Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Discipline*

¶200.
Petition Number: 20490-LC-¶200-G; Lewis, Dan - Pasadena, CA, USA for California-Pacific Annual Conference.

**Readiness for Church Membership**

Amend *The Book of Discipline* by the inclusion of the following paragraph between ¶ 214 and ¶215 and renumber accordingly:

The decision about an individual’s readiness to affirm the vows of membership and to become a professing member of the United Methodist Church rests with the pastor in charge of the congregation or charge in which that individual seeks membership. However, in the event that the pastor, in his or her discretion, deems that an individual is not ready to affirm the vows of membership, that person may appeal the pastor’s decision to an arbitration committee consisting of:

1) the Superintendent of the District in which the congregation or charge lies;
2) the Lay Leader(s) of the District in which the congregation or charge lies;
3) one additional pastor selected by the District Superintendent;
4) the lay leader from the local congregation;
5) one additional pastor selected by the pastor in charge.

The arbitration committee will meet with the appellant and the pastor to determine the facts of the case and to reach its own conclusion about the appellant’s readiness to receive the vows of membership. In the event that the arbitration committee determines that the appellant is not yet ready to receive the vows of membership, it will work with the appellant and the pastor to develop a course of remediation designed to prepare the appellant to take the vows and to be received into professing membership in the United Methodist Church. At the end of one year, the pastor and the appellant will report back to the District Superintendent and Lay Leader about the progress that has been made in this course of remediation.

**Rationale:**
The Constitution of the United Methodist Church acknowledges that “all persons are of sacred worth,” and affirms that “All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted...

¶203.
Petition Number: 20697-LC-¶203-G; Fowler, Dennis C. “Corky” - Houston, TX, USA.

**Apportionments and the Wider Church**

Add new § to current ¶203

Apportionments and the Greater Church

The United Methodist Church being a connectional community of faith depends on funds from the beneficent-apportionment process to fund ministry work above the local congregation. Each congregation is expected to payout annually 100% of its apportioned-beneficent amount. Payout failures retard ministries and services performed by offices and agencies of the greater church. Leaders of the local congregation should exert every effort to insure 100% payout every year.

Consequences to the local congregation for pay out failure include:
- All apportioned amounts not paid by the local congregation shall be considered a loan with no less than annual simple interest of 2%. A payment plan must be arranged with the annual conference.
- The presiding Bishop should consider appointing less experienced and less qualified ministers to the congregation.
- If payout difficulties extend over three or more years the congregation should be considered under stress with chronic problems and become a candidate for merger with another congregation or closure.

Rationale:
Apportionments are traditional and clear dynamics of our polity and they should be paid 100% all the time. Congregations who fail to pay out 100% are simply shifting their problem to others; others who may help them in pay out or to greater church agencies who have to absorb the...

¶203.
Petition Number: 20928-LC-¶203-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Congregational Choices
Add new subparagraph after ¶ 203:

¶203. Relation to the Wider Church. The local church is ... holy catholic church.

Within this connectional context, because of the liturgical freedom declared in Article XXII of the Articles of Religion and Article XIII of the Confession of Faith, the decisions on the following issues belong to the congregation alone: (1) the choice of worship hymnals and pew Bible translations; (2) the degree to which gender-neutral or traditional language shall be used in worship or in other church settings, including the free use of Biblical titles such as “Father,” “Son,” “Lord,” and “King”; (3) whether or not to offer ashes at Ash Wednesday observances; and (4) whether or not to display the national flag or other symbols, when done in accordance with national laws or customs.

Rationale:
Though these are secondary issues, where freedom of conscience and action ought to rule (Romans 14:5), some pastors and other leaders have demanded conformity to their standards, provoking bitter strife. The added language should reduce this quarreling.

¶208.
Petition Number: 20441-LC-¶208.b-G; Ingram, Kimberly T - Charlotte, NC, USA for Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

Union Churches
Amend ¶208 part (b) by addition

a union church, in which a congregation with one unified membership roll is related to two or more denominations;

Rationale:
Adding the words “or more” to ¶208 part (b) will make the description consistent with the other ecumenical church membership roll designations (federated, union, merged, or yoked parish) in ¶208, and will allow union churches to consist of more than two denominations.

¶212.
Petition Number: 20647-LC-¶212.1-G; Paige, Peggy - Iron Mountain, MI, USA for UM Rural Fellowship.

Churches in Transitional Communities
Amend ¶212.1 as follows:

1. When the communities where the church is located experience transition especially identified as economic and/or ethnic, the local church shall engage in deliberate analysis of the neighborhood community change and alter its program to meet the needs and cultural patterns of the new residents. The local church shall make every effort to remain in the neighborhood community and develop effective ministries to those who are newcomers, whether of a cultural, economic, or ethnic group different from the original or present members.

Rationale:
The change from “neighborhood” to “community” better identifies and expands our understanding that transition not only takes place in urban neighborhoods but also in town and country communities around the world.

¶212.
Petition Number: 20648-LC-¶212.2-G; Paige, Peggy - Iron Mountain, MI, USA for UM Rural Fellowship.
Ministry with the Poor

Amend ¶212.2 by addition as follows:

212.2. In communities in transition, the local church shall be regarded as a principal base of mission from which structures of society shall be confronted, evangelization shall occur, and a principal witness to the changing community including ministry with the poor shall be realized.

Rationale:

This addition gives us a strong reminder that we need to be intentional about ministry with the poor which is one of our Four Areas of Ministry Focus. Ministry with the Poor is fundamental to our Wesleyan and pietistic roots and integral to the Church’s mission “to make disciples of...”

¶213.

Petition Number: 20440-LC-¶213-G; Ingram, Kimberly T. - Charlotte, NC, USA for Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

Task Force Membership

Amend ¶ 213 as follows:

...Alternatively, the district superintendent may appoint such a task force when the future viability of the congregation is in question or whenever he/she deems it necessary for other reasons. The task force shall be composed of an equal number of lay and clergy persons and shall include persons from that congregation, at least one clergy facilitator, who is not appointed to the local church doing the assessment, and one laity facilitator, who is not a member of the local church doing the assessment, assigned by the district superintendent, and shall include the clergy and selected persons from that congregation.

Rationale:

Every local church is encouraged to study their congregation’s potential. Often there is a preference for fewer study task force members from outside of the congregation. It is necessary to provide enough outside study task force members to all churches requesting to go through the Assessment of Local Church Potential.

¶213.

Petition Number: 20655-LC-¶213-G; Paige, Peggy - Iron Mountain, MI, USA for UM Rural Fellowship.

Assessment of Local Church

Amend ¶ 213 as follows:

¶ 213. A Process for Assessment of Local Church Potential—Since every congregation ... Alternatively, the district superintendent may appoint such a task force when the future viability of the congregation is in question, when he/she determines that the existing congregation is no longer acting to transform its community, or whenever he/she deems it necessary for other reasons. . . .

3. b) In urban churches where the reported average worship attendance for the previous two conference years is below 25 or is unknown. For any church that has been through this process, the District Superintendent may convene a special session of the conference . . .

Rationale:

The church exists not for its own sake, but for the transformation of the world.

Churches of all sizes and in all settings (not just urban) can benefit from this process.

¶214.

Petition Number: 20005-LC-¶214-G; Beasley, Amelia - Dallas, TX, USA.

Correcting Inconsistency

Amend ¶ 214 as follows:

Delete “may” and substitute the following: “shall be eligible to.”

“¶214. Eligibility – The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal church), as we confess in the Apostles’ Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶4). In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian[s], themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.”

Rationale:

The United Methodist Church specifically states in the Discipline: “We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons” (¶ 161.F). This statement is vital to the mission of The United Methodist Church, which is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”...
Petition Number: 20477-LC-¶214-G; Ruggles, Bruce - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference.

Welcoming

Amend ¶ 214 in The Book of Discipline as follows:

¶214:
Eligibility—The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles’ Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people are welcomed to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶4) . . .

Rationale:
The legislation seeks to ensure that all people know they are welcome to join The United Methodist Church and, in this way, it reaches new people. An inclusive church also contributes to its spiritual vitality. The action should happen to ensure justice for all people in the United Methodist Church.

Petition Number: 20491-LC-¶214-G; Erbele, W. Terence - Ketchikan, AK, USA for Alaska Annual Conference.

Suitability for Membership

Add new language to the end of existing ¶214 as follows:

In all other cases only the person who presents herself or himself for professing membership has authority to discern whether she or he is ready to take the vows prescribed by The United Methodist Church.

Add new language to the end of existing ¶225 as follows:

In all cases, when a person applies for transfer of membership under this provision only the person who presents herself or himself for transfer of professing membership has authority to discern whether she or he is ready to take the vows prescribed by The United Methodist Church.

Rationale:
The current situation wherein the pastor is given sole authority to make the determination of suitability of an applicant for taking the vows of membership is authoritarian beyond tolerance in The UMC. Any applicant should be empowered prayerfully to make this decision for him/herself.

Petition Number: 20618-LC-¶214-G; Lambrecht, Thomas A. - Spring, TX, USA.

Appeal Membership Decision

Section V. Church Membership

¶ 214. Eligibility-The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we con-


Rationale:

Prevenient Grace applies to all; John Wesley states in his sermon, “Justification by Faith” that human beings aren’t pre-sanctified before receiving Justifying Grace; standards for readiness for membership vary greatly between pastors; we are a part of the holy catholic church; being brought into the body of Christ is transformative.

Petition Number: 20796-LC-¶214-G; Powers, Samuel T. - Piedmont, OK, USA.

Church Membership

Section V. Church Membership

¶ 214. Eligibility-The United Methodist Church is a part of the holy catholic (universal) church, as we confess in the Apostles’ Creed. In the church, Jesus Christ is proclaimed and professed as Lord and Savior. All people may attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments and become members in any local church in the connection (¶ 4). Although the pastor is to educate and counsel the person seeking to unite with the local church which may include membership classes, God’s redemptive gift is available to all, and the pastor is to faithfully receive all who are willing to affirm our vows of membership. In the case of persons whose disabilities prevent them from reciting the vows, their legal guardian(s), themselves members in full covenant relationship with God and the Church, the community of faith, may recite the appropriate vows on their behalf.

Rationale:

There may be times when, for reasons of safety or integrity, membership in a church is appropriately denied or deferred. The ability to appeal the decision protects against the abuse or capricious use of pastoral authority. The right of appeal is enshrined in our Constitution (¶ 20). P/SPRC is the...
2. The professing membership of a local United 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.

Rationale:
The legislation seeks to ensure that all people can choose and be welcomed to join The United Methodist Church and, in this way, the church reaches new people. An inclusive church also contributes to its spirituality vitality. The action should happen to ensure justice for all people in the United...

Petition Number: 20830-LC-¶217-G; Thomas, H.O. Tom Jr., VA, USA.

Professing Membership

Amend The Book of Discipline 2008 ¶217 as follows:

¶217. When persons unite as professing members with a local United Methodist church, they profess their faith in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Thus, they make known their desire to live their daily lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. In order to unite as a professing member with a local United Methodist church, persons shall in a supervising relationship with the pastor profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and give evidence of the genuineness of their commitment to Christ and of their desire to be faithful to the vows of reception into the church so that the pastor shall bring them before the congregation and administer the vows of membership that they be received into the fellowship of the Church. They covenant together with God and with the members of the local church to keep the vows which are a part of the order of confirmation and reception into the Church.

Rationale:
Membership expresses faith’s commitment to Jesus Christ and to the community of believers. According to our historical consensus, the pastor as the resident theologian and administrative officer is positioned to prepare persons for vows of membership and discern readiness to assume the responsibilities of church membership.

Petition Number: 20929-LC-¶219-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Covenant Responsibilities

Amend ¶ No.219:

¶ 219. Mutual Responsibility — Faithful discipleship includes ... body of Christ. A member is bound in sacred covenant to seek to shoulder the burdens, share the risks, ease the pains, 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 a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation, while striving to live peaceably with all, avoiding offensive speech and actions, and respecting the sensitivities of “the weaker believer” (Rom. 12:18, 1 Cor. 10:32, 14:1-23, and Col. 3:12-17). For these reasons, members will speak of themselves and church institutions as “United Methodist,” not “Methodist,” because it violates long-standing church policies (The Book of Resolutions, 1980-2008), and, more importantly, because many of our members find the omission of “United” offensive. The omission violates the spirit of the Plan of Union and denies the Evangelical United Brethren contribution to our heritage. Moreover, when disagreeing, members shall speak and act with kindness and cordiality, avoiding derisive names or speculating about others’ motives. They shall seek reconciliation through following the Bible’s teachings (Mt. 18:15-17, Gal. 6:1). With the possible exception of meeting the legal requirements for divorce (¶161D), they may not initiate litigation against other Christians; such lawsuits are forbidden by Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) and the General Rules.

Rationale:
Bishop Paul Washburn, lamenting that many UMs “do not know, or do not seem to know, the name of our church,” urged us “to call it by its proper name” (An Unfinished Church, Abingdon, 1984, p. 153). Scripture, The General Rules, and longstanding Methodist-EUB policies prohibited lawsuits between believers.

Petition Number: 20234-LC-¶220; Greenwaldt, Karen - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Ministry of All the Baptized

Amend ¶ 220, fourth sentence, as follows:
Participation in disciplined groups such as covenant discipleship groups or class meetings is an expected part of personal mission involvement.

Rationale:
This language, covenant discipleship groups or class meetings, provides more specific examples of the kinds of disciplined, accountable small groups that can foster personal growth and missional involvement as disciples of Jesus Christ transforming the world.

¶225.
Petition Number: 20457-LC-¶225-G; Johnson, Carolyn E. - West Lafayette, IN, USA for Indiana Annual Conference.

Transfer of Membership

Amend ¶ 225 as follows:
Transfer from Other Denominations – A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with The United Methodist Church and is willing to profess loyalty to The United Methodist Church may be received as either a baptized or a professing member. Such a person may be received as a baptized member by a proper certificate of transfer from that person’s former church....

Rationale:
Paragraph 225, as it now stands, is confusing with the words shall be received which could be interpreted to mean that it is inappropriate to inquire about the person’s faith. The words may be received implies allowance for determining a person’s readiness for membership.

¶225.
Petition Number: 20982-LC-¶225-G; Thomas, H.O. Tom Jr., VA, USA for Evangelical Fellowship in Virginia Annual Conference.

Transfer from Other Denominations

Amend ¶ 225 in the following way:
¶ 225 Transfer from Other Denominations – A member in good standing in any Christian denomination who has been baptized and who desires to unite with The United Methodist Church shall may be received as either a baptized or a professing member by a proper certificate of transfer from that person’s former church, or by a declaration of Christian faith, and upon affirming willingness to be loyal to The United Methodist Church (see ¶¶ 214-217). The local pastor shall discern readiness for membership. In baptism water is administered...

Rationale:
Whereas different denominations have different standards of membership; different definitions of Christian moral character; often do not have current knowledge of members’ faithfulness; and proving a negative (a member is not in ‘good standing’) is problematic, therefore, one should have an opportunity to re-affirm commitment before a transfer is enacted.

¶226.
Petition Number: 20405-LC-¶226; Coppock, Larry - Nashville, TN, USA for General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Title Change

Amend ¶¶ 226 and 256.4
¶226.4 . . . The God and Me and God and Family portions of the God and Country Program of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y) program may be available to elementary children as an additional resource.
¶226.5 . . . and service of our Lord Jesus Christ. The God and Country Program of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y) program may be available to all youth with the God and Church portion providing study of the United Methodist Church, and the God and Life program challenging the youth to integrate their faith into their daily life....

¶256.4. Civic youth-serving agencies and scouting ministries offer another setting for ministry to children, youth, their leaders, and their families. These opportunities would include the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire USA, 4-H, or other appropriate organizations in the central conferences. The God and Country Program of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y) award program may be available to all appropriate age-level participants of the local church education program including the church school, youth ministry, and scouting ministries.
Petition Number: 20694-LC-¶228.2-G; Walker, Rocky - Sarasota, FL, USA.

Care of Members

¶228.2. Care of Members – a) The pastor in cooperation with the church council shall arrange the membership in groups - with a leader for each group - designed to involve the membership of the Church in its ministry to the community class meetings. These groups shall be of such size, usually not larger than eight or ten families, as to be convenient and effective for service. The leaders of the class meeting shall inquire weekly as to 1.) How the individual is doing spiritually and 2.) To advise, rebuke, comfort, or exhort, as the occasion may require. Where appropriate, electronic social media may be utilized in place of face-to-face meetings. The leaders of such groups may be especially helpful...

Rationale:

From the beginning of the Methodism the class meeting was at the heart of the movement. After the class meeting was removed from the Discipline of what would eventually be known as The United Methodist Church, this denomination has struggled to maintain its vitality. Therefore, I request the class meeting...

Petition Number: 20790-LC-¶228.2b1-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA.

Accurate Membership Statistics

¶228.1. The local church...
2. Care of Members-a) The pastor...
b) While primary responsibility...
(1) If a professing member whose address is known is residing outside the community and is not participating in the worship or activity of the church, the directives to encourage a transfer of the member shall be followed each year until that member joins another church or requests in writing that the name be removed from the roll of professing members; provided, however, that if after two years the council has not been able to relate that member to the church at the new place of residence, the name may be removed from the roll of members by the pastor and the evangelism ministry chairperson shall recommend that the name be removed from the roll of members according to the procedure of § (4) below.
(3) If the address...
Rationale:

There is too much congregational and regional variation in how often membership rolls are cleansed of departed members. Making such removals more clearly mandatory helps ensure greater consistency across the connection in making our membership statistics reflect the reality of our denomination more accurately.

Petition Number: 20789-LC-¶228.2b2-G; Lomperis, John S.A. - Arlington, VA, USA.

Accurate Membership Statistics

¶228.1. The local church...
2. Care of Members-a) The pastor...
b) While primary responsibility...
(2) If a professing member whose address is no longer known to the pastor, the membership secretary and the evangelism ministry group chairperson shall make every effort to locate the member. If the member can be located, the directives of either § (1) or § (2) above shall be followed, but if after two years of such efforts the address is still unknown, the member’s name may be removed from the roll of members by the pastor.
and the evangelism ministry chairperson shall recom-

mend that the member’s name be removed according to

the procedure of § (4) below.

(4) If the directives ... 

Rationale:

Basic Christian honesty should motivate us to pre-

sent an accurate picture to ourselves and to others of our

numerical growths and declines, avoiding artificial sta-

tistical inflation. This language shift makes such prac-

tices to ensure membership-counting integrity more than

merely permissible, as was suggested by the word

“may.”

¶232.

Petition Number: 20543-LC-¶232-G; Darnell, Gregory

L. - Orange City, FL, USA.

Amend Title

Revise ¶ 232 Title

Annual Report of Full and Preparatory Members

Attending Colleges and Universities.

Rationale:

Delete obsolete terminology to match paragraph

wording..

¶235.

Petition Number: 20546-LC-¶235-G; Darnell, Gregory

L. - Orange City, FL, USA.

Baptized Member Rolls

Add a sub-paragraph to ¶ 235:

When a person is removed from the Professing

Member roll by any means other than for cause (¶2714),

the person is also removed from the Baptized Member

roll, because the local church is no longer in a position
to carry out its obligation to baptized members. When

a person transfers to another congregation, that congre-
gation assumes responsibility for their ongoing care.

When a person “withdraws without notice” (¶241) it has
been determined that another congregation has assumed

responsibility for ongoing care. If a person withdraws at
his or her own written notice, the individual is advising
that they do not any longer wish the nurturing care of the
local congregation. If a person has moved and can no
longer be contacted, the local church can no longer pro-

vide care (which is likely already being provided by an

unknown congregation). In all of these cases, the person
will be removed from the Baptized Member roll of the

local church at the same time they are removed from the
Professing Member roll. If a person should be removed
from the Professing Member roll for cause (¶2714), that

person shall remain on the Baptized Member roll and
under the nurturing care of the church (¶228.2b)(10),
unless the person is subsequently removed for one of the
reasons noted above.

Rationale:

Implementation of the current wording of the Book
of Discipline is a source of irritation for people who no
longer wish association with the local church. People
who have withdrawn with or without notice or who fail
to respond to contact attempts by the church express dis-
pleasure at continued contact...

¶241.

Petition Number: 20930-LC-¶241-G; Carlsen, Jonathan

- Arcadia, FL, USA.

Dual Church Membership

Delete ¶ 241.

Rationale:

Nothing in the Discipline forbids dual membership.

But this paragraph says, “If your pastor finds out, you’re
out!” It denies members’ right to trial (¶ 20), violates our
constitution, turns pastors into membership police, and
separates Catholic-UM couples at communion.

Founders Thomas Coke and Martin Boehm exercised
multiple memberships.

¶244.

Petition Number: 20744-LC-¶244-G; Myers, Kevin

Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual
Conference.

Generosity Among Leaders

Amend ¶244 by adding the following after the cur-

rent ¶244.3

4. Members serving on administrative and pro-

grammatic structures, as members and chairpersons, are

persons of generosity, willing to share their time, gifts,

and finances, and being examples of Christian disciple-
ship and stewardship of resources, The Church Council shall encourage and model Christian sharing of resources generously with the Church of Jesus Christ.

¶247.
Petition Number: 20679-LC-¶247; Shultz, Paul - Iowa City, IA, USA.

Campus Ministry Names

Amend ¶ 247 Powers and Duties by adding a new sub—paragraph 16 and re-numbering as follows:

¶ 247 Powers and Duties – 1. ... 
15. The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the membership. (see ¶ 231.)
16. The charge conference shall receive a report on the names and addresses of college students to send to the United Methodist campus ministers and chaplains.
17. In those instances where there are ...

¶247.
Petition Number: 20465-LC-¶247.12-G; Wilson, Laura Cean - Worthington, OH, USA for West Ohio Annual Conference.

Missions

Amend ¶ 247.12 by addition

12. The charge conference shall ensure that each congregation shall be involved in at least one local and one global mission/justice effort annually, and that at least one of those efforts involve more than sending money as a type of support. If a charge fails to do so, five percent shall be added to their apportionments the following year to support Conference missions, or they can send two persons to the Conference School of Christian Mission the following year to be trained to lead their congregation’s mission effort. The charge conference shall receive reports annually on all local church...

¶247.
Petition Number: 20372-LC-¶247.14; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Apportionment

Amend the first sentence of ¶ 247.14 as follows:

As soon as practicable after the session of annual conference, each district superintendent or designated agent shall notify each local church in the district what amounts have, or the methodology by which they have, been apportioned to it for World Service, conference benevolences and other general Church, jurisdictional, and annual conference funds.

Rationale:
This legislation would allow the annual conferences to employ a revenue-based formula to apportion general Church funds in the future if such a change is considered appropriate.

¶247.
Petition Number: 20460-LC-¶247.14-G; Jones, Scott J. - Wichita, KS, USA for Kansas West Annual Conference.

Income-Based Apportionment Formula

Amend ¶247.14 by inserting the following sentence after the first sentence:

In the event that the conference uses an apportionment formula whereby the local church contributes a specified percentage of its current income and/or expenses, the specified percentage may be used in lieu of an actual dollar amount.

Rationale:
This would permit annual conferences to adopt apportionment formulas that tells the local church to contribute 10% of its income as defined by the annual conference based on that year’s income. In 2012 local churches could contribute a percentage of 2013 income to the 2013 budget of the conference.

¶247.
Petition Number: 20749-LC-¶247.14-G; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Charge Conference and Apportionments

Amend ¶ 247.14 as follows:

As soon as practicable after the session of annual conference, each district superintendent or designated...
Local Church

agent shall notify each local church in the district what amounts have been apportioned to it for World Service, conference benevolences and other general Church, jurisdictional and annual conference funds. In preparation for and at the charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent, 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 these apportioned funds, explaining the causes supported by each of them and their place in the total program of the Church. After the approval of the Conference Budget at the session of annual conference, the Conference Treasurer or designated agent shall notify each local church in the conference what amounts have been designated as connectional sharing to it for World Service, conference benevolences and other general Church, jurisdictional and annual conference funds. At each charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent or the presiding elder, the pastor, the finance committee, and the church council to interpret the transformational value of the connectional sharing, highlighting the missional impact among people and communities. The World Service Fund is basic in the financial program of The United Methodist Church. World Service apportionment represents the minimum needs for the mission and ministry of the Church. Conference Benevolences represent the minimum needs of for mission and ministry in the annual conference. Payment in full of these apportionments the connectional sharing by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church (¶ 812). Visible outward sign of our connection with people and communities and also a God-gifted opportunity of sharing our resources beyond local churches. Stories of connectional sharing may be visually communicated at all levels.

¶247.

Petition Number: 20074-LC-¶247.8; Cape, Kim - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Charge Conference Responsibilities

Amend ¶ 247.8

The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the district committee on ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 311.2a 1e, candidates for licensed or ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least two one years; 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 licensed or ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for licensed or ordained ministry and providing for spiritual and some financial support, including as well as supporting the Ministerial Education Fund, for their education and formation as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.

Rationale:

To bring consistency with the changes made in 2008 to ¶ 311, and to include “licensing” as a part of this paragraph.

¶252.

Petition Number: 20750-LC-¶252.1-G; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Visioning by Church Council

Amend ¶ 252.1 as follows:

Purpose—The Church Council shall provide for planning and implementing a program of 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 (†244) be the visioning body of the local church. Visioning for near and far future of the local church shall be the priority of the Church Council. It shall continuously engage in planning, strategizing, implementing and evaluating a mission and ministry plan for the local church in the areas of nurture, outreach, witness and resources. It shall provide guidelines including a system of accountability to all committees and teams for their effective functioning. It shall work with clergy and lay staff to celebrate growth and development of the local church. It shall provide structural support to leverage the mission and ministry of the local church. It shall be amenable to and function as the change-agent of the charge conference.
Petition Number: 20413-LC-¶252.4e; Boigegrain, Barbara - Glenview, IL, USA for General Board of Pension and Health Benefits.

**Housing as Compensation**

Amend the last sentence of ¶ 252.4.e) as follows: Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration except to the extent provided for in denominational pension and benefit plans.

Rationale:
For purposes of the benefit plans administered by the GBOPHB, housing is sometimes considered to be part of compensation.

Petition Number: 20548-LC-¶252.4e-G; Vickers, John H. III - Aynor, SC, USA.

**Compliance with AC Clergy Housing Guidelines**

Amend ¶ 252.4e pertaining to the church council as follows.

e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations 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. These shall include indoor environmental standards and testing standards to ensure the health and safety of pastoral families with regard to such things as radon, mold, asbestos, relative humidity, infestations, and lead-based paint. These shall also include good stewardship standards for energy efficiency of the parsonages and appliances, minimum housing standards, and housing allowances adequate to obtain a residence compliant with the standards when a parsonage is not provided. If a parsonage is out of compliance, a plan including timeline for compliance not to exceed two years shall be included. If the pastoral family must vacate the parsonage for it to be brought into compliance, alternate safe and adequate housing shall be provided. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration.

Rationale:
Mandates of the Discipline to comply with annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards have not prevented numerous parsonages or housing allowances from falling below the requirements and negatively impacting pastoral families. Approval of this petition will facilitate protecting the health and well-being of pastoral families.

The provision of adequate...

Petition Number: 20672-LC-¶252.5; Schultz, Paul - Iowa City, IA, USA; Puhr, Roger - Moss Point, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference.

**Campus Ministry Coordinator**

Amend ¶ 252.5
Add new § l) as follows:

¶ 252.5 Membership...

k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
l) Campus Ministry Coordinator
m) pastor

Petition Number: 20673-LC-¶254; Schultz, Paul - Iowa City, IA, USA; Puhr, Roger - Moss Point, MS, USA for Mississippi Annual Conference.

**Campus Ministry Coordinator**

Amend ¶ 254 as follows:

Other Ministry Group coordinators – In order to fulfill the mission of the local church, the charge conference may elect annually a coordinator or ministry group chairperson for any or all of these areas: Christian unity and interreligious concerns, church and society, community volunteers, education, evangelism, higher education and campus ministry, missions, prayer advocacy, religion and race, status and role of women, earth advocacy, stewardship, worship, advocacy for persons with special needs, and church media resources. Every local United Methodist Church shall have a Campus Ministry Coordinator, who shall have membership on the Church Board I Council. A primary responsibility of the Campus Ministry Coordinator shall be to report the names and contact information (i.e., addresses, phone numbers and email addresses) of all college students from their local church each semester to the appropriate United Methodist Campus ministry, such as the Wesley...
Local Church

Foundation. The Campus Ministry Coordinator shall contact every college student from their church each semester by letter, e-mail, or phone and encourage the student’s active participation in United Methodist student ministry. The Campus Ministry Coordinator in every church shall also promote financial and other support of United Methodist Campus ministries, such as the Wesley Foundations, within their local church.

Where desirable, the charge conference ...

¶ 256.

Petition Number: 20031-LC-¶256.5-G; Olson, Harriett Jane - New York, NY, USA for General Board of Global Ministries - Women’s Division.

UMW Organization

Amend ¶ 256.5 as follows:

¶ 256.5 United Methodist Women—United Methodist Women

5. United Methodist Women—In every local church there shall be an organized unit of United Methodist Women. United Methodist Women shall be organized in every local church. The following is the authorized constitution:

Article 1. Name—The name of this organization shall be United Methodist Women.

Article 2. Relationships—The unit local organization of United Methodist Women in the local church is directly related to the district, and conference and national organizations of United Methodist Women, and to the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Article 3. Purpose—The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the local church.

Article 4. Membership—Membership shall be open to any woman who indicates her desire to belong and to participate in the global mission of the church through United Methodist Women. The pastor(s) shall be an ex officio member of the local unit organization and of its executive committee, of United Methodist Women and of its Leadership Team or equivalent structure.

Article 5. Officers and Committees Leadership Team—The local unit shall elect a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a committee on nominations. Additional officers and committees shall be elected or appointed as needed, in accordance with the plan of the Women’s Division as set forth in the bylaws for the local unit of United Methodist Women.

Members of the local organization of United Methodist Women shall elect as its leaders those persons who are needed to help the organization to fulfill the PURPOSE, including at least a president, a treasurer, a secretary and one member at large. These persons may form such other teams or committees as may be needed to fulfill the PURPOSE and in accordance with this constitution and guidance from the national organization of United Methodist Women.

Article 6. Funds:

a. The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall secure funds for the fulfillment of its purpose. United Methodist Women in the local church shall secure funds for the fulfillment of the PURPOSE.

b. All funds from whatever source secured by the unit local organization of United Methodist Women belong to the organization and shall be disbursed only in accordance with its constitution and by its order. Its accounts shall be audited or reviewed in accordance with guidance from the national organization.

c. The total budget secured and administered by the organized unit organization of United Methodist Women in the local church shall include: (1) pledges and other money for the programs and responsibilities of the Women’s Division; and national organization of United Methodist Women, which shall be directed through regular channels of giving of United Methodist Women; and (2) funds to be used in mission locally, which shall include amounts for administration and membership development, the functions of the local organization of United Methodist Women.

d. The organized unit in the local church shall make an annual pledge to the total budget of the district or conference organization of United Methodist Women.

The local organization of United Methodist Women shall make an annual pledge to the total budget of the district or conference organization of United Methodist Women, as applicable.

e. All undesignated funds channeled to the Women’s Division national organization of United Methodist Women shall be appropriated by the division and its board of directors.

Article 7. Meetings—Each local organization of United Methodist Women shall hold such meetings for develop and implementing plans for fulfilling the purpose, Purpose and transacting its business as the unit itself shall decide.
Article 8. Relationship in the Local Church—The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall encourage all women to participate in the total life and work of the Church and shall support them in assuming positions of responsibility and leadership.

Article 9. Amendments—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be sent to the recording secretary of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries before the last annual meeting of the division in the quadrennium national organization of United Methodist Women for consideration by the board of directors. The last date for consideration of any amendments will be the last regular meeting of the board of directors before the date by which proposed legislation must be submitted for action of the General Conference.

Rationale:
Incorporates references to new national structures and provides flexibility to organize at local church level.

¶256.
Petition Number: 20698-LC-¶256.5-G; Fowler, Dennis C. “Corky” - Houston, TX, USA.

United Methodist Women

¶ 256.
5. United Methodist Women—In every local church there shall be an organized unit of United Methodist Women. The United Methodist Women shall be responsible for and in charge of all women’s ministries in the church. All women in the church above the age of twelve years shall be members of United Methodist Women. The local congregations shall pay annual dues of no less than three dollars per female member with one dollar going to each of the following United Methodist Women’s organizations: District, Conference and Women’s Division. No less than one-half of Annual dues payments are to be received by no later than January 1st and July 1st. These regulations are superior to any other rules, regulations and principles regarding the status and governance of United Methodist Women. The following is the authorized constitution...

Rationale:
Too many of our church leaders and pastors are disregarding the ‘shall statement’ regarding UMW and too many Bishops and DSs are not enforcing the statement. UMW and its programs are being starved of human and physical resources. UMW can and should handle all of our women’s ministries. We need...

¶256.
Petition Number: 20802-LC-¶256.5-G; Kittle, Liza - Martinez, GA, USA.

Additional Women’s Ministry Groups

Amend ¶256.5 as follows:
5. United Methodist Women—In every local church there shall be an organized unit of United Methodist Women. Other organized women’s ministry groups may also be present and shall annually report to the church council and charge conference. All local church women’s organizations shall provide a dedicated ministry for building women spiritually and involving women in the total ministry of the Church. The following...

Rationale:
This addition will give women of the United Methodist Church the same provision as United Methodist Men, which allows for other organized men’s ministry groups to be present in the local church (¶256.6). This addition may encourage the formation of other women’s ministry options to reach the 86% of women...

¶256.
Petition Number: 20699-LC-¶256.6-G; Fowler, Dennis C. “Corky” - Houston, TX, USA.

United Methodist Men

¶ 256.
6. United Methodist Men—Each church or charge shall have an organized unit of United Methodist Men chartered and annually renewed through the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Other organized men’s ministry groups in a local United Methodist Church shall annually report to the charge conference and be resourced through the General Commission on United Methodist Men. All local church men’s organizations shall provide a dedicated ministry for building men spiritually and involving men in the total ministry of the Church (¶2302).—All male members of the United Church above the age of twelve years shall be members of United Methodist Men. All male ministries of the United Methodist Church shall be under the supervision and responsibility of United Methodist Men. United Methodist Men shall report annually to the charge conference. Each congregation will be responsible for annu-
al dues of no less than three dollars per male. District, Conference and General Church United Methodist Men’s units will share equally in dues’ payments. No less than one-half of each year’s dues payments are to be received by no later than January 1st and July 1st.

a) Local church resource material...

d) Men seeking membership in a local unit of United Methodist Men will be All men shall be asked to subscribe to the major strategies ...

f) Membership shall be open to any man who indicates his desire to belong and Each man is encouraged to participate in the ministry of the church through United Methodist Men.

g) The appointed clergy ...

Rationale:

UMM is an authorized men’s ministry in our church. We are embracing too many other men’s ministries at the expense of UMM. Through UMM the church can better focus, supervise and leverage church ministry. Too many local power and control dynamics result from our lack of focus through the embrace...

¶258.

Petition Number: 20256-LC-¶258.2; Greenwaldt, Karen - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

P(S)PRC

Amend ¶ 258.2

. . . In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry. It shall engage in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church.

The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts, maintaining health holistically and work-life balance, and setting priorities for leadership and service....

g) The duties of the committee shall include the following:

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

(2) To promote unity in the church(es).

(3) To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; the pastor’s health and self-care, conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.

(4) To confer with, consult, and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time and priorities for the demands and effectiveness of the mission and ministry of the congregation.

(5) To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing educational needs and plans.

(6) To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in The United Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy, the preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund.

(7) To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor. 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 (see ¶ 339). Committees shall be encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.

(8) To consult with the pastor and staff concerning continuing education, work-life balance, dimensions of personal health and wellness, and spiritual renewal, 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.

... 

(16) 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), 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 committee on finance. 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 committee on pastor-parish relations, the chairperson of the board of trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance.

(17) To encourage, monitor, and support clergy and lay staff pursuit of health and wholeness.
Rationale:
Recommends additional language to enhance and further support clergy health in the disciplinary ¶ 258.2.

¶258.

Petition Number: 20778-LC-¶258.2-G; Archibald, Julius A. - Plattsburgh, NY, USA.

S/PPRC

Amend ¶ 258.2 as follows:
¶ 258.2. There shall be elected annually ...

In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry; it shall approach its responsibilities in a positive and constructive manner. The pastor shall engage the committee in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church.

The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts and setting priorities for leadership and service. The committee itself shall relate positively and constructively to the pastor(s) and staff in a holistic manner rather than as individual committee members. In order to facilitate this kind of relationship, every committee meeting will include, at its beginning, a time when concerns may be shared by the members of the committee in the absence of the pastor(s) and staff. It is the responsibility of the committee to communicate with the committee on nominations and leadership development and/or the church council when there is a need for other leaders or for employed staff to perform in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) and staff proves to be an inappropriate stewardship of time.

a) The committee shall be composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine persons representative of the total charge. One of the members shall be a young adult and one member may be a youth. In addition, the lay leader and a lay member of the annual conference shall be members. The committee shall, annually, elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among its elected membership. 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.

b) In order to secure experience and stability, the membership shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The lay member of the annual conference and the lay leader are exempt from the three-year term. To begin the process of rotation where such a process has not been in place, on the first year one class shall be elected for one year, one class for two years, and one class for three years. Elected members of the committee shall be able to succeed themselves once for one three-year term. Each year’s new class, and vacancies at the time of charge conference, shall be elected from nominees from the floor of the charge conference. When vacancies occur during the year, nominees shall be elected at the church council (or alternative church structure), to serve until the next charge conference.

c) 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.

d) The committees on pastor-parish relations of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry as a whole.

e) The committee shall meet at least once quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent. The pastor shall be present at the conclusion of each meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations except when he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself.

The committee may meet ...

f) In the event ...

gh) The duties of the committee shall include the following:

(1) To encourage...

(4) To confer ... and ministry of the congregation.

(5) To establish, annually, in consultation with the pastor(s) and individual staff members, performance and achievement goals for the coming year. The establishment of these goals will be guided by the Mission of the Church (¶ 120) and the programs adopted by the general church and the annual conference.
To provide evaluation based upon previously agreed upon goals, at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing educational needs and plans.

To communicate ...

To develop ...

To consult ...

To enlist ... The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these students, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student.

To interpret ...

To confer ...

To recommend ... 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, effective on and after January 1, 2006, 100 percent vested pension benefits ...

To recommend ...

To educate ...

Members of the committee ...

To consult on matters ...

This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2012 General Conference.

Rationale:

This petition implements the “reform [of] clergy evaluation and accountability” for “vital congregations” suggested in the Call to Action. It strengthens Pastor (or Staff) Parish Relations Committees by requiring Committee nominations directly from the Charge Conference, and by encouraging constructive Committee deliberation without jeopardizing individual pastoral relationships.

Petition Number: 20480-LC-¶258.2e; Ruggles, Bruce - Minneapolis, MN, USA for Minnesota Annual Conference.

Lay Employees & SPRC

Amend ¶ 258.2 (e) as follows:

The committee shall meet at least quarterly. . . . The committee may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor or appointed staff under consideration being present. However, the pastor or appointed staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting with the district superintendent and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. Likewise, lay staff (full- or part-time) shall be notified prior to any meeting at which her or his continued employment will be discussed, and will be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

Rationale:

Lay staff should have the same right of notification that clergy have in advance of Staff/Parish Relations
Committee meetings in which that person’s congregational employment is discussed. The Book of Discipline 2012 should be amended to bring this guarantee back in line with the 2004 Book of Discipline...

¶258.
Petition Number: 20734-LC-¶258.2e-G; Darnell, Gregory L. - Orange City, FL, USA.

Open Meetings of S/PPRC
Amend ¶ 258.2e) (last paragraph/sentence)
The committee shall meet in open closed session (except as provided in ¶ 721); and information shared in the committee in closed session shall be confidential.
Rationale:
Establish compliance with ¶ 721.

¶258.
Petition Number: 20590-LC-¶258.2g-G; Eckert, Jerry - Port Charlotte, FL, USA.

Handling Disagreements
Amend by addition to ¶ 258.2g) a new (4) and renumber accordingly:
(3) To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.
(4) To ask those with disagreements with the pastor or staff to follow the pattern of Matthew 18:15-16, that is, to speak with them to try to resolve the disagreement. If that does not work, have the disagreeing parties discuss the matter with the appropriate program or administrative committee where the concern would ordinarily be handled. If that does not resolve the matter, then the disagreeing parties shall meet with the Staff (Pastor)-Parish Relations Committee, and take appropriate action by dropping the matter, by offering therapeutic or educational opportunities to help one or both parties grow in understanding and/or practice, by suggesting professional assistance in mediating the matter, or by recommending the appropriate complaint procedure (Paragraphs 221 and 362) with the possibility of some form of mediation or just resolution being used.
Rationale:
The local church needs to have a concrete way of handling disagreements as soon as they come up so that they do not fester and become crises later on. The Scriptural model is a good starting point.

¶258.
Petition Number: 20409-LC-¶258.2g1; Ward, Hope Morgan - Jackson, MS, USA for Church Systems Task Force.

Health and Wellness
Amend ¶258.2.g)(1) of The Book of Discipline by adding the following sentence to the end of the paragraph:
, and to give attention to the health and wellness of the pastor and staff as part of the committee’s duties.
Rationale:
The petition enhances the work of staff-parish relations committees in caring for the health and wellness of clergy and staff.

¶258.
Petition Number: 20075-LC-¶258.2g9; Cape, Kim - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

PPRC/SPRC Responsibilities
Amend ¶ 258.2g) (9)
To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay preachers and persons for candidacy for licensed or ordained ministry (see ¶¶ 247.8 and 310), ... The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students candidates from the charge who are preparing for licensed or ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact
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with these student candidates, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student candidate.

Rationale:
To bring consistency with the language in ¶ 268.1a. and include licensed candidates.

¶258.

Petition Number: 20237-LC-¶258.2g9; Greenwaldt, Karen - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Discipleship.

Role of P(S)PRC with Lay Speakers

Amend ¶ 258.2 g [9]
To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay preacher and persons.......

Rationale:
The term “lay preacher” no longer exists in the United States and this term, lay preacher, is often confused to mean lay speaker. Lay speakers are approved by the charge conference not the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

¶258.

Petition Number: 20717-LC-¶258.2g12-G; Oliver, Beverley - Alhambra, CA, USA for SPRC of Alhambra First UMC.

Lay Employee Benefits

(12) To recommend to the church council ... When persons are hired or contracted, consideration shall be given to the training qualifications and certification standards set forth by the general Church agency to which such positions are related. 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, effective on and after January 1, 2006, 100 percent vested pension benefits of at least three percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through either a denominational pension program administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or another pension program administered by another pension provider.

Rationale:
Removes requirement for PPRC/SPRC of each church in US and Central Conferences to recommend providing pension benefits for lay employees working an average of 20 hours per week. In present economy, fewer employers provide pension benefits. Bad for morale to require SPRC to make recommendation which Church Council votes down.

¶258.

Petition Number: 20076-LC-¶258.2g16; Cape, Kim - Nashville, TN, USA for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; Ward, Hope Morgan - Jackson, MS, USA for Church Systems Task Force.

Parsonage Upkeep

Amend by addition to the end of the sub-paragraph 258.2 g) (16):

(16).... The chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations, 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 swift resolution to parsonage issues affecting the family’s health and well-being.

Rationale:
To support the parsonage family in their living conditions. Unresolved parsonage issues have been proven to adversely affect the health and mental well-being of parsonage families. This empowers staff-parish relations committees to act quickly to bring resolution.

§258.
Petition Number: 20747-LC-§258.4-G; Myers, Kevin Rice - Sun Prairie, WI, USA for Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Stewardship Focus of Finance Committee

Amend §258.4 (third paragraph) as follows:
Where there is no stewardship ministry area, stewardship shall be the responsibility of a subgroup of the committee on finance or shall be assigned to task group that shall report to the church council. The committee on finance shall give stewardship of financial resources as their priority throughout the year. It may delegate the responsibility to either a sub-group or task force that would plan, strategize, and implement ways to generate more resources for mission and ministries of local churches and beyond. It is strongly recommended that the committee on finance, in collaboration with the Church Council, find creative ways to turn their congregations into tithing-congregations with an attitude of generosity.-

§2500.
Petition Number: 20538-LC-§2500-G; Childs, Mike - Louisville, MS, USA for First United Methodist Church (Louisville, MS) Administrative Board. 1 similar petition.

Disaffiliation

Add new paragraph
§ 2548. Surrender of Charter of Local Church and Disaffiliation For Reasons Of Conscience — A local church may surrender its charter from The United Methodist Church and disaffiliate upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (66.7%) of the church’s professing members present and voting at a duly called church conference affirming the local church’s declaration that it is in irreconcilable conflict for reasons of conscience with the provisions of The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline on the practice of homosexuality and the blessing of homosexual unions. Upon such surrender and disaffiliation, the local church shall be released from the provisions of ¶ 2501 and shall retain full rights to its property and funds, provided that any debts upon such property and any other debts payable by that local church are assumed by that local church. In the event of such proposed action, officials of The United Methodist Church shall facilitate the orderly and timely administration of this process.

Rationale:
Despite efforts to preserve unity in the Church, irreconcilable differences persist regarding the practice of homosexuality. The Church needs to value the consciences of our people and provide an honorable way for those whose consciences are violated to disaffiliate without the loss of property and in a ministry-affirming way.

For...

§2528.
Petition Number: 20365-LC-§2528; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Charge Conference Authority

Amend §2528 as follows:
The board of trustees shall be responsible to the charge conference. In a pastoral charge consisting of one local church, the charge conference, constituted as set forth in ¶ 246-247, shall be vested with power and authority as hereinafter set forth in connection with the property, both real and personal, of the said local church. In fulfilling that duty, the charge conference may delegate certain duties and responsibilities to the board of trustees as described below. However, the board of trustees shall always be subject to the direction of the charge conference. The charge conference may:

Rationale:
These changes make it clear that the board of trustees is always subject to the direction of the charge conference.
Local Church

¶2528.

Petition Number: 20706-LC-¶2528-G; Wolfram, Charles - Northfield, NJ, USA.

Estates

Add a new sub-paragraph after ¶ 2528.3 and renumber subsequent sub-paragraphs:

To accept, or decline, the administration of an estate when named as the executor or personal representative in a will and to require the administration of the estate in accordance with the terms and provisions thereof and with the local laws appertaining thereto. (See ¶ 2532.5)

Rationale:
This is to make clear that a church may act as an executor of a will when so named, possibly by a member of the church. There was no specific statement they could do so, although they could administer a trust.

¶2528.

Petition Number: 20366-LC-¶2528.1; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Local Church Incorporation

Amend ¶ 2528.1 as follows:

1. If it so elects, to direct the board of trustees to incorporate the local church, expressly subject, however, to the Discipline of The United Methodist Church (see ¶ 2506) and in accordance with the pertinent local laws and in such manner as will fully protect and exempt from any and all legal liability the individual officials and members, jointly and severally, of the local church and the charge, annual, jurisdictional, and general conferences of The United Methodist Church, and each of them, for and on account of the debts and other obligations of every kind and description of the local church.

b) Regardless of whether the charge conference elects to incorporate the local church, the local church:

(1) must be organized and operated in compliance with the Discipline;
(2) cannot act in a manner contrary to the purpose of The United Methodist Church, the annual conference, or the Discipline; and
(3) cannot sever its connectional relationship to The United Methodist Church without the consent of the annual conference.

c) The organizing documents (articles of incorporation, charter, bylaws or equivalents) of a local church shall reflect its connectional relationship to The United Methodist Church. The adoption or modification of a local church’s organizing documents must be approved, in writing, by its pastor and district superintendent. Specifically, local church organizing documents shall, at a minimum:

(1) require the local church to be organized and operated in compliance with the Discipline;
(2) prohibit the local church from acting in a manner contrary to the purpose of The United Methodist Church, the annual conference, or the Discipline;
(3) prohibit the local church from severing its connectional relationship to The United Methodist Church without the annual conference’s consent;
(4) require the pastor and the district superintendent to approve, in writing, the adoption of, and changes to, the local church’s organizing documents; and
(5) include language consistent with the Internal Revenue Code to protect the local church’s tax-exempt status.

d) The failure of a local church’s organizing documents to meet the requirements of ¶¶ 2528.1c(1)-(4) does not relieve the local church of its connectional responsibilities to The United Methodist Church, nor does it absolve its pastor and membership of the responsibility to operate the local church as a United Methodist church, in accordance with the Discipline. The organizing documents are deemed modified to the extent necessary to comply with ¶¶ 2528.1c(1)-(4) if any of the circumstances described in ¶ 2503.6a-c apply.

Rationale:
These changes impose requirements on local church organizing documents (articles of incorporation, charter, bylaws or equivalents) similar to the trust clause requirements for deeds. They also provide for uniformity and consistency in local church organizing documents.

¶2530.

Petition Number: 20367-LC-¶2530; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Local Church Board of Trustees Vacancies

Amend the title of ¶ 2530 as follows:
¶ 2530. Removal of Local Church Trustees; Vacancies

Add the following sentence to the end of ¶ 2530.3:

A vacancy occurring ad interim may be filled until the next charge conference by the church council.

Rationale:
The added language provides a specific mechanism for filling vacancies that occur between charge conferences.

¶ 2532.

Petition Number: 20705-LC-¶2532.5-G; Wolfram, Charles - Northfield, NJ, USA.

Board of Trustees’ Powers and Limitations

Amend ¶2532.5 as follows:

Subject to the direction of the charge conference as hereinbefore provided, 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 like political unit in which the local church is located. They shall act as and perform the duties of an executor or personal representative when the local church is so named in a will. 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, or trust funds or to administer estates to the permanent endowment committee or to a local church permanent endowment and planned giving ministry committee. The purposes for establishing such a committee include the responsibilities to:

1 . . .  
2 The charge conference shall adopt guidelines for action by the committee on endowment and planned giving as developed by the permanent endowment and planned giving ministry committee, and/or permanent endowment fund. Subject to the direction and supervision of the charge conference, the committee shall fulfill its responsibilities in administering the planned-giving and/or permanent endowment fund. ...  
3 . . .  
6. Permanent Endowment and Planned Giving Ministry Committee trustees are directed by the charge conference . . .

Rationale:
Permanent endowments and planned giving go together naturally in discussions with local churches. Many endowments are established through planned gifts. Endowments provide future income for ministry and planned giving helps to fund the endowments. This will help educate church leaders about these opportunities and strengthen the role of the committee.

¶ 2533.

Petition Number: 20752-LC-¶2533-G; Taylor, Jeff - Charleston, WV, USA for National Association of United Methodist Foundations.

Permanent Endowment and Planned Giving

Amend ¶ 2533 as follows:

¶ 2533. Permanent Endowment and Planned Giving Ministry Committee—A charge conference may establish a local church permanent endowment fund and planned giving ministry committee. The purposes for establishing such a committee include the responsibilities to:

1 . . .  
2 The charge conference shall adopt guidelines for action by the committee on endowment and planned giving as developed by the permanent endowment and planned giving ministry committee, and/or permanent endowment fund. Subject to the direction and supervision of the charge conference, the committee shall fulfill its responsibilities in administering the planned-giving and/or permanent endowment fund. ...  
3 . . .  
6. Permanent Endowment and Planned Giving Ministry Committee trustees are directed by the charge conference . . .

Rationale:
Permanent endowments and planned giving go together naturally in discussions with local churches. Many endowments are established through planned gifts. Endowments provide future income for ministry and planned giving helps to fund the endowments. This will help educate church leaders about these opportunities and strengthen the role of the committee.

¶ 2540.

Petition Number: 20739-LC-¶2540; Smith, Phil - Pateros, WA, USA.

Abstract of Title

Add new subparagraph 7 to Book of Discipline ¶ 2540 as follows:

Albeit in issues regarding an abstract of title to local church property, be it known of adverse possession, that such cloud on title be permitted rights to conveyance pursuant to ¶ 2503 of the Book of Discipline, that the proposed addenda to past clauses in deeds of trust be not revocable, but instead be granted in fee simple. Whereas the corpus of local church property be granted quasi in rem to the elected trustees in accordance with the Book of Discipline per ¶ 2529.
Local Church

¶2545.
Petition Number: 20714-LC-¶2545; Fowler, Dennis C. “Corky” - Houston, TX, USA.

Merger Plans

Delete current ¶2545 and replace with the following:

When general recognition exists that a local church is experiencing systemic difficulties such that it is in violation of our first General Rule and is unable to comprehensively maintain our second General Rule the presiding Bishop will form a group to study the situation and issue a merger plan. Indications of problems and stress may include but are not limited to; inadequate maintenance of facilities, loss of membership, little transformative ministry, failure to pay apportionments, low rates of baptisms and confessions of faith, etc. The assigned group will include; the District Superintendent responsible for the congregation, the District Lay Leader, the congregation pastor, the chair of the congregation’s leadership council and any other individual deemed important to the process in the mind of the presiding Bishop. Once formed the group will have ninety days to issue a comprehensive report for merging or closure of the congregation. Following receipt of the report the presiding Bishop will decide the appropriate action.

Rationale:
The current congregational merger provisions leave nearly 100% of the decision making in the hands of leaders of the involved congregations. These procedures are clumsy and very ineffective when a failing or troubled congregation is involved. Church leaders need better tools for dealing congregations experiencing systemic difficulties. Overwhelming decision making...

¶2548.
Petition Number: 20368-LC-¶2548; Kumar, A. Moses Rathan - Nashville, TN, USA for General Council on Finance and Administration.

Disposition of Property of a Closed Local Church

Delete ¶ 2548 and replace with the following:

¶2548. Disposition of Property of a Closed Local Church—1. Except as provided in ¶ 2548.3, the district superintendent may, pursuant to this paragraph, recommend the closure of a local church, upon a finding that:

a) The local church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized or incorporated (¶ 201-204); or

b) The local church property is no longer used, kept, or maintained by its membership as a place of divine worship of The United Methodist Church.

2. Procedure—a) Prior to a recommendation to close a local church, the district superintendent shall:

(1) Guide the congregation in an assessment of its potential as outlined in ¶ 213, in consultation with the appropriate agency assigned the responsibility of the conference parish and community development strategy;

(2) Obtain and consider an opinion of legal counsel as to the existence of any reversion, possibility of reverter, right of reacquisition, or similar restrictions to the benefit of any party;

(3) Develop, in consultation with the appropriate district board of church location and building, a plan for the future use of all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church; and

(4) Develop a plan for the transfer of the membership of the local church (¶ 229).

b) Upon a recommendation by the district superintendent, and with the consent of the presiding bishop, a majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building, the annual conference may declare a local church closed. If the annual conference closes a local church, title to all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church shall immediately vest in the annual conference board of trustees, who shall hold said property in trust for the benefit of the annual conference.

c) The annual conference board of trustees may retain, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of the property of a closed local church in accordance with the direction of the annual conference, if any. It shall be the duty of the annual conference board of trustees to remove, insofar as reasonably practicable or necessary, all Christian and United Methodist insignia and symbols from such property. In the event of loss, damage to, or destruction of such local church property, the annual conference board of trustees, as the duly and legally authorized representative of such local church, is authorized to make a claim for, and collect on, any applicable insurance policies. If the annual conference board of trustees sells or leases the property, consideration should be given to selling or leasing the property to one of the other denominations represented in the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union.

d) If the annual conference closes any local church, the failure to complete any of the prior steps will not invalidate such closure.
3. *Ad Interim Procedures*—

a) At any time between sessions of annual conference, a local church may voluntarily transfer title to all its real and personal, tangible and intangible property to the annual conference board of trustees following the procedures set forth in ¶ 2539 or ¶ 2540. In such case, the annual conference board of trustees shall hold or dispose of such property in its sole discretion, subject to any standing rule of the annual conference. When it next meets, the annual conference shall decide whether to formally close the local church.

b) At any time between sessions of annual conference, if the presiding bishop, the majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building all consent, they may, in their sole discretion, declare that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate protection of the local church’s property, for the benefit of the denomination. In such case, title to all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church shall immediately vest in the annual conference board of trustees who may hold or dispose of such property in its sole discretion, subject to any standing rule of the annual conference. Exigent circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations where a local church no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized or incorporated (¶¶ 201-204) or where the local church property is no longer used, kept, or maintained by its membership as a place of divine worship of The United Methodist Church. When it next meets, the annual conference shall decide whether to formally close the local church.

4. All the deeds, records, and other official and legal papers, including the contents of the cornerstone, of a closed local church shall be collected by the district superintendent and shall be deposited for permanent safekeeping with the annual conference commission on archives and history.

5. The annual conference board of trustees shall review all gifts held in trust, assets of any endowment funds, and assets of any foundation of the closed local church. The annual conference board of trustees shall dispose of the property in its discretion, unless otherwise directed by the annual conference or as required by law.

6. Any gift, legacy, devise, annuity, or other benefit that accrues to a closed local church shall become the property of the annual conference board of trustees. The annual conference board of trustees shall dispose of the property in its discretion, unless otherwise directed by the annual conference or as required by law.

7. If a local church in an urban center with more than 50,000 population is closed, any proceeds of the sale of its property must be used for new and/or existing ministries within urban transitional communities, as described in ¶ 212, and consistent with the annual conference’s urban ministry strategic plan.

   Rationale:
   This rewrite removes confusing language and terminology, more clearly outlines the steps that must be taken to close a local church, and describes how to manage the closed church’s property.

### ¶2548.

Petition Number: 20654-LC-¶2548-G; Paige, Peggy - Iron Mountain, MI, USA for UM Rural Fellowship.

#### Donation of Property

Amend ¶ 2548 by adding a new .8 as follows:

¶ 2548.8 Upon the discontinuance or abandonment of a local church, the gift of said property may be made to an organization that is a non-profit and has values consistent with the United Methodist Church’s values and consistent with our Wesleyan heritage, theology, and United Methodist polity that will begin, enhance or continue the work and vision of ministry with the poor in that community.

   Rationale:
   Donating discontinued or abandoned local church property is one way to facilitate John Wesley’s vision to minister to the poor as the cost of land and/or building is one of the largest barriers for non-profit organizations in helping those in poverty to attain sustainable lifestyles.

### ¶2548.

Petition Number: 20725-LC-¶2548.2c-G; Pogue, Creed - Estell Manor, NJ, USA.

#### Protect Apportionment-Paying Churches

Amend Paragraph 2548, Section 2c as follows:

c) If a local church fully paid its apportionments for the previous year, then all of the procedures in a) and b) must be followed. Additionally, the local church has the right to hold the discontinuance in abeyance until the next annual conference. However, if the local church did not meet its apportionment obligations, then if the annual conference declares any local church discontinued, the failure to complete any of the prior steps will not invalidate such discontinuance.
Rationale:
Churches that have fully paid their apportionments deserve the respect of due process. Otherwise, situations may arise where other factors besides mission become paramount.

◊ ◊ ◊ ◊ ◊

Proposed Non-Disciplinary Legislation

Petition Number: 20753-LC-NonDis-G; Terwilliger, Mark - Beach Lake, PA, USA for Beach Lake UMC.

Styrofoam

Pastors and lay members of United Methodist local churches will appeal to their congregations to adopt and encourage covenants to discontinue utilizing Styrofoam for food and beverages.

Rationale:
The former Wyoming Conference has passed many similar resolutions. The repetition may be churches’ disregard for the toxic process of producing Styrofoam and the legacy of creating more landfills.

Susquehanna Conference did not pass this resolution because of the word “enforce”; Beach Lake UMC has substituted “encourage”.

Proposed Resolutions

R8009.

Petition Number: 20956-LC-R8009-G; Carlsen, Jonathan - Arcadia, FL, USA.

Churches and Sex Offenders

Amend Resolution No. 8010 (Church Participation by a Registered Sex Offender) as Shown:
Amend the second paragraph, beginning “Increasingly, churches are faced ...”: Increasingly, churches are faced with a dilemma ... by a convicted child abuser. This dilemma is often complicated by laws and regulations ordering convicted abusers to keep themselves specified distances away from places where child gather. These regulations may declare “off-limits” not only parks, playgrounds, and schools, but sometimes also church property. Moreover, they seldom make exceptions, no matter how many “guardian adults” may be present to protect the children. Therefore, churches or church officials may find themselves uneasy, if not criminally liable, if they allow convicted abusers to participate in worship and other church activities on their property. Being While being part of a worshiping community is not the only way for a person to experience God’s redeeming love, but it is an important one, and churches must weigh carefully the legal and moral/spiritual consequences either of extending or limiting access to worship opportunities to convicted abusers.

Amend the third paragraph, beginning, “Recent studies suggest ...”: A further complication heightening this dilemma are recent studies that suggest a low likelihood that pedophiles can or will change. Without a life-transforming born-again experience followed by steady Christian growth and/or extensive professional treatment, virtually all child sexual offenders will re-offend. Repentance, prayer, and pastoral support, always often in combination with lifelong professional treatment, can be crucial in helping change behavior, but, in themselves, research shows little evidence that they offer much hope of changing the behavior of perpetrators. Further research may clarify the difficulties and offer more hopeful outcomes, but at present welcoming a child sex offender into a congregation must be accompanied by thorough knowledge, careful planning, painstaking coordination with law enforcement and other authorities, and long-term monitoring.

Add a new fourth bullet point recommendation to section A, beginning: “Local churches should”:
- work with annual conferences, lawmakers, courts, and other officials to balance rightly the public safety needs of children with the rights of former offenders to freely and harmlessly practice their religious faith.

Rationale:
This thoughtful, much-needed resolution has three shortcomings: underestimating the Holy Spirit’s power to transform lives, overestimating (Beware of always, beware of never!) psychiatry’s and psychology’s effectiveness in this, and ignoring governments’ legitimate public safety concerns that may restrict churches’ ministries to this group. The amendments make those corrections.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20537-LC-R9999-G; Childs, Mike - Louisville, MS, USA for First United Methodist Church (Louisville, MS) Administrative Board.

Homosexual Practice and Local Church Property

Add new resolution as follows:
Whereas, the United Methodist Church is deeply divided over the issue of homosexual practice and the ordination of practicing homosexuals:
Whereas, part of the United Methodist Church sincerely believes that the practice of homosexuality, homosexual marriage covenants, and the opportunity for the ordination of practicing homosexuals is a human right:
While another part of the United Methodist Church just as sincerely believes its conscience bound by Scripture which teaches that the practice of homosexuality is sin (Rom. 1:26-27, 1 Cor. 6:9), and that the homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with Christian teaching:
And whereas, neither side can in good conscience surrender their position since the positions are incompatible with one another; nor, in view of the spiritual and moral issues at stake, can either side in good conscience remain in a church body that takes the opposing position:
And whereas, for forty years the United Methodist Church has battled over this issue at a terrible cost of
resources, time, and energy which should have been better spent spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ;

And whereas, both sides are tired of the battle, but unwilling to surrender their positions;

And whereas, a denomination held together only by “trust clauses” in property deeds is not a “United” Methodist Church;

Therefore, we reluctantly conclude that the wisest and most loving course of action is to permit those local churches and/or charges that show that they cannot in good conscience agree with the official position or the accepted practice of the United Methodist Church on the issue of homosexuality to amicably separate from the United Methodist Church in peace and love.

R9999.

Petition Number: 20801-LC-R9999-G; Kittle, Liza-Martinez, GA, USA.

Additional Women’s Ministry Groups

Whereas, the Call to Action Project, adopted by the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table, concludes that congregational vitality must be the first priority over the next decade for the United Methodist Church to be effective in its mission and change the path of membership decline;

Whereas, the report (Call to Action Final Report, pg. 20) proposes that intense concentration be given to building effective practices in local churches using the drivers of Vital Congregations, and that attention and resources should be directed toward enriching and extending high-quality ministries in and through congregations as the primary arenas for making disciples (CTA, pg. 20), (also see ¶201 and 202, 2008 BOD);

Whereas, “multiple small groups and programs have been determined to be a key driver of Vital Congregations” (CTA, Pg. 21);

Whereas, the report recommends that the church should demonstrate “profound respect for and then encourage and celebrate diversity in the ways churches apply the drivers of vitality that fit their local contexts” (CTA, Page 21);

Whereas, the report states emphatically that “rule-bound structures inhibit innovation, continuous renewal, and viability, a key responsibility of leaders is to suspend rules in order to test and assess the efficacy of new, worthy ideas” (CTA, Pg. 21);

Whereas, women make up 58% of the United Methodist Church and less than 14% of those women participate in the only official women’s ministry of the UMC through United Methodist Women (statistics derive from General Commission on Finance and Administration 2009 annual report);

Whereas, the needs of women today are complex, dynamic, and unique in every congregation and studies show that a variety of women’s ministry programs is the most effective means of enabling and encouraging women to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ, to serve effectively in their local church, and to serve passionately in mission outreach to a lost and hurting world.

Therefore, be it resolved that the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church encourages the local church to provide supplemental women’s ministry programs, in addition to United Methodist Women, that fit the unique needs of the women in the church.