIAN AID MINISTRY COMMISSION.

This commission shall provide administrative support and guidance to the local church and annual conferences comprised of the Annual Conference Disaster Relief Coordinator and/ or Annual Conference Disaster Relief Team Committee Chair from each annual conference. The commission shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary to serve for the term of six years or for one General Conference term and members shall serve no more than two terms or as otherwise guided by the BODD.

Coordinate the development and implementation of disaster preparedness, response, relief, recovery, and humanitarian aid ministries of the Global Methodist Church through the local church and the annual conferences. Provide training, credentialing, resourcing, and equipping churches and volunteers to serve communities impacted by disasters and humanitarian crisis. Facilitate the collaborative deployment of response services, empowering local churches and volunteers to lead response efforts within their communities, supported by annual conferences through a unified Global Methodist Church Disaster Response and Humanitarian Aid Ministry commission. carry out such additional responsibilities related to disaster response and humanitarian aid as may be assigned by the Connectional Council.

Establish a legal non-profit status for the purposes of meeting requirements to function as a disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization in the local, state, national, and intenational VOADs (Volunteer Organizations Active

in Disasters) and to align with government requirements as necessary and to qualify for grants specific to disaster relief and humanitarian aid for the purposes of funding the ongoing work of commission around the global connection.

Funding and financial support for this ministry shall be provided through voluntary donations and contributions from local churches, annual conferences, private donors and private-sector supporting organizations as well as government grants where accessible.

PETITION 1267

¶809

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶809

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The functions in ¶809 are vague and/or are best performed at more local levels of the GMC and through the Assembly of Bishops.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶809 IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1437

¶809

Change Name to Discipleship, Doctrine, and Ethics Commission

Petitioner: Discipleship and Doctrine Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

"Justice" is a topic that falls under the larger heading of Christian ethics, and as a church we will have an abundance of complex ethical matters and moral confusion with which to deal in the years ahead. If the church does not speak to the concerns which fall under the heading of "Christian ethics,", we will have failed in our duty to cultivate ethically responsible disciples. Further, it is important for the church to address not simply how we should behave in the work of ministry, but in every aspect of our lives. This Commission should provide resources and assist the Assembly of Bishops in order to help guide Global Methodists into all righteousness.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶809 TITLE AND REPLACES ¶809.2.c

~~¶ 809. DISCIPLESHIP, DOCTRINE, AND JUST MINISTRY COMMISSION.~~

¶ 809. DISCIPLESHIP, DOCTRINE, AND ETHICS COMMISSION.

1. This commission shall consist initially of fourteen members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of twenty-one members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to the commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:

a. Discipleship. Encourage and resource the continuing spiritual growth of individuals at all levels of the church through such discipleship programs as classes, church through such discipleship programs as classes, bands, and other small groups; through the training of leaders; and through identifying and developing liturgies and orders of worship for use by both local congregations and the general church with General Conference approval, emphasizing racial, tribal, gender, and language equity throughout.

b. Doctrine. Increase understanding of the importance of our doctrine through teaching and preaching ministries and the use of liturgical resources that are consistent with our understandings of the faith, study and propose any revisions in our doctrinal statements, and give guidance to ecumenical engagement with other Christian denominations.

c. Ethics~~.~~ Enable both individuals and congregations to live righteously "in ways consistent with our Social Witness and commitments to the sacred worth and equality of all individuals. The work of this commission will include the development of teaching, training materials, and policies~~,~~ expressing a biblical vision of righteousness. (see ¶ 805.4). The commission will resource annual conferences and local churches to engage with the church's Social Witness rooted in Scripture and in the ethical teachings of the historic and universal church.

d. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Discipleship, Doctrine, and Just Ministry.

25 *Rename Commission title in all other sections where it is listed in BDD.*

PETITION 1105

¶810

Clarifying the Role of Ministry and Higher Education Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There are a few areas dealing with the Committee on Approval that are not aligned with the requirements in 507.2

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶810.2.a AND ¶810.3.b.(2)

2.a. *Ministry Credentials*. Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference; certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders; develop curricula for ministry training courses; resource annual conference boards of ministry; ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; and approve ~~seminaries as recommended educational institutions~~ schools and programs for ordination which meet the criteria in 507.2.

3.b.(2) Ensuring schools are approved~~al~~ by the Association of Theological Schools and/or the Association of Biblical Higher Education in North America or an approved equivalent accrediting body elsewhere whenever applicable.

PETITION 1129

¶810

Ministry and Higher Education Commission

Petitioner: Ministry and Higher Education
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The revision integrates global theological education within the Commission's scope, enhances clarity and consistency for worldwide implementation, and clearly defines roles and accountability among the Commission, approval committee, and advisory groups. It standardizes terminology related to accreditation, curriculum, and pathways for lay and clergy training, aligns ministerial credentials with theological education, and consolidates advisory structures like the Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC). Additionally, it clarifies institutional approval, review procedures, and global accreditation standards.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶810 & ALL SUBPARAGRAPHS, AND ADDS ¶810.4 & ¶810.5

¶810. MINISTRY AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION.

1. This commission shall consist initially of fourteen members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. To prevent conflict of interest, no executive-level or full-time employee or trustee of an institution of theological higher education shall serve on the Commission. The chair of the Committee on Approval shall serve as a member of the Commission, either elected by the General Conference or added by the elected members. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of twenty-one members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. ~~The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:~~

2. The commission shall serve local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in these ministry areas:

a. *Ministry Credentials.* ~~Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference; certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders; develop curricula for ministry training courses; resource annual conference boards of ministry; ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; and approve seminaries as recommended educational institutions.~~

Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference; certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders; approve ministry training courses; resource annual conference boards of ministry; recommend adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; and approve seminaries and theological educational institutions.

b. *Higher Education.* ~~Help unite "knowledge and vital piety" by encouraging Christian perspectives within institutions of higher education that are related to the church, provide a network of such institutions, and assist in the founding, growth, and vitality of Christian colleges and seminaries with a Wesleyan theological perspective across the world, particularly in underserved regions.~~

Help unite "knowledge and vital piety" by recognizing that a call to ministry is also a call to live into the call to higher education. This unification encourages Christian perspectives within institutions of higher education that are related to the church, provides a network of such institutions, and assists in the founding, growth, and vitality

of Christian colleges and seminaries with a Wesleyan theological perspective across the world, particularly in underserved regions.

c. *Certified Lay Ministry.* Establish standards and guidelines for the certification of annual conference lay ministry programs as described in ¶405.

~~c.~~ d. *Ministry Endorsement.* ~~Establish and refine criteria and qualifications for various forms of non-parish ministry, such as chaplaincy; evaluate and approve training programs that meet the criteria and qualifications; examine and credential persons for various forms of non-parish ministry; and support persons engaging in non-parish ministry.~~

Review and approve criteria and qualifications for various forms of non-parish ministry, such as chaplaincy; evaluate and approve training programs that meet these criteria and qualifications; examine and credential persons for these ministries; and support persons engaged in non-parish ministry.

e. *Ministerial Training Fund.* Establish standards and guidelines for the allocation and distribution of funds as described in ¶511.

~~d~~f. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Ministry and Higher Education.

3. *Committee on Approval.* The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall appoint a Committee on Approval, which will recommend to the commission approval of institutions of higher education for ordination candidates in the Global Methodist Church. ~~Approval shall apply to both degree and nondegree/certificate programs and be renewed following every regular session of the General Conference.~~ Approval shall apply to degree, nondegree, and certificate programs (as defined in ¶507.2.c.) and be renewed following every regular session of the General Conference.No approved school shall go up to seven years without a review. The Ministry and Higher Education Commission shall make the final decision on approval based upon the committee's recommendations. Schools may be invited to apply for approval or recommended for approval by a board of ministry. Schools seeking approval will be evaluated in accordance with the guidelines and standards recommended by the Committee on Approval and approved by the Commission.

a. The Committee on Approval shall consist of one bishop and up to twenty other people, consisting of elders, deacons, and laity, who shall be members of the Global Methodist Church. ~~The committee will include people from diverse international contexts and a diversity of academic institutions.~~ The committee will include people from diverse international contexts who have been trained at a diversity of academic institutions. To prevent conflict of interest, no employee or trustee of an institution of theological higher education shall serve on the Committee on Approval.

b. The work of the Committee on Approval shall involve: (a) ~~Developing and refining an evaluation process.~~ Developing and refining an evaluation process that recognizes a global standard for clergy theological education, applying to the educational pathways for clergy credentialing as described in ¶507.2.c: degree, certificate/course of study programs, and GMC Schools of Ministry. (b) ~~Ensuring approval by the Association of Theological Schools and/or the Association of Biblical Higher Education in North America or an approved equivalent accrediting body elsewhere whenever applicable.~~ Ensuring approval by recognized accrediting agencies, given the institution's locale. (c) Ensuring that schools produce candidates for the Global Methodist Church who are capable of effective ministry and profess faith consistent with our Doctrinal Standards. (d) Addressing any areas of concern with schools following an evaluation. (e) ~~Developing a report to the Ministry and Higher Education Commission with a~~

~~recommendation of approval, approval with areas of concern, or delisting.~~ Developing a report to the Ministry and Higher Education Commission with a recommendation of approval, provisional approval, or delisting. (f) Determining whether courses at a given institution meet the requirements listed in ¶507. The Committee will recommend competencies and courses for ministerial training, and establish standards for and supervise approved degree, certificate/courses of study in conjunction with the annual conference boards of ministry. These standards shall be maintained on the Global Methodist website annually.

c. ~~The Committee on Approval may meet as necessary upon the request of the bishop serving on the committee.~~ The Committee on Approval may meet as necessary upon the request of the chair or bishop serving on the committee. ~~It will consider any requests or recommendations for schools who wish to be approved for education or ordination candidates in the Global Methodist Church. It may meet to address areas of concern that arise regarding any approved school.~~ It will consider any requests or recommendations for schools seeking approval for education or ordination of candidates in the Global Methodist Church. It may meet to address concerns that arise regarding any approved school. It may make recommendations to the Ministry and Higher Education Commission at any time.

~~d. The CEO (president or dean) of each approved institution for theological education shall serve on an advisory committee to the Committee on Approval. The CEO may appoint a proxy to serve in his or her stead. The advisory committee shall meet biannually to discuss challenges, opportunities, and concerns with one another and with the members of the Committee on Approval.~~

4. Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC). The CEO (president or dean) of each fully-approved theological education institution shall serve on an advisory committee to the Commission and the Committee on Approval. The CEO may appoint a proxy to serve in his or her stead. The advisory committee shall meet at least annually. The TEAC will select a chairperson who serves a two-year term, renewable for no more than two consecutive terms.

5. *Global Education Committee.*The Global Education Committee is to encourage and connect Wesleyan theological education across regions worldwide, ensuring consistent standards for training clergy that align with the mission and theological aims of the Global Methodist Church.

PETITION 1106

¶810.2

Clarifying the Role of Ministry and Higher Education Commission in Ministry Credentials

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There are a few areas dealing with the Committee on Approval that are not aligned with the requirements in 507.2

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶810.2.a

2.a. *Ministry Credentials*. ~~Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference; certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders; develop curricula for ministry training courses; resource annual conference boards of ministry; ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; and approve seminaries as recommended educational institutions.~~

2.a. *Ministry Credentials*. Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference; certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders; develop curricula for ministry training courses; resource annual conference boards of ministry; ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates; and approve schools and programs for ordination which meet the criteria in 507.2.

PETITION 1266

¶810.2

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶810.2a

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The functions in ¶810.2a vary globally and are best handled at more local levels of the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶810.2.a IN ITS ENTIRETY

~~a. Ministry Credentials. Implement the standards and qualifications set for various forms of ministry by General Conference, certify the educational programs for training lay ministers, deacons, and elders, develop curricula for ministry training courses, resource annual conference boards of ministry, ensure adequate psychological and background evaluation for candidates, and approve seminaries as recommended educational institutions.~~

PETITION 1107

¶810.3

Clarifying the Role of Ministry and Higher Education Commission in Approvals

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There are a few areas dealing with the Committee on Approval that are not aligned with the requirements in 507.2

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶810.3.b.(2)

b. (2) ~~ensuring approval by the Association of Theological Schools and/or the Association of Biblical Higher Education in North America or an approved equivalent accrediting body elsewhere whenever applicable,~~

b. (2) ensuring schools are approved by the Association of Theological Schools and/or the Association of Biblical Higher Education in North America or an approved equivalent accrediting body elsewhere whenever applicable.

PETITION 1264

¶810.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶810.3 – Committee on Approval

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The functions in ¶810.3 vary globally and are best handled at more local levels of the GMC.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶810.3 IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1108

¶811

Clarifying the Role of Finance, Administration, Pensions, and Benefits Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The role of this Commission is currently very US-centric & is not able to oversee the benefits of a church in over 50 countries globally. Removal of "Pension" because the current US-based system is not a "pension", and also "benefits" can cover any type of retirement benefit we offer. In 2, it is unclear which "strategic plan" the commission is to follow. This clarifies it is the strategic plan developed and passed by the Connectional Council per ¶ 807.4.b. 2.b currently states that the FAPB shall offer legal advice to local churches all over the world, which is not feasible and needs to be deleted. FAPB should only concern itself with the legal dealings of the General Church. The role of the FAPB in benefits should be advisory only.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶811

¶ 811. FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND BENEFITS COMMISSION.

1. This commission shall consist initially of fourteen members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission. The commission shall thereafter propose the number of members, up to a maximum of twenty-one members plus the chair and the bishop assigned to that commission, subject to approval by the Connectional Council.

2. The commission shall fulfill the strategic plan developed and approved by the Connectional Council by offering resources to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in the following ministry areas:

a. *Finance.* Oversee the financial and fiduciary life of the general church, including the Assembly of Bishops, its commissions, and programs, to ensure both their integrity and efficiency, by reporting publicly the detailed expenses and income of all entities, conducting an annual independent audit of the Assembly of Bishops and each commission's finances, collecting and distributing all income received by the general church, and annually recommending to the Connectional Council a budget for the general church.

b. *General Counsel*. Manage the legal work of the general church and provide for the ownership and maintenance of any general church property.

c. *Archives and History*. Maintain the historical archives of the Global Methodist Church and encourage the study of its history to better understand how "thus far has the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

d. *Statistics*. Collect, make public, and help interpret accurate and timely statistics on membership, ministry, and the participation of its members in the life of the church.

e. *Benefits.* Make recommendations to annual conferences and local churches for benefit programs (i.e., retirement, insurance, disability, etc.) to cover clergy and lay employees of the church. Additionally, make recommendations to the Connectional Council for benefit programs to cover general church employees and administer such programs when authorized by the Connectional Council.

f. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Finance, Administration, and Benefits.

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PETITION 1329

¶811.2

Pensions and Benefits for Non-US Clergy & Staff

Petitioner: Wilton Odongo

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The majority of annual conferences of the Global Methodist Church in non-American countries are in extremely impoverished economic conditions. Their salaries/stipends are grossly inadequate to support their family, ministry, and health care. This constantly impacts their ability to pay for their medical care and other associated expenses. The support of the church's related pension and benefits shall enable them at a relatively modest cost to provide a dignified life in retirement for those who serve sacrificially. This petition makes no specific pre-suppositions about US funding, but would simply have us make sure that we have some systems in place to care for our non-US retirees.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS ¶811.2.f

2. The commission shall offer resourcing to local churches, annual conferences, and the general church in fulfilling the strategic plan in these ministry areas:

f. *Benefits for Non-U.S. Clergy*. In consultation with the Assembly of Bishops, relevant conference superintendents, and leaders engaged in conference-to-conference partnerships, establish a process to secure pension and health benefits for clergy and lay staff serving outside the United States where such provisions are inadequate, in accordance with the applicable laws of the land and other relevant service providers, with this process including research into best practices from other global church bodies, the development of compassionate, reasonable, and sustainable solutions, and planning for local contributions and sound financial management to ensure growth through interest and investment.

g. Perform such other responsibilities as are assigned to it by the Connectional Council related to Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits.

PETITION 1029

¶812.2

Petition Removing General Conference Administrative Committee Nominees' Restriction

Petitioner: General Conference Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Restricting membership of administrative committees to delegates from the previous General Conference (as the current language does) disadvantages newly-formed annual conferences. It also prevents newly elected, younger leaders from serving in important committees.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶812.2g

AMEND Par. 812.2g as follows:

~~(g) Establish the number of administrative committees for the General Conference and nominate delegates from the previous General Conference to serve on such administrative committees to be elected by the Connectional Council.~~

(g) Establish the number of administrative committees for the General Conference and nominate delegates from the upcoming General Conference to serve on such administrative committees to be elected by the Connectional Council.

PETITION 1109

¶812.2

Clarifying the Role of the General Conference Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Everything contained in 2.e, f, and g has been part of the Plan of Organization for the past two General Conferences. These should be combined into one line about the Plan of Organization.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶812.2.(e), ¶812.2.(f), & ¶812.2.(g) AND REPLACES IT WITH A NEW ¶812.2.(e)

~~(e) Set the number of legislative committees and the process for the assignment of legislative materials to those committees in consultation with the Connectional Council.~~

~~(f) Recommend to the General Conference amendments to the Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together.~~

~~(g) Establish the number of administrative committees for the General Conference and nominate delegates from the previous General Conference to serve on such administrative committees to be elected by the Connectional Council.~~

(e) Recommend to the General Conference amendments to the Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together, including the number of legislative committees and the process for the assignment of legislative materials to those committees, as well as the number of administrative committees for the General Conference and the process for electing members thereof.

PETITION 1016

¶813

Ecumenical Relationships Commission

Petitioner: Ecumenical Relationships Commission
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Now that the Global Methodist movement is in full swing, we notice that certain shifts will better align our work with our stated mission. The work of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission (ERC) is one such example. While the initial vision of the ERC as expressed BoDD is laudable, it does not emphasize the local church as the basic unit of the GMC. Our commission believes that rather than emphasizing connections with councils and networks, or creating denominationally rooted covenants, we would be more effective if we train local churches to be in meaningful partnership with other local churches in their communities. This is now our emphasis and the substance of this petition.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶¶813.1-4 & ¶¶813.6-7 AND DELETES ¶813.5

¶ 813. ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS COMMISSION.

1. The Global Methodist Church recognizes that the global Christian community transcends denominational barriers. Jesus's prayer in John 17 that all his disciples "may be one" compels us to seek closer communion with all Christians. Locally and globally, Christian communions that are committed to the "faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3) will find in the Global Methodist Church a willing partner in worship, evangelism, disciple-making, and works of mercy. Because the local church is the basic unit of the Global Methodist Church, we further emphasize building partnerships at the local or "grassroots" level. Toward that end, the Ecumenical Relationships Commission will develop resources to encourage local churches to reach out to churches in their local communities for collaboration on projects that benefit the wider community and build the Body of Christ.

2. Each General Conference shall elect, other than the bishop who chairs the Commission, all of the members of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission. The Commission shall be chaired by a bishop of the Global Methodist Church appointed by the Assembly of Bishops. ~~The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall consist of four clergypersons and four laypersons in addition to the bishop serving as chair.~~ The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall consist of five clergypersons and five laypersons in addition to the bishop serving as chair. ~~Those persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for two years or until their successors are elected and shall be eligible for re-election at the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, each person shall be elected for a six-year term and is eligible to serve a second six-year term if elected.~~ Each person shall be elected for a six-year term and is eligible to serve a second six-year term if elected. The chair and members serve until their successors are elected. The chair and members serve until their successors are elected.

3. ~~In its work, the Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall give particular care to uphold the doctrines, moral principles, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.~~ In its partnerships and teaching, the Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall give particular care to uphold the doctrines, moral principles, and polity of the Global Methodist Church.

4. ~~The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall bring recommendations to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council with respect to membership of the Global Methodist Church in councils, networks, or associations of other Christian bodies, covenants with other Christian denominations or associations of churches, and the potential organic union with other Christian denominations or groups.~~ To foster greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups that share a common heritage of theology, history and polity, the Ecumenical

Relationships Commission shall bring recommendations to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council with respect to membership of the Global Methodist Church in councils, networks, or associations of other Christian bodies, covenants with other Christian denominations or associations of churches, and the potential organic union with other Christian denominations or groups. If membership is recommended in a Wesleyan/Methodist organization, the recommendation shall be presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council between General Conferences, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.

~~5. The Global Methodist Church has a particular interest in fostering greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups that share a common heritage of theology, history, and polity. Unity among the spiritual heirs of John Wesley is a profound hope and desire of the Global Methodist Church, rooted in our heritage as a "connectional" movement, linking congregations and conferences in cooperative ministry and mutual encouragement. Closer relationships with other Wesleyan groups provide increased opportunities for global mission and evangelism, enrichment in our understanding and practice of ministry, and the sharing of resources and expertise. The Commission shall explore: (a) Membership in the World Methodist Council. (b) the advisability of membership in other Wesleyan/ Methodist organizations. such as the Asian Methodist Council, the European Methodist Council, the Global Wesleyan Alliance, or the Pan-Methodist Commission. If membership is recommended in a Wesleyan/Methodist organization, the recommendation shall be presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council between General Conferences, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.~~

5. ~~6. The Global Methodist Church welcomes covenant relationships with other Christian denominations or association of churches.~~ The Global Methodist Church emphasizes local partnerships over denominational covenants. ~~The purpose of establishing such covenant relationships is to enhance our mutual Christian witness and effectiveness, and/or to allow for increased reach into regions or nations where one or the other has little or no presence.~~ Where covenants with other Christian denominations or association of churches are deemed the most appropriate way forward, the purpose would be to enhance our mutual Christian witness and effectiveness, and/or to allow for increased reach into regions or nations where one or the other has little or no presence.

~~These covenant relationships may include mutual recognition of baptism and ordained ministry, eucharistic fellowship, shared representation at governing assemblies, and/or plans for shared ministry and resources.~~ Conversations toward formalized relationships as covenant churches may be held by the Ecumenical Relationships Commission with such recommendations being presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots. Covenants shall not include a provision for excluding a future Global Methodist presence in any part of the world.

~~7.~~ 6. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission, or its designated representatives, shall represent the Global Methodist Church in conversations related to union with other Christian denominations or associations of churches. Such plans of union shall include:

(a) A statement of vision on a preferred future;

(b) a statement on doctrinal and theological alignment; and

(c) a plan for integration of ministries, including evidence of consultation with all annual conferences directly affected by the plan of union.

Plans which do not require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church shall be ratified between sessions of the General Conference by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots of each of the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council if the other body is Wesleyan in its theology, or a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots at the General Conference. The union shall become immediately effective upon such ratification. The other body shall have voted to dissolve its own governance structure to become effective upon ratification of the plan of union as provided herein. Plans which require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline or with bodies which are not Wesleyan in their theology shall require a three-fourths majority vote of those delegates present and casting valid ballots at a General Conference for ratification.

PETITION 1257

¶813.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶813.1

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The language of ¶813.1 is superfluous.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶813.1 IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1110

¶813.2

Removal of Extraneous Language from of Ecumenical Relations Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Removes language specific to the Convening Conference and condenses paragraph.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶813 BY REPLACING ¶813.2

2. ~~Each General Conference shall elect, other than the bishop who chairs the commission, all of the members of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission. The commission shall be chaired by a bishop of the Global Methodist Church appointed by the Assembly of Bishops. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall consist of four clergypersons and four laypersons in addition to the bishop serving as chair. Those persons elected prior to the 2026 General Conference shall serve for two years or until their successors are elected and shall be eligible for reelection at the 2026 General Conference. Beginning with the 2026 General Conference, each person shall be elected for a six-year term and is eligible to serve a second six-year term if elected. The chair and members serve until their successors are elected.~~

2. Each General Conference shall elect, other than the bishop who chairs the commission, all of the members of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission. The commission shall be chaired by a bishop of the Global Methodist Church appointed by the Assembly of Bishops. The Ecumenical Relationships Commission shall consist of four clergypersons and four laypersons in addition to the bishop serving as chair. Each person shall be elected for a six-year term and is eligible to serve a second six-year term if elected. Service prior to the 2026 General Conference shall not count towards a six-year term. The chair and members serve until their successors are elected.

PETITION 1256

¶813.3

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶813.3

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. The language of ¶813.3 is obvious and superfluous.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶813.3 IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1116

¶813.5

Clarifying the Role of the Ecumenical Relationships Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

It is not necessary to list all the potential organizations we can join. Instead, we should simply say "Wesleyan/ Methodist organizations".

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES ¶813.5

5. ~~The Commission shall explore:~~

~~(a) Membership in the World Methodist Council.~~

~~(b) The~~ advisability of membership in other Wesleyan/ Methodist organizations ~~such as the Asian Methodist Council, the European Methodist Council, the Global Wesleyan Alliance, or the Pan-Methodist Commission.~~

5. The Commission shall explore the advisability of membership in Wesleyan/ Methodist organizations.

PETITION 1255

¶813.5

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Reduction of ¶813.5

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This cleans up superfluous language in ¶813.5.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶813.5

~~5. The Global Methodist Church has a particular interest in fostering greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups that share a common heritage of theology, history, and polity. Unity among the spiritual heirs of John Wesley is a profound hope and desire of the Global Methodist Church, rooted in our heritage as a "connectional" movement, linking congregations and conferences in cooperative ministry and mutual encouragement. Closer relationships with other Wesleyan groups provide increased opportunities for global mission and evangelism, enrichment in our understanding and practice of ministry, and the sharing of resources and expertise. The Commission shall explore: a. Membership in the World Methodist Council. b. The advisability of membership in other Wesleyan/Methodist organizations such as the Asian Methodist Council, the European Methodist Council, the Global Wesleyan Alliance, or the Pan-Methodist Commission. If membership is recommended in a Wesleyan/Methodist organization, the recommendation shall be presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council between General Conferences, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification to the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.~~

5. The Global Methodist Church has a particular interest in fostering greater unity with other Wesleyan and Methodist groups that share a common heritage of theology, history, and polity. If membership is recommended in a Wesleyan/Methodist organization, the recommendation shall be presented for approval to the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council between General Conferences, each of which must vote affirmatively by a simple majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots. Such action must be presented for ratification at the next General Conference by a simple majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots.

PETITION 1254

¶813.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of a Sentence from ¶813.6

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This sentence is superfluous.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶813.6 BY DELETING THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE

~~The purpose of establishing such covenant relationships is to enhance our mutual Christian witness and effectiveness, and/or to allow for increased reach into regions or nations where one or the other has little or no presence.~~

PETITION 1117

¶813.7

Clarifying the Plan of Union Process in Ecumenical Relationships Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Clarifies Plan of Union process and provides flexibility in the date of union.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶813.7.(c)

7.(c) ~~a plan for integration of ministries, including evidence of consultation with all annual conferences directly affected by the plan of union. Plans which do not require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church shall be ratified between sessions of the General Conference by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots of each of the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council if the other body is Wesleyan in its theology, or a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots at the General Conference. The union shall become immediately effective upon such ratification. The other body shall have voted to dissolve its own governance structure to become effective upon ratification of the plan of union as provided herein. Plans which require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline or with bodies which are not Wesleyan in their theology shall require a three-fourths majority vote of those delegates present and casting valid ballots at a General Conference for ratification.~~

7.(c) a plan for integration of ministries, including evidence of consultation with all annual conferences directly affected by the plan of union. Plans which do not require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the Global Methodist Church and are with bodies which are Wesleyan in their theology shall be ratified between sessions of the General Conference by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and casting valid ballots of each of the Assembly of Bishops and the Connectional Council, or a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present and casting valid ballots at the General Conference. Plans which require alterations to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline or with bodies which are not Wesleyan in their theology shall require a three-fourths majority vote of those delegates present and casting valid ballots at a General Conference for ratification. The union shall become immediately effective upon such ratification, or at such time when the other body votes to dissolve its own governance structure.

PETITION 1118

¶814.3

Clarifying the Role of Conferences Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Conferences Commission needs explicit authority to recommend division, merger or decertification for existing conferences.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶814.3

3. The Conferences Commission shall recommend the establishment of new conferences and the realignment, division, merger, or decertification of existing conferences.

PETITION 1119

¶814.6

Delete Extraneous Language from the Role of the Conferences Commission

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Subparagraph 6 is no longer necessary. It privileges former UMC conferences, however, any religious body including former UMC bodies can join the GMC using the provisions in subparagraph 5.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶814.6

6. ~~Upon request of annual conferences previously aligned with The United Methodist Church, or clergy and churches from such annual conferences, the Conferences Commission shall make recommendations on how such requests shall be responded to and how such groups shall be organized as part of the Global Methodist Church.~~

PETITION 1253

¶814.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶814.6

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. ¶814.6 is no longer necessary.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶814.6 IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1054

¶815

Connectional Operations Office

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The revisions better define the duties of the Connectional Operations Officer and the officer's relationship with the Assembly of Bishops; simplify the selection process; and remove unnecessary and excess verbiage or detail. It also clarifies the role of the Assembly of Bishops with respect to the selection of the Connectional Operations Officer.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶815 & MULTIPLE SUBPARAGRAPHS, AND ¶606.7

¶ 815. CONNECTIONAL OPERATIONS OFFICER. ~~The connectional operations officer shall bear responsibility for the fruitful and accountable functioning of all general church boards, commissions, and councils as they work together to fulfill the General Conference's missional mandates between General Conferences.~~ The connectional operations officer shall bear responsibility for the fruitful and accountable functioning of the Connectional Council and all general church commissions, committees, and councils as they work together to fulfill the mission of the GMC and any missional mandates passed at General Conference.

1. Selection.

a. The connectional operations officer may be either a clergy or lay person.

b. ~~As necessary, the Connectional Council will be responsible for revising the job description for the connectional operations officer.~~ The council will be responsible for posting the position in order to surface a large pool of qualified, global candidates.

~~c. The council will be responsible for posting the position as widely as it believes necessary in order to surface a large pool of qualified candidates.~~

~~d.~~ c. From the pool of applicants, the council shall select a minimum of three and a maximum of six candidates, forwarding the chosen candidates' applications to the Assembly of Bishops for its consideration.

~~e. From among the candidates forwarded to it by the council, the Assembly of bishops will determine which candidates it wishes to interview.~~

~~f.~~ d. ~~The Assembly of Bishops will select its chosen candidate based on a process of its own choosing (e.g., consensus, simple majority, two-thirds).~~ The Assembly of Bishops will select its chosen candidate based on a process of its own choosing.

~~g.~~ e. ~~The Assembly of Bishops will inform the council of its chosen candidate.~~ The Assembly of Bishops will inform the council of its chosen candidate, and the council chairperson will contact the chosen candidate to offer the position.

~~h. The council's chairperson will notify the chosen candidate and present her or him a six-year contract.~~

~~i. The council will be responsible for onboarding the connectional operations officer.~~

2. *Term.* The connectional operations officer will serve for a six-year term, and if approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the council, he or she may serve one additional six-year term.

3. *Performance Evaluation.* ~~The Connectional Council's chairperson will annually conduct a performance evaluation of the connectional operations officer, and prepare a report based on the evaluation. The council may appoint a sub-committee to conduct the evaluation and it may contract with outside personnel organizations in order to complete it. The report will be delivered to the connectional operations officer and the council. The connectional operations officer will have the right to include a self-evaluation to add to the report.~~ The Connectional Council will annually conduct a performance evaluation of the connectional operations officer.

4. *Vacancy of the Office.* In the event of the connectional officer's resignation, serious illness, approved leave of absence, death, or removal from office, the council will:

a. Immediately inform the Assembly of Bishops of the vacancy.

b. ~~Appoint a qualified individual to serve as the interim connectional operations officer.~~ If necessary, appoint a qualified individual to serve as the interim connectional operations officer.

c. ~~If the office is permanently vacated, the provisions of ¶ 815.1 shall apply, except that the new connectional operations officer will be presented with a contract for the balance of the previous occupant's term.~~ If the office is permanently vacated, the provisions of ¶ 815.1 shall apply.

~~d. If approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the council, he or she may serve a full six-year term after completion of the balance of years remaining in the previous occupant's term. And by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly of Bishops and by a sixty percent plus one vote of the council, a second additional six-year term.~~

5. *Dismissal From Office.* The connectional operations officer is an "at will" employee of the Global Methodist Church. ~~Therefore, the officer may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Connectional Council for any reason and without warning as long as the dismissal does not violate applicable laws in the state where the Global Methodist Church is incorporated. In keeping with Christian principles and ethical standards, the Connectional Council shall work to remedy any deficiencies in performance before moving to dismiss the connectional operations officer. The council may choose to propose a severance agreement with a monetary component that includes a non-disparagement clause.~~ Therefore, the officer may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Connectional Council for any reason as long as the dismissal does not violate applicable laws in the state where the Global Methodist Church is incorporated.

6. Responsibilities and Duties.

a. ~~Serve as the chief operations officer bearing responsibility for the accountable functioning of the Connectional Council, connectional commissions, and task forces as they work to fulfill the General Conference's missional mandates between General Conferences.~~ Serve as the chief operations officer bearing responsibility for the accountable functioning of the Connectional Council, connectional commissions, committees, and councils as they work to fulfill the mission of the GMC and the General Conference's missional mandates.

b. ~~Working with the chairperson and secretary of the Connectional Council, the connectional operations officer~~

~~will:~~ The connectional operations officer will provide support for Connectional Council meetings in the following ways:

i. Schedule all council meetings, including locations for in-person meetings;

ii. ~~Ensure all items necessary for meetings are prepared and delivered to council members at least one week prior to meetings (i.e., agendas, minutes, reports, and proposals requiring the council's action); and~~ Ensure all items necessary for meetings are prepared and delivered to council members at least 3 days prior to meetings.

~~iii. Deliver an annual report of the council's work to the Assembly of Bishops, annually appear before the Assembly of Bishops to provide an overview of the report, and be prepared to answer their questions and respond to requests for guidance in fulfilling the General Conference's vision and mandates for the church.~~

c. Serve as an ex-officio member on the Connectional Council, the Assembly of Bishops, and the Global Episcopacy Committee.

d. Provide operational support to the Conference Superintendents and other annual conference staff as needed.

~~c.~~ e. ~~Be responsible for hiring all general church executive director level positions as set forth in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline, within the constraints and processes established by the council.~~ In consultation with the Council, hire all general church executive director level positions, oversee these staff positions, and exercise authority to relieve persons holding these positions.

~~d. Serve as supervisor for all executive director level positions as set forth in the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.~~

~~e. In consultation with the council, exercise the authority to relieve persons holding executive director level positions.~~

f. ~~Oversee the hiring, assigning, and retaining of all general church administrative staff.~~ Oversee the hiring, assigning, and retaining of all general church staff.

g. ~~Regularly convene meetings of general church executive directors to ensure fulfillment of direction given by the council.~~ Regularly convene meetings of general church staff and executive directors to ensure fulfillment of direction given by the council.

h. ~~Oversee the connectional budget as approved by the General Conference, and the maintaining of all financial records.~~ Oversee the connectional budget as approved by the Connectional Council, the maintenance of all financial records, and the annual audits of all general church finances.

~~i. Oversee annual audits of all general church assemblies, boards, and commissions.~~

~~j.~~ i. In consultation with the Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits Commission and the executive director of finance, prepare the general church budget for deliberation, amendment, and approval.

~~k.~~ j. Negotiate and/or oversee negotiation of contracts for general church services and facilities.

~~l.~~ k. ~~Lead the council and all general church executive directors in a bi-annual review and evaluation of the~~

~~missional effectiveness of the general church's commissions and boards and propose course corrections as necessary to the relevant areas.~~ Lead the council and all general church executive directors in an annual review and evaluation of the missional effectiveness of the general church's commissions, committees and councils, and propose course corrections as necessary to the relevant areas.

~~m.~~ l. ~~In consultation with the council, recommend to the General Conference changes to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline and implementing legislation.~~ Work with the council, to submit legislation to the General Conference for changes to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

~~n. In consultation with the council, oversee planning and research to advance the mission of the church.~~

¶ 606. THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS. By virtue of their election and consecration, bishops, including interim bishops, are members of the Assembly of Bishops and are bound together in special covenant. As the collegial expression of episcopal leadership, the Assembly of Bishops speaks pastorally to the church and from the church to the world. The Assembly of Bishops is composed of all active bishops and shall have the following responsibilities:

...

9. ~~Nominate the connectional operations officer to be elected by the Connectional Council.~~ Select the Connectional Operations Officer from the pool of applicants submitted by the Connectional Council pursuant to paragraph 815.1.

PETITION 1120 ¶815

Clarifying the Role of Connectional Operations Officer and Deletion of Extraneous Language

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

In subparagraph 5, we use a US term. In subparagraph 6 it is also unnecessary so deletion of extraneous language.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶815.5 AND ¶815.6.(j)

5. *Dismissal From Office*. The connectional operations officer is an "at will" employee of the Global Methodist Church. ~~Therefore, the officer may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Connectional Council for any reason and without warning as long as the dismissal does not violate applicable laws in the state where the Global Methodist Church is incorporated.~~ In keeping with Christian principles and ethical standards, the connectional council shall work to remedy any deficiencies in performance before moving to dismiss the connectional operations officer. The council may choose to propose a severance agreement with a monetary component that includes a non-disparagement clause.

6.(j) ~~In consultation with the Finance, Administration, Pension, and Benefits Commission and the executive director of finance, prepare the general church budget for deliberation, amendment, and approval.~~

5. *Dismissal From Office*. The connectional operations officer is an "at will" employee of the Global Methodist Church. Therefore, the officer may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Connectional Council for any reason and without warning as long as the dismissal does not violate the applicable laws where the Global Methodist Church is incorporated. In keeping with Christian principles and ethical standards, the connectional council shall work to remedy any deficiencies in performance before moving to dismiss the connectional operations officer. The council may choose to propose a severance agreement with a monetary component that includes a non-disparagement clause.

6.(j) In consultation with the Finance, Administration, and Benefits Commission and the executive director of finance, prepare the general church budget for deliberation, amendment, and approval.

PETITION 1252

¶815.1

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Elimination of ¶815.1c

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. ¶815.1c is superfluous.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶815.1.c IN ITS ENTIRETY

PETITION 1040

¶815.4

Simplifying Vote Percentages

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Great Lakes

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

"Plus one" language is discouraged by the editors of Robert's Rules of Order because it creates unexpected tabulation results. A simple example: With 7 votes cast, 4 is the obvious majority. However, "fifty percent plus one" (50%=3.5 ~ plus one=4.5) would require 5 votes (which equals 71%). In the case of a 60% majority vote: With 7 votes cast, 60% is 4.2, so 5 votes would be sufficient. If the threshold is "sixty percent … plus one", 4.2 1=5.2 so 6 votes would be necessary (which equals an 85% majority). With a threshold of 60% or simple majority, "plus one" language could create unexpected results when put into practice.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶815.4

~~If approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the Council, he or she may serve a full six-year term after completion of the balance of years remaining in the previous occupant's term. And by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly of Bishops and by a sixty percent plus one vote of the Council, a second additional six-year term.~~ If approved by the Assembly of Bishops and the Council he or she may serve a full six-year term after completion of the balance of years remaining in the previous occupant's term. And by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly of Bishops and by a sixty percent vote of the Council a second additional six-year term.

PETITION 1251

¶815.6

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Reduction of ¶815.6m

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. Eliminated language in ¶815.6m is superfluous.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶815.6.m

~~m. In consultation with the Council, recommend to the General Conference changes to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline and implementing legislation.~~

m. In consultation with the Council, recommend to the General Conference changes to the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1332

¶1002

Seeking Right to Annual Conference to Use 'Trust Clause' Where Deemed Fit for Them

Organization: AF: Northern Nigeria

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

Submitter Type: Annual Conference

RATIONALE:

The rationale is that some conferences face challenges due to local laws or National ecumenical body's requirements for registration. Going by this paragraph it means every local church would have to register their own church separately to own their property; in some countries the laws require a church to register nationally with the government. National ecumenical bodies require a unified registration to be a member of the body. The petition aims to give annual conferences flexibility to use the trust clause as needed, making it optional instead of compulsory. This would allow conferences to manage properties according to their specific contexts. If this petition is amended, then Paragraph 1003 will also include the annual conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1002 AND ¶1003

¶ 1002. STEWARDSHIP OF ASSETS. There is no trust clause for property held by local churches, annual conferences, connectional commissions, or any other entities of the Global Methodist Church. Except otherwise agreed by the annual conference to entrust their properties. Each local church, annual conference, or connectional commission shall designate in its corporate records how its property shall be disposed of in the event of the entity's dissolution.

¶ 1003. PROCESS OF DISAFFILIATION. ~~After at least a 90-day period of discernment and prayer, a congregation of the Global Methodist Church may disaffiliate from the denomination by a majority vote of its church or annual conference.~~ After at least a 90-day period of discernment and prayer, a congregation of the Global Methodist Church may disaffiliate from the denomination by a majority vote of its church conference.

PETITION 1195

¶1005.1

Clarifying Compliance with Local Law

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Organization: US: Trinity

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This paragraph is written from a US perspective. We recommend changes to make it more applicable world-wide.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1005.1

1. *Conformity with local law*. All provisions of this Book of Doctrines and Discipline relating to property, both real and personal, relating to the formation and operation of any corporation; and relating to mergers are conditioned upon their being in conformity with local laws. ~~In the event of conflict with local law, local law shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of the Global Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by state statute where such regulation violates any constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the church to maintain its connectional structure.~~ In the event of conflict with local law, local law shall prevail; provided, however, that this requirement shall not be construed to give the consent of the Global Methodist Church to deprivation of its property without due process of law or to the regulation of its affairs by any statute which violates the freedom of religion and separation of church and state or violates the right of the church to maintain its connectional structure.

PETITION 1196

¶1006

Renumbering Paragraph on Boards of Directors

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Currently, ¶ 1006 is not placed next to the paragraph that describes the duties of Boards of Directors. To make sure all people know that the Board of Directors and Trustees are synonymous, we recommend renumbering ¶ 1006 to be ¶ 1011, and all the paragraphs in between ¶ 1006-1011 be moved accordingly.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1006 BY RENUMBERING IT TO ¶1011 AND RENUMBERING ALL PARAGRAPHS BETWEEN CURRENT ¶1006 & ¶1011

¶ ~~1006.~~1011. TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS ARE SYNONYMOUS. The terms “trustee(s)” and “Board of Trustees” used in this Book of Doctrines and Discipline may be construed to be synonymous with “director(s)” and “Board of Directors” applied to corporations. If a local church chooses an alternative structure, it shall designate which body shall act as the Board of Directors.

PETITION 1249

¶1010

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Reduction of ¶1010

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. This cleans up superfluous language in ¶1010 that is difficult to interpret globally. It also removes bonding language, which is impossible or virtually impossible to secure.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1010

~~¶1010. AUDITS AND BONDING OF CHURCH OFFICERS. All persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to a unit of the Global Methodist Church (not including a local church) shall be bonded by a reliable company in such good and sufficient sum as the Connectional Council of the Global Methodist Church or its designated agent may direct. The accounts of such units shall be audited at least annually by a recognized public or certified public accountant or equivalent. A report to a unit of the Global Methodist Church containing a financial statement that this Book of Doctrines and Discipline requires to be audited shall not be approved until the audit is made and the financial statement is shown to be correct. Other parts of the report may be approved pending such an audit.~~

¶1010. AUDITS OF CHURCH OFFICERS. All persons holding trust funds, securities, or moneys of any kind belonging to a unit of the Global Methodist Church (not including a local church) shall have audits of such units at least annually in a manner satisfactory to the Connectional Council or the unit they designate.

PETITION 1208

¶1012

Clarify Duty of Charge Conferences to Ratify Requests from Board of Directors

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

¶ 1012 lists multiple provisions for a charge conference to approve dealings with real property. For clarity, it would help to include a note about this in this paragraph as well, so we recommend adding a new .16.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1012 BY ADDING SUBPARAGRAPH ¶1012.16

16. The charge conference shall act upon any request from the Board of Directors of the local church to purchase, sell, lease, construct upon, or mortgage any real property of the church (¶ 1012),

PETITION 1197

¶1012.9

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Trinity
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

There are numerous parts of this paragraph that need to be clarified, streamlined, and brought into accordance with the rest of the BDD. A few notable examples are: 1. All of .9.e is included in ¶ 446.6. It is unnecessary to be duplicated here, so we recommend deletion. 2. In .9.f, there is no need to explain the process for calling a Charge Conference since that is explained in ¶ 438. 3. In .9.8, we currently state that 60% of members must vote to approve using sale proceeds for operating expenses. This should be 60% of the members who show up for a church conference. Many churches don't even have the ability to contact 60% of their members, much less convince them to do anything.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶1012.9.e AND AMENDS ¶1012.9.f & ¶1012.9.g

~~e. *Annual Report* (¶ 446.6). The Board of Directors shall annually make a written report to the charge conference, in which shall be included the following:~~

~~The legal description and the reasonable valuation of each parcel of real estate owned by the church;~~

~~The specific name of the grantee in each deed of conveyance of real estate to the local church;~~

~~An inventory and the reasonable valuation of all personal property owned by the local church;~~

~~The amount of income received from any income-producing property and a detailed list of expenditures in connection therewith;~~

~~The amount received during the year for building, rebuilding, remodeling, and improving real estate, and an itemized statement of expenditures;~~

~~Outstanding capital debts and how contracted;~~

~~A detailed statement of the insurance carried on each parcel of real estate, indicating whether restricted by coinsurance or other limiting conditions and whether adequate insurance is carried;~~

~~The name of the custodian of all legal papers of the local church, and where they are kept;~~

~~A detailed list of all trusts of which the local church is the beneficiary, specifying where and how the funds are invested; and~~

~~An evaluation of all church properties, including the chancel areas, to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, and when applicable, a plan and timeline for the enhancement of the property's accessibility.~~

f. *Purchase, Sale, Lease, Construction, and Mortgage of Property.* Notwithstanding the powers granted in ¶ 1012.3, prior to the purchase, sale, lease, or mortgage by a local church of any real estate, or the construction or renovation of a building, a resolution authorizing such action shall be passed by the charge conference, with the members thereof acting in their capacity as members of the corporate body, by a majority vote of those present

and voting at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided that ~~not less than ten days' notice of such meeting and the proposed action shall have been given from the pulpit and in the weekly bulletin, newsletter, or electronic notice of the local church or other means if required or permitted by local law, and provided further, that~~ written consent to such action shall be given by the pastor. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the Board of Directors to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument. The Board of Directors at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws. Any required contract, deed, lease, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the corporation by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation.

g. *Restrictions on Proceeds of Mortgage or Sale.* No real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of a local church without the approval of 60 percent of the members present and voting at a duly called Church Conference and the full awareness of and consultation with the presiding elder.

PETITION 1248

¶1012.9

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Removal of ¶1012.9d

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. ¶1012.9d is superfluous and unenforceable.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION DELETES ¶1012.9.d

~~d. Accessible buildings (¶446.5e). The Board of Directors shall conduct an annual accessibility audit of their buildings, grounds, and facilities to discover and identify any physical, architectural, or communication barriers that exist that impede the full participation of people with disabilities and shall make plans and determine priorities for the elimination of all such barriers.~~

PETITION 1417

¶1012.9

Charge Conference Authority and Church-Wide Votes

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: MidTexas

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

Unnecessary. The charge conference is the governing board for a local church (437.1). All members of the church council are voting members of the charge conference (438.2) , for which the presiding elder presides (438.3). “Church conferences” and church-wide votes set aside the authority of the charge conference and shift decision-making to a congregational form of administrative approval. Open meetings and the presence of the presiding elder ensure that major decisions are made with transparency and oversight. No special provision is necessary for property sales since there is no trust clause and property belongs to the local church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶1012.9.g

g. Restrictions on Proceeds of Mortgage or Sale. ~~No real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of a local church without the approval of 60 percent of the members and the full awareness of and consultation with the presiding elder.~~ No real property on which a church building or parsonage is located shall be mortgaged or sold to provide for the current budget or operating expense of a local church without the approval of the charge conference.

PETITION 1250

NEW ¶10XX

Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Proposal of a New ¶1014

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: MidTexas
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline should include only directives essential for unity and mission. Provisions should: 1) require global uniformity; 2) strengthen the local church; 3) align with disciple-making; 4) allow flexibility so structure serves mission; and 5) be clear and enforceable. There is currently no language in the BDD for local church closure. This solidifies the authority at the Annual Conference level.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶1014

¶1014 – CHURCH CLOSURE. Procedures for local church closure shall be determined by Annual Conferences. Annual Conferences shall notify the denomination, in a timely manner, of local church closures. Closure procedures shall not infringe on other portions of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

PETITION 1243

NEW ¶8XX

Establishment of a Connectional Young People's Ministry

Petitioner: Frank Webere

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline provides for connectional organizations (¶ 801–899) but lacks a permanent, self-governing structure for young people. Young people across Africa and the globe have already organized themselves through bodies like the GMC African Youth Network. This petition recognizes and empowers what the Holy Spirit has raised up, ensuring young people are co-equal partners in mission rather than dependent on shifting leadership priorities. A dedicated connectional body with protected funding, direct representation, formal legislative review authority, and a clear pathway to establish bylaws will equip the next generation for decades of leadership in the church's mission.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶8XX

The Connectional Young People's Ministry.

1. Purpose and Vision. The Connectional Young People's Ministry is established as a permanent connectional organization of the Global Methodist Church. Its purpose is to equip, empower, and mobilize young people for leadership in the mission of the church, ensuring that the voices, gifts, and perspectives of youth and young adults are central to the church's life and decision-making.

2. Governance. The Connectional Young People's Ministry shall be governed by a Connectional Young People's Council elected by young people through regional caucuses held prior to each General Conference. The Council shall consist of young people representing the geographic, linguistic, and demographic diversity of the global church. Members shall serve terms as established by the Council's bylaws, subject to ratification by the General Conference.

3. Autonomy within Connectional Accountability. The Connectional Young People's Council shall have authority over its own programs, personnel, and bylaws, subject to the doctrinal standards of the church and the general oversight of the General Conference. The Connectional Council is authorized to work with existing young people's networks, including representatives from all regions of the church, to draft the specific bylaws and electoral processes for the Connectional Young People's Council. Such bylaws shall be presented for ratification by the General Conference no later than the succeeding General Conference. This authority is exercised within the connectional system of the Global Methodist Church and shall be accountable through regular reports to the General Conference and the Connectional Council.

4. Representation. The Connectional Young People's Council shall have:

a. Ex officio seating and voice at all plenary sessions of the General Conference;

b. Voting membership on the Connectional Council and all major boards and agencies of the church;

c. The right to nominate young people for election to all connectional bodies where young people are eligible to serve.

5. Funding. The General Conference shall allocate not less than [X]% of the general church budget to the

Connectional Young People's Ministry. These funds shall be administered in accordance with the financial policies and oversight procedures of the Global Methodist Church, under the direction of the Connectional Young People's Council and in coordination with the Connectional Council. The Council shall present its budget request directly to the Connectional Council and the General Conference for approval.

6. Direct Access. Bishops, conference superintendents, and connectional leaders shall interface directly with the elected leadership of the Connectional Young People's Ministry on all matters affecting young people. Where regional coordination is necessary, it shall be facilitated through the Young People's Council, not around it.

7. Mandatory Review by Connectional Young People's Council. Any petition, resolution, or structural proposal before the General Conference or any Annual Conference that directly affects young people's ministry, education, or evangelism shall be referred to the Connectional Young People's Council for review and recommendation before final vote. The Council's recommendation shall be included in the official record of the legislative committee and reported to the plenary.

PETITION 1067

Resolution

Establishment of a Global Contextualization Task Force for the Book of Doctrines and Discipline

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

As a global denomination, the Global Methodist Church must ensure its governing document reflects the diversity of its people and contexts. While doctrinal unity remains essential, aspects of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline reflect assumptions rooted primarily in the United States. A carefully appointed task force will allow for thoughtful, representative, and connectional discernment, engaging voices from across the worldwide church. This process will help produce legislation for 2032 that preserves theological integrity while fostering greater global relevance, adaptability, and missional effectiveness.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Global Methodist Church is a worldwide body composed of clergy and laity from diverse cultural, linguistic, economic, and geopolitical contexts; and

WHEREAS, the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* serves as the foundational document guiding the doctrine, governance, and practice of the church; and

WHEREAS, the current structure, language, and assumptions within the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* reflect, in significant measure, a United States–centric perspective; and

WHEREAS, the continued growth and vitality of the Global Methodist Church depend upon a Discipline that is both doctrinally faithful and contextually adaptable across its global connection; and

WHEREAS, a more globally attentive Discipline would strengthen unity, enhance missional effectiveness, and better reflect the lived realities of the church in Africa, Europe, the Philippines, and other regions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of 2026 directs the Connectional Council to establish a *Global Contextualization Task Force*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Connectional Council shall determine the composition of the Task Force, ensuring broad geographic representation and inclusion of voices from the various regions of the Global Methodist Church, including both clergy and laity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall be charged with:

(1) Conducting a comprehensive review of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* to identify provisions that are culturally or structurally U.S.-centric;

(2) Consulting with regional leaders, annual conferences, and theological voices from across the global church;

(3) Recommending principles for a more globally contextual and connectionally appropriate Discipline; and

(4) Drafting proposed legislation and amendments to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* that reflect the global

nature of the church while maintaining doctrinal integrity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall report its findings and submit proposed legislation to the Connectional Council no later than a date determined sufficient for inclusion in the legislative process leading up to the 2032 General Conference; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Connectional Council shall ensure that the proposed legislation is made widely available across the connection in advance of the 2032 General Conference for study, feedback, and prayerful consideration; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Global Methodist Church commits itself to the ongoing work of becoming a truly global church, rooted in shared doctrine while attentive to the diverse contexts in which its members live and serve.

PETITION 1330

Resolution

Establish Pension Benefits for Non-USA Clergy and Staff

Petitioner: Wilton Odongo

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)

Legislative Committee: Constitution, Connectional Organization, and Finance

RATIONALE:

This resolution seeks to initiate a fund to support non-US pensions and benefit plans for pastors and staff workers in the Global Methodist Church. Given that starting a religious pension initiative involves some funding to set up systems such as legalization of the scheme in conformity with the law of each of country, this one-time denominational-wide contribution will give it a head start.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION IS A RESOLUTION

The General Conference hereby directs the Finance, Administration, Pensions and Benefits Commission to launch and oversee, in consultation with others it deems appropriate, a one-time denomination-wide fundraising campaign to provide financial support for the establishment of pension and benefit plans for non-US clergy and lay staff in annual conferences of the Global Methodist Church in which the commission identifies such pension support as a pressing need. The commission may fulfill the requirements of this petition by creating a task force for this purpose.

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

all ¶900s · the Judicial Processes & Procedures

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PETITION 1284

¶9XX (NEW)

Recusal and Conflicts of Interest for the Council on Appeals

Petitioner: Jay Therrell
Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

The Connectional Council on Appeals serves as the highest judicial body of the Global Methodist Church and must maintain the strictest standards of impartiality, integrity, and public confidence in its decisions. This paragraph establishes clear rules governing conflicts of interest, mandatory recusal, and the prohibition of ex parte communications to ensure that every matter is decided solely on the record and in accordance with the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION ADDS A NEW ¶9XX

¶ 9XX. Conflicts of Interest, Recusal, and Ex Parte Communications

Purpose. Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall conduct themselves with absolute impartiality and shall avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, bias, or appearance of impropriety that could undermine confidence in the Church's judicial process. This policy governs all participation in any appeal, review, or other matter that may come before the Council.

Prohibition on Ex Parte Communications and Pre-Decisional Participation.

No member of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall give advice, counsel, or opinion to any person or entity concerning any matter that is or may reasonably be expected to come before the Council as an appeal, request for declaratory decision, or other judicial proceeding.

No member shall participate in any discussion, meeting, correspondence, or other communication—formal or informal—about any such matter with any party, counsel, annual conference official, or other interested person outside the formal proceedings of the Council.

This prohibition applies from the time a matter is filed or reasonably anticipated until the Council has issued its final decision and any rehearing period has expired.

Inadvertent Participation and Mandatory Recusal. If a member inadvertently participates in a discussion or receives information about a matter that later comes before the Council, the member shall immediately disclose the circumstances to the chair (or, if the chair is the affected member, to the vice-chair or the full Council) and shall recuse himself or herself from all further participation in that matter. Recusal is mandatory; no vote of the Council may waive it in cases of *ex parte* involvement.

Financial and Personal Conflicts of Interest. A conflict of interest exists whenever a member, or a member of the member's immediate family (spouse, parent, child, sibling, or any person residing in the member's household), has:

A direct or indirect financial interest (including compensation, investment, ownership, or potential gain or loss) in any entity, contract, grant, or outcome affected by the matter; or

Any other personal, professional, relational, or prior involvement that could reasonably be expected to impair the member's objectivity. In such cases, the member shall fully disclose the conflict in writing and shall recuse himself

or herself from all discussion, deliberation, and voting on the matter. The recused member shall not be present during consideration of the item unless the remaining members, after full disclosure and by a two-thirds vote, determine the interest is so remote or insignificant that no conflict exists. Recusal shall be recorded in the minutes.

Annual Conference-Specific Matters. A member of the Connectional Council on Appeals who is a clergy member, lay member, or resident of a particular annual conference shall not participate in any discussion, deliberation, or vote on any matter that specifically and uniquely affects only that annual conference (including, but not limited to, appeals arising from disciplinary actions, constitutional questions, funding decisions, or administrative reviews limited to that conference). This provision does not apply to matters of general application across the connection including a decision of law from an annual conference whose subject matter applies beyond the annual conference from which it arose. The member shall recuse himself or herself, and the recusal shall be recorded in the minutes.

Duty of Disclosure and Annual Statements. Before any meeting or consideration of a docketed matter, each member shall disclose fully and promptly any actual or potential conflict or *ex parte* involvement. All members shall complete and submit an annual disclosure statement to the secretary of the Council identifying any employment, contracts, financial holdings, relationships, or other circumstances that could give rise to a conflict or *ex parte* issue.

Procedure for Recusal and Quorum.

Recusal is the primary responsibility of the individual member, but any member may raise a question of conflict or *ex parte* involvement concerning another member. The chair (or the Council in the chair's absence) shall rule on the question, subject to appeal to the full Council. The appeal shall require a majority vote of the remaining members and shall be final.

A recused member shall be replaced by an alternate for that docket item.

The secretary shall maintain a public record (subject to appropriate confidentiality) of all disclosures, recusals, and related votes.

Violations and Remedies. Any knowing violation of this policy, including failure to disclose or recuse, shall be reported immediately to the chair and to the Connectional Council. Upon reporting the alleged violation to the Connectional Council, the Connectional Council shall investigate the relevant facts. The Connectional Council may vote, by a 2/3 majority, to remove the Connectional Council on Appeals member in question. The member shall have the right to offer a defense to the full Connectional Council.

PETITION 1114

¶903

Additional Flexibility for Unresolved Complaints

Petitioner: Conference Connectional Council

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: North Carolina

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Para. 903 currently requires every complaint that reaches the conference superintendent's desk follow the entire process as currently outlined. The proposed additional language would allow the conference superintendent to return the compliant to the local church and respective PE if he/she determines that no authentic attempt at resolution has occurred prior to submitting the complaint to the superintendent.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶903

Section I. Complaints ¶ 903. COMPLAINTS. The process of accountability is initiated when a formal complaint is filed. A complaint is a written and signed statement alleging misconduct as defined in ¶ 908.1–2 (a judicial complaint) or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties (an administrative complaint, ¶¶ 906–907). If the complaint is against a bishop, the complaint shall be submitted to the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee. If the complaint is against a pastor, the complaint shall be submitted to that pastor's Pastor-Parish Relations committee chair or equivalent, presiding elder, and conference superintendent. If the complaint is against a local church member, the complaint shall be submitted to the presiding elder over that local church, the Church Council chair of that local church or equivalent, the pastor of that local church, and the conference superintendent. Upon receipt of the complaint, <u>if the conference superintendent determines that there has been no authentic attempt to resolve the complaint at the local church level, the conference superintendent can refer the complaint back to the local church and respective PE for pastoral resolution. If an attempt to resolve the complaint pastorally in the local church is unsuccessful,</u> the conference superintendent or their designee shall handle the complaint throughout its process. Upon receiving a complaint, the duly authorized recipient shall describe the complaint process in writing both to the person making the complaint ("complainant") and the person against whom the complaint is made ("respondent"). As the complaint process progresses, the duly authorized recipient of the complaint shall continue to describe in writing to the complainant and recipient new parts of the process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended only once for thirty (30) days upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

PETITION 1327

¶903

Full Biblical Accountability

Petitioner: Tyson Heins

Organization: Madison Ebenezer (US: Heartland)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

It can be argued confidential information may not be the basis for a complaint. Those who seek to teach & those who desire the position of overseer are called & held to the highest & most strict level of accountability (James 3:1). They are accountable to both the Biblical (1 Peter 5:2-3, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9) & Book of Doctrines & Discipline (¶503, ¶505, ¶¶601-603,) qualifications. Furthermore, they are accountable to the whole church for their behavior & actions as long as they hold orders within the denomination (¶901). Therefore, modifying ¶903 ensures complaints can be brought regardless of when or where the misconduct or unsatisfactory performance occurs subject to the limitations of ¶908.3-908.4.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶903

The process of accountability is initiated when a formal complaint is filed. A complaint is a written and signed statement alleging misconduct as defined in ¶908.1–2 (a judicial complaint) or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties (an administrative complaint, ¶¶906–907). Complaints shall be received as valid regardless of the circumstances under which the alleged misconduct or unsatisfactory performance is discovered by the complainant including but not limited to confidential meetings and proceedings. If the complaint is against a bishop, the complaint shall be submitted to the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee. If the complaint is against a pastor, the complaint shall be submitted to that pastor's Pastor-Parish Relations committee chair or equivalent, presiding elder, and conference superintendent. If the complaint is against a local church member, the complaint shall be submitted to the presiding elder over that local church, the Church Council chair of that local church or equivalent, the pastor of that local church, and the conference superintendent. Upon receipt of the complaint, the conference superintendent or their designee shall handle the complaint throughout its process. Upon receiving a complaint, the duly authorized recipient shall describe the complaint process in writing both to the person making the complaint ("complainant") and the person against whom the complaint is made ("respondent"). ~~As the complaint process progresses, the duly authorized recipient of the complaint shall continue to describe in writing to the complainant and recipient new parts of the process in a timely fashion.~~ As the complaint process progresses, the duly authorized recipient of the complaint shall continue to describe in writing to the complainant and recipient respondent new parts of the process in a timely fashion. All original time limitations may be extended only once for thirty (30) days upon the consent of the complainant and the respondent.

PETITION 1045

¶905

Petition to Amend Paragraph 905 from the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Allegheny West

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

The presumption of innocence has long been standard in ecclesial jurisprudence, including in our Wesleyan heritage. This presumption is understood within the mandates of the Book of Doctrines and Disciplines. ¶ 915.2 states, "In order to be sustained, the church must establish [...] clear and convincing evidence. In order for evidence to be clear and convincing [...] the court must demonstrate that the specification is highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue." This requirement for clear, convincing evidence that is highly and substantially more likely to be true is an expression of the presumption of innocence that ought to be explicitly present at all stages where fair process applies.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶905

¶ 905 As a part of the holy covenant that exists within the membership and organization of the Global Methodist Church, the following procedures protect the rights of individuals and the church in administrative and judicial processes. The principles set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever there is an administrative or judicial complaint. The presumption of innocence shall be maintained as a principle of fair process. Special attention shall be given to the timely disposition of all matters and to ensuring racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the committees dealing with complaints.

PETITION 1081

¶905

Extending Fair Process to Include Anti-retaliation and Restorative Communication

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation

Submitter Type: Group

Organization: US: Trinity

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Protect complainants and respondents from retaliation. Confirms outcomes of complaints in writing.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶905 BY ADDING NEW ¶905.11 AND ¶905.12

11. Anti-Retaliation. No person or body subject to this Book of Doctrines and Discipline shall bring negative action against a complainant, respondent, witness, support person, or other participant for reporting sincere concerns, invoking fair process, earnestly contesting removal/appointment, participating in mediation, or pursuing appeal.

12. Reputation and Communication. When a complaint or charge is dismissed or overturned on appeal, the process chair may issue a written communication to any persons or bodies with a legitimate need to know stating that the matter has been resolved and that no adverse inference should be drawn beyond the disposition reached.

PETITION 1440

¶905

A Process for Administration of Complains with Multiple Complainants or Respondents

Petitioner: Global Episcopacy Committee

Organization: Global Methodist Church

Submitter Type: Group

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

To provide for judicial efficiency, allow, but not mandate, a process of combining complaints from multiple individuals (or one complaint with multiple signers) involving the same respondent and the same claims and circumstances for processing under Part Nine with consideration of the rights of the complainants to pursue such claims individually.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶905 BY ADDING NEW SUBPARAGRAPH ¶905.11

11. Multiple Complainants and Respondents. In all proceedings under Part Nine, to provide for judicial economy and efficiency:

Multiple individuals who have allegedly been harmed by the same or comparable event or action by the same respondent may join together to file a single complaint against the respondent. In that event, the multiple parties filing the single complaint shall select one representative to serve as the complainant for all the parties who signed the complaint, and that complainant shall have the right to select the support person for the complaint process.

In the event multiple complaints are filed against the same respondent based on the same or substantially the same claims, conduct or circumstances, the process chair may, but shall not be required to, combine the multiple complaints for administration during the complaint process. In that event, the parties filing the multiple complaints shall select one of the complaining parties to serve as the complainant for all the parties who signed a separate complaint, and that designated complainant shall have the right to select the support person for the complaint process.

If the multiple parties who filed one complaint, or the several persons who filed multiple complaints as described in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above, are not combined by the process chair, as set forth above, all parties who joined in the complaint or complaints shall have the right to be present and to speak at any and all stages of the complaint process and each shall be entitled to have a support person.

In the case of multiple respondents to a single complaint, each respondent shall have the same right to be present and speak at any and all stages of the complaint process.

Any party to a complaint involving multiple complainants or respondents, or any party named in multiple complaints against the same respondent involving the same claims, conduct or circumstances has the right to request a bifurcation (division) of the claims listed in the complaint, and the matter may be bifurcated by the process chair or presiding officer upon a showing of just cause.

The dismissal of a combined complaint, or of any individual complaint within a consolidated proceeding on procedural or technical grounds shall not bar any individual complaint whose claim(s) were not subject to the same procedural deficiency from their original complaint continuing based on their individual circumstances.

PETITION 1453

¶906.2

Nominations of Annual Conference Administrative Review Committee Members

Petitioner: Conference Board Of Ministry
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: North Alabama
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Paragraphs 607.1(o) and 710.7(b) state that the conference superintendent nominates the members of the Annual Conference Administrative Review Committee. Paragraph 906.2 states that the nominations are made by the bishop, which is incongruent with the previous two paragraphs. This petition aligns all paragraphs. The Conference Superintendent was preferred in this instance because he/she is charged with the temporal leadership of the annual conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶906.2

906.2. There shall be an administrative review committee in every annual conference composed of three ordained clergy and two alternates who are not members of the cabinet, the board of ministry, or immediate family members of those two groups. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. ~~The committee shall be nominated by the bishop and elected by the clergy session of the annual conference.~~ The committee shall be nominated by the conference superintendent and elected by the clergy session of the annual conference. Its only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as per the requirements of the JPP 2 and 3, and fair process (¶ 905).

PETITION 1082

¶908.2

Additional Chargeable Offenses for Laity

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Organization: US: Trinity
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Provide additional clergy protection, clearly stating that attempting to force clergy removal is a chargeable offenses.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶908.2.(f)

2. Chargeable Offenses for Laity. A professing member of a local church may be charged (subject to the statute of limitations as specified in ¶ 908.3) with the following offenses:

(a) Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities, including but not limited to child or elder abuse, theft, or assault;

(b) Fiscal malfeasance or gross financial mismanagement;

(c) Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination or harassment;

(d) Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;

(e) Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church; or

(f) Relationships and/or behavior that undermines the ministry of a pastor and/or seeks to forcibly compel a resignation, status change, or request for transfer.

PETITION 1421

¶908.2

Judicial Complaints of Sexual Misconduct for Both Clergy and Laity

Petitioner: Wilton T.A. Odongo

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Rationale: In ¶ 104, The Holy Scripture is the primary rule and authority for faith, morals, and service, against which all other authorities must be measured for the Global Methodist Church, both lay and clergy. Clergy members should always include the laity when guided by the Bible in doctrinal obedience or morals. Therefore, all members of the Global Methodist Church should have equal judgment parameters when it comes to faith, moral standards, and service.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION WOULD ADD ¶908.2(g)

¶908. 2 (g) Any member of the local church who engages in sexual activities outside the bonds of a loving and monogamous marriage between one man and one woman, including but not limited to sexual abuse or misconduct, the use or possession of pornography, or infidelity.

PETITION 1423

¶908.2

Amending Chargeable Offenses of Lay Members

Petitioner: Miguel Velez

Submitter Type: Individual

Organization: Brookhaven Skyland (US: North Georgia)

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Skyland Church is proposing a "last resort" approach to formal disciplinary charges between members, citing the division and mistrust such actions cause within the congregation. Their goal is to prioritize internal resolution, fellowship, and mutual accountability over formal proceedings to maintain church unity.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶908.2.d AND DELETES ¶908.2.e

¶ 908.2.d

Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church may constitute a chargeable offense when such actions disrupt the ministry of the church and/or undermine the ministry of the pastor.

~~¶ 908.2.e~~

~~e. Disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;~~

PETITION 1311

¶909.2

Suspension of Lay Members from Leadership Positions Pending Trial

Petitioner: General Conference Delegation
Submitter Type: Group
Organization: US: Virginia
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

This petition seeks to amend ¶ 909 to include language allowing for the suspension of laity from active leadership during investigation to prevent continued harm, nullify authority, and protect the church, ministry setting, and respondent. This provision parallels existing practices for clergy and bishops under investigation, ensuring consistency, fairness, and accountability across all orders of the Church.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶909.2

2. *Suspension.* To avoid harm to the church or ministry setting or to the respondent, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee, with the affirmative vote of a majority of the Global Episcopacy Committee (if the respondent is a bishop) or the bishop with the affirmative vote of a majority of the cabinet (if the respondent is clergy), may suspend the respondent from all ministry responsibilities during the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. The respondent retains all rights and privileges, including continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, while suspended from ministerial duties, provided, however, that they shall not interfere with an interim bishop or pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended. If the respondent is laity, and the Conference Superintendent, Presiding Elder, and Pastor are in unanimous agreement, they may suspend the respondent from all local church leadership positions during the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. The respondent shall not interfere with an interim leader, selected to carry out their duties, while they are suspended. If the judicial complaint does not proceed to trial, the respondent's suspension must be lifted at that time.

PETITION 1046

¶917.3

Petition to Amend Paragraph 917 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline.

Petitioner: Shreve Community
Organization: US: Allegheny West
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Currently, there is no mandate from the Book of Discipline to require bishops to rule on questions of law, which inadvertently gives bishops the freedom to choose the questions on which they will rule. This gives bishops the unintended power to veto the appeals process by simply not ruling on questions that are properly placed before them. This veto power is violative of Article XI of the Constitution which guarantees clergy's and member's right to appeal. This amendment mandates the right and responsibility that the rulings must be made, it stipulates the parameters of how they may be made, and instructs the limitations of those rulings. By passing this amendment we will bring our Book of Discipline back in line with our Constitution.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶917 BY ADDING SUBPARAGRAPH ¶917.3

¶917.3 A bishop presiding over an annual or regional conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing. The decision shall be recorded by the conference secretary in the journal of the conference. Such an episcopal decision shall not be authoritative, except in the pending case, until it shall have been passed upon by the Connectional Council of Appeals. All decisions of law made by each bishop shall be reported in writing annually, with a syllabus of the same, to the Connectional Council on Appeals, which shall affirm, modify, or reverse them.

PETITION 1414

¶920.1

Establishment of the Number of Clergy and Laity to Be Elected to the Connectional Council on Appeals

Petitioner: Vicky Johnson

Organization: Rogers Bland Chapel (US: Trinity)

Submitter Type: Individual

Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Since the term of office for those elected in 2024 was only two years, alternating every six years beginning in 2024 would result in a switch in numbers in 2030 when there would be no General Conference at which new members could be elected. This proposed amendment would leave the mix of clergy and laity unchanged in 2026 and begin the six-year alternating cycles to coincide with the years in which General Conference will be held going forward. It would also clarify the application of the term limits does not include the initial two-year terms of the current members. If adopted by General Conference, this language needs to be effective before election of Connectional Council on Appeals members at the 2026 General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶920.1

¶ 920. MEMBERSHIP. 1. The Connectional Council on Appeals is the highest judicial body in the Global Methodist Church. The council shall be composed of seven members. ~~When the initial council is elected by the convening General Conference, four members shall be clergy and three members shall be laity.~~ Members elected at the 2024 Convening General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the term limit specified herein. At the 2026 General Conference four members shall be clergy and three members shall be laity. A member's term of office shall be six years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive six-year terms. The number of clergy and laity shall alternate every six years so that the clergy have the four members during one six-year term and the laity have the four members during the next six-year term. ~~Members shall either be elders or laity who are professing members of the Global Methodist Church.~~ Members shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church (clergy or laity). Bishops shall be ineligible for election to the council. The language of this petition will be effective upon passage by the 2026 General Conference.

PETITION 1289

¶920.4

Allowing More Candidates for Council on Appeals

Petitioner: Jay Therrell
Organization: St Johns Mandarin (US: Florida)
Submitter Type: Individual
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

With the new recusal rules specifically requiring a member of the Council not to participate in a matter that relates to a single annual conference to which the Council member belongs, this amendment allows the Council member to serve on annual conference, district, and local church bodies. This would increase the number of available persons to serve on the Council, especially from smaller annual conferences and those outside the U.S.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS AND ADDS TO ¶920.4

¶ 920.4. *Ineligibility.* ~~Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General Conference or to serve on any general church or annual conference board or commission.~~ Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General Conference or to serve on any general church board or commission. Members may serve on annual conference, district, or local church boards, councils, or committees subject to the provisions of ¶ 9XX regarding recusals, conflicts of interest, and *ex parte* communication.

PETITION 1154

¶920.5

Consistency of Nominations for Connectional Council on Appeals (2 of 3)

Petitioner: Connectional Council
Organization: Global Methodist Church
Submitter Type: Group
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

The Book of Doctrines and Discipline (BDD) is not clear and consistent in describing the source of nominations for service on Connectional Commissions, Councils and the Global Episcopacy Committee. This petition (along with two other accompanying petitions) provides uniform language and makes clear that nominations come from the duly elected annual conference delegations to General Conference.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION AMENDS ¶920.5

¶ 920. MEMBERSHIP

...

5. *Nominations.* Each duly elected annual conference delegation shall nominate, by majority vote of both lay and clergy delegates, up to two persons (clergy or lay, but not bishops) as candidates for the Council. ~~In advance of the General Conference, the administrative Nominations Committee shall nominate by majority vote a total of 21 persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories.~~ The General Conference's administrative nominations committee shall, from the list of candidates received from annual conference delegations, propose a slate of 21 persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories, provided that individuals nominated by annual conference delegations who do not appear on the slate may be renominated by their delegation as specified in the Plan of Organization and Covenant for Our Life Together. ~~On the first day of the General Conference, nominations of clergy or laity may be made from the floor.~~ Name, annual conference membership and biographical information not to exceed 100 words shall be published for review by delegates to the General Conference at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of election. Election shall occur without discussion or debate, by ballot and majority vote.

PETITION 1130

Part IX / JPP

Consolidating the Judicial Administration Process (BDD and JPP)

Petitioner: Chris Gadlage
Submitter Type: Individual
Organization: Avon Bartlett Chapel (US: Great Lakes)
Legislative Committee: Judicial Administration

RATIONALE:

Several members of the 2024 Judicial Administration legislative committee met independently to address missing elements, conflicts, and unclear portions of Part Nine and the JPP. • Our guiding principles were a judicial process that is Biblical, clear, simple, and practical. • Part Nine and the JPP are combined here for clarity and ease of use. • Additionally, the process has been revised for a simplified process, uniform treatment, and use of common terminology where practical. • We worked with representatives from numerous stakeholders. The addition of ¶ 710.2.e at the end is made necessary by the wide implications of the proposed changes in Part Nine.

TEXT:

THIS PETITION REPLACES THE ENTIRE CURRENT PART NINE AND JUDICIAL PRACTICE & PROCEDURES AND ADDS ¶710.2.e

Part Nine – Judicial Administration

¶ 901. ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHURCH. Founded in the call to faithfulness and holiness in the Old and New Testaments, Global Methodist Church judicial administration seeks to honor God in all things. It is grounded in the ministry of reconciliation given to the Church by Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18). Its purpose is to protect the integrity of individuals and the Church and to restore the unity of the body (Proverbs 25:9-10; Galatians 6:1-2). Through their membership and ordination vows, laity and clergy enter into a sacred trust of accountability with one another, committing to live in accordance with the covenant of grace, guided by biblical truth and the witness of the Holy Spirit (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Colossians 3:16). The purpose of any complaint or appeal is the pursuit of justice that leads to repentance, forgiveness, and restoration (Galatians 6:1-2). All who participate in these processes shall do so as Christ's servants—valuing wisdom, impartiality, confidentiality, transparency of process, and love—seeking to speak the truth in love and to watch over one another in faithfulness (Ephesians 4:15; James 1:26). Through such discipline exercised in grace, the Church bears witness to God's righteousness, mercy, and redeeming work in the world.

¶ 902. DEFINITIONS.

1. Complainant. The person filing a formal complaint will be called the complainant.

2. Respondent. The person against whom the complaint is filed will be called the respondent.

3. Confidentiality. All formal complaints and supporting evidence shall be treated by all parties involved including those persons or entities who receive notification of the complaint as confidential except for those persons that may be directly involved in the complaint process (e.g. witnesses to the applicable events) or as may be permitted by the person leading the process, or as otherwise provided in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

4. Duly authorized recipient. The duly authorized recipient of a formal complaint shall be:

a. the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee if the respondent is an active bishop.

b. the respondent's bishop if the respondent is a conference superintendent.

c. the clergy person's presiding elder or conference superintendent if the respondent is clergy serving as neither an active bishop nor a conference superintendent.

d. the local church's presiding elder if the respondent is a local church member.

5. Process chair. The person charged with handling and directing the complaint process will be called the process chair. The process chair shall be:

a. the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee if the respondent is an active bishop.

b. the respondent's bishop if the respondent is a conference superintendent. If the complainant is the respondent's bishop, the process chair will be designated by the Assembly of Bishops.

c. the clergy person's conference superintendent if the respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop.

d. the local church's conference superintendent if the respondent is a local church member.

6. Designee. The process chair may designate another person to administer one or more of the phases of the complaint process, including, but not limited to, the supervisory response stage. If the process chair is the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee only a member of the Global Episcopacy Committee may serve as designee. If the process chair is the conference superintendent, only a member of the cabinet may serve as designee.

7. Meetings. For purposes of the complaint process, a meeting or hearing may be conducted in person or via electronic means so long as all persons participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting, with in-person or video conferencing being the preference if at all possible. A person participating in a meeting by such means shall be considered present in person at the meeting.

8. Presiding Officer. The duly authorized officer presiding over a trial court. See ¶ 914.11 for proper designations.

Section I. Complaints

¶ 903. COMPLAINTS. The complaint process is initiated by a formal complaint being filed. A complaint is a written and signed statement specifying alleged misconduct as defined in ¶ 908 (a judicial complaint) or unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties as defined in ¶¶ 906, 907 (an administrative complaint). All time calculations under Part Nine commence on the date the process chair forwards an administrative complaint or judicial complaint to the respondent. The process chair must make every effort to confirm the respondent received the complaint.

1. All complaints shall be submitted to the duly authorized recipient. In the case of an administrative complaint against clergy not serving as an active bishop, the duly authorized recipient shall confirm the local church's Pastor-Parish Relations Committee attempted to find a resolution. If they have not, the complaint shall be referred to the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to seek resolution prior to formal complaint. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved at the local church, the duly authorized recipient shall formally receive the complaint.

2. The duly authorized recipient shall forward the complaint to the appropriate process chair and the respondent immediately. The complaint shall be handled by the process chair throughout the process.

3. Upon receipt of the complaint, the process chair shall designate the complaint as an administrative or judicial complaint, forward a copy of the complaint to the respondent, and refer the parties to Part Nine and specifically ¶ 925 for explanation of the complaint process in writing within ten (10) days of receiving the complaint. If a judicial complaint does not state a specific violation of church law, the process chair may declare the complaint invalid.

a. If the respondent is an active bishop, the process chair must notify the Global Episcopacy Committee, the Assembly of Bishops, all superintendency committees in the episcopal area, and the area episcopal committee of the respondent. The process chair must keep all of these parties apprised of the complaint's process.

b. If the respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop, the process chair must notify the chairperson of their Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or equivalent and their conference superintendent (or the chair of the conference superintendency committee if the respondent is a conference superintendent) that an administrative or judicial complaint has been received against the respondent. The process chair must keep all of these parties apprised of the complaint's process.

c. If the respondent is a local church member, the process chair must notify the church council chairperson or equivalent of the respondent's local church, the senior pastor of the respondent's local church, and the conference superintendent that an administrative or judicial complaint has been received against the respondent. The process chair must keep all of these parties apprised of the complaint's process.

4. If the complaint is declared valid, the respondent may submit a written response, which must be provided to the process chair and the complainant at least five (5) days before the supervisory response meeting. As the complaint process progresses, the process chair shall keep the complainant and respondent apprised of any developments in processing the complaint in a timely fashion.

5. The process chair may extend all designated time limitations one-time for thirty (30) days, at the request of either party or upon the process chair's own motion. In addition to other extensions provided for in Part Nine, further extensions must be approved by all parties. All minimum time requirements in the process may be waived on a case-by-case basis with the written consent of all parties and the process chair.

6. The complainant may withdraw the complaint in writing at any point during the process prior to final disposition. Notice of withdrawal shall be provided to all informed parties. The complainant may not refile a withdrawn complaint for the same alleged offenses and same set of facts.

¶ 904. JUST RESOLUTION AGREEMENT. Complaints may be resolved at any stage by a just resolution agreement. A just resolution agreement is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability, making things right in so far as possible, and bringing healing to all the parties. With the agreement of all parties to the complaint, the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s) may be utilized to seek a just resolution satisfactory to all parties. Special attention should be given to ensuring that cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender contexts are valued throughout the process in terms of their understandings of fairness, justice, and restoration. A resolution of the complaint at any stage shall involve a written statement of the allegations, a list of all parties to the complaint, determination of facts, elucidation of context, and plan of action or agreed penalty to address the allegations, including follow-up accountability. Any just resolution agreement for a complaint that involves an allegation of disobedience to a provision of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* shall include a commitment by the respondent to abide by all applicable disciplinary requirements. A just resolution agreement shall not be imposed but must be voluntarily agreed to and signed by all parties to the complaint, including as a minimum: the complainant, the respondent, and the person presiding over the current stage of the

process. A just resolution agreement shall be a final disposition of the related complaint. If future requirements are included in the just resolution agreement, repercussions for failure to comply must also be included. The process chair and their oversight body (Global Episcopacy Committee, if respondent is an active bishop or the cabinet otherwise) shall be responsible for verifying completion of any future requirements and administering any prescribed punitive measures if necessary.

1. All parties receiving a copy of a just resolution agreement shall treat the agreement as confidential. The just resolution agreement shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file if clergy. A just resolution agreement shall not be disseminated or distributed except to those persons or entities given access in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. All just resolution agreements shall include this paragraph from *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

¶ 905. PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PROCESS. As a part of the Holy Covenant that exists within the membership and organization of the Global Methodist Church, the following procedures protect the rights of individuals and the church in administrative and judicial processes. The principles set forth in this paragraph shall be followed whenever there is an administrative or judicial complaint. Special attention shall be given to the timely disposition of all matters and consideration should be given to racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the committees dealing with complaints.

1. Right to Be Heard. The process chair, the complainant, and the respondent shall have a right to be heard before any final action is taken at any stage in the process.

2. Right to Notice. The respondent and complainant have the right to notice of any hearing with sufficient detail to allow the respondent to prepare a response. Notice shall be given not less than thirty (30) days prior to any hearing. This time may be shortened by the express consent of the complainant, respondent, and the process chair.

3. Right to Presence and Accompaniment. The respondent and the complainant shall have a right to be present at all hearings and the right to be accompanied to any hearing by a support person with the right to speak on their behalf. The support person shall be a member of the Global Methodist Church. A designated translator will not be considered a support person. Under no circumstances shall the church award compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's or complainant's use of an attorney.

4. Access to Records. The respondent shall have access, at least thirty (30) days prior to any hearing, to all records to be relied upon in the determination of the outcome of the process, including the written texts of the complaints themselves.

5. Ex Parte Communication. Once the supervisory response process has concluded, under no circumstances shall one party, in the absence of the other party, discuss substantive issues with members of the body hearing the pending matter with the exception of ¶ 905.6. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer of the hearing body, with the answers shared with all parties.

6. Failure to Respond. In the event that a respondent fails to appear for supervisory interviews, refuses mail, refuses to communicate personally with the process chair, or otherwise fails to respond to supervisory requests or requests from official committees, such actions or inactions shall not be used as an excuse to avoid or delay any church processes, and such processes may continue without the participation of such individual.

7. Healing. As a part of the accountability process, the bishop and cabinet, in consultation with the presiding officer

of any hearing, trial, or appellate body hearing the pending matter, shall provide resources for healing if there has been significant disruption to a congregation, annual conference, or ministry context by the matter. Resources for healing shall include communication about the process. Release of information must not compromise the process or confidentiality as defined above.

8. Double Jeopardy. No person shall be subject to double jeopardy. No complaint shall be accepted for the same alleged offenses based on the same set of facts, when a similar complaint has already been adjudicated via just resolution agreement or final action by an administrative or judicial body. This does not preclude filing a new complaint for new instances of the same offense. The counsel for the Church or respondent may appeal a decision regarding double jeopardy directly to the Connectional Council on Appeals (¶ 921.9.c) within ten (10) days of the decision with notice to all parties. Such appeal shall suspend the complaint process and all timelines and deadlines until a ruling is made.

9. Immunity From Prosecution. To preserve the integrity of the church's process and ensure full participation at all times, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee, the bishop, conference superintendent, cabinet, board of ministry, witnesses, support persons, counsel, administrative review committee, clergy voting in executive session, and all others who participate in the church's process shall have immunity from prosecution of complaints brought against them related to their role in a particular process, unless they have committed a chargeable offense in conscious and knowing bad faith. The complainant/plaintiff in any proceeding against any such person related to their role in a particular judicial process shall have the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence, that such person's actions constituted a chargeable offense committed knowingly in bad faith. The immunity set forth in this provision shall extend to civil court proceedings, to the fullest extent permissible by civil laws.

10. Counsel for the Church. No person who was a member of the Global Episcopacy Committee, cabinet, conference staff, board of ministry, or committee on investigation on or after the date of the alleged offense shall be appointed counsel for the Church or serve as counsel for the respondent or any of the persons bringing complaints in a case. By agreeing to serve, the counsel for the Church signifies his or her willingness to uphold the requirements of church law and *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*. Counsel for the Church shall represent the interests of the church in pressing the claims of the person making the complaint.

11. Multiple Complainants and Respondents. In all proceedings under Part Nine, to provide for judicial economy and an opportunity for all complainants and respondents to be heard:

a. Multiple individuals who have allegedly been harmed by an action or event may join together to file a single complaint, and all shall have the right to be present and to speak at any and all stages of the complaint process. In the case of multiple respondents to a single complaint, each shall likewise have the same right to be present and speak at any and all stages of the complaint process.

b. Multiple complaints based on the same or substantially the same claims or circumstances may be combined at the suggestion of the process chair into one or more complaints, upon the consent of all complainants.

c. Any party to a complaint involving multiple complainants or respondents has the right to request a bifurcation (division) of the matter, and the matter may be bifurcated upon a showing of just cause.

12. Protection from Retaliation. During or after the complaint process, an active bishop respondent shall not alter the appointment of a clergy complainant or related party to a complaint except with the approval of the Assembly of Bishops.

¶ 906. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING CLERGY NOT SERVING AS AN ACTIVE BISHOP. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 908. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons who are within the scope of a respondent's ministry, other clergy familiar with the respondent's ministry, the presiding elder, the conference superintendent, or the bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. Processing of an administrative complaint shall include an administrative supervisory response, which shall, if warranted, be followed by an investigative response, an administrative review, and an appeal.

a. Supervisory Response – The first step in resolving an administrative complaint is a required meeting of the complainant, the respondent, and the process chair. Both parties and the process chair are all entitled to have a support person with them who may speak on their behalf in the meeting. The participants in the meeting shall be informed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled meeting, and the written complaint shall be presented to the respondent at least thirty (30) days prior to any supervisory response meeting. The purpose of the supervisory response is to, so far as possible, establish facts, consider circumstances and explanations, determine if there is an issue that merits action, and arrive at a plan of addressing the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties (if any).

The supervisory response shall result in one of three possible outcomes:

1) The process chair may dismiss a complaint if it lacks a basis in fact, church law, or both. Such dismissal requires a majority affirming vote of the cabinet (or when the respondent is an active bishop, a majority affirming vote of the Global Episcopacy Committee). In such a case, the process chair shall provide a written rationale for dismissing the complaint, which shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file and copies shall be provided to the complainant and respondent.

2) A just resolution agreement is agreed to by all parties, signed, and placed in the respondent's personnel file.

3) A just resolution agreement is not signed, and the process chair determines that the allegations may have a basis in fact and church law to merit a response. In such cases, the complaint shall be forwarded to a committee on investigation of the board of ministry for an examination and investigative process.

The supervisory response shall be completed within sixty (60) days of the process chair sending the complaint to the respondent, with the possibility of a one-time 30-day extension at the request of either party at the discretion of the process chair, and any additional extensions according to ¶ 903.5.

b. Investigative Response. A committee on investigation of the board of ministry shall convene to investigate the allegations of the complaint (See ¶ 910). The purpose of the investigative response is to, so far as possible, establish facts, consider circumstances and explanations, determine if there is an issue that merits action, and arrive at a plan of addressing any unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties. The committee shall have access to all relevant materials related to the allegations and shall be able to interview witnesses. When witnesses are interviewed, the respondent and complainant, along with their support persons shall be entitled to be present and ask questions.

When the committee has finished its investigation, it shall hold a closed hearing, with the respondent and complainant and their support persons entitled to be present. The evidence regarding the allegations shall be presented. The respondent shall also have the opportunity to present evidence, ask questions of witnesses, and make statements to the committee. A verbatim record of the hearing shall be made and kept in the respondent's personnel file. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee shall enter into executive session for the purpose of resolving the allegations. The committee's investigation shall be completed and the hearing held within sixty (60) days of the referral of the complaint to the committee on investigation, with the possibility of a one-time 30-day extension if agreed upon by both the respondent and the complainant. A written report of the committee's decision, including rationale, shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file and copies given to the respondent and complainant.

The investigative response shall result in one of three outcomes:

1) The committee may find the allegations are without sufficient basis to take action and dismiss the complaint. This outcome may be determined by majority vote of the committee and reported to the board of ministry.

2) The committee may find the allegations are substantiated and mandate a course of remedial action(s), with appropriate benchmarks and follow-up, subject to regular oversight by the board of ministry and annual review, including but not limited to:

a) Program of continuing education;

b) Personal counseling or therapy;

c) Program of career evaluation;

d) Peer support and supervision;

This outcome may be determined by majority vote of the committee and reported to the board of ministry.

3. The committee may find the allegations are substantiated and recommend an involuntary status change, such as surrender of credentials, administrative location, involuntary leave of absence, or involuntary retirement. This outcome may be determined by three-quarters vote of the committee and ratification by a majority of the board of ministry, as well as a majority of the clergy session.

c. Administrative Review. The conference administrative review committee shall review the report of the investigative response and the entire process used by the board of ministry in the investigative response to determine whether it followed the requirements of ¶ 906, and fair process (¶ 905). The committee shall have no authority to review the facts of the case or the merits of the decision. The committee shall issue a report on the process and its compliance with *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, which report shall be given to the respondent, the complainant, the conference superintendent, the cabinet, and the board of ministry, and clergy session prior to any action by those bodies on the investigative response. Prior to its report, if the committee determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error or decide the error is harmless. Whether remedial action is taken shall factor into the response by the board of ministry and clergy session. The administrative review committee shall complete its report within thirty (30) days of receiving the matter.

d. Appeal. The respondent and complainant both have the right to appeal the investigative response of the board of ministry. The appeal shall be first heard by the full board of ministry (with no members of the committee on investigation voting as part of the full board action) and then may be appealed to the clergy session. Both bodies shall have access to the full report of the investigative response, and additional evidence, testimony, and statements may be presented by both sides during the appeal. The decision of the board of ministry is final unless notice of appeal is filed with the bishop, with a copy to other parties to the administrative complaint within thirty (30) days of the release of the decision. The decision of the clergy session is final, with no further appeal.

e. Expenses. All expenses for the administrative process for clergy shall be borne by the annual conference, except for travel and other expenses of the respondent and their support person.

2. Every annual conference shall seat an administrative review committee. The composition of this committee is defined in ¶ 710.7. The committee's only purpose shall be to ensure that the disciplinary procedures for resolving a substantiated administrative complaint are properly followed as per the requirements of this Part.

¶ 907. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS CONCERNING ACTIVE BISHOPS. An administrative complaint involves allegations of the unsatisfactory performance of ministerial duties through incompetence, ineffectiveness, or unwillingness or inability to perform such duties. Allegations of professional or personal misconduct shall not be handled through an administrative complaint but through the provisions of ¶ 908. Administrative complaints may be filed by laypersons, clergy, and presiding elders within the episcopal area in which the bishop is serving, the conference superintendency committee, or another active bishop. The complaint shall contain specific examples of unsatisfactory performance, including approximate dates and times (if appropriate). The process for an administrative complaint against an active bishop shall be:

1. When the respondent is an active bishop, the administrative process outlined in ¶ 906 shall be adhered to, with the following distinctions:

a. The Global Episcopacy Committee shall appoint a committee on investigation in accordance with ¶ 910.1.

b. Any involuntary status change of an active bishop must be recommended by a three-fourths vote of the investigative committee and approved by the Global Episcopacy Committee by a two-thirds vote (¶¶ 615, 605).

c. The administrative review committee of the annual conference where the complaint originated shall examine the administrative process and issue its report prior to any action by the Global Episcopacy Committee.

d. The Global Episcopacy Committee's decision shall be final.

2. Expenses. All expenses for the administrative process for complaints involving bishops shall be borne by the general church.

¶ 908. JUDICIAL COMPLAINTS. A judicial complaint involves allegations of misconduct as enumerated in the chargeable offenses below. Such complaints may be filed by any layperson or clergy person, a presiding elder, a conference superintendent, or an active bishop. The complaint shall contain at least one (1) violation of a chargeable offense, as set forth below, and shall contain specific allegations and factual basis of such misconduct, including approximate dates and times (if appropriate).

1. Chargeable Offenses. An active bishop, clergy not serving as an active bishop (including in senior status,

honorable location, or administrative location), or a professing member of a local church may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations as specified in ¶ 908.3) with one or more of the following offenses:

a. Conviction or admission of guilt in criminal activities except minor traffic infractions;

b. Fiscal malfeasance or financial misconduct;

c. Racial, gender, or sexual discrimination;

d. Harassment;

e. Promoting or engaging in doctrines or practices, conducting or participating in ceremonies or services that are not in accord with those established by the Global Methodist Church;

f. Disobedience to a specific provision of the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church;

g. Relationships and/or behavior that undermine the ministry of a Global Methodist pastor or clergy person; or

h. Engaging in sexual activities outside the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman.

2. Statute of Limitations. No judicial complaint or charge shall be considered for any alleged occurrence that shall not have been committed within six years immediately preceding the filing of the original complaint. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of allegations of sexual or child abuse or crime involving allegations of sexual or child abuse, there shall be no statute of limitation. Time spent on leave of absence shall not be considered as part of the six years.

3. Time of Offense. A person shall not be charged with an offense that was not a chargeable offense at the time it is alleged to have been committed. Any charge filed shall be in the language of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the offense is alleged to have occurred, except in the case of sexual or child abuse or crime involving sexual or child abuse. Then it shall be in the language of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect at the time the charge was filed. Any charge must relate to an action listed as a chargeable offense in *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*.

¶ 909. JUDICIAL SUPERVISORY RESPONSE.

1. The purpose of the judicial supervisory response is to, so far as possible, establish facts, consider circumstances and explanations, determine if there is an issue that merits action, and arrive at a resolution of the complaint that restores compliance and redresses any harms resulting from a violation. The supervisory response shall result in one of three possible outcomes:

a. The process chair may dismiss a complaint if it lacks a basis in fact, church law, or both. Such dismissal requires a majority affirming vote of the Global Episcopacy Committee when the respondent is an active bishop, or a majority affirming vote of the cabinet in all other cases. In such a case, the process chair shall provide a written rationale for dismissing the complaint, which shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file if clergy or active bishop, and copies shall be given to the complainant and respondent.

b. A just resolution agreement is agreed to by all parties, signed, and placed in the respondent's personnel file if

clergy or active bishop.

c. A just resolution agreement is not reached, and the process chair determines that the allegations may have a basis in fact and church law to merit a response. In such case, the complaint shall be forwarded to a committee on investigation for an examination and investigative process.

2. The procedure for a judicial supervisory response shall be as follows:

a. The first step in resolving a judicial complaint is a required meeting of the complainant, the respondent, and the process chair. Both parties and the process chair are all entitled to have a support person with them who may speak on their behalf in the meeting. The participants in the meeting shall be informed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled meeting, and the written complaint shall be presented to the respondent at least thirty (30) days prior to any supervisory response.

3. The judicial supervisory response shall result in one of three possible outcomes:

a. The process chair dismisses the complaint as having insufficient basis in church law (requires a majority vote of the Global Episcopacy Committee if respondent is an active bishop or a majority vote of the cabinet otherwise) In such a case, the process chair shall provide a written rationale for dismissing the complaint, which shall be placed in the respondent's personnel file (if clergy or active bishop) and copies of which shall be given to the complainant and respondent.

b. A just resolution agreement is agreed to by all parties, signed, and placed in the respondent's personnel file (if clergy or active bishop).

c. A just resolution agreement is not reached, and the process chair determines that the allegations may have a basis in fact and church law to merit a response. In such case, the complaint shall be forwarded to a counsel for the Church to present the complaint to the committee on investigation for an examination and investigative process.

4. The judicial supervisory response shall be completed within sixty (60) days of the process chair sending the complaint to the respondent, with the possibility of a one-time 30-day extension at the request of either party at the discretion of the process chair, and any additional extensions according to ¶ 903.5.

5. Suspension. In cases where credible evidence suggests that continued ministry poses a probable risk of one or more types of harm, the following actions may be taken:

a. The process chair shall suspend the respondent from all ministry responsibilities with the affirmative vote of a majority of the oversight body (Global Episcopacy Committee if respondent is an active bishop, or the cabinet otherwise). Such suspension shall remain in effect throughout the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. The respondent retains all rights and privileges, including continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, while suspended from ministerial duties, provided that they shall not interfere with an interim appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended. If the judicial complaint does not proceed to trial, the respondent's suspension must be lifted at that time. Notice of the suspension shall be given to all parties who received notice of the complaint and to those additional parties the process chair deems necessary and appropriate, including the general church and the public.

b. If the respondent is laity, the process chair, with an affirmative vote of the majority of the cabinet, shall suspend

the respondent from all duties and participation in the life of the congregation during the supervisory and investigative process for a judicial complaint. During suspension, the respondent shall not interfere with the congregation or its appointed or assigned pastor(s). If the judicial complaint does not proceed to trial, the respondent's suspension must be lifted at that time.

c. Standard of Harm. In considering suspension, the standard of harm is satisfied on any one of the following grounds:

1) Credibility. A suspension may be approved on the grounds of credibility when the allegation of harm is specific and corroborated by witnesses, documentation, pattern(s) of behavior, or other evidence. To be credible, the source of the allegation of harm shall not be anonymous. The allegation of harm shall include specific facts rather than general impressions or unverified assertions.

2) Severity. A suspension may be approved on the grounds of severity when the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute significant physical, psychological, spiritual, or professional harm to an individual, group, or to the integrity and witness of the Global Methodist Church.

3) Immediacy. A suspension may be approved on the grounds of immediacy when the threat of harm is present and ongoing, not hypothetical, speculative, or confined to past conduct; and continued exercise of the respondent's office could reasonably be expected to increase, perpetuate, or otherwise exacerbate the identified risk of harm. In determining immediacy, the oversight body (Global Episcopacy Committee if respondent is an active bishop, or the cabinet otherwise) shall consider whether reasonable and timely precautionary measures, short of suspension, would adequately mitigate the risk.

Section II. Investigative Response

¶ 910. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION.

1. When the respondent is an active bishop: The Global Episcopacy Committee shall appoint a global committee on investigation from among its members. The committee shall consist of five (5) members, three (3) ordained clergy who are not active bishops and two (2) professing lay members, and two (2) alternate members, one (1) ordained clergy who is not an active bishop and one (1) professing lay member. If possible, no two members and alternates shall be from the same annual conference. No member or alternate shall be from an annual conference presided over by the respondent. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. The committee shall elect a chairperson and secretary and organize following its appointment. Two clergy who are not active bishops and one laity (or their alternates) seated as members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. Where technically feasible, members of the committee may participate in meetings and hearings through video conferencing.

2. When the respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop: The annual conference committee on investigation (¶ 710) shall consider judicial complaints against clergy members of the annual conference.

3. When the respondent is a layperson: The process chair shall appoint a committee on investigation consisting of four professing lay members and three clergy in full connection to serve only for this complaint. All members of the committee on investigation must come from congregations other than the respondent's or the complainant's churches. Committee members must be in good standing and must be of good character. Five (5) members shall constitute a quorum.

¶ 911. REFERRAL OF A COMPLAINT TO A COUNSEL FOR THE CHURCH.

1. When the respondent is an active bishop:

a. If a just resolution agreement is not agreed to signed and the complaint is not dismissed, the process chair shall notify all parties listed in ¶ 903.1 of the referral of the complaint to counsel for the Church.

b. Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the judicial supervisory process, absent a just resolution agreement or dismissal of the complaint, the process chair shall name an elder within the same geographical region as the respondent to serve as counsel for the Church. The counsel for the Church shall represent the Church in the judicial process.

c. The counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and forward the judicial complaint and all documentary evidence under consideration, including but not limited to information from the supervisory process, relevant information from the respondent's personnel file, and a suggested list of witnesses as deemed appropriate, to the chairperson of the committee on investigation, the complainant, and the respondent. The counsel for the Church shall be responsible for providing a progress report on the development of the judicial complaint every thirty (30) days to all parties, starting from the date of appointment until the complaint is resolved. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to submit to the committee on investigation a written response to the judicial complaint within thirty (30) days of receipt of the judicial complaint. The chairperson shall convene the committee on investigation within sixty (60) days of receiving the judicial complaint.

d. If six or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the Global Episcopacy Committee shall suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all episcopal duties and responsibilities pending the conclusion of the trial process

e. Upon recommendation of any member of the Global Episcopacy Committee and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the committee, the respondent shall be placed on involuntary leave during the judicial process. During such leave, the respondent shall not retain rights and privileges of the episcopal office; including housing, salary, or benefits until the process is resolved. If the respondent is found innocent of the complaint, the General Conference shall provide full compensation for all salary, housing, and benefits lost during the period of involuntary leave.

2. When the respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop:

a. Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the supervisory process, absent a just resolution agreement or dismissal of the complaint, the process chair shall name an elder within the annual conference in which the alleged violation took place to serve as counsel for the Church. The counsel for the Church shall represent the Church in the judicial process.

b. The counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and forward the judicial complaint and all documentary evidence under consideration, including but not limited to information from the supervisory process, relevant information from the respondent's personnel file, and a suggested list of witnesses as deemed appropriate, to the chairperson of the committee on investigation, the complainant, and the respondent. The counsel for the Church shall be responsible for providing a progress report on the development of the judicial complaint every thirty (30) days to all parties, starting from the date of appointment until the date the complaint is resolved. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to submit to the committee on investigation a written response to the judicial complaint within thirty (30) days of receipt of the judicial complaint. The chairperson shall convene the committee on

investigation within sixty (60) days of receiving the judicial complaint.

c. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the bishop shall suspend the respondent, with continuation of housing, salary, and benefits, from all duties and responsibilities relating to their appointment pending the conclusion of the trial process. The respondent retains all rights and privileges as a member of the annual conference while suspended from pastoral duties, provided, however, they shall not interfere with an interim pastor appointed to carry out their duties while they are suspended.

d.) Involuntary Leave. Upon recommendation of the bishop or conference superintendent and a two-thirds affirmative vote of the cabinet, the respondent shall be placed on involuntary leave during the judicial process. During such leave, the respondent shall not retain rights and privileges of their office, including salary, housing, or benefits until the process is resolved. If the respondent is found innocent of the complaint, the local church shall provide full compensation for all salary, housing, and benefits lost during the period of involuntary leave. In cases of extension ministries, if the appointment has been discontinued, the annual conference shall provide any of the above compensation that is not covered by a severance agreement.

3. When the respondent is a layperson:

a. Within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the supervisory process, absent a just resolution agreement or dismissal of the complaint, the process chair shall name an elder within the annual conference in which the alleged violation took place to serve as counsel for the Church. The counsel for the Church shall represent the Church in the judicial process.

b. The counsel for the Church shall prepare, sign, and forward the judicial complaint and all documentary evidence under consideration, including but not limited to information from the supervisory process and a suggested list of witnesses as deemed appropriate, to the chairperson of the committee on investigation, the complainant, and the respondent. The counsel for the Church shall be responsible for providing a progress report on the development of the judicial complaint every thirty (30) days to all parties, starting from the date of appointment until the date the complaint is resolved. The respondent shall be given an opportunity to submit to the committee on investigation a written response to the judicial complaint within thirty (30) days of receipt of the judicial complaint. The chairperson shall convene the committee on investigation within sixty (60) days of receiving the judicial complaint.

c. If five or more members of the committee on investigation so recommend, the pastor or presiding elder shall suspend the respondent from exercising any church office pending the conclusion of the trial process.

¶ 912. COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES.

1. Introduction. The role of the committee on investigation is to investigate allegations made in a judicial complaint and to determine if reasonable grounds exist to bring a bill of charges and specifications to trial. Reasonable grounds are defined as sufficient reason to believe, based on the known facts, that a chargeable offense has been committed. If so, the committee shall prepare, sign, and certify a bill of charges and specifications. The committee's duty is only to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to support the charges. The committee makes no determination of guilt or innocence.

2. The investigation process shall be administered as follows:

a. Parties and Counsel – The parties are the respondent and the Church.

b. Counsel for the Church – Counsel for the Church shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel without right to speak, who may be an attorney. All reasonable expenses of the counsel and assistant counsel shall be paid by the annual conference (or general church, if the respondent is an active bishop), but no honorarium or compensation shall be paid. When the counsel for the Church needs to spend significant time away from ministry in order to fulfill their duties, the annual conference shall provide at its expense supplemental ministry assistance.

c. Committee on Investigation – The committee on investigation may have legal counsel present, who shall not be the conference chancellor, for the sole purpose of providing legal advice to the committee, at the annual conference's (or if the respondent is an active bishop, general church's) expense.

d. A respondent who is an active bishop or clergy not serving as an active bishop shall be entitled to select a lay member or clergy person from the Global Methodist Church to serve as counsel for the respondent. A respondent shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel without right to speak, who may be an attorney. In no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

e. A lay respondent shall be entitled to select a lay member or clergy person from the Global Methodist Church to serve as counsel for the respondent. A respondent shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel without right to speak, who may be an attorney. In no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

3. Preliminary Meeting – Basic procedural decisions shall be made in a preliminary meeting. During this meeting the respondent, counsel for the respondent, the complainant and counsel for the Church shall have the right to argue procedural points before a decision is made by the chair. All procedural decisions and such unanticipated decisions as may come in the course of the meeting of the committee on investigation shall be rendered in writing so as to be available for consideration in all further possible stages of the case. The chair shall provide any rulings in writing to the parties at least five (5) days prior to the initiation of the hearing before the committee on investigation.

4. Hearing before the Committee on Investigation

a. If possible, the respondent and the complainant(s) shall be brought face to face, but the inability to do this shall not invalidate an investigation. Notice of the hearings shall be given to all parties, including the complainant, and they all shall be permitted to be present during testimony, but not during deliberations. Proceedings in the investigation shall be informal. No oaths shall be taken. All procedural decisions shall be made by the chairperson.

b. Interview of witness prior to or outside of hearing—The chairperson shall have the power, whenever it is appropriate in the committee's own discretion, to appoint at least two members of the committee to interview any witness(es), provided that all parties may be present (without right to speak,) and that notice of the time and place of such interview has been provided to all parties at least three (3) days prior to the interview date. The members so appointed shall create a verbatim record of the interview and certify the record by signature for transmittal to the chairperson.

c. Examination of witnesses—The committee on investigation may call and question such persons or request such

written information, including but not limited to materials from the supervisory process, as it deems necessary to establish whether reasonable grounds exist for formulating a charge or charges. The committee may receive from the counsels suggested lists of persons to be questioned, sources of written material, or questions to be asked. There shall be no right of cross-examination by either the respondent or the complainant(s).

d. Evidence—The committee should only consider testimony or evidence which is relevant and reliable. The chairperson or presiding officer, after consultation with counsel for both parties, shall rule on challenges to relevance and reliability. The introduction of any material relating to events barred by the statute of limitations (¶ 908) as evidence, as preface to evidence, or as buildup for evidence in the procedures of the committee on investigation or the trial proceedings shall be permitted when the presiding officer, after consultation with counsel for both parties, rules that such material is relevant and reliable.

e. Verbatim transcript—There shall be a verbatim record of all proceedings of the committee on investigation, except when the committee meets in executive session. The term executive session shall mean the committee meeting alone or with only its legal counsel. If the complaint is dismissed or returned to the process chair, a verbatim record shall be sent to the conference secretary for retention.

f. Bill of Charges and Specifications, Deliberations, Vote, and Referral – A vote on each charge and each specification shall be taken separately. It is incumbent on each member of the committee to base his or her vote solely on whether reasonable grounds exist to support the charges. If there are members who are unwilling to uphold *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* for reasons of conscience or otherwise, such members shall step aside in this matter and either alternate members or others who are willing to uphold *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* must be appointed to the committee to enable it to fulfill its responsibility.

1) Bill of Charges and Specifications – A charge is one of the chargeable offenses listed in ¶ 908. A charge shall not include more than one such chargeable offense. More than one charge against the same person may be presented and tried at the same time. Each charge must be written with specifications that support the charge. Each charge must be accompanied by one or more specifications of fact. Each specification, standing alone, must allege a factual occurrence that, if found to be true, would support a finding of guilt on the related charge. The specifications should be as specific as possible with information such as date, place, and specific events alleged to have occurred.

2) Finding of Reasonable Grounds by Committee and Referral of Bill of Charges and Specifications for Trial.

a) When respondent is an active bishop – A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require a simple majority vote. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted shall be sent within five (5) days to the respondent, the complainant, the General Conference Secretary, the chair and members of the Global Episcopacy Committee, counsel for the Church, and the chairperson of the conference superintendency committee (if any).

b) When respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop – A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require a simple majority vote. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted by the committee on investigation shall be sent by the chairperson within five (5) days to the respondent, the complainant, the annual conference secretary, the board of ministry chair, the counsel for the Church, their presiding elder, and the conference superintendent (or the chair of the conference superintendency committee if the respondent is a conference superintendent).

c) When respondent is a layperson – A vote to adopt any charge or specification shall require a simple majority

vote. Any bill of charges and specifications adopted by the committee shall be sent within five (5) days to the respondent, the complainant, the conference superintendent, the lay leader of the respondent's local church, counsel for the Church, the pastor(s), and the presiding elder.

3) Findings Other Than Reasonable Grounds by Committee or Other Actions

a) If the committee on investigation determines that there are no reasonable grounds for charges, it may dismiss the judicial complaint.

b) When deemed appropriate, it may refer matters of concern to the proper referring Church official (to the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee in the case of an active bishop, to the conference superintendent in the case of clergy not serving as an active bishop, or to the pastor(s) in the case of a layperson) for administrative or other action. Notification of these actions should be given to the respondent, the complainant, counsel for the Church, and the proper referring Church officials, along with a written rationale for the committee's decision. Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 905. Notification of these actions should be given to the respondent, the complainant, counsel for the Church, and the proper referring Church officials.

c) Upon recommendation of the counsel for the Church and the counsel for the respondent, the committee may refer the matter back to the process chair as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution agreement under the provisions of ¶ 904. The process chair shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral shall not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 905. The appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, counsel for the respondent, and the complainant, shall enter into a written agreement outlining the process, including any agreements on confidentiality. Deadlines shall be suspended during a process seeking resolution.

If resolution is achieved, a written statement affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for reporting such change or for readmission. The committee on investigation shall retain jurisdiction for the period of time stated for the implementation of the resolution agreement. The committee shall periodically monitor the progress of the completion of the terms and conditions of the just resolution agreement, and shall certify when the terms and conditions of the agreement are completed. When the terms and conditions of the agreement are completed, the committee on investigation shall report its certification, and the status of the respondent as a result of completing the terms and conditions of the resolution agreement, to the conference superintendent or Global Episcopacy Committee chair.

If the process does not result in resolution, the matter shall be returned to the committee on investigation for further consideration. Also, decision(s) of a trial court that call for certification as to the completion of terms and conditions of the jury's decision(s) after the end of a trial are to be assigned to the committee on investigation for monitoring and certification of completion of the decision, unless the jury specifies otherwise. If the respondent fails to complete the terms and conditions of a jury decision, the committee shall notify the presiding officer of the trial, who may reconvene the trial court for further consideration.

5. Special Investigations—In the event that jurisdiction in a judicial proceeding is ended as a result of the death of, or surrender of credentials by the respondent in cases where the chargeable offense includes those listed in ¶ 908, the committee on investigation may be convened at the request of the presiding bishop to make pastoral inquiry into the charges. The inquiry shall:

a. not be judicial in nature;

b. be empowered to receive witnesses and to consider evidence; and

c. make a report of the inquiry to the body where the respondent's membership was held, including any recommendations.

6. Records of the Committee on Investigation – At the conclusion of the investigation process, all documents used by the committee on investigation, including transcriptions of its hearings, shall be sent to the General Conference Secretary (when the respondent is an active bishop) or the annual conference secretary (otherwise), who shall keep them in custody. Such documents are to be held in a confidential file and shall not be released except for the purposes of trial and then only to counsel for the Church, the respondent, and the presiding officer of the trial court. Those receiving the documents shall return them to the General Conference Secretary or the annual conference secretary following the conclusion of the trial and any appeal.

7. When the respondent is a layperson, the presiding elder shall preside at all meetings of the committee on investigation, shall be given a copy of the judicial complaint and any response, and shall have the right to be present and to speak at all meetings of the committee.

Section III. Trials

¶ 913. GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURES. Fundamental Principles for Trials.

Church trials are to be regarded as a matter of last resort. Only after every reasonable effort has been made to correct any wrong and adjust any existing difficulty should steps be taken to institute a trial. No such trial as herein provided shall be construed to deprive the complainant, respondent or the church of legal civil rights, except to the extent that immunity is provided as in ¶ 905. All trials shall be conducted according to *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in a consistent Christian manner by a properly constituted court after due investigation. Trials shall be administered as follows:

1. Officers of the Court – Officers shall consist of a presiding officer, who shall appoint a secretary and such other officers as deemed necessary. The presiding officer may have legal counsel, who shall not be the general conference nor annual conference chancellor, and who shall serve at the expense of the general conference or annual conference which is holding the trial, for the sole purpose of advising the presiding officer during the trial.

2. Time and Place of Trial – The presiding officer (as defined in ¶ 914) shall consult with the parties in fixing the time and place for the trial and notify the respondent, counsel for the Church, and the complainant. In all cases, sufficient time shall be allowed for these persons to appear at the given place and time and to prepare for the trial. The presiding officer shall determine what constitutes sufficient time; however, in no case shall this period be less than forty-five (45) days nor more than ninety (90) days.

3. Pre-Trial Motions and Referrals – All appeals of any procedural or substantive matters that have occurred prior to trial must be appealed to the presiding officer no later than forty (40) days before the convening of the trial. Otherwise, the right to appeal on such matters is forfeited. All objections to and motions regarding the regularity of the proceedings and the form and substance of charges and specifications must be made no later than twenty (20) days before the convening of the trial court. The presiding officer shall rule on all such preliminary objections and motions. In furtherance of truth and justice, the presiding officer may permit amendments to the specifications

or charges not changing the general nature of the same and may dismiss all or any part of the complaint upon a finding by the presiding officer (1) that all or such part is without legal or factual basis or (2) that, even assuming the specifications to be true, they do not constitute a basis for a chargeable offense.

The presiding officer may refer the matter as deemed appropriate for a process seeking a just resolution agreement under the provisions of ¶ 904 to the conference superintendent (or if the respondent is an active bishop, to the Global Episcopacy Committee chair) with consent of the counsel for the Church, counsel for the respondent and the complainant. The conference superintendent or the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall institute such a process and may use the assistance of a trained, impartial third-party facilitator(s) or mediator(s). Such referral will not constitute a dismissal or double jeopardy under ¶ 905. If a process seeking a just resolution is used, the appropriate persons, including the counsel for the Church, counsel for the respondent, and complainant should enter into a written agreement outlining such process, including any agreement on confidentiality. If resolution is achieved, a written statement affirming such resolution, including any terms and conditions, shall be signed by the same persons who signed the written agreement outlining the process, and they shall agree on any matters to be disclosed to third parties. If the resolution results in a change of ministerial status, the disclosure agreement shall not prevent the disciplinary disclosures required for reporting such change or for readmission. The committee on investigation shall be charged with maintaining oversight of the fulfillment of the agreement. Such a written statement shall be given to the presiding officer, and the presiding officer shall take action consistent with the agreement. If no resolution results, the matter is returned to the presiding officer for the continuance of the trial process.

4. Change of Venue – The respondent may request a change of venue in writing to the presiding officer of the court within ten (10) days of receipt of notice to appear for trial. The presiding officer shall rule upon the request after hearing arguments by counsels for the respondent and the Church. If the motion is approved, the presiding officer shall name the annual conference outside the episcopal area wherein the trial shall be held and shall notify the conference superintendent of that conference, who shall convene the court. The jury pool shall consist of clergy and laity from the annual conference where the trial shall be held. If there are not enough persons available to complete the jury pool, jurors may be selected from other annual conferences. The cost of prosecution shall be borne by the conference where the case originated. The filing of a change of venue suspends the date the trial is to be convened. After a decision on the request for change of venue, the presiding officer shall schedule a new trial date.

5. Notice

a. All notices required or provided for in relationship to investigations, trials, and appeals shall be in writing, signed by or on behalf of the person or body giving or required to give such notice, and shall be addressed to the person or body to whom it is required to be given. Such notices shall be served by delivering a copy thereof to the party or chief officer of the body to whom it is addressed in person or sent by other delivery system to the last known residence or address of such party. Proof of notice shall be provided and becomes a part of the record of the case.

b. In all cases wherein it is provided that notice shall be given to a conference superintendent or presiding elder and the charges are against that particular person, then such notice (in addition to being given to the accused) shall be given, in the case of a conference superintendent, to the bishop and, in the case of a presiding elder, to the conference superintendent.

6. Trial Scheduling and Continuances – If in any case the respondent, after due notice has been given, shall refuse or neglect to appear at the time and place set forth for the hearing, the trial may proceed in the respondent's

absence. However, if in the sole discretion of the presiding officer there is good and sufficient reason for the absence of any party or another essential person, the presiding officer may reschedule the trial to a later date not later than thirty (30) days from the decision of the presiding officer.

7. Counsel – In all cases, a respondent shall be entitled to appear and to select and be represented by counsel who is a lay or clergy member of the Global Methodist Church. All parties and the Church shall be entitled to have counsel heard in oral or written argument or both. The official charged with convening the court (see ¶ 914) shall, within thirty (30) days after receiving a copy of the charges and specifications, appoint counsel for the Church, if counsel has not been previously appointed, under the provisions of ¶¶ 905, 911. The counsel for the Church or complainant and for the respondent each shall be entitled to choose one assistant counsel, who may be an attorney, without right to speak. In no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

8. Witnesses – Notice to appear shall be given to such witnesses as either party may name and shall be issued in the name of the Church and be signed by the presiding officer of the trial. It shall be the duty of all clergy and lay members of the Global Methodist Church to appear and testify when summoned. Refusal to appear or to answer questions ruled by the presiding officer to be relevant may be considered as disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church, except when refusal to answer is based on a good faith claim that answering might tend to incriminate the witness under state or federal criminal law or is based on a claim of confidential communication to a clergy person. A witness, to be qualified, need not be a member of the Global Methodist Church.

9. Commissioned Out-of-Court Testimony—The presiding officer of any court before which a case may be pending shall have power, whenever the necessity of the parties or witnesses shall require, to allow the examination of the witnesses outside of the trial hearing; provided notice of the time and place of taking such testimony shall have been given to the adverse party at least three (3) days prior. The party making this request shall have the burden of showing good cause and shall bear the cost of such commissioned out-of-court testimony. The presiding officer or his/her designee shall preside over the testimony. Counsel for both parties shall be permitted to examine and cross-examine the witness or witnesses whose testimony is thus taken. The testimony shall be transcribed for inclusion in the trial record. The testimony may also be video recorded for replay during the trial. The testimony shall be transmitted to the presiding officer and secretary of the court before which the case is pending.

10. Prior Changes to Complaints and Specifications –Charges or specifications previously considered and dropped by the committee on investigation shall not be introduced in the trial in the form of evidence or otherwise.

11. Open or Closed Trials – The selection and deliberation of the jury shall be closed. All other sessions of the trial shall be open. The presiding officer may, in extenuating circumstances, in his or her judgment on motion of counsel for either party or on the presiding officer's own motion, declare a particular session of the court to be closed. Respecting the seriousness of the proceedings and the privacy of individuals involved, video recording or photography of the proceedings shall not be allowed. At all times, however, in the hearing portion of the trial, the presiding officer, the members of the jury, the person(s) making the original complaint, counsel for the Church, the respondent, and counsel for the respondent shall have a right to be present.

12. Combined Trials of Multiple Persons—In cases in which a number of persons have allegedly engaged in the same offense at the same time and place, their trials may be combined into one trial for that same offense. The presiding officer shall make the determination on combination of trials.

¶ 914. CONVENING OF A TRIAL COURT.

1. In all trials there shall be a Presiding Officer with the following authority:

a. The right to set reasonable time limits, after consultation with counsel for the parties involved, for the presentation of the case, provided such time is equal for both. The authority of the presiding officer shall be limited to ruling upon proper representation of the Church and the person charged, admissibility of evidence, recessing, adjourning, and reconvening sessions of the trial, charging the members of the jury as to the Church law involved in the case at the beginning of the trial and just before they retire to deliberate, and such other authority as is normally vested in a civil court judge sitting with a jury, but he or she shall not have authority to pronounce any judgment in favor of or against the person charged other than such verdict as may be returned by the jury, which body shall have the exclusive right to determine the innocence or guilt of the person charged.

2. Entering of the Plea – After selection of the jury, the respondent shall be called upon by the presiding officer to enter a plea of "guilty" or "not guilty", to the charge(s) presented in the complaint, and the plea(s) shall be recorded. If the respondent pleads "guilty" to the charges, no trial shall be necessary, but evidence may be taken with respect to the appropriate penalty, which shall thereupon be imposed. If the respondent pleads "not guilty" or if the respondent should neglect or refuse to plead, the plea of "not guilty" shall be entered, and the trial shall proceed. The respondent shall at all times during the trial, except as hereinafter provided, have the right to present evidence, produce testimony, offer documentary evidence and to otherwise make a defense.

3. Order of Trial – Counsel for all parties may make an opening statement to inform the jury of what the evidence is expected to be. Evidence shall then be offered by questioning of witnesses and by documents and other evidence shown to be relevant and reliable. Each counsel shall have opportunity to make closing arguments before the jury begins deliberations. Deliberations of the jury and receiving of the verdict shall follow.

4. Oaths – The administration of oaths shall not be required. At the beginning of the trial, the presiding officer shall remind all parties of the duties and responsibilities of Church membership and/or the clergy covenant. Failure to testify truthfully subjects witnesses to potential charges of disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church.

5. Recess and Trial Procedures – The court may recess from time to time as convenience or necessity may require. During the time of recess, the members of the jury shall be instructed that under no circumstance will they:

a. speak to one another or to others about the trial;

b. allow anyone else to provide them with any information regarding the case, a party or any witness;

c. read, observe, or listen to media reports regarding the case, a party, or any witness.

The members of the jury shall further be instructed to immediately advise the presiding officer if anyone attempts to contact them in any way regarding the case, a party or any witness. Threatening or tampering with the jury or officers of the trial court shall be considered disobedience to the order and discipline of the Global Methodist Church. The presiding officer shall remain and preside until the decision is rendered and the findings are completed and shall thereupon sign and certify them.

6. Objections and Rulings – Objections of any party to the proceedings shall be entered on the record. All rulings

on pre-trial appeals, objections, and motions shall be entered on the record. All objections and motions from counsels during the proceedings of the trial shall be made in open session before the trial court and entered on the record along with the rulings of the presiding officer on all such objections and motions.

7. Exclusion of Witnesses—With the exception of the complainant and respondent, no witness to be examined shall be present during the examination of another witness if the opposing party objects. Witnesses shall be examined first by the party producing them, then cross-examined by the opposite party and may be questioned by members of the jury, with the approval of the presiding officer. After counsels have completed direct and cross examination, the counsel for the Church may conduct redirect examination of a witness, provided, however, that the question posed by the counsel for the Church pertain to testimony already offered by the witness. At the completion of redirect examination, the counsel for the respondent may conduct a re-cross examination, provided, however, that the questions posed by the respondent's counsel pertain only to testimony already offered by the witness during direct or redirect examination. The presiding officer of the court shall determine all questions of relevancy and competency of evidence.

8. Recording of Proceedings – A verbatim record of all proceedings of the trial shall be by stenograph or other appropriate means and reduced to writing and certified by the presiding officer or secretary. The official record, including all exhibits, papers and evidence in the case, shall be the basis of any appeal that may be taken.

9. Evidence – The introduction of any material relating to events happening before the six year statute of limitation period (¶ 908) as evidence, as preface to evidence, or as buildup for evidence in the procedures of the trial proceedings may be permitted when the presiding officer, after consultation with counsel for both parties, rules that such material is relevant and reliable. Documentary evidence deemed by the presiding officer to be relevant and reliable may be in the physical possession of the jury during deliberations at their request.

10. Instructions and Charges – The presiding officer shall not deliver jury instructions reviewing or explaining the evidence or setting forth the merits of the case. The presiding officer shall express no opinion on the law or the facts while the court is deliberating. If requested by either party's counsel, the presiding officer shall instruct the jury on Church law applicable to the case. Instructions may be given at the beginning of the trial, during the trial, before the jury begins deliberations or a combination of any of these. If requested by the jury, instructions may be given during deliberations. The presiding officer shall not review or explain the evidence or comment on the merits of the case.

11. Convening of Trials, Jury Selection and Record Keeping. Trials shall be convened under the following provisions:

a. Trial of Active Bishops. In the trial of an active bishop, the chair of the Global Episcopacy Committee shall proceed to convene the court and shall designate an active bishop or bishop emeritus to serve as presiding officer over the trial.

b. Trial of Clergy Not Serving as an Active Bishop. In the trial of clergy not serving as an active bishop, the bishop of the respondent shall proceed to convene the court and the conference superintendent shall designate an active bishop or bishop emeritus who is not the respondent's bishop where a member or serving, to be the presiding officer over the trial.

c. Trial of Lay Persons. In the trial of a lay person, the respondent's presiding elder shall proceed to convene the court and may serve as the presiding officer over the trial or may designate another ordained clergy person (who does not have any relationship with the respondent or complainant) to serve as presiding officer over the trial.

d. Jury Composition. The jury shall consist of 13 jurors plus 2 alternates drawn from a pool of thirty-six (36) or more persons to consist of an equal number of laity and ordained clergy, and chosen as set forth herein. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, and gender diversity. Persons who were members of the cabinet, board of ministry, or committee on investigation that considered the case in the process of coming to jury trial shall not be included in the jury pool. In the trial of active bishops, the jury pool shall be named by the Global Episcopacy Committee in approximately equal numbers from the episcopal area where the bishop presides.

In the trial of clergy not serving as an active bishop, the pool of thirty-six (36) or more persons shall consist of ordained clergy and laity from the respondent's annual conference. If there are not enough persons in the appropriate categories in an annual conference to complete the pool, additional persons may be appointed from other annual conferences, All appointments to the pool shall be made by the presiding elders of the conference of the respondent. Special consideration should be given so that the pool includes persons representative of racial, age, ethnic, and gender diversity. Persons who were members of the cabinet, board of ministry, or committee on investigation that considered the case in the process of coming to a jury trial shall not be included in the jury pool.

In the trial of laity, the pool of thirty-six (36) or more person shall consist of clergy and professing lay members of local churches other than the local church of the respondent within the same annual conference. Appointments to the pool shall be made by the presiding elder of the respondent, who may consult with the conference lay leader and with local church pastors.

e. Jury Selection. After consulting with the parties, the presiding officer shall conduct limited voir dire (brief focused questioning) by asking potential jurors questions designed to determine their ability to be fair and impartial. In order to be selected as a juror, each potential juror should affirm they can base their decision solely on what they see and hear during the trial and that they can disregard any other information they may have previously received. Each party shall select six (6) jurors from the pool, plus one (1) alternate each. The thirteenth (13th) juror shall be selected by the presiding officer. In the event of multiple complainants or respondents, the presiding officer shall determine how to distribute the selection of jurors among the parties.

f. Record Keeping. The secretary of the court shall at the conclusion of the proceedings send all trial documents as follows:

1) In the case of the trial of an active bishop, to the General Conference Secretary, who shall keep them in custody. If an appeal is taken, the secretary shall forward the materials forthwith to the secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals. After the appeal has been heard, the records shall be returned to the General Conference Secretary or to the process chair if the case is remanded for new trial.

2) In the case of the trial of clergy not serving as an active bishop, to the annual conference secretary, who shall keep them in custody. Such documents are to be held in a confidential file and shall not be released other than for appeal or for new trial purposes without a signed release from both the clergy person and the presiding officer of the trial. If an appeal is taken, the secretary shall forward the materials forthwith to the secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals. After the appeal has been heard, the records shall be returned to the annual conference secretary or to the process chair if the case is remanded for new trial.

3) In the case of the trial of a lay person, to the annual conference secretary, who shall keep them in custody. Such documents are to be held in a confidential file and shall not be released other than for appeal or for new trial purposes without a signed release from both the lay person and the presiding officer of the trial. If an appeal is

taken, the secretary shall forward the materials forthwith to the respondent's Presiding Elder who shall submit the records to the ad hoc conference appeals committee. After the appeal has been heard, the records shall be returned to the annual conference secretary or the process chair if remanded for a new trial. The existence (though not the contents) of such a file may be disclosed at the request of a pastor when a layperson removed from membership desires to join another congregation of the Global Methodist Church.

12. Standard of Proof. The standard of proof in all trials shall be clear and convincing evidence. The complainant must prove their case by that burden of proof. Failure to do so shall result in dismissal of the complaint. In order for evidence to be clear and convincing, the evidence provided to the jury must demonstrate that the specification is highly and substantially more likely to be true than untrue.

13. Jury Instruction, Disqualification, Voting, and Verdicts. The trial court (presiding officer and impaneled jury) shall have full power to try the case. The trial court shall be a continuing body until the final disposition of the charge. If any regular or alternate member of the jury fails to attend any part of any session at which evidence is received or oral argument is made to the trial court by counsel, that person shall not thereafter be a member of the jury, shall be replaced by alternate, and the rest of the jury may proceed to judgment.

14. Verdicts. A vote of at least nine (9) members of the jury is required for conviction. In the event the number of the jurors falls below thirteen (13) during a trial, a two-thirds vote shall be required. The jury shall present to the presiding officer a decision on each charge and each individual specification under each charge. Its findings shall be final, subject to appeal.

15. Penalties.

a. If the jury finds that the charges are proven by clear and convincing evidence, then it may impose such penalties as it may determine, provided that the jury shall first consider other remedies that would fulfill the provisions of ¶¶ 403, 414-417, 420.

b. Further testimony may be heard and arguments by counsel presented regarding what the penalty should be. The jury shall determine the penalty, which shall require a vote of at least seven (7) members. If the number of jurors falls below thirteen (13), a majority vote shall be required.

c. The jury shall have the power to:

1) remove the respondent from professing membership;

2) terminate the respondent's conference membership and revoke credentials of conference membership, ordination, or consecration;

3) suspend the respondent from the exercise of the functions of office for a defined period of time; or

4) fix a lesser penalty.

d. The jury shall determine whether an active bishop or clergy person suspended from office as a penalty for a defined period of time shall have any continuation of housing, salary, and benefits during such suspension.

e. The penalty fixed by the jury shall take effect immediately unless otherwise indicated by the trial court. Should

any penalty fixed by a trial court be altered or reduced as a result of the appellate process, the respondent shall be restored and/or compensated as appropriate by the general church if an active bishop and by the annual conference, if clergy, provided that in no instance and under no circumstances shall the respondent be entitled to receive an award of compensation for or reimbursement of any expenses or fees associated with the respondent's use of an attorney.

Section IV. Appeals

¶ 915. APPEAL PROCEDURES

1. General.

a. In all cases of appeal, the appellant shall give written notice of appeal within thirty (30) days of the verdict and announcement of penalty by the trial court or the issuance of a written decision of an appellate body other than the Connectional Council on Appeals. At the same time the appellant shall furnish to the officer receiving such notice and to the counsel for the opposing party a written statement of the grounds of the appeal. The hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

b. When any appellate body shall reverse in whole or in part the findings of a committee on investigation or trial court, or remand the case for a new hearing or trial, or change the penalty imposed by the trial court, it shall return to the convening officer a statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be copied to the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the Church.

c. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel at the investigation and the trial. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct, such as refusal to abide by the trial court's findings; or by withdrawal from the church; or by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal from conviction, by resorting to suit in the civil courts against the complainant or any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical court in which the appellant was tried.

d. The right of appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

e. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs or legal representatives may prosecute such an appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

f. Trial records and documents, including evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

g. The appellate body shall determine two questions only:

1) Were the charge(s) sustained by clear and convincing evidence?

2) Were there such errors of church law as to substantially affect the verdict and/or the penalty?

3) These questions shall be determined from the records of the trial. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses but shall receive and/or hear argument of the counsel for the Church and respondent. It may have legal

counsel present, who shall not be the conference chancellor for the conference from which the appeal is taken, for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

h. In all cases where an appeal is made and admitted by the appellate committee, after the charges, findings, and evidence have been read and the arguments concluded, the parties shall withdraw, and the appellate committee shall consider and decide the case. It may reverse in whole or in part the findings of the committee on investigation or the trial court, or it may remand the case for a new trial to determine verdict and/or penalty. It may determine what penalty, not higher than that affixed at the hearing or trial, may be imposed. If it neither reverses in whole or in part the judgment of the trial court, nor remands the case for a new trial, nor modifies the penalty, that judgment shall stand, subject to possible appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing or trial on account of errors plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

i. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the trial court, but questions of church law may be carried on appeal, step by step, to the Connectional Council on Appeals (¶ 921).

j. The Church shall have no right of appeal from findings of fact of the trial court. The Church shall have a right of appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals from findings of the committee on investigation or trial court based on egregious errors of church law or administration that could reasonably have affected its findings. In this paragraph, "egregious errors of church law or administration" refers to the misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misapplication, or violation (whether knowing or not) of church law or judicial process as required by *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, with such errors more likely than not (in the judgment of the appellate body) affecting the findings of the trial court or committee on investigation. The committee on investigation's decision not to certify a bill of charges does not alone constitute an egregious error of church law or administration. When the Connectional Council on Appeals shall find egregious errors of church law or administration under this part, it may remand the case for a new hearing or trial on verdict and/or penalty, in which event it shall return to the chair of the committee on investigation or presiding officer of the trial court a statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be copied to the respondent, complainant, and counsel for the Church. This action is not to be considered double jeopardy.

k. Questions of procedure may be raised with the presiding officer or secretary of the appellate body, with the answers shared with all parties. Under no circumstances shall one party in the absence of the other party discuss substantive matters with members of any appellate body while the case is pending (¶ 905).

2. Appeal by Bishop or Clergy Member

a. In case of conviction by a trial court, an active bishop or clergy member, including clergy on honorable or administrative location, shall have the right of appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals, provided proper notice is given under ¶ 915.

b. When notice of an appeal has been given to the presiding officer of the court, the presiding officer shall give notice of the same to the president and secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals and submit the documents in the case. In case the documents have been sent to the secretary of the annual or General Conference, the presiding officer shall instruct the secretary to send the documents to the president and secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals. The Council shall give notice within thirty (30) days to the conference superintendent of the conference from which the appeal is taken (or to the chair of the Global Episcopacy

Committee when the appellant is an active bishop), to the appellant, and to counsel for the opposing party of the time and place where the appeal will be heard. Such hearing shall occur within sixty (60) days following receipt of notice to the committee on appeals. The counsels who prosecuted the trial shall continue in the appeals process, unless replaced in accordance with the provisions of ¶ 905 and ¶ 911.

c. All necessary traveling, sustenance, or other reasonable related expense incurred by the Connectional Council on Appeals, including any cost for legal counsel retained to advise the Council, in the hearing of an appeal case coming from an annual conference and appearing before the Council, shall be paid out of the administrative fund of the annual conference (if respondent is clergy not serving as an active bishop) or general church (if respondent is an active bishop) in which the proceedings arise. The president of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall approve all expenses. Expenses for counsel for the Church shall be paid by the annual conference or general church where the case originated. Such expenses for counsel for the respondent shall be paid by the respondent, unless in the interest of fairness, the Council on Appeals orders the annual conference or general church to reimburse the respondent.

3. Appeal by Lay Member

a. A lay member convicted by a trial court shall have the right of appeal and shall serve written notice of appeal with the pastor and the presiding elder within thirty (30) days of conviction.

b. The presiding elder shall give written notice to all concerned of the time and place of the convening of an ad hoc conference appeals committee. Notice of the convening shall be given not less than ten (10) nor more than thirty (30) days after the presiding elder has received notice of appeal. The ad hoc conference appeals committee shall convene not less than thirty (30) days nor more than ninety (90) days after notice of appeal is received.

c. The ad hoc conference appeals committee shall be constituted in the following manner: The Leadership Committee (¶ 710) shall appoint eleven (11) professing lay members of churches within the annual conference not in the appellant's district (or the district where the trial was held), who hold office either as local church lay leader or lay member of the annual conference, none of whom shall have been members of the trial court. Nine (9) members shall serve as the ad hoc conference appeals committee and two shall serve as alternates.

d. The findings of the ad hoc conference appeals committee shall be certified by the presiding elder to the pastor of the church of which the accused is a member.

e. Questions of church law arising from the appeal process may be appealed by either party to the Connectional Council on Appeals.

f. All necessary traveling, sustenance, or other reasonable related expenses incurred by the committee on appeals, including any cost for legal counsel retained to advise the committee, in the hearing of an appeal case coming from a lay member and appearing before any committee on appeals, shall be paid out of the administrative fund of the annual conference. The presiding elder shall approve all expenses. Expenses for counsel for the Church shall be paid by the annual conference. Such expenses for counsel for the respondent shall be paid by the respondent unless, in the interest of fairness, the ad hoc conference appeals committee orders the annual conference to reimburse the respondent.

¶ 916. APPEAL OF QUESTIONS OF LAW.

1. Appeals on questions of law shall be automatically appealed as follows:

a. From the decision of the presiding elder presiding in the charge or district conference to the bishop presiding in the annual conference. Upon the filing of an appeal, the bishop's ruling may be further appealed to the Connectional Council on Appeals;

b. From the decision of the bishop or conference superintendent presiding in the annual conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals; and

c. From the bishop presiding in the General Conference to the Connectional Council on Appeals.

2. When a question of law is raised in writing during a session of a conference, it shall be the secretary's duty to see that an exact statement of the question submitted and the ruling of the chair thereon shall be entered in the journal and minutes of the conference. The secretary shall then make and certify a copy of the question and ruling and transmit the same to the person or body to which an appeal is taken.

¶ 917. APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS (see ¶ 906).

1. The order of appeals on procedures in an administrative process shall be as follows:

a. From the decision of the board of ministry investigative committee to the annual conference administrative review committee;

b. From the administrative review committee to the full board of ministry; and

c. From the full board of ministry to the clergy session.

d. Questions of law arising from an administrative process should be raised in the clergy session for ruling by the bishop and review by the Connectional Council on Appeals.

2. In all cases of such an appeal, the appellant shall within thirty (30) days give written notice of appeal and at the same time furnish to the officer receiving such notice a written statement of the grounds of appeal, and the hearing in the appellate body shall be limited to the grounds set forth in such statement.

3. The appellate body shall return to the convening officer of the administrative hearing and to the appellant a written statement of the grounds of its action, which shall also be placed in the appellant's personnel file.

4. An appeal shall not be allowed in any case in which the respondent has failed or refused to be present in person or by counsel during the administrative hearing. Appeals shall be heard by the proper appellate body unless it shall appear to the said body that the appellant has forfeited the right to appeal by misconduct; by withdrawal from the church; by failure to appear in person or by counsel to prosecute the appeal; or, prior to the final decision on appeal, by resorting to suit in the civil courts against any of the parties connected with the ecclesiastical administrative process.

5. The right to appeal, when once forfeited by neglect or otherwise, cannot be revived by any subsequent appellate body.

6. The right to prosecute an appeal shall not be affected by the death of the person entitled to such right. Heirs or legal representatives may prosecute such an appeal as the appellant would be entitled to do if living.

7. The records and documents of the administrative process, including any evidence, and these only, shall be used in the hearing of any appeal.

8. The appellate body shall determine one question only: Were there such errors of church law or procedure as to substantially affect the recommendation and/or action of the administrative body? The records of the administrative process and the arguments of the official representatives of all parties shall determine this question. The appellate body shall in no case hear witnesses. It may have legal counsel present for the sole purpose of providing advice to the appellate body.

9. If the appellate body determines that any error has occurred, it may recommend to the appropriate person or body that action be taken promptly to remedy the error, decide the error is harmless, or take other action. The appellate committee shall not reverse the judgment nor remand the case for a new hearing on account of error plainly not affecting the result. All decisions of the appellate committee shall require a majority vote.

10. In all cases, the right to present evidence shall be exhausted when the case has been heard once on its merits in the proper administrative hearing body, but the decision of the administrative hearing body may be appealed as outlined herein. Questions of church law may be raised in the clergy session and carried on appeal to the Connectional Council on Appeals.

Section V. Other Provisions

¶ 918. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.

1. Any clergy members residing beyond the bounds of the conference in which membership is held shall be subject to the appropriate officers of the conference in which the alleged violation took place, unless the presiding bishops of the two annual conferences and the clergy member subject to the procedures agree that fairness will be better served by having the procedures carried out by the appropriate officers of the annual conference in which he or she is a member or, if the clergy person has elected senior status, where they are currently residing.

2. When an active bishop or clergy member is the respondent to a complaint under ¶¶ 906, 907, or 908 and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the bishop or clergy member shall surrender his or her credentials and his or her name shall be removed from conference membership. In such case the record shall be "withdrawn under complaint" or "withdrawn under charges," whichever is appropriate. If the person desires their credentials to be restored, they must first resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at which it ended when they withdrew. Time spent as "withdrawn under complaint or charges" does not count toward the statute of limitations (¶ 908).

3. When a professing member of the Global Methodist Church is charged with an offense and desires to withdraw from the Global Methodist Church at any point in the process, the charge conference may permit such member to withdraw his or her name from the roll of professing members, in which case the record shall be "withdrawn under complaint." If formal charges have been referred by a committee on investigation, such member may be permitted to withdraw, in which case the record shall be "withdrawn under charges." If the person desires to be restored as a professing member (or become a professing member in another local congregation of the Global Methodist Church), they would first have to resolve the complaint, with the complaint process picking up at the point at

which it ended when they withdrew.

4. For procedural purposes, the judicial process shall be governed by *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* in effect on the date a complaint is forwarded to the process chair.

Section VI. Connectional Council on Appeals

¶ 919. MEMBERSHIP.

1. The Connectional Council on Appeals is the highest judicial body in the Global Methodist Church. The council shall be composed of seven members. Members elected at the 2024 convening General Conference shall serve for two years or until their successors are elected. Persons elected at the 2024 convening General Conference shall be eligible for nomination at the 2026 General Conference and their two-year term shall not count against the term limit specified herein. At the 2026 General Conference four members shall be clergy and three members shall be laity. A member's term of office shall be six years. A member may serve a maximum of two consecutive six-year terms. The number of clergy and laity shall alternate every six years so that the clergy have the four members during one six-year term and the laity have the four members during the next six-year term. Members shall be professing members of the Global Methodist Church (clergy or laity). Bishops shall be ineligible for election to the council.

2. Alternates. Clergy and laity shall be elected to serve as alternates in a number equal to the number to serve on the Connectional Council on Appeals during the ensuing six-year term. Alternates shall serve in their category at any session of the council in the absence of a member of the council in the order of their election. In the event a member of the council cannot serve the balance of a term, the next elected alternate in the category impacted shall serve the balance of the term and such service shall not count against the maximum time of serving.

3. Expiration of Term. The term of office of the members of the Connectional Council on Appeals and of the alternates shall expire upon the adjournment of the General Conference at which their successors are elected.

4. Ineligibility. Members of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall be ineligible to serve as delegates to the General Conference, or to serve on any general church or annual conference board or commission.

5. Nominations. In advance of the General Conference, the administrative Nominations Committee shall nominate by majority vote a total of twenty-one (21) persons representing the church's geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity in the appropriate lay and clergy categories. On the first day of the General Conference, nominations of clergy or laity may be made from the floor. Name, annual conference membership, and biographical information not to exceed 100 words shall be published for review by delegates to the General Conference at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the time of election. Election shall occur without discussion or debate, by ballot and majority vote.

¶ 920. ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE.

1. Rules of Practice and Procedure. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall provide its own rules of practice and procedure not in conflict with the provisions of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, including the election of a president, vice president, and secretary of the council, who shall be elected by the members of the council.

2. Time and Place of Meeting. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall meet at the time and place of the meeting

of the General Conference and shall continue until the adjournment of that body, at least one other time in each calendar year, and at other times as the council may deem appropriate, and at such places as it deems appropriate from time to time. Where necessary due to international or local conditions that prevent the physical assembling of the Council, it may, by a two-thirds vote, decide to meet via electronic or other digital means.

3. Quorum. Seven members or alternates duly seated shall constitute a quorum. One lay and one clergy alternate shall attend the meeting to be available in case of illness or recusal. An affirmative vote of at least five members or duly seated alternates shall be necessary to declare any act of the General Conference unconstitutional. On all other matters, a majority vote of the entire Connectional Council on Appeals shall be sufficient to arrive at a decision.

4. Docket. The secretary of the Connectional Council on Appeals shall publish a list of the matters which will be decided at any session at least thirty (30) days prior to the deadline for submission of briefs. The description of each matter pending shall be sufficient to enable persons who might file briefs to know the subject of the pending matter.

5. Public Access. All materials properly filed with the Connectional Council on Appeals pursuant to the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* are matters of public record and are to be made available to clergy and members of the Global Methodist Church. Upon a majority vote of the Connectional Council on Appeals, confidential information may be redacted from otherwise public record. The deliberations of the Council are private. The Council may schedule a hearing open to the public for the presentation of oral argument in any matter.

¶ 921. JURISDICTION.

1. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of the General Conference is in compliance with this Book of Doctrines and Discipline upon an appeal of one-fifth of the members of the General Conference present and voting, or by a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

2. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any proposed legislation is in conflict with this Book of Doctrines and Discipline when such a declaratory decision is requested by one-fifth of the members of the General Conference presenting and voting, or by a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

3. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine whether any act of an annual conference is in compliance with this Book of Doctrines and Discipline upon an appeal by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting to that annual conference.

4. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall determine the legality of any action taken by any body created or authorized by the General Conference or by any body created or authorized by an annual conference upon appeal by one-fifth of the delegates present and voting of such General or annual conference wherein the action was taken, or one-third of the governing members of the created or authorized body present and voting, or a majority of the Assembly of Bishops.

5. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to determine the legality of any action taken by a body or agency created or authorized by the General or annual conference upon petition for certiorari by one fifth of the delegates present and voting of any annual conference.

6. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to render a declaratory decision as to the meaning,

application, or effect of *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline* or any portion thereof or the legality, meaning, application, or effect of any act or legislation of an annual conference. Petitions for certiorari may be filed by:

a. The General Conference upon the vote of one fifth of the delegates present and voting;

b. The Assembly of Bishops upon the vote of a majority of the bishops present and voting;

c. Any body created or authorized by the General Conference or an annual conference on matters relating to or affecting the work of such body upon the vote of a majority of the body's governing entity present and voting; or

d. An annual conference upon the vote of one-fifth of its delegates present and voting.

7. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall affirm, modify, or reverse the decisions of law made by bishops in annual or General Conference. No such episcopal decision of law shall be authoritative, except in the conference where it is made, until review by the council has been completed.

8. The Connectional Council on Appeals may grant certiorari to review a decision of an ad hoc conference appeals committee of any annual conference if it should appear that such decision may be at variance with *The Book of Doctrines and Discipline*, a prior decision of the Connectional Council on Appeals, or a decision of a committee on appeals of another annual conference on a question of church law.

9. The Connectional Council on Appeals may rule on any matter referred to it in accordance with Part Nine.

10. The Connectional Council on Appeals shall:

a. Affirm, modify, remand or reverse the decisions of a trial court regarding the trial of a clergy member or an active bishop (¶ 915.8).

b. Affirm or remand for a new hearing or trial any decision of a committee on investigation or trial court when appealed by the Church (¶ 915.10).

c. Rule on a respondent's appeal of an adverse double jeopardy ruling of an investigative body (¶ 905.8).

¶ 922. CERTIORARI. Certiorari is a request to re-examine a previous decision by another body. It is discretionary and is granted upon the affirmative vote of three members of the Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ 923. DECISIONS. All decisions of the Connectional Council on Appeals are final. Decisions shall immediately be delivered to the parties of interest in each matter and be published electronically for public review.

¶ 924. PRECEDENTIAL VALUE. The decisions of predecessor Methodist bodies such as the Judicial Councils of The Methodist Church and of The United Methodist Church may be cited in arguments before the Connectional Council on Appeals but shall only have precedential value to the extent determined by the Connectional Council on Appeals.

¶ 925. TIMELINES AND DEADLINES.

This paragraph summarizes the timelines and deadlines contained in ¶¶ 901-918.

1. All notices shall be delivered to the applicable parties not less than thirty (30) days before a hearing (¶ 905).

2. Evidence to be used in a hearing shall be available to the respondent not less than thirty (30) days prior to the hearing (¶ 905).

3. The supervisory response shall be completed within sixty (60) days (with the possibility of a one-time 30-day extension) (¶¶ 906, 909).

4. The investigative response shall be completed within sixty (60) days (with the possibility of a one-time 30-day extension) (¶ 906).

5. The relevant supervising officer shall appoint a counsel for the Church within thirty (30) days of the end of a supervisory response regarding a judicial complaint (¶ 911).

6. The counsel for the Church shall report on the status of the complaint every thirty (30) days to all parties (¶ 911).

7. A response to a judicial complaint must be made in writing within thirty (30) days of the respondent receiving the complaint (¶ 911).

8. The committee on investigation must be convened within sixty (60) days of receipt of a judicial complaint (¶ 911).

9. Preliminary rulings by the chair of the committee on investigation shall be released to all parties at least five (5) days prior to the committee on investigation hearing (¶ 912).

10. If witnesses are to be interviewed outside of the hearing, notice shall be given to all parties at least three (3) days before (¶¶ 912, 913).

11. The bill of charges and specifications shall be sent to all parties by the committee on investigation within five (5) days of its decision (¶ 912).

12. Any request for a change of venue shall be submitted within ten (10) days of receiving the notice of the time and place of a trial (¶¶ 913, 914).

13. The convening officer of the trial court shall appoint a counsel for the Church within thirty (30) days of receiving the bill of charges and specifications, if one has not been appointed (¶ 913).

14. Notice of an appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of the release of a decision (¶¶ 915, 917, 906).

15. Notice of an ad hoc conference appeals committee hearing time and place shall be given within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal (¶ 915).

16. The ad hoc conference appeals committee hearing shall be held within thirty (30) to ninety (90) days of receiving the appeal (¶ 915).

¶ 926. Recognizing our denomination is global in its reach and membership, any party in a process outlined under this Part Nine, may, due to cultural differences or restrictions and a showing of extreme hardship, make application

to the Connectional Council for a limited variance of any process, timeline, or deadline hereunder. Such variance may only be granted on a case-by-case basis and not as an ongoing variance for any region or annual conference. Any such variance should be as limited as possible to achieve the aim of fair administration of church law and policy. The Connectional Council on Appeals is granted jurisdiction to hear any appeal of any such decision of the Connectional Council. Any variance application and appeal shall suspend the complaint process and all timelines and deadlines until a ruling is made.

AMEND BY ADDITION:

¶ 710.2.e For administrative complaints described in ¶ 906, the board of ministry shall appoint from among its own members, a committee on investigation that includes at least one lay member.

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1010	—	Certification of Mission Organizations (Withdrawn) *Luther Oconer · Conference Connectional Council (PH: Mega Manila Philippines) · Group*
1012	¶302	Allegiance as Christian Witness (Withdrawn) *Chance Robinson · Paris Hutchison (US: MidSouth)*
1017	—	Global Unity Commission (Withdrawn) *Jonathan Lee · Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)*
1018	¶610.7	The Process of Appointment-Making (Withdrawn) *Jonathan Lee · Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)*
1019	¶610.5	Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Training (Withdrawn) *Jonathan Lee · Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)*
1023	¶610.7	The Process of Appointment-Making (Withdrawn) *Jonathan Lee · Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)*
1030	¶401	Scripture Quotation Integrity (Invalid - Editorial, Not Legislative) *Chris Gadlage · General Conference Delegation (US: Great Lakes) · Group*
1042	¶505.2	Clarifying Ordination Standards in Light of the Church's Teaching on Sexual (Withdrawn) *Jonathan Lee · Christ's Community Church (US: Upper Midwest)*
1043	—	Seeking All the Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Withdrawn) *Mark Barrow · Hendersonville Christ (US: MidSouth)*
1057	¶207.11	Petition to Amend Paragraph 207 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline (Withdrawn) *Shreve Community (US: Allegheny West) · Church Leadership Board/Council · Group*
1058	¶208	Petition to Amend Paragraph 208 of the Book of Doctrines and Discipline (Withdrawn) *Shreve Community (US: Allegheny West) · Church Leadership Board/Council · Group*
1137	¶103	Covenant Fellowship (Invalid) *Samuel Padgett · Olney (US: Great Lakes)*
1175	¶450	Clarify Requirements for Organizing a New Church (Invalid) *Jason Burnham · General Conference Delegation (US: Trinity) · Group · Duplicate of 1176*
1230	—	Establishment of a Connectional Young People's Ministry (Withdrawn) *Frank Webere · Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)*
1232	—	Mandatory Review by Connectional Young People's Council (Withdrawn) *Frank Webere · Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)*
1236	—	Protection of Existing Young People's Structures (Withdrawn) *Frank Webere · Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)*
1237	—	Implementation and Transition (Withdrawn) *Frank Webere · Nairobi Kayole St John's (AF: Kenya-Ethiopia)*
1340	—	Communion (Invalid) *Jack Granger · Garner Mount Zion (US: North Carolina)*
1402	¶410	Global Unity, Local Flexibility: Clarifying Pastoral Responsibilities in Membership (Withdrawn) *Samantha Wilkins · General Conference Delegation (US: MidTexas) · Group*
1426	¶605.4	Deleting Irrelevant Timestamp (Withdrawn) *Jason Burnham · GMC Global Episcopacy Committee · Group*
1445	¶106	Adopt Clear Doctrinal Standard on Marriage (Invalid - Duplicate) *John Lomperis · First Methodist Waco (US: MidTexas)*
1381	¶438.9	Global Unity, Local Clarity: Removing Church Conference Structure (Withdrawn) *Ryan Barnett · General Conference Delegation (US: MidTexas) · Group · Withdrawn 2026-07-01; duplicate of 01416*