

**VI. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FORTY-NINTH
REGULAR SESSION**

Resolution Number 1
Special Session of General Conference

WHEREAS, the Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference for February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, MO. The Constitution of the Church offers that the Special General Conference shall be composed of the delegates elected to the previous General Conference or their legal successors or alternates, except when a particular annual conference or missionary conference shall choose to have a new election it may do so. (§14, Article II, *2016 Book of Discipline*);

WHEREAS, in June 2015, our Annual Conference duly elected a delegation to serve at General and Jurisdictional Conferences for the 2016-2019 quadrennium; and

WHEREAS, our current delegation members have shared in the discussion and voting at the 2016 General Conference Session on matters now before the church in this called session;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that our 2016 General Conference delegation continue to represent our Annual Conference at the Special Session of the General Conference in February of 2019.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our Annual Conference enter into a time of intentional prayer and fasting for our United Methodist Church, our delegation, the Commission on the Way Forward, and all delegates to this Special Session.

Resolution Number 2
**Affirming Our Bishop, Our Cabinet,
and the Clergy Members of Our Conference**

WHEREAS the Plan of Union which brought into being the United Methodist Church in 1968 identified the Confession of Faith, the Articles of Religion, and John Wesley's sermons as doctrinal standards for the United Methodist Church;¹

AND, WHEREAS, those who seek to become clergy members of the annual conference are asked to answer the following questions¹:

“After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?”

“Will you preach and maintain them?”

“Do you approve our Church government and polity?”

“Will you support and maintain them?”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the members of the 2017 session of the West Virginia Annual Conference believe that United Methodist doctrine as contained in the Articles of Religion and the Confession of Faith is indeed in harmony with the Holy Scriptures;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we affirm and embrace this doctrine;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we affirm the clergy members of the West Virginia Annual Conference in their vow to preach and teach the doctrines of the United Methodist Church;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we affirm the clergy members of the West Virginia Annual Conference in their vow to support and maintain the polity of the United Methodist Church;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we give thanks for the ministry of Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball and for her commitment to upholding the covenant represented by *The Book of Discipline*;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we give thanks for the ministry of our bishop's cabinet and for their commitment to upholding the covenant represented by *The Book of Discipline*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon every clergy member, every lay member of the West Virginia Annual Conference, and every local church in the West Virginia Annual Conference to uphold our bishop and her cabinet in prayer.

1 *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*, paragraph 103

Resolution Number 3

Prayer for the Commission on A Way Forward and for Our General Conference Delegation

WHEREAS the General Conference of 2016 asked the Council of Bishops to appoint The Commission on A Way Forward;

WHEREAS our bishop, Sandra Steiner Ball, was chosen to serve as one of the three facilitators for the Commission on A Way Forward;

WHEREAS the Commission on A Way Forward was appointed and was invited to recommend changes in any or all paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline* pertaining to human sexuality and to recommend changes to the basic structure of our denomination;

WHEREAS the Commission has begun its work; and

WHEREAS the Council of Bishops has called a special General Conference for 2019;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that every lay member and every clergy member of the West Virginia Annual Conference and every local church in the West Virginia Annual Conference is called upon to pray faithfully for the Commission on A Way Forward, for Bishop Steiner Ball, and for our annual conference's delegation to the special General Conference;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2017 Session of the West Virginia Annual Conference respectfully requests that our General Conference delegation hold at least one two-hour listening session in each district between June 15, 2018, and January 15, 2019, to hear the concerns of the laity and clergy of the annual conference regarding any of the recommendations which are to be presented to the Special Session of the General Conference.

Resolution Number 4

Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the West Virginia Annual Conference

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the “Church”), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church (“Clergypersons”);

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (the “*Discipline*”), which includes all such payments from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (“GBOPHB”), during the year 2018 by each active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

2. THAT the pension or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from the GBOPHB and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a GBOPHB plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the *Discipline*, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergyperson to

perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled Clergy person's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

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

Resolution Number 5

Closed Properties, and the Sale and Other Disposition of the Same

WHEREAS, it is deemed desirable by this Annual Conference to declare under what circumstances certain properties may be deemed to be closed, placed in the hands of the Board of Trustees of the Annual Conference and sold, or otherwise disposed of; and

WHEREAS, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church sets forth procedures that should be followed with regard to such matters;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. When a local church property is no longer used, kept, or maintained by its membership as a place of divine worship, it shall be considered closed.
2. When a local church is closed and is, therefore, deemed to no longer serve the purpose for which it is organized, with the consent of the Bishop, a majority of the District Superintendents of this Conference and the District Board of Church Location and Building, the Annual Conference Trustees shall, upon such procedures as shall be prescribed by them, assume control of the property.
3. If circumstances do not make immediate action necessary, the Conference Board of Trustees may sell, transfer, lease or mortgage such property in accordance with the applicable provisions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, as revised from time to time.
4. For purposes of this Resolution, the circumstances which make immediate action necessary shall be deemed to include the following: the possibility that the property will decline materially in value prior to the next meeting of the Annual Conference; the need to expend substantial funds for repair, alteration, safety and health or the Board of Trustees for uses previously authorized by the Annual Conference or the Board; the existence of an exceptional offer of purchase which is not likely to reoccur in the immediate future; and such other unique circumstances which the Board determines, in its discretion, justify the sale of such property as being in the best interest of the Annual Conference and its members.

(This resolution is based on the *2016 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, ¶2549).

Resolution Number 6

Closed Church – Real & Personal Property Funds

WHEREAS, the Annual Conference annually approves the closing of specific church properties upon recommendation of the Cabinet and the Conference Board of Trustees;

WHEREAS, said properties are sold by the Annual Conference Board of Trustees;

WHEREAS, not all proceeds from the sale of said properties are designated by the Annual Conference and are thus placed in a Property Account of the Annual Conference;

WHEREAS, requests may be made to the Annual Conference Board of Trustees for these funds by local churches for capital improvements; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees makes recommendations to the Annual Conference at a regularly scheduled session of the Annual Conference for the dispersing of these funds;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that 10% of the net proceeds from the sale of closed churches, after all legal fees and expenses related to the sales have been paid, be allocated for an endowment fund for capital improvements, repair, and restoration of ethnic local churches. These funds shall be invested through the W.Va. United Methodist Foundation, Inc., and that the income shall be administered by the Annual Conference Ethnic Local Church Committee (Fiscal Policy 47),

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that 40% of the proceeds from the sales of closed church properties, after all legal fees and expenses related to the sales have been paid, shall be allocated to the New Church Development and Congregational Revitalization Fund of the Annual Conference, invested through the W.Va. United Methodist Foundation, Inc.;

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Annual Conference authorizes the Annual Conference Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Cabinet, to disburse, as available, up to \$50,000 a year of those funds between sessions of the Annual Conference. Said disbursement is to be reported to the Annual Conference at its next regularly scheduled session.

Resolution Number 7

Parsonage Allowances - Clergy in Extension Ministries

WHEREAS, The West Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is the qualified employing organization of its clergy; and

WHEREAS, The Internal Revenue Code, Section 107, provides for clergy to exclude (a) the rental value of a home furnished as part of compensation, and (b) the rental allowance paid as part of compensation, to the extent used to rent or provide a home,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in the calendar year 2018, the actual expense for housing, not to exceed \$18,000, be designated as the parsonage allowance excludable under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code as part of the compensation of clergy employed by the West Virginia Conference in positions other than local churches such as Director of Administrative Services, Conference Secretary, Conference Staff, and Administrators of Conference Programs and Projects. District Superintendents shall have \$4,000 be designated as the parsonage exclusion excludable under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code as part of the compensation of clergy employed by the West Virginia Annual Conference in positions other than local churches.

Referrals

The following resolutions were referred to the Council on Finance and Administration:

1. That beginning January 1, 2018, the premium amount for all active participants in the health insurance plan be increased by \$20 per month or \$240 annually and that this increase be set aside to fund the 30% of the premium that is the participant's responsibility while a participant is on medical leave.
2. Resolved that the 2017 session of the WV AC directs the CFA to present to the 2018 annual conference session a budget for 2019 which includes no increase for the Office of Connectional Ministries if the 2017 statistical report shows both a decrease in the number of pledges and identified givers and a decrease in income received through pledges.

The following motion was referred to the Board of Pensions:

1. A motion to change the Miscellaneous Pensions recommendation C that "the maximum individual emergency benefit shall not exceed \$1,000 per calendar year, with a lifetime benefit of \$3,000" to be "the maximum individual emergency benefit shall not exceed \$3,000 per calendar year and a lifetime benefit of \$10,000." This motion was referred to the Board of Pensions with the request that the BOP report back to the 2018 Conference.