This document comprises all legislation approved at both the 35th Session (June 2019) and the Special Session (September 2019) of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

**June 2019**

**LEGISLATION APPROVED**

**Motion for Special Annual Conference**

Bishop Bob, members of the annual conference: I move that in accordance with ¶603.5 of the *2016 Book of Discipline*, we authorize a special session of Desert Southwest Annual Conference to meet on September 14, 2019 at a United Methodist Church to be named later. The purpose of this special session of the Annual Conference shall be to consider the petitions and resolutions submitted to this current session of Annual Conference as well as any other petitions or resolutions submitted for consideration related to the topics of a response to the 2019 special session of the General Conference and about the future of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference and/or The United Methodist Church, with the exception of Resolution 8.

Originator: Rev. Dan Hurlbert, Prescott UMC
Amended by: Amy Notbolm, Dayspring UMC

**PETITIONS APPROVED**

*Book of Discipline 2016 ¶ 362*

**General Church Budget Implications:** No

**Global Implications:** None

Amend ¶ 362 as follows:

¶362.

*Complaint Procedures*—1. Ordination and membership in an annual conference in The United Methodist Church is a sacred trust. The qualifications and duties of local pastors, associate members, provisional members, and full members are set forth in *The Book of Discipline (2016) of The United Methodist Church*, and we believe they flow from the gospel as taught by Jesus the Christ and proclaimed by his apostles. Whenever a person in any of the above categories, including those on leaves of all types, honorable or administrative location, or retirement, is accused, by a professing lay member or another clergy member of the conference in which they serve and/or live (with exceptions being made for complaints where criminal charges or abuse may be involved), of violating this trust, the membership of his or her ministerial office shall be subject to review.

submitted via the General Conference Petitions website on 9/16/19

Concerning Immigration

Whereas the Scriptures proclaim that “The Lord your God…loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19). And Jesus taught his disciples that when they took care of “the least of these,” including welcoming strangers, they were welcoming Him (Matthew 25:31-40);

Whereas The United Methodist Social Principles state “The mistreatment or torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs," The 2016 Book of Discipline, Par. 164A, p. 138;

Whereas The United Methodist Social Principles also state "We commit ourselves as a Church to the achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community," The 2016 Book of Discipline, Par. 165, p. 143;

Whereas The United Methodist Social Principles also state "We reaffirm our historic concern for the world as our parish and seek for all persons and peoples full and equal membership in a truly world community," The 2016 Book of Discipline, Par. 165D, p. 144;

Whereas The United Methodist Social Principles also state “We recognize, embrace, and affirm all persons, regardless of country of origin, as members of the family of God. We urge the Church and society to recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of those who are immigrants, and to advocate for justice for all. We oppose the immigration policies that separate family members from each other or that include detention of families with children, and we call on local churches to be in ministry with immigrant families.” The 2016 Book of Discipline, Par. 162H, p. 122;

Whereas Justice For Our Neighbors is a nationwide United Methodist organization offering legal assistance to immigrants in the United States. As Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors, in the Desert Southwest Conference, we welcome our immigrant brothers and sisters as fellow children of God, and neighbors in our conference; and

Whereas Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors opposes the incarceration of incoming migrants. We believe all of God's children, regardless of national origin are entitled to due process rights, including the ability to post bond, the opportunity to seek council, and await the resolution/determination of their case out of detention; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference petition the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to request that the General Board of Church and Society contact the appropriate United States Governmental Agencies, and demand the following:

1. All children who have been separated from their families in the United States be reunited with their families as soon as possible;
2. United States Government Agencies cease detaining individuals and families seeking asylum, and that those currently detained and those seeking to enter the United States as asylees be provided with due process as soon as possible;

3. The facilities where immigrants are being detained be open for inspection, with a priority on those where immigrants are holding hunger protests; and

4. Legislation for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, that reflects the principles and priorities noted above, be passed as soon as possible.

Petitioner: Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors

submitted via the General Conference Petitions website on 9/16/19

The 2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 511.4.c

General Church Budget Implications: Yes

Global Implications: None

Amend ¶ 511.4.c as follows:

c) The commission, in cooperation with the United Methodist Publishing House, shall make all necessary arrangements for the publication of the Advance Edition of the Daily Christian Advocate and quadrennial reports of the Connectional Table and the general agencies of the church in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Kiswahili (standard), and for all delegates to have timely (90-day period) and convenient access to the most linguistically appropriate translation of these documents.


submitted via the General Conference Petitions website on 9/16/19

A Declaratory Decision from Judicial Council

Whereas the 2016 Book of Discipline ¶¶ 2610.1 and 2610.2.j authorize the annual conference to petition the Judicial Council for declaratory decisions as to the constitutionality, meaning, application, or effect of the Discipline on matters relating to the work of the annual conference;

Whereas The United Methodist Church maintains a separation of powers to divide government responsibilities into distinct branches (e.g., executive, legislative, and judicial) to limit any one branch from exercising the core functions of another, to prevent the concentration of power, and to provide for checks and balances;¹

Whereas bishops are given residential and presidential supervision responsibilities² as well as leadership responsibilities to “oversee the spiritual and temporal affairs of The United Methodist Church”³ thereby representing the executive branch of this denomination;

¹ See Judicial Council Decision no. 689 for reinforcement of “separation of powers.”
² See 2016 Book of Discipline ¶¶ 49, 415, and 416.
³ See 2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 414.
Whereas bishops are given legal authority to “decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session” (emphasis added), which is a limited power given that all such decisions “shall not be authoritative… until it shall have been passed upon by the Judicial Council”;  

Whereas bishops have historically exercised their residential supervision and spiritual responsibilities and powers by discerning when a complaint should be dismissed for executive and pastoral reasons;  

Whereas the legislative branch (i.e., the February 2019 Special Session General Conference) just amended the Book of Discipline (2016) ¶¶ 362.1.e.1 and 413.3.d.i to remove executive and pastoral reasons for dismissing complaints and to limit complaint dismissals to only those “as having no basis in law or fact,” (emphasis added) thereby requiring bishops to act as quasi-magistrates and thereby legislating that the executive branch have judicial responsibilities;  

Whereas supervision of the complaint process generally occurs between sessions of the Annual Conference, and the Judicial Council does not have the constitutional or Disciplinary authority to review legal assessments made by bishops in the dismissal of complaints;  

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Annual Conference and Rev. Anthony Tang petition for a Declaratory Decision from the Judicial Council on the Constitutionality of the 2016 Book of Discipline ¶¶ 362.1.e.1 and 413.3.d.i in light of their breaches of separation of powers, violation of ¶ 49 by arbitrarily restricting the residential and presidential supervision responsibilities of bishops in the performance of their duties, and violation of ¶ 51 by giving bishops legal authority between sessions of Annual Conferences without judicial oversight. Furthermore, if indeed not constitutional, that the words, “as having no basis in law or fact” be stricken from ¶¶ 362.1.e.1 and 413.3.d.i.


submitted to the Judicial Council for consideration in July 2019.

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4 See Book of Discipline (2016) ¶ 51.
5 See 2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 362.1.e.1 (with the consent of the cabinet) and ¶ 413.3.d.i (with the consent of the College of Bishops and the committee on episcopacy).
6 See Petition 90044 (Traditional Plan #13).
7 See 2016 Book of Discipline ¶¶ 2609 and 2610.
Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops to Convene Special Western Jurisdictional Conference

Whereas the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops has declared in its response to Judicial Council Decision 1378 in a document dated April 26, 2019, entitled “A Home For All God's People” that...

...the intent of the Western Jurisdiction remains the same as was stated on the floor of General Conference 2019: to live in the spirit of “One Church.” ... In the wake of the Judicial Council decisions, we continue our commitment to live into Beloved Community as one church in each of the conferences of the Western Jurisdiction...

we, your bishops, are prayerfully in conversation in many places, with many individuals and groups about your hopes and your vision for being Church in this challenging time. We remain committed to ministry as one church for all and we ask for your prayers for the church and for the future of the love and grace as we travel this road together, not knowing where it will lead us, yet, but confident in God's presence with us.;” and

Whereas §521.2 of the 2016 Book of Discipline gives the College of Bishops the authority by two-thirds vote “to call a special session of the Jurisdictional Conference when necessary;” now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Annual Conference petitions the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops to call a special session of the Western Jurisdictional Conference, as needed, for the following purposes:

1. to consider and develop a process should separation from The United Methodist Church become inevitable;

2. to prayerfully consider how we can most faithfully continue to be a home for all God’s people, gathered around a table of reconciliation and transformation; and

3. to recognize while there are many groups being formed within the Western Jurisdiction, there is a need for open communication and collaboration. In our desire for transparency and clarity we bring this resolution forward; be it further

Resolved, that we urge the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops to appoint a special planning team that will:

1. consider creative ways of minimizing the cost of a specially called session; and

2. find creative sources for funding a specially called session.

We urge immediate action so that the beginnings of a Jurisdictional plan can be in place prior to the 2020 General Conference; and be it further

Resolved, that we will send key leaders (with voice, not vote) and our 2020 Jurisdictional Delegation as they were elected in 2018 for the purpose of doing that connectional work.

**RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED**

Equitable Compensation

What is the 2020 schedule of Equitable Compensation required by ¶342.1, .2 and ¶625.2, .3 of the 2016 Book of Discipline?

I. Base Cash Compensation and Housing - 2020

(Please note: The following schedule is the minimum allowable cash compensation for all pastors and both the minimum and maximum schedules of the cash compensation for churches receiving an equitable compensation subsidy from the Conference.)

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The above schedule reflects a 2.3% increase from the 2019 schedule for 0-20 years of service. This recommended percentage increase was based on consideration of various data including inflation rates, changes in denominational and clergy compensation, changes in conference employee compensation, and available funds in the conference budget. The schedule also includes recommendations for 21-40 years of service, which were not reflected in the 2019 schedule.
In addition to the cash compensation per the above schedule, the local church will provide housing comparable to the housing standards of the local church community, by means of a parsonage or a housing allowance. If a housing allowance is provided, the amount shall be determined by the local church in consultation with the District Superintendent. If a parsonage is provided, it must meet the standards described in the Conference Policy “Clergy Housing Policies and Standards.” In addition to the housing allowance or parsonage, the congregation shall provide full payment of gas, water, electricity, sewer, trash collection, telephone and other utilities for the residence.

II. Professional Expenses

Business and Transportation: The local church will provide an accountable reimbursement plan for business and transportation expenses incurred by the pastor in the work of the parish in an amount no less than $2,000 for the year ($4,000 per year for pastors appointed to multi-point charges). Reimbursement for auto transportation will be at the IRS allowable standard mileage rate. For all churches receiving equitable compensation subsidies, the accountable reimbursement plan for business and transportation cannot exceed $4,000 for the year.

Continuing Education: The local church will provide an accountable reimbursement plan for continuing education expenses incurred by the pastor in the work of the parish in an amount no less than $500 for the year. For churches receiving equitable compensation subsidies, the accountable reimbursement plan for continuing education cannot exceed $1,000 for the year.

III. Benefits

*Health/Dental Insurance: The local church will provide payment of the church portion of premiums for the Annual Conference sponsored health/dental insurance program for the clergy member where required.  

*Pension: Payment of the local church’s contribution to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) will be provided by the local church.

* Note: Conference Rule IV.F.3.f states: “Payment of monthly subsidies will be made by the Conference Treasurer, first to cover health insurance premiums, second to cover pension payments, and third any subsidy balance to the local church.”

Council on Finance & Administration

Recommendation 1 – 2020 Apportioned Conference Budget

That the total Apportioned Conference Budget for 2020 be $5,780,820 as follows:

- A World Service and Conference Benevolences budget of $2,006,972 (including $539,603 for the World Service Fund)
- A Support Ministry Team budget of $2,040,127
- A Leadership Team budget of $1,409,499
- A budget for Other Conference Benevolences of $324,222

Recommendation 2 – Special Days and Causes

That the Special Days and Causes goals be $210,000 for 2020 as follows:

Day/Cause and Month
Human Relations Day (January) .........................................................$10,000
Campus Ministries (February) ...........................................................$18,500
UMCOR Sunday (OGHS) (March) .................................................$50,000
Native American Awareness (2nd Sunday after Easter) ........$12,000
Peace with Justice (May) ...................................................$15,000
Youth Service Fund (June) ..................................................$20,000
Golden Cross (July) ............................................................$12,000
Conference Hunger Needs (August) .....................................$25,000
Young Adults (1st Sunday in September) ...............................$5,000
Christian Education (September) .........................................$7,500
World Communion (October) ................................................$18,000
Disability Awareness (3rd Sunday in October) .........................$5,000
Rural Life Sunday (November) ..............................................$6,000
United Methodist Student Day (December) .........................$6,000

**Recommendation 3 – Conference Advance and Benevolence Specials**

That the following Conference Advance and Benevolence Specials be approved for 2020:

Arizona Faith Network
Asylum Aid Phoenix
Church to Church Pastor Support
Conference Missionary (Surafel Gebretsadik)
Cook Native American Ministries
El Mesias Iglesia Metodista - Nogales
Fort Yuma Indian Mission
General Board of Global Ministries Advance specials
Hope for the Hopeless Ethiopian Orphanage
Inn Project
Justa Center
Justice for our Neighbors
Methodist Border Mission Network
Mexico Methodist Ministries
Mingus Mountain Camp
Nevadans for the Common Good
Northern Arizona Native American Ministries
Phoenix Native American Fellowship
Potosi Pines Camp
School of Theology at Claremont
Sidewalk Sunday School
Sierra Service Project
Strength for the Journey
TMM Family Services – Tucson
Trinity Opportunity Alliance
UMM Saws Project
UMOM New Day Centers – Phoenix
United Methodist Social Ministries (UMSM) – Las Vegas
United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM)
United Christian Ministry, Northern Arizona University
Wesley Foundation, University of Arizona
Wesley Community Center - Phoenix
Wesley Foundation, Arizona State University

**Recommendation 4 – Other Recommendations**

That the 2019 annual conference offerings be designated as follows:

- Thursday Morning Opening Service – College Student Hunger/Homelessness
- Thursday Evening Memorial Service – Conference ERT/UMCOR USA Disaster Relief
- Saturday Evening Ordination Service – Huachuca UMC fire recovery
- Sunday Morning Closing Service – Asylum Aid Phoenix

That the Level I Exempt Compensation figure be set at $100,754 for 2020, which reflects a 2.3% cost-of-living increase from 2019 (after a 6.0% decrease from 2018 to 2019).

That the following be adopted regarding employee expenses:

A. That the employee reimbursement mileage rate for 2020 shall be at the allowable rate of the Internal Revenue Code.

B. That the maximum daily meal allowance for 2020 shall be $40.00 per person.

That Annual Conference members of the 2020 Annual Conference Session be reimbursed for travel to and from the Session in excess of 50 miles one way (100 miles both ways) at 22 cents per mile, with an additional 4 cents per mile if one or more additional members travel in the same vehicle. Alternatively, reimbursement shall be made for airfare at the lowest coach air fare available for a 21-day advance purchase. The reimbursement is for miles traveled within the geographical bounds of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference. Airfare will be reimbursed on a pro rata basis for miles flown over the geographical bounds of the Annual Conference.

That members of Conference Boards and Committees be reimbursed for official travel at the rate of 22 cents per mile, with an additional 4 cents per mile if one or more additional members travel in the same vehicle. Alternatively, reimbursement shall be made for airfare at the lowest coach air fare available for a 21-day advance purchase.

That spending is to be only within budgeted or designated funds. Any exceptions must be presented to the Council on Finance and Administration for consideration.

**Pension and Health Benefits**

**Recommendation 1 – Annuity Rate and Past Service Obligation**

That the pension rate for pre-1982 past service for the calendar year 2020 be set at $702. This represents a 2.0% increase from the 2019 rate and keeps the rate set at 1.00% of the Conference Average Compensation. Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) is authorized and instructed to distribute this amount to the claimants in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Ministerial Pension Plan and the Comprehensive Protection Plan.

**Recommendation 2 – Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowance for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the Desert Southwest Conference**

Whereas the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (Church), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (Clergypersons);
Whereas the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

Whereas pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, and disabled Clergypersons in consideration of previous active service; and

Whereas the Internal Revenue Service has recognized that the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under The 2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (Discipline), which includes all such payments from Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) during the years 2019 and 2020 by each active, retired or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and be it further

Resolved, that the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the Discipline, including such payments from Wespath and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the Discipline, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, retired or disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired or disabled Clergyperson’s pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson’s gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations thereunder to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson’s employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

Recommendation 3 – Resolution Relating to Local Church Funding for the Clergy Retirement Security Program in 2020

Whereas the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) will continue as the denominational pension plan of The United Methodist Church in 2020;  

Whereas the funding of CRSP in 2020 and each subsequent year by the Desert Southwest Conference (Conference) will be based mainly on an actuarial determination from the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits and partially on matched participant contributions to the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan;
Whereas the Conference desires to keep the local churches’ funding of clergy pensions as close as possible to the 2019 CRSP funding methodology;

Whereas pension amounts will not be equal for all clergy under CRSP (with elements of both a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan); and

Whereas it is reasonable that local churches with the ability to pay their clergy above the denominational average compensation (DAC) have the ability to pay a larger pension amount for the clergy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that for 2020, CRSP continue to be funded by the local churches to the Conference at the annual rate of 13% of actual plan compensation (cash salary plus housing allowance or imputed parsonage value) with no maximum limit based on DAC.

Recommendation 4 – Resolution Relating to HealthFlex Exchange Participant Contribution Levels and Church Payment Rate

Whereas in 2016 through 2019, the Conference provided health insurance coverage for active participants through the denomination’s HealthFlex Exchange;

Whereas feedback obtained across the Conference has indicated satisfaction with the HealthFlex Exchange program;

Whereas the Conference desires to keep the details of the 2020 HealthFlex Exchange program as close as possible to those of the 2019 program;

Whereas good claims experience in 2018 for many of the HealthFlex Exchange plans has resulted in an approximate 4.5% increase in the costs to be paid by the Conference for all HealthFlex Exchange plans for 2020; and

Whereas budget considerations dictate that this 4.5% cost increase be shared proportionately by the Conference, churches, and participants; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that for 2020, churches pay the blended rate of $15,576 per participant for their share of health insurance premiums (regardless of whether the participant selects single, couple, or family coverage), in order to provide HealthFlex Exchange contribution levels of $11,124 for single coverage, $18,540 for couple coverage, and $22,236 for family coverage.

Personnel Committee

Recommendation 1 – Changes to Exempt Salary Levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exempt Salary Level</th>
<th>2019 Salary Ranges</th>
<th>2020 Recommended Salary Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>$68,501 to $86,691</td>
<td>$70,077 to $88,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>$51,582 to $71,850</td>
<td>$52,768 to $73,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>$30,987 to $51,010</td>
<td>$31,700 to $52,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation 2 – Changes to Non-Exempt Wage Levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Exempt Wage Level</th>
<th>2019 Wage Ranges</th>
<th>2020 Recommended Wage Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>$17.78 to $26.29</td>
<td>$18.19 to $26.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>$16.66 to $22.35</td>
<td>$17.04 to $22.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>$15.05 to $20.86</td>
<td>$15.40 to $21.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV $13.41 to $17.70 $13.72 to $18.11
V $12.07 to $15.91 $12.35 to $16.28

Informational notes for recommendations No. 1 and No. 2:

*Each year the Committee reviews ranges of compensation of both exempt and non-exempt staff of the Annual Conference with the exception of Level I positions which are governed by other recommendations. See Conference Rules “Compensation and Expense Policies for District Superintendents and other Level I Exempt Personnel (as defined in the Conference Personnel Policies)” in the 2018 Conference Journal.

The Fair Labor Standards Act provides that all employees who work more than 40 hours in a workweek must be paid at a rate of one and one-half (1½) times their regular rate of pay. Certain employees are EXEMPT from these overtime requirements. The major general exemptions to the overtime requirements include individuals who are covered under what are known as the “white collar” exemptions. The white-collar exemptions include executive, administrative and professional employees. These exemptions are based on the employee’s actual work activities, not on the employer’s characterization of those activities. All employees within the Desert Southwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church must be placed either within the EXEMPT or NON-EXEMPT categories.

At the present time EXEMPT STAFF are as follows:

I. District Superintendents, Director of Connectional Ministries, Director of Administrative Services/Treasurer, Director of New Faith/Vital Faith Communities

II. Director of Outreach Ministries, Director of Communications, Assistant Treasurer/Comptroller, Director of Camp & Retreat Ministries

III. Camp Site Directors

IV None

NON-EXEMPT STAFF – Usually support staff of which the following are examples: administrative assistants, temporary or seasonal workers. Their compensation level is determined by their responsibilities and duties as outlined in their job descriptions.

The Conference Personnel Policies are printed in the 2018 Conference Journal. One of the responsibilities of the Conference Personnel Committee is to recommend increases in Wage or Salary Ranges for the different assigned levels for employment. These are not to be understood as automatic individual pay raises. However, after an annual performance review, an employee is eligible for a salary or wage increase depending upon the performance review, the consumer price index which measures inflation, and other factors. The recommendation for 2019 was a 2.3% cost of living increase.

RESOLUTIONS APPROVED

Affirm Our Covenant

Submitted by Rev. George Cushman, Billie Fidlin, Rev. Stephen Govett, Rev. Tom Jelinek, Kent Olson, Rev. Michael Patzloff, Rev. Beth Rambikur
Whereas the First Letter of John states: “Beloved let us love one another, because love is from God, everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (I John 4:7-8);

Whereas the word translated as “love” in these verses is the Greek word agape, which means to show honor and respect thus bestowing dignity;

Whereas First Corinthians states: “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way … love bears all things, believes all things hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.” (I Corinthians 13:4-5a, 7-8);” and

Whereas in the Gospel of John, Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35); now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the United Methodist People and United Methodist Churches of the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. aspire to practice love by respecting and honoring each other in all our dialogue and discussions;
2. aspire to express our deepest beliefs, concerns and hopes with each other; and
3. aspire to listen to understand and embrace all expressions from each other’s hearts without judgment, as we can embrace our faith without demeaning another’s faith.

**Disavowal of the Traditional Plan**

Submitted by Rev. George Cushman, Billie Fidlin, Rev. Stephen Govett, Rev. Tom Jelinek, Kent Olson, Rev. Michael Patzloff, Rev. Beth Rambikur

Financial Implications: No

Whereas using contextual biblical scholarship, there is no biblical mandate to discriminate against LGBTQ+ persons and relationships;

Whereas The United Methodist Church is capable of great nuance in the matter of biblical interpretation as displayed in its treatment of issues such as divorce and the ordination of women, but reverts to simplistic literalism when it comes to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons in its life and ministry;

Whereas The United Methodist Church has singled out LGBTQ+ persons and their supporters for special punitive action while ignoring the “clear biblical teaching” on other matters such as pensions (Matthew 6:19-20);

Whereas in our Wesleyan tradition the first general rule that John Wesley gave the people called Methodists concerns “doing no harm.”

Whereas United Methodists promise “to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves;”

Whereas by passing the Traditional Plan, the denomination has done great, and perhaps irreparable harm to our LGBTQ+ siblings and The United Methodist Church as a whole; and
Whereas for the past 10 years, the Desert Southwest Conference has declared itself to be a Reconciling Conference; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. condemns the decision of the 2019 General Conference to pass the Traditional Plan and apologizes for the harm that it has caused LGBTQ+ persons, their families, friends, and the body of Christ;
2. affirms that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God; and
3. asserts and affirms that no human being is incompatible with Christian teaching.

RULE CHANGES APPROVED

Health Insurance for Part-Time Lay Employees

Submitted by the Desert Southwest Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB)

Rule change to correct health insurance participation eligibility for part-time conference lay employees.

Whereas clergy in the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) are eligible to participate in the conference health insurance plan only if they are appointed ¾-time or full-time; and,

Whereas the DSC health insurance adoption agreement with Wespath Benefits and Investments (Wespath) specifies that participants are only eligible to be covered if they work ¾-time or full-time; and,

Whereas conference lay employees are eligible to participate in the conference-sponsored pension plan if they work a minimum of 30 hours per week;

Whereas the CBOPHB feels that the health insurance participation eligibility for part-time conference lay employees should be consistent with clergy, adoption agreement, and pension eligibilities; therefore be it

Resolved, that DSC correct rule B.II.F.7 of the Conference Personnel Policies as follows:

B. CONFERENCE PERSONNEL POLICIES

II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

F. Employment status categories:

7. Each employee working a minimum of 20 30 hours per week is eligible to participate in the Group conference-sponsored Health Insurance Plan. Each employee working a minimum of 30 hours per week is also eligible to participate in the Employee’s conference-sponsored Pension Plan.

Change Health Insurance for Clergy on Disability Leave

Submitted by the Desert Southwest Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits (CBOPHB)

Rule change to clarify health insurance premium coverage for clergy members on approved disability leave.
Whereas all clergy and other participants in the health insurance plan sponsored by the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) are responsible for a portion of their health insurance premiums while their church pays the large majority of the premiums; and,

Whereas clergy members on approved disability leave have for several years been paying the participant portion of health insurance premiums while DSC has been paying the church portion of premiums; therefore be it

Resolved, that the DSC clarify rule A.IV.J.6.b.3 as follows:

A. CONFERENCE RULES

IV. CONFERENCE BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND AGENCIES

J. PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS, Board of

6. Health Insurance Plan: Eligibility and Participation

b. ACTIVE CLERGY MEMBER PARTICIPATION

3) The Conference will pay for the church portion of all Conference HIP premiums for any clergy member who is on approved disability leave as defined by Wespath. Said premium coverage will also include the clergy member’s spouse and dependents as well applicable.

Change Moving Expense Policy

Submitted by the Desert Southwest Conference Council on Finance and Administration

Rule Change to address reimbursement of a pro-rated portion of the moving costs paid for/to a clergy person coming to an appointment in the Desert Southwest Conference from outside its bounds if the clergy person leaves the Conference within the first three years of their appointment in the Conference.

Whereas the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) continually receives requests from clergy outside DSC to be appointed in DSC; and,

Whereas it sometimes becomes necessary to appoint such clergy in DSC; and,

Whereas the cost of moving clergy from outside DSC to an appointment in DSC is significant to both DSC and the receiving church; and

Whereas such clergy occasionally leave their appointment in DSC within a short period of time, creating additional moving costs to DSC and the church for another new appointment; therefore be it

Resolved, that DSC update the Moving Expense Plan in rule A.II.I by adding item 13 below and adjusting the subsequential numbering:

A. CONFERENCE RULES

II. Conference Procedures

I. Moving Expense Plan

13. Any clergy coming to an appointment in the Desert Southwest Conference from outside its bounds must reimburse the Conference and the receiving Church a pro-rated portion of the moving costs paid for/to the clergy person if they leave the Conference appointment within the first 3 years of their appointment in the Conference. The pro-rated reimbursement amount shall
be as follows:

- 100% if they leave the Conference within the first year of their Conference appointment.
- 67% if they leave the Conference within the second year of their Conference appointment.
- 33% if they leave the Conference within the third year of their Conference appointment.

Exceptions to the provisions of these rules shall be subject to the final approval of the Appointive Cabinet with such approval being ratified by the Moving Expense Committee Chairperson and/or the Conference Treasurer.

September 2019
RESOLUTIONS APPROVED

Resolution: Adoption of Desert Southwest Conference Theological Statement

Financial Implications: no

Whereas United Methodists are the people of two books which guide our spiritual and communal lives, The Bible, as our authoritative scriptures, and The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, our Book of the Covenant;

Whereas theology consists of two Greek words, theos which means God and logos which means word or words about God, and our Book of Discipline suggests we use the Wesley Quadrilateral as the basis for theologizing (¶105);

Whereas the Bible calls for radical inclusivity many times over, including when Peter set aside Jewish law to visit a Gentile’s household when it was revealed to him that he “should not call anyone profane or unclean” (Acts 10); and

Whereas the United Methodist, Book of Discipline, calls us to a theology of radical inclusivity and defines an inclusive church as “one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world;” (¶140) now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference

1. Shall adopt the attached Theological Statement of the DSC Way Forward;
2. Shall adopt the attached Executive Summary of the Theological Statement;
3. Encourage all pastors and lay delegates to share these documents with their local church;
4. Commit to a theological foundation that affirms that all persons are welcomed; and
5. In response to the 2019 General Conference affirm that the LGBTQIA+ community have all rights of full membership in our church

Names of Petitioners.
Clayton M. Bowman
Rev. Nancy Cushman
Rev. Dr. George Cushman
Lea Ann Davis
Pastor Noni Dye
Sylvia Harris
Rev. Dr. Evelyn McDonald
Rev. Dr. Larry Norris

Legislative Summary 2019 17 of 29
Supporting Documents

Theological Statement of the DSC Way Forward

The Context of Our Theological Task

Our journey begins as we rehearse these words from The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church:

“Theology is our best effort to reflect upon God's gracious action in our lives. In response to the love of Christ, we desire to be drawn into a deeper relationship with 'faith's pioneer and perfecter.' Our theological explorations seek to give expression to the mysterious reality of God's presence, peace, and power in the world. By so doing, we attempt to articulate more clearly our understanding of the divine-human encounter and are thereby more fully prepared to participate in God's work in the world . . . As United Methodists, we are called to identify the needs both of individuals and of society and to address those needs out of the resources of Christian faith in a way that is clear, convincing, and effective. Theology serves the Church by interpreting the world's needs and challenges to the Church and by interpreting the gospel to the world" (Paragraph 105, p. 80).

As we think about the theological position of the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) and, in particular, the DSC Way Forward, we affirm that our theological directive is set within this broad mandate, and also affirm what the Discipline says about the nature of theological reflection. This inquiry is both critical and constructive, individual and communal, and contextual and incarnational (Paragraph 105, p. 81-82). The very nature of this task compels us to think broadly, deeply, and creatively about how God's grace and love works in our world to bring about transformation, discipleship, and witness. The DSC takes serious its mission statement, that we are to be "A Courageous Church loving like Jesus, acting for justice, and united in hope."

Our contemporary culture is a remarkable cacophony of voices that come from social, cultural, political, economic, and religious diversity. These expressions have always been present, to a greater or lesser degree, but the tenor of the times has brought increased dissension and outright conflict over many issues. The perspectives in the prevailing culture are pitched to heightened levels of dialogue and frustration, fueled by the continued growth of diverse secular attitudes; the voices of groups that have long-felt marginalized by society; a strong ethic of individualism in contrast to communal ways of living; the recognition of science and technology as persuasive aspects of our lives; and changing feelings that deemphasize as well as challenge the role of religion and the institutional church. In the midst of a great diversity of voices within the American United Methodist Church, we must also acknowledge the total spectrum of voices within United Methodism imbedded in the cultures of Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

We not only claim a solid theological foundation as stated in The Discipline of The United Methodist Church, but also recognize the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as articulated by Albert Outler as helpful in integrating our points of view as United Methodists. Based on the distinctive theological orientation of John Wesley as it emerged from both his pietistic experiences with the Moravians as well as his classical theological training at Oxford, Wesley built a theology of personal holiness and social justice, seeking and living God's will in our personal and social lives. Wesley never used the phrase, "Quadrilateral," but Outler, in catching the nuances of Wesley's thinking, has given expression to it with these terms: Scripture, Experience, Tradition, and Reason.
**Scripture:** We affirm that the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian New Testament disclose the love of God for humanity and for all creation. It is "the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine" (Paragraph 105, p.83). It is one of many witnesses to God in the world, but for Christians, it becomes the primary standard by which we judge faith and practice. For John Wesley, Scripture was foundational, both timely and timeless, and he always recognized that it must be relevant to the church and in the lives of believers. Scripture may be approached from different perspectives and examined with different lenses. However, the best tools and skills of biblical interpretation are needed to do contextual study so as to draw out the most accurate meaning that a writer intended. Sound interpretation must always prevail over any approach that compromises an accurate understanding of Scripture. There is always the danger of a reader imposing his or her presuppositions, agendas, or biases into the interpretation of a biblical text.

**Experience:** We all bring our collective and individual experiences to the understanding of theology. We have all been shaped in the caldron of our environment. We are a product of biological, social, historical, and location factors. Our core values, norms, mores, beliefs, taboos, and fears (real and perceived) have all been influenced by dynamics in our families of origin (including genetics), educational opportunities (positive and negative), political exposure, socio-economic circumstance, geographical environment (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), and religious practices. Our personalities, each unique and precious, have not been created in a vacuum. We are each unique persons of the world that has molded us. Thus, we recognize our differences that originate from many sources as we engage our free will with situations thrust upon us.

**Tradition:** The legacy of our faith embraces a four-thousand-year history. The traditions of Christianity and Judaism bring long and complex histories. In the awareness of rich and gifted contributions of laity, rabbis, clergy, and social and spiritual movements, we nonetheless acknowledge that, at times, our traditions have been driven, and even complicit, in promoting prejudice, discrimination, alienation, and physical and cultural genocide. The United Methodist Church is passionate about facing and changing inequities of all kinds. Traditions are worth preserving but must never be used to defend or maintain injustice.

**Reason:** *The Book of Discipline* recognizes that any adequate theological statement addresses the importance of reason. We believe that all truth is from God and that, through reason, we interpret Scripture, clarify our Christian witness, articulate and ask questions as we seek God's will, and check the internal coherence of our witness with Scripture, our experiences, and our traditions. Reason helps us to discern a holistic view of reality that joins together "knowledge, experience, and service" (paragraph 105, p. 88, *Discipline*). Further, we affirm the importance of reason to discriminate "the connections between revelation and reason, faith and science, [and] grace and nature" (paragraph 105, p. 88, *Discipline*).

**The Challenge of Preserving Unity in Diversity**

We are currently in a struggle that will determine the preservation or fragmentation of The United Methodist Church. Our disagreements are not over the fundamental doctrinal and theological foundations of our denomination nor are they over the distinctive Wesleyan emphases. We articulate our personal interpretations but we generally affirm the great doctrines of the orthodox church. Also, we affirm Wesley's teachings about justification and assurance; sanctification and perfection; faith and good works; mission and service; and the nature and mission of the church. These beliefs found roots in German Moravian pietism and later were also found in the Evangelical United Brethren tradition as articulated in the theology of Phillip William Otterbein, who came from a Reformed background. As United Methodists, we share in the Reformed tradition and, as some would say, we are reformed and are always reforming! In all these traditions, God's grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is the dynamic that gives substance and vitality to Christian life. Wesley never drew back from the communal form of expression that he believed built the
community of faith in worship, prayer, witness, and social justice. This thinking was instrumental in forming what would later become the "connectional mentality" of the Methodist Church.

What is crucial to understand is that, in spite of what divides us today in The United Methodist Church around sensitive and important issues, there is much that all United Methodists hold in common and celebrate. Although we have differences in how we interpret Scripture and apply it to a rapidly changing world, this has always been the case. We have always struggled yet affirmed and rejoiced in the gift of diversity and inclusion. We have believed that we could all live together under "One Tent," honoring our diversity and believing that made us stronger as the Body of Christ.

The Passion for Inclusiveness

The DSC Way Forward continues to maintain, without apology, its position and support not only of embracing diversity but also of achieving the goal of full inclusion. Full inclusion as the goal of The United Methodist Church has always been a priority. The Discipline (Paragraph 140, p. 101, "Called to Inclusiveness") states:

"We recognize that God made all creation and saw it was good. As a diverse people of God who bring special gifts and evidences of God's grace to the unity of the church and in society, we are called to be faithful to the example of Jesus' ministry to all persons. Inclusiveness means openness, acceptance, and support that enables all persons to participate in the life of the church, the community, and the world; therefore, inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination. The services of worship at every local church of The United Methodist Church shall be open to all persons. The mark of an inclusive society is one in which all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the church, the community, and the world. A further mark of inclusiveness is the setting of church activities in facilities accessible to persons with disabilities."

The voice of inclusion within The United Methodist Church has been an integral part of its history and theology. The past decisions of our denomination demonstrate that it has changed its collective mind from one of exclusion to inclusion in many cases, usually through a slow and painful process. It has occurred with respect to individuals, groups, and/or classes of people who were judged as inferior, defective, or inadequate because of some social, cultural, or physical characteristic or feature. There has always been a gap between the ideal and reality. Full inclusion is rooted in the radical hospitality of God's grace and forgiveness. We all come to the Lord's table needing the Lord's grace and forgiveness. We are each a work in progress and so is the Church. Thus, we recognize the inequality that has existed and continues to exist along lines of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability, and national origin. We also believe that addressing policies, procedures, guidelines, and behaviors that continue to bring physical, psychological, and social wounds to persons need to be boldly confronted and changed.

The Task Ahead

We believe that, in addressing these contradictions, we are giving expression to our confirmation and reception vows of membership into the Church (Paragraph 217, p. 157). These vows, in part, state we are to "renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of [our] sin." We are also to "accept the freedom and power God gives [us] to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." Anything that diminishes or denies the full humanity of an individual is evil and may lead to inconceivable injustice. It denies the creative work of God who "knit me in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13 NRSV). It is hard to go on and have a full life when one has been judged as defective or inadequate by society or by the church for reasons that are arbitrary and subjective. We believe that full inclusion is the outgrowth of the unconditional love of God. That love is the root of justice. We seek full inclusion for all persons whose voices need to be heard. All are children of God.
In particular, this means addressing those statements in The Book of Discipline that articulate those Social Principles of The United Methodist Church (paragraph 161, pp. 105-144) that are in conflict with its own theology of full inclusion. However, in stating this position, we also recognize the nature of variant cultures in which The United Methodist Church is implanted. Full inclusion may be understood in different ways given a cultural and social context. In a diverse denomination, one that holds the hearts and souls of over twelve million believers, let us remember the words of John Wesley: “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.”

We are many voices, but we must be one spirit as we bring together our statements of faith, our theology, our social principles, and our witness to a world that desperately needs to know the love of God in Jesus Christ. In this quest, we seek unity, not uniformity.

**Executive Summary of the Theological Statement of the DSC Way Forward**

“*Theology is our best effort to reflect upon God's gracious action in our lives. ... As United Methodists, we are called to identify the needs both of individuals and of society and to address those needs out of the resources of Christian faith in a way that is clear, convincing, and effective*” (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, Paragraph 105). As we think about the theological position of the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) and, in particular, the DSC Way Forward, we affirm that our theological directive is set within this broad mandate. The DSC takes seriously its mission statement that we are to be "A Courageous Church loving like Jesus, acting for justice, and united in hope." Our contemporary culture is a remarkable cacophony of voices that come from social, cultural, political, economic, and religious diversity. In the midst of a great diversity of voices within the American United Methodist Church, we must also acknowledge the total spectrum of voices within United Methodism imbedded in the cultures of Africa, Asia, and Europe.

We not only claim a solid theological foundation as stated in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, but also recognize the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as articulated by Albert Outler. In catching the nuances of Wesley’s thinking, Outler has given expression to the theological task through the lenses of Scripture, Experience, Tradition, and Reason.

We are currently in a struggle that will determine the preservation or fragmentation of The United Methodist Church. In spite of what divides us today in The United Methodist Church around sensitive and important issues, there is much more that all United Methodists hold in common. We have always struggled yet affirmed and rejoiced in the gift of diversity and inclusion. The DSC Way Forward continues to maintain its position and support not only of embracing diversity but also of achieving the goal of full inclusion. We recognize the inequality that has existed and continues to exist along the lines of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability, and national origin. We also believe that addressing policies, procedures, guidelines, and behaviors that continue to bring physical, psychological, and social wounds to persons need to be boldly confronted and changed.

Anything that diminishes or denies the full humanity of an individual is evil and may lead to inconceivable injustice. There is a need to address those statements in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church that articulate those Social Principles of The United Methodist Church (paragraph 161 pp. 105-144) that are in conflict with its own theology of full inclusion. Full inclusion may be understood in different ways given a cultural and social context. Although we are many voices, we must be one spirit as we bring together our statements of faith, our theology, our social principles, and our witness to a world that desperately needs to know the love of God in Jesus Christ. In this quest, we seek unity, not uniformity.
Resolution: Integrity of Faithfulness

Financial Implications: no

Whereas our faith is the expression of our intimate relationship with God influencing our deepest values and mores;

Whereas it is essential that all people be able to live from the integrity of their core beliefs about God and God’s call to discipleship; and

Whereas any legislation that denies this expression of faith is to deny a person the opportunity to live God’s calling and direction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. Encourages all churches to follow a path that ensures the rights of all people to follow their hearts and live from the integrity of their faith and

2. Encourages our Bishop and Annual Conference leaders to be in dialogue with other Conferences and Jurisdictions to investigate coalitions that would support the ability of people to live by the integrity of their faith.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Dr. George Cushman
Billie Fidlin
Rev. Stephen Govett
Rev. Tom Jelinek
Kent Olson
Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Elizabeth Rambikur

Resolution: Respecting Cultural Differences

Financial Implications: No

Whereas we of the Desert Southwest Conference acknowledge and respect the cultural differences that exist within our international denomination, and view it as a strength;

Whereas the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church allows for such differences outside of the United States in the designation of Central Conferences, which have the power to change and adapt the Discipline as the conditions in their respective areas may require (¶ 31 Article IV section 5);

Whereas the Book of Discipline contains 109 references in which the language “Jurisdiction or Central Conference” is used, which indicates that the Discipline views Jurisdictional and Central Conferences as similar in structure and organization; and

Whereas Jurisdictional Conferences cannot change or adapt the Discipline as the cultures in their respective areas may require; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. Work with the Western Jurisdiction to allow the Discipline to be changed and adapted as conditions in the Western Jurisdiction may require; and

2. Acknowledge that this change can come in several forms:
   a. afford the Western Jurisdiction the powers that Central Conferences have to change and adapt the Discipline; or
b. allow the Western Jurisdiction to live into a new way of being which enables it to do effective ministry within its cultural context.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Dr. George Cushman                      Kent Olson
Billie Fidlin                                Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Stephen Govett                          Rev. Elizabeth Rambikur
Rev. Tom Jelinek

Resolution: Preserve Our Connectionalism

Financial Implications: no

Whereas we have a heritage of 35 years of ministry together as the Desert Southwest Conference;

Whereas we have achieved significant milestones in building God’s kingdom together in the southwest;

Whereas we have done great works as a theologically diverse conference; and

Whereas we have created many special relationships and bonds, individually and as churches; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. Seek to remain together, united in our Wesleyan heritage,

2. Grants authority to our Bishop and Conference leadership to take whatever steps necessary, including participation in a special session of Jurisdictional Conference, to preserve our unity; and

3. Designates the delegates elected to the 2020 Jurisdictional Conference to serve as our representatives to any specially called conferences.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Dr. George Cushman                      Kent Olson
Billie Fidlin                                Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Stephen Govett                          Rev. Elizabeth Rambikur
Rev. Tom Jelinek

Resolution on Renouncing Divisive and Destructive Strategies

Whereas in the Gospel of John, Jesus told his disciples, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35);

Whereas in First Corinthians, Paul wrote, “Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.” (1 Corinthians 1:10);

Whereas John Wesley, in a 1786 sermon, decried schism, and advocated for unity in the Body of Christ (John Wesley, “On Schism,” 1786);

Whereas the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the precursor denominations of the United Methodist Church, both encountered significant controversies over the
ordination of women and minorities, and over social change brought about by the civil rights movement, but neither denomination divided over those issues;

**Whereas** Issues surrounding human sexuality have been a subject of controversy in The United Methodist Church since 1972, but were not considered a basis for possible division of the denomination for the vast majority of that time;

**Whereas** United Methodists of many perspectives have dismissed or excluded those with different convictions, exacerbating a lack of community that has contributed to the divisiveness currently present in our denomination;

**Whereas** the Confessing Movement, Good News, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Wesleyan Covenant Association, and other “renewal” groups have advocated division in the United Methodist Church, and their influence has played a major role in the move towards schism that has occurred in recent General Conferences; and

**Whereas** a document titled “Options for the Future, With Some Strategic Implications, Summer 2004,” written by current and former Good News board members and staff, and studied by the Good News Board of Directors, outlined a plan in which “the United Methodist Church would cease to exist”, and in describing another plan, stated that it would be a “disadvantage” that “It also leaves the United Methodist denomination somewhat intact, with the accumulation of resources to potentially continue for decades…” (“Options for the Future With Some Strategic Implications Summer 2004,” pp. 5, 7, 8); now, therefore, be it

**Resolved,** the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC), individual churches and individuals, and new and reforming church movements:

1. Affirm that any future actions by the Confessing Movement, Good News, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Wesleyan Covenant Association, and any other “renewal” organizations deemed appropriate to further divide or eliminate the United Methodist Church or its successor denominations are contrary to the will of God, and to the express teachings of Jesus Christ;

2. Contact the Confessing Movement, Good News, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Wesleyan Covenant Association, and any other “renewal” organizations deemed appropriate, and express that the DSC finds the content of “Options for the Future With Some Strategic Implications, Summer 2004” and other similar plans Inconsistent with foundational biblical principles, denominational history, and the desire of our Conference to love our neighbors as ourselves, and strive for unity in our Conference, the United Methodist Church, and the body of Christ; and

3. Contact the General Board of Church and Society, and strongly urge it to contact the Confessing Movement, Good News, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, the Wesleyan Covenant Association, and any other “renewal” organizations it deems appropriate, and strongly urge those organizations to specifically and publicly renounce current or future strategies to further divide or eliminate the United Methodist Church or its successor denominations, and focus their efforts on unity in spite of our differences.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Dr. George Cushman  
Billie Fidilin  
Rev. Tom Jelinek  
Rev. Stephen Govett  
Kent Olson  
Rev. Michael Patzloff
Resolution: Dialogue with Central Conference Leaders

Financial Implications: no

Whereas the General Conference of The United Methodist Church is composed of delegates from around the world;

Whereas these delegates have an equal voice in the forming the policies, procedures, rules, theological statements, and polity of The United Methodist Church;

Whereas at the 2020 General Conference, 52% of the voting members will represent The United States, and 48% will represent the Central Conferences;

Whereas it is estimated that 70% of United States delegates do not support the Traditional Plan, and almost 100% of the delegates from the Central Conferences support it;

Whereas Central Conferences have the ability to vote on General Conference legislation individually, effectively ignoring legislation that produces cultural difficulties in their local context, and United States Conferences do not have that option;

Whereas the Wesleyan Covenant Association has successfully lobbied Central Conference delegates to support the Traditional Plan, promoting a very conservative agenda for The United Methodist Church that does not reflect the theology of the majority of congregations in the United States;

Whereas a minority of the United States delegates have the ability to prevail with the votes of the Central Conference delegates, making a mass exodus of members from United States likely; and

Whereas by the 2024 General Conference, Central Conference delegates may be the majority voting block, enabling them to dictate policy that United States Conferences must follow, while the Central Conferences may exempt themselves from following those policies; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference

1. Encourages our Bishop, Robert Hoshibata, to be in dialogue with Central Conference leaders of our desire to continue to be in ministry with them and to see the continued flourishing of the United Methodist Church worldwide;

2. Encourages members of the Council of Bishops to be in dialogue with Central Conference delegates of our desire to continue to be in ministry with them and to see the continued flourishing of the United Methodist Church worldwide; and

3. Encourages United States delegates to create a structure where United States Conferences and Central Conferences will vote separately on social issues, while continuing to work together to support mission and ministry around the world.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Dr. George Cushman
Billie Fidlin
Rev. Stephen Govett
Rev. Tom Jelinek
Kent Olson
Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Elizabeth Rambikur

Legislative Summary 2019
Resolution: Seeking to Protect Our Connection and Clergy

Financial Implications: No

Section 1: Keeping Connection while Breaking Apart

Whereas the Desert Southwest Conference has been a Reconciling Conference for 10 years;

Whereas we recognize a profound division in The United Methodist Church which appears to be moving to a redefinition of its organization;

Whereas within our conference we find deep divides along theological lines that prevent us from fully engaging one another in ministry that embraces the full diversity of our community;

Whereas division of our denomination over the proper regard, role, and status of persons who are LGBTQIA+ may have now become irreconcilable;

Whereas the delegates and bishops of the Western Jurisdiction have made unified statements as one body working together; and

Whereas if a time comes when we can no longer be a part of The United Methodist Church, we see the best way forward from a broken connection is to form new connections; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that exploration of a pathway of separation for the Desert Southwest Conference be sought as much in cooperation with our brothers and sisters of the Western Jurisdiction as is possible; and, be it further

Resolved, that such work include seeking a way in the work of General Conference 2020 which would permit jurisdictions, conferences, and churches to separate from The United Methodist Church and form a new denomination with new structure as deemed appropriate by the forming bodies.

Section 2: Values for Moving Forward

Whereas trying to anticipate or predict what will happen at General Conference 2020 is nearly impossible;

Whereas while we cannot control much of what happens, we can most certainly control our attitude and actions in response;

Whereas doing nothing, waiting to see what will happen and then hoping for the best is a failure at planning; and

Whereas when there are many variables at play and an exact future is indiscernible, the effective leader works at setting in place operating values to shape how best decisions will be made when the time arrives; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference sets in place these values;

If the division of our denominational body becomes necessary any split will be handled in ways that are equitable, amicable, and honorable. We simply decline to operate in a vindictive or punitive manner on a personal or corporate level and we hold to processes of honoring each other as we are working out details of division over our differences.
Section 3: Protecting Our Colleagues While Seeking A New Future

Whereas the February 2019 General Conference of The United Methodist Church singled out LGBTQIA+ persons, supporters, and allies for specific punitive action;

Whereas we recognize in the Traditional Plan the systematization of institutional oppression through the establishment and strict enforcement of rules over one group of people;

Whereas this conference condemned the Traditional Plan at Annual Conference June 2019;

Whereas the punishments of the Traditional Plan are set to take effect at 12:01 am, January 1, 2020, threatening immediate and destructive action against lives and careers of LGBTQIA+ persons, allies, and supporters; and

Whereas what is at stake with the implementation of new rules and punitive punishments of the Traditional Plan, are the careers of professional clergy, including candidates, consecrated and ordained persons who are giving their lives in service to God’s call through the United Methodist denomination; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference yearns to be and will unceasingly strive to bring to completion a conference of full acceptance and a suspension or reversal of rules which enable complaints against candidates and members of the clergy having to do with acceptance, marriage, or ordination of LGBTQIA+ persons; and, be it further

Resolved, that until that time we strongly encourage our episcopal authority to not take up for consideration any complaints of such a nature. We simply decline to operate in a vindictive or punitive manner on a personal or corporate level and hold to processes nurturing and honoring and embracing of all God’s children.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Khalif Smith                Rev. Tom Jelenik
Anita MacFadden                  Rev. Doug Handlong
Nancy French                     Rev. Dee Dee Azhikakath
Rev. Ann Lyter                   Rev. Dan Hurlbert
Rev. Michael Patzloff            Rev. Antoenette Fernandes
Rev. Stephen Govett              Rev. David Rennick
Fay Sias                        Rev. Melissa Rynders

Resolution: A Moratorium on Complaints, Investigations and Trials Against LGBTQ+ Clergy and those Clergy Officiating Same-Gender Weddings

Financial Implications: no

Whereas John Wesley’s Three General Rules are: Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God;

Whereas harm was caused to LGBTQ+ persons when in 1972 the sentence, “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching” was added as an amendment to the statement on Human Sexuality which in the same paragraph had just affirmed “that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God….”
Whereas harm was caused to LGBTQ+ persons when in 1984, a time when same-gender marriage was not legal, the phrase, “fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness” was added to the discipline as requirements of candidates for ordination. The author of the phrase, Bishop Jack Tuell, in a sermon preached at Claremont UMC on May 18, 2003, stated that this was added specifically to exclude homosexual persons from ordination;

Whereas these formed the basis of The Book of Discipline paragraphs used to bring complaints against LGBTQ+ clergy and those officiating same-gender weddings;

Whereas the Traditional Plan which was passed at the Special Session of General Conference in February 2019 made these restrictions and punishments more severe;

Whereas annual conferences, churches, and individual United Methodists across the connection (including the Desert Southwest Annual Conference) have done good by repeatedly stating their opposition to the passing of the Traditional Plan at the February 2019 General Conference;

Whereas the Desert Southwest Annual Conference affirmed its commitment to do good in 2009, declaring itself to be a Reconciling Conference;

Whereas it is essential that all people be able to live from the integrity of their core beliefs about God and God’s call to discipleship; and

Whereas persons across the theological spectrum are doing good by having conversations to accomplish new directions for the denomination at the General Conference 2020; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference:

1. Do good by reaffirming its commitment found in our Baptismal Covenant; to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in all forms, and toward all people and further, to build a church which affirms the full participation of all ages, nations, races, classes, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations and abilities and

2. Follow the call of John Wesley to do good and not do harm by declaring an immediate and indefinite moratorium on complaints, investigations, and trials against LGBTQ+ clergy (Elders, Deacons, and Licensed Local Pastors) as well as any clergy (Elders, Deacons, and Licensed Local Pastors) officiating same-gender weddings, in The United Methodist Church as a whole, and specifically within this annual conference—including any that may already be underway.

Names of Petitioners.
Rev. Mary Klaehn Deaconess Martha Lundgren
Rev. Amy Barron-Gafford Rev. Misty Howick
Rev. Tweedy Sombrero Navarette Rev. Dr. Candace Lansberry
Rev. Khalif Smith Rev. David Rennick
Pastor Stuart Salvatierra Rev. Michael Patzloff
Rev. Sandy Johnson Rev. Sarai Riddlesworth Case
Rev. Joshua Warner Mr. Scott Morris
Rev. Stephen Govett Mr. Fred Killion
Rev. Brian Kemp-Schlemmer Rev. Dr. Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Rev. Kimberly Scott Rev. Efrain Zavala
Rev. Asa Holly Pastor Bob Klein
Rev. Jim Wiltbank Rev. Ed Bonneau
Rev. Jeff Procter-Murphy Rev. Jim Wallasky
Rev. Kristin Longnecker Hansen Rev. Mary Bullis
Pastor Clare Sullivan
Rev. Paul Cho
Rev. Alma Aguirre-Olivares
Mr. Ty Montell
Rev. Gaylene Boyett
Rev. Michael Bryant
Rev. Roger Smith
Mr. Chris Ayala
Mr. Bob Rammelt
Ms. Lisa Rammelt
Pastor Christopher Wurpts