



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 CONSEIL JUDICIAIRE DE L' EGLISE METHODISTE UNIE
 RECHTSHOF DER EVANGELISCH-METHODISTISCHEN KIRCHE
 CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA
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Report by Bishop on Decision of Law

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

Reporting of decisions of law made by bishops in response to questions of law submitted to them in writing during the regular business of a conference session (§ 56.3 Const. and § 2609.6 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).

Reporting of episcopal decisions on questions of law when such decisions are appealed by one-fifth of the members of the conference (§ 56.2 Const. and § 2609.7 *The Book of Discipline 2016*).

Name of Bishop: ELAINE J.W. STANOVSKY
 Address: P.O. BOX 13650 City: DES MOINES
 State/Province: WA ZIP/Postal Code 98198-3650 Country: USA
 Phone: 206-870-6810 Fax: 206-870-6839 E-mail: bishop@greaternw.org
 Annual Conference: ALASKA UM Date of session: 02/22/2020 (month/day/year)
 Question(s) of Law: AS AN ATTACHED DOCUMENT.

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

Constitution: 51 Book of Discipline: 369.6, 507.5, 507.6, 603.5, & 2609.6
 Judicial Council Decision(s): 33

Signature: 
Bishop of The United Methodist Church

Date: 03/16/2020
 (month/day/year)

The following must be attached:

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

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
RESPONSE TO A QUESTION OF LAW
SUBMITTED BY LONNIE D. BROOKS, LAY MEMBER
DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE ALASKA CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
FEBRUARY 22, 2020**

Elaine J. W. Stanovsky, Resident Bishop, Greater Northwest Area, including Alaska

Facts

During a special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference, called according to the provisions of the *Book of Discipline*, ¶¶ 369.9 and 603.5, Rev. Andy Bartel, chair of the Conference Leadership Team, moved that the Alaska United Methodist Conference petition the 2020 General Conference to discontinue the missionary conference status of the Conference (attachment 1). The motion was approved. Mr. Lonnie D. Brooks, a lay member of the Conference, then presented in writing and read aloud a question of law in two parts regarding the meaning, application and effect of ¶ 507.6 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (attachment 2).

Paragraph 507.5 states, “Petitions [to a General Conference] must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 230 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.”

Paragraph 507.6 states, “Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.”

Appropriateness of the Question

Paragraph 51, *Article VII* of the constitution states that “A bishop presiding over an annual...conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference.” Judicial Council Decision 33 establishes the precedent that “requests for rulings by a Bishop in an Annual Conference...should not include moot or hypothetical questions,” but “be based upon some action taken or proposed to be taken, wherein under the specific facts in each case some doubt may have arisen as to the legality of the action taken or proposed.” The question of law is not moot or hypothetical. It is based upon, and was presented immediately following, the Conference’s adoption of a General Conference petition less than 230 but more than 45 days prior to the opening of the 2020 General Conference (attachment 3). In his question of law Mr. Brooks reports that Gary Graves, Secretary of the General Conference, interpreted ¶ 507.6 to Mr. Brooks as allowing only petitions developed in a regular session of an annual conference that is held after the deadline, and does not apply to petitions developed in a special session of an annual conference (attachment 4). This interpretation raised “doubt as to the legality of the action... proposed” in Rev. Bartel’s motion, prompting the question of law. Mr. Brooks’ question of law meets the standards established in Judicial Council Decision 33.

Question, Part 1 -- Legality

“Is a petition to General Conference, adopted by a special session of the annual conference held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference, legal under the

provisions of *The Book of Discipline* ¶¶ 51, 369.6, 507.5, 507.6 and 2609.6?”

Ruling

Paragraph 51 establishes the constitutional duty of a bishop presiding over an annual conference “to decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session. The question was properly put before the bishop in writing and recorded in the journal of the conference.

Paragraph 369.6 prescribes the conditions for holding a special session of the annual conference. The question of law was presented at a special session of an annual conference, called in compliance with the conditions set forth.

Paragraph 507.5 establishes the deadline and conditions for submitting petitions to General Conference.

Paragraph 507.6 states that, “Exceptions to the time limitations *shall* be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.” It does not specify that petitions originating from a special session of an annual conference should be treated differently than those originating from a regular session.

No provision in the *Book of Discipline* differentiates between the legality, authority or treatment of actions taken by an annual conference in a regular session of an annual conference and those taken in a special session. There is no disciplinary foundation for treating a petition originating from a special session of an annual conference differently than one

originating from a regular session of an annual conference.

A petition adopted by a special session of an annual conference meeting between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the general conference is legal under the exception to time limitations provided in ¶507.6.

Question, Part 2 – The right of a petition to be heard by the General Conference

“Is a petition developed in a special session of an annual conference meeting between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the general conference considered a late petition that may or may not be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and processed or not processed as determined by the Committee on Reference in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference?”

Ruling

A petition to General Conference originating at a special session of an annual conference held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference shall be granted an exception to the time limitations as provided in ¶507.6. It’s consideration by the General Conference is not subject to the discretion of the Committee on Reference. Such a petition shall be given the same right of consideration by the general conference as any petition originating at a regular session of an annual conference.

ATTACHMENT 1

Total Number of Pages: 3
Suggested Title: AUMC Petition for Change of Status
Disciplinary Paragraphs: Non-Disciplinary
General Church Budget Implications: None
Global Implications: None

WHEREAS ¶587 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* says, in relevant part, the following:

“A petition to the General Conference for change in status from a missionary conference shall set forth details of the history and status of the conference and shall be accompanied by a report and recommendation of the General Board of Global Ministries,” and

WHEREAS The Alaska United Methodist Conference (AUMC) is a missionary conference of the UMC, one of three such conferences within the jurisdictions which was created by the General Conference under its authority in ¶587. The Judicial Council acknowledged the creation of the AUMC as a missionary conference in Judicial Council Decision (JCD) 448 when it said, “The 1972 General Conference constituted the former Alaska Mission and Oklahoma Indian Mission as Missionary Conferences (DCA 583, 888),” and

WHEREAS The AUMC was originally named the Alaska Missionary Conference (AMC), but the conference name was changed to the Alaska United Methodist Conference by action of the Western Jurisdictional Conference of 2012, and

WHEREAS further details of the history of the AUMC are presented in the book *Have Gospel Tent Will Travel* by Bea Shepard and Claudia Kelsey, long serving United Methodists of Alaska, now deceased, and

WHEREAS Thomas Kemper, the General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), said in his 2016 address to the AUMC that missionary conference status was always intended by the Church to be an interim status, not permanent, and

WHEREAS GBGM has been gradually decreasing its financial support of the AUMC over several years with an announced intent of reducing it to zero for 2021, and

Whereas the AUMC as a small entity of 27 churches and three unchartered fellowships does not qualify for conversion to an annual conference, and

WHEREAS the AUMC continues to be a vital United Methodist and mainline presence in the communities it serves, and

WHEREAS the AUMC will continue to rely on United Methodist resources in personnel and funding to maintain the United Methodist presence and witness in the far north, and

WHEREAS The members of the AUMC have determined by vote in a special session of the AUMC that it is in the best interests of themselves, the Western Jurisdiction, and The United Methodist Church that they will be better served by Alaska's becoming a mission district of another annual conference in the Western Jurisdiction, as provided in ¶513, and

WHEREAS The General Board of Global Ministries has reviewed and approved this proposed action,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of 2020 discontinues the missionary conference status of the AUMC which discontinuance will be effective at the close of the next Western Jurisdictional Conference, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT IN THIS ACTION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE honors the authority and responsibility of the Western Jurisdiction to determine the number, names and boundaries of the annual conferences in the jurisdiction as provided in ¶¶27.4 and 40 and that the Western Jurisdiction is at liberty to respond to this action of the General Conference at the next jurisdictional conference so as to establish boundaries that include Alaska within

another annual conference of the jurisdiction as the next step in continuing United Methodist mission and ministry in Alaska.

Date: 22Feb20

Signature of Petitioner: 

Karen Martin Tichenor

Identification of the Petitioner: Secretary of Alaska Annual Conference

Phone: 907-394-4849

City, State, Province, Country: Soldotna, Alaska, USA

Email: hope4glory.kmt@gmail.com

ATTACHMENT 2

QUESTION OF LAW CONCERNING THE MEANING, APPLICATION, AND EFFECT OF
¶507.6

22 February 2020

Bishop, as authorized in ¶¶51 and 2609.6, I present you with a Question of Law concerning the meaning, application, and effect of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*. The portion of ¶507.6 that is the subject of my Question of Law is the portion that says the following:

¶507.6...Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.

This special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference is being held on Saturday, 22Feb20, which is 73 days prior to the scheduled 05May20 opening session of General Conference 2020, well within the time period identified in the quoted portion of ¶507.6. We have just adopted a petition intended for General Conference 2020, and it is important for us to know how our petition will be received and processed by the Secretary of the General Conference, who has said that it is his interpretation of the exception clause of ¶507.6 that it applies only to petitions developed in regular sessions of annual conferences that are held late and therefore does not apply to petitions developed in special sessions.

My question to you then is the following:

Is a petition to General Conference, adopted by a special session of the annual conference held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference, legal under the provisions of *BOD* ¶¶ 51, 369.6, 507.5&.6 and 2609.6?

Further, does the exception clause of ¶507.6 quoted above mean that only petitions originating in a regular session of an annual conference that is held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference must be received by the Secretary of the General Conference as timely petitions and presented to the General Conference for action (see the Plan of Organization for the 2019 General Conference, sections IV.D— Secretary of the General Conference and VII.A.7— Committee on Reference) and that a petition developed in a special session of an annual conference such as ours is considered a late petition and may or may not be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and processed or not processed as determined by the Committee on Reference in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference?

Respectfully submitted,



Lonnie D. Brooks, Lay Member
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EMAIL: lonnieinalaska@gmail.com
Phone 907-333-4529
Cell 915-491-7646
FAX 907-332-1400

ATTACHMENT 3

Alaska United Methodist Conference
Special Called Session
AUMC Conference Center
1660 Patterson St., Anchorage
February 22, 2020

...

Report of Leadership Team

Andy Bartel, Chair

Good morning, my name is Andy Bartel and I am appointed to serve St John Anchorage and I also am privileged to serve as the Leadership Team Chair of the Alaska Conference. ...

With gratitude to the Future Visions Task Force for their excellent work, the Leadership Team moves the petition #1 printed on blue paper before you, and is asking you, the Annual Conference to pass the petition.

Petition #1: AUMC Petition for Change of Status

...

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of 2020 discontinues the missionary conference status of the AUMC which discontinuance will be effective at the close of the next Western Jurisdictional Conference, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT IN THIS ACTION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE honors the authority and responsibility of the Western Jurisdiction to determine the number, names and boundaries of the annual conferences in the jurisdiction as provided in ¶¶27.4 and 40 and that the Western Jurisdiction is at liberty to respond to this action of the General Conference at the next jurisdictional conference so as to establish boundaries that include Alaska within another annual conference of the jurisdiction as the next step in continuing United Methodist mission and ministry in Alaska.

...

Results: Yes: 49; No: 1, Abstain: 2

Petition 1 is adopted.

...

Question of Law from Lonnie Brooks, Lay Member St. John

QUESTION OF LAW CONCERNING THE MEANING, APPLICATION, AND EFFECT OF ¶507.6

The Question of Law was presented by Lonnie Brooks to the Bishop in writing and read orally to the Conference. The Question of Law and the Bishop's Decision of Law are both submitted herewith as separate documents and included herein by reference.

Subject: PETITION DUE DATE EXCEPTIONS

From: LONNIE D BROOKS <lonnieinalaska@gmail.com>

Date: 12/11/2019, 3:04 PM

To: ANDY BARTEL <revandybartel@gmail.com>, CARLO RAPANUT <carlorapanut@gmail.com>, "ELAINE J.W. STANOVSKY" <bishop@greaternw.org>, "ELAINE J.W. STANOVSKY" <elainejws@comcast.net>, EMILY RIPLEY CARROLL <egrcarroll@gmail.com>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <ggraves@gcfa.org>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <ggraves@umcgc.org>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <gwg85@earthlink.net>, STEPHANIE DECKARD HENRY <stephjdhenry@gmail.com>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 11DEC19

TO: GARY GRAVES

FM: LONNIE BROOKS

CY: ANDY BARTEL

EMILY CARROLL

STEPHANIE HENRY

CARLO RAPANUT

ELAINE STANOVSKY

SJ: Petition Due Date Exceptions

Thanks very much for agreeing to research the history of the exception clause of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*, which says the following:

QUOTE

Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference

END QUOTE

The two most salient parts of that provision that seem relevant to the question we are raising are the use of the word "shall" and the unqualified use of the phrase, "an annual conference session." The language "shall be granted" does not give any discretionary authority to the secretary of the General Conference, to the Committee on Reference, or to the Commission on the General Conference. That language is mandatory, if the conditions to follow are met. And the only condition to be met is that it applies for "an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference."

You have suggested that the phrase "an annual conference session" might be intended to apply only to a regular session of the annual conference that is held late, and it would not, therefore, apply to a special session of an annual conference, regardless of when it is held.

For that suggestion to be true, its support has to lie somewhere other than in the plain language of the exception, which says nothing whatsoever about either a regular session or a special session. The only modifier to the word "session" in the second line of the language before us is "annual conference."

On the chance that the history of the exception language might lend some support to the possibility you have expressed, I did the research to discover how the exception has been worded through the years, and my results are shown on the attachment. While the wording has changed slightly over time, and the time window has varied from time to time, the essentials relative to the question before us have not changed. At no time did the language include a reference either to a regular session of the annual conference or to a special session of the annual conference.

You might consider it to be relevant to the issue as to whether or not a special session was an option when the language was introduced. The answer is that a special session of the annual conference has always been an option. In the 1960 *Discipline* that provision is in ¶627, which says in relevant part, the following:

QUOTE

The Bishop, with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents, may call a special session of the Annual Conference.

END QUOTE

The current language is the following:

QUOTE

¶603.5 A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call.

END QUOTE

With respect to a special session of an annual conference initiated by the bishop, there is no change in wording from 1960 to 2016, a period of fifty-six years, the beginning of which predates the formation of The United Methodist Church. That's remarkable stability for a law in our Church.

I believe, based on the research I've done, that if the Alaska Conference holds a special session sometime prior to 21Mar20, which is the forty-fifth day prior to when GC20 convenes, then any

petition it submits to GC20 must be received as a timely petition in accordance with the plain language of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and thus must be entered as expeditiously as possible into the process, including assignment to a legislative committee. The role, if any, of the Committee on Reference will be to determine to which LC the petition ought to be assigned, not whether or not it will be accepted, unless there are some irregularities found in its format.

Thanks for your attention to our problems.

Regards,

Lonnie

— Attachments: —

GENESIS OF PETITION EXCEPTION.pdf

50.3 KB

LIST OF INTERESTED PARTIES

Decision of Law by Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky, Alaska United Methodist Conference, 22Feb20

Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky
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EMAIL: bishop@greaternw.org

Lonnie D. Brooks
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The Rev. Ms. Karen Martin Tichenor
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The Rev. Ms. Abby Parker Herrera
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The Rev. Mr. Gary Graves
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 CONSELHO JUDICIAL DA IGREJA METODISTA UNIDA
 CONSEJO DE LA JUDICATURA DE LA IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA



Submission of Brief

Docket No.: 0420-15

This form is to be used by (please check one): Interested Party (§ 2608.1)
 Amicus Curiae (Art. V.F RPP)
 to submit (please check one): Opening Brief Reply Brief

Clergy Member Lay Member Name: LONNIE D. BROOKS
 Address: 2020 MULDOON RD. #344 City: ANCHORAGE
 State/Province: AK ZIP/Postal Code 99504-3683 Country: USA
 Phone: 907-333-4529 Fax: 907-332-1400 E-mail: lonnieinalaska@gmail.com
 Conference: ALASKA UNITED METHODIST Date of session: 02/22/2020 (month/day/year)
 Authorities Cited (indicate paragraph or decision number where applicable):
 Constitution: _____ Book of Discipline: ¶507.6
 Judicial Council Decision(s): 83, 205, 211, 233, 236, 249, 312, 315, 324, 339, 356, 448, 459, 485, 562, 683, 702, 704, 833, 845, 908, 1025, 1120, 1147, 1161, 1230, 1262, and 1378 _____

Signature:  Date: 03/16/2020
 (month/day/year)

Submission must conform to the Format for Briefs (Appendix C):

- On 8 ½ x 11 inch or A4, white paper.
 - Printed on one or two sides.
 - Double space in 12 point, serifed font.
 - One inch margins, left justified.
 - Each page numbered at the bottom right.
 - The pages may be bound with staple, paperclip, or alligator clip. They should not be bound in theme folders, three hole binders, GBC, or spiral formats.
 - Name of the author on the first and last page.
 - Docket number (if known) at the bottom left of the page.
 - Maximum thirty (30) pages for opening briefs and twenty (20) pages for reply briefs.
 - All *amicus curiae* briefs are limited to twenty (20) pages, including attachments and exhibits.
- Eight (8) hard copies must be submitted via USPS or other delivery service to:
 Secretary of the Judicial Council, 5556 N. Sheridan Road, #610, Chicago, IL 60640, USA
- Electronic copies in both Word and PDF (with security features disabled) must be submitted to: secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org.

TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

DOCKET 0420-15, APRIL 2020 SESSION

BISHOP'S DECISION OF LAW ON THE MEANING, APPLICATION, AND EFFECT OF
¶507.6

16 March 2020

Opening Brief of Lonnie D. Brooks, Questioner

FACTS OF THE CASE

Question of Law Asked

On 22Feb20 during a special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference (AUMC) called by Presiding Bishop Elaine J.W. Stanovsky, Lonnie D. Brooks, lay member of the AUMC from St. John United Methodist Church of Anchorage, asked Bishop Stanovsky a Question of Law (QOL) that was presented to her in writing as well as read orally into the record of the AUMC. The operative portion of the QOL is quoted herein following:

Is a petition to General Conference, adopted by a special session of the annual conference held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference, legal under the provisions of *BOD* ¶¶ 51, 369.6, 507.5&.6 and 2609.6?

Further, does the exception clause of ¶507.6 quoted above mean that only petitions originating in a regular session of an annual conference that is held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference must be received by the Secretary of the General Conference as timely petitions and presented to the General Conference for action (see the Plan of Organization for the 2019 General Conference, sections IV.D— Secretary of the General Conference and VII.A.7— Committee on Reference) and that a petition developed in a special session of an annual conference such as ours is considered a late petition and may or may not be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and processed or not processed as determined by the Committee on Reference in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference?

The complete text of the QOL is provided herewith as Exhibit 1.

Decision of Law Tendered

As provided in ¶2609.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* Bishop Stanovsky provided her Decision of Law (DOL) within thirty days of the close of the special session, and a copy of her DOL is provided herewith as Exhibit 2.

Secretary of the General Conference Opinion Stated

On or about 10Dec19 by telephone Gary Graves, the Secretary of the General Conference, stated to Lonnie D. Brooks that it is his opinion that “the phrase ‘an annual conference session’ might be intended to apply only to a regular session of the annual conference that is held late, and it would not, therefore, apply to a special session of an annual conference, regardless of when it is held.” This conversation was referenced in Brooks memorandum sent by EMAIL to Rev. Graves on 11Dec19, and a copy of that EMAIL is hereto attached as Exhibit 3.

Alaska Conference Special Session Held on 22Feb20

As provided in Bishop Stanovsky’s call for a special session of the AUMC, the special session was held on 22Feb20 in Anchorage, Alaska, 73 days prior to the opening session of General Conference 2020. The call for the special session is hereto attached as Exhibit 4, and the minutes of the conference, redacted as required by the Judicial Council and appended to Bishop Stanovsky’s Decision of Law, are hereto attached as Exhibit 5.

ARGUMENT OF THE BRIEF

I. Basis for Jurisdiction by the Judicial Council

The Judicial Council has jurisdiction under ¶2609.6.

II. Standing for Submitting a Brief

The current *Rules of Practice and Procedure* (Revised 26Apr19) of the Judicial Council provide in Article V.F. that “Any interested party or other person who wishes to

comment on any matter coming before the Judicial Council may submit a brief.” This brief is submitted by Lonnie D. Brooks who presented the Question of Law and is therefore an interested party in this proceeding.

III. Previous Judicial Council Decisions Bearing on the Issue

Judicial Council Decisions (JCD) 83, 205, 211, 233, 236, 249, 312, 315, 324, 339, 356, 448, 459, 485, 562, 683, 702, 704, 833, 845, 908, 1025, 1120, 1147, 1161, 1230, 1262, and 1378 have a bearing on this case.

IV. Supporting Argument and Information

Limited Scope of the Brief

Bishop Stanovsky’s Decision of Law has adequately disposed of the questions raised in the Question of Law (QOL). No further comment or opinion is expressed herein regarding the first portion of the QOL, and this brief deals on with the second portion on which additional material and argument is offered.

Plain Language of the Text

¶507.6 says the following

¶507.6. If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 230 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference. [Emphasis added]

In the portion of ¶507.6 highlighted above an exception to the normally applicable due date for petitions to be submitted is provided. The provision only applies to petitions that originate in an annual conference, not from any other source, and it applies only to a session of an annual conference that is held within the specified time period of “between

230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.” The primary issue raised in the QOL that is the occasion for this proceeding is whether or not the exception applies to petitions that are approved in a special session of an annual conference or, in the alternative, applies only to petitions that are approved in a regular session.

The plain language of the paragraph requires the former interpretation, which is that the exception applies to any session of an annual conference, without regard to whether the session is a regular or special session. The only modifier to the word “session” in the referenced paragraph is the phrase “annual conference.” Neither the word “regular” nor the word “special” appears in the paragraph.

The Judicial Council has a long history of placing value on the plain language of a portion of the *Book of Discipline* that is at issue in any proceeding. In October 2010 in JCD1161 the Judicial Council said the following:

The decision of law by the Bishop responds to the inquiry about “appropriateness and legality” by affirming the way that the Conference Council on Finance and Administration interpreted the language of the *Discipline* in ¶ 613.8. However, that interpretation rests upon a reading of the text which stretches the law of the church. The *plain language* of ¶613.8 refers to “situations in which budgeted funds, as approved by the annual conference, are inadequate to meet emerging missional needs or unforeseen circumstances.” These words do not contain a reference to the “actual cash receipts” which are cited in Report #2. It is not explicit in ¶613.8 that inadequate performance on the payment of apportionments meets the tests in the *Discipline* for “emerging missional needs or unforeseen circumstances.” In fact, by establishing a procedure to handle an inadequate flow of “actual cash receipts,” Report #2 and the action to adopt it by the annual conference are declaring them to be foreseeable circumstances.

The Bishop’s decision of law in affirming the interpretation of ¶ 613.8 by CFA is incorrect in that it adopts an incorrect reading of the *Discipline*.
[Emphasis added]

The Judicial Council similarly and consistently also applied the same principle of “plain language” in JCDs 236, 908, and 1025 indicating that interpreters of the *Discipline* are not permitted to read into the text language that is not there in order to render an interpretation they favor.

It is also important to note that the language of the text does not provide the Secretary of the General Conference with discretionary authority. ¶507.6 says, “Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted...” where the operative word is “shall.” That is mandatory language. When the necessary conditions are met, the Secretary, and others involved in the petition process, must grant the exception, according to the plain language of the text.

Legislative History of the Text

The Judicial Council has a long and consistent history of placing value on the legislative history of any text on which the Judicial Council is required to make a decision as to the text’s meaning, application, or effect. A recent example of how legislative history has been used by the Judicial Council in its work is found in JCD1378. In that decision the Judicial Council said the following:

Primary evidence of General Conference’s intent is the text of the legislation—its language, meaning, structure, and purpose. Indicative of the intent to save the legislation can be a *severability clause*—a provision stating that, if a portion of the act is ruled unconstitutional, the remaining part will be effective. However, the absence of such a clause *per se* does not create the presumption against severability. Secondary evidence is the *legislative history* contained in the official record of the proceedings of General Conference. [Emphasis on legislative history added]

Other examples of the Judicial Council’s reliance on the legislative history as an aide to its interpretation may be found in JCDs 83, 205, 211, 233, 249, 312, 315, 324, 339, 356, 448, 459, 485, 562, 683, 702, 704, 833, 845, 1120, 1147, 1230, and 1262.

A detailed exposition of the legislative history of the text at issue herein is included as Exhibit 6.

It can be seen from an examination of the legislative history of the exception clause, that while the wording has changed slightly over time, and the time window has varied from time to time, the essentials relative to the question before this body have not changed. At no time did the language include a reference either to a regular session of an annual conference or to a special session of an annual conference. Such language would have to be read into the text by an interpreter at any phase of its development.

It is possible that one could argue that the exception clause did not originally specify that it applied only to a regular session of an annual conference because there was no provision for any other kind of session of an annual conference. However, that argument has no merit. A special session of the annual conference has always been an option. In the 1960 *Discipline* that provision is in ¶627, which says in relevant part, the following:

The Bishop, with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents, may call a special session of the Annual Conference.

The current language is the following:

¶603.5 A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or *by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents*. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call. [Emphasis added]

That is remarkable stability for a law in the Church; there has been no change in wording from 1960 to 2016, a period of fifty-six years, the beginning of which predates the formation of The United Methodist Church. There is thus no possibility that the

exception clause was intended to apply only to a regular session but did not include the word “regular” in the language since no other kind of session was conceived as possible.

Answer to the Question of Law

The answer to the first portion of the QOL, as previously stated, is not addressed in this brief, since Bishop Stanovsky’s Decision of Law, Exhibit 2, has disposed of any possible argument that the action of the AUMC was not legal under the UM Constitution and other parts of the *Book of Discipline*.

Further, as a result of the foregoing arguments, there is only one possible answer to the second portion of the QOL, which is that the exception clause of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* applies to any session of an annual conference that is held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference without regard to whether the session is a regular session, a special session called by the bishop, or a special session called by the annual conference.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated, the answer to the second portion of the Question of Law must be that the exception clause of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* applies to any session of an annual conference that is held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference without regard to whether the session is a regular session, a special session called by the bishop, or a special session called by the annual conference. The further necessary implication of that finding is that the petition to General Conference 2020 approved by the 22Feb20 special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference must be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and his designated Petitions Secretary as a timely petition and processed accordingly. Additionally the Committee on Reference of the General

Conference, as provided in Rule VII.A.7)(a) of the Plan of Organization, must “refer the same to the appropriate legislative committees.”

RELIEF REQUESTED

The Judicial Council should declare that the petition approved by the Alaska United Methodist Conference and forwarded to the Petitions Secretary of General Conference 2020 must be received as a timely petition in keeping with a proper reading of ¶507.6 and processed accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,



Lonnie D. Brooks, Member
St. John United Methodist Church
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Anchorage AK 99504-3683
Phone 907-333-4529
FAX 907-332-1400
Cell 915-491-7646
EMAIL: lonnieinalaska@gmail

EXHIBIT 1

QUESTION OF LAW CONCERNING THE MEANING, APPLICATION, AND EFFECT OF
¶507.6

22 February 2020

Bishop, as authorized in ¶¶51 and 2609.6, I present you with a Question of Law concerning the meaning, application, and effect of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*. The portion of ¶507.6 that is the subject of my Question of Law is the portion that says the following:

¶507.6...Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.

This special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference is being held on Saturday, 22Feb20, which is 73 days prior to the scheduled 05May20 opening session of General Conference 2020, well within the time period identified in the quoted portion of ¶507.6. We have just adopted a petition intended for General Conference 2020, and it is important for us to know how our petition will be received and processed by the Secretary of the General Conference, who has said that it is his interpretation of the exception clause of ¶507.6 that it applies only to petitions developed in regular sessions of annual conferences that are held late and therefore does not apply to petitions developed in special sessions.

My question to you then is the following:

Is a petition to General Conference, adopted by a special session of the annual conference held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference, legal under the provisions of *BOD* ¶¶ 51, 369.6, 507.5&.6 and 2609.6?

Further, does the exception clause of ¶507.6 quoted above mean that only petitions originating in a regular session of an annual conference that is held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference must be received by the Secretary of the General Conference as timely petitions and presented to the General Conference for action (see the Plan of Organization for the 2019 General Conference, sections IV.D— Secretary of the General Conference and VII.A.7— Committee on Reference) and that a petition developed in a special session of an annual conference such as ours is considered a late petition and may or may not be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and processed or not processed as determined by the Committee on Reference in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference?

Respectfully submitted,



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EXHIBIT 2

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH RESPONSE TO A QUESTION OF LAW SUBMITTED BY LONNIE D. BROOKS, LAY MEMBER DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE ALASKA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH FEBRUARY 22, 2020

Elaine J. W. Stanovsky, Resident Bishop, Greater Northwest Area, including Alaska

Facts

During a special session of the Alaska United Methodist Conference, called according to the provisions of the *Book of Discipline*, ¶¶ 369.9 and 603.5, Rev. Andy Bartel, chair of the Conference Leadership Team, moved that the Alaska United Methodist Conference petition the 2020 General Conference to discontinue the missionary conference status of the Conference (attachment 1). The motion was approved. Mr. Lonnie D. Brooks, a lay member of the Conference, then presented in writing and read aloud a question of law in two parts regarding the meaning, application and effect of ¶ 507.6 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (attachment 2).

Paragraph 507.5 states, “Petitions [to a General Conference] must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 230 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.”

Paragraph 507.6 states, “Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.”

Appropriateness of the Question

Paragraph 51, *Article VII* of the constitution states that “A bishop presiding over an annual...conference shall decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session, provided that such questions be presented in writing and that the decisions be recorded in the journal of the conference.” Judicial Council Decision 33 establishes the precedent that “requests for rulings by a Bishop in an Annual Conference...should not include moot or hypothetical questions,” but “be based upon some action taken or proposed to be taken, wherein under the specific facts in each case some doubt may have arisen as to the legality of the action taken or proposed.” The question of law is not moot or hypothetical. It is based upon, and was presented immediately following, the Conference’s adoption of a General Conference petition less than 230 but more than 45 days prior to the opening of the 2020 General Conference (attachment 3). In his question of law Mr. Brooks reports that Gary Graves, Secretary of the General Conference, interpreted ¶ 507.6 to Mr. Brooks as allowing only petitions developed in a regular session of an annual conference that is held after the deadline, and does not apply to petitions developed in a special session of an annual conference (attachment 4). This interpretation raised “doubt as to the legality of the action... proposed” in Rev. Bartel’s motion, prompting the question of law. Mr. Brooks’ question of law meets the standards established in Judicial Council Decision 33.

Question, Part 1 -- Legality

“Is a petition to General Conference, adopted by a special session of the annual conference held between 230 and 45 days of the opening of a General Conference, legal under the provisions of *The Book of Discipline* ¶¶ 51, 369.6, 507.5, 507.6 and 2609.6?”

Ruling

Paragraph 51 establishes the constitutional duty of a bishop presiding over an annual conference “to decide all questions of law coming before the bishop in the regular business of a session. The question was properly put before the bishop in writing and recorded in the journal of the conference.

Paragraph 369.6 prescribes the conditions for holding a special session of the annual conference. The question of law was presented at a special session of an annual conference, called in compliance with the conditions set forth.

Paragraph 507.5 establishes the deadline and conditions for submitting petitions to General Conference.

Paragraph 507.6 states that, “Exceptions to the time limitations *shall* be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.” It does not specify that petitions originating from a special session of an annual conference should be treated differently than those originating from a regular session.

No provision in the *Book of Discipline* differentiates between the legality, authority or treatment of actions taken by an annual conference in a regular session of an annual conference and those taken in a special session. There is no disciplinary foundation for treating a petition originating from a special session of an annual conference differently than one originating from a regular session of an annual conference.

A petition adopted by a special session of an annual conference meeting between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the general conference is legal under the exception to time limitations provided in ¶507.6.

Question, Part 2 – The right of a petition to be heard by the General Conference

“Is a petition developed in a special session of an annual conference meeting between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the general conference considered a late petition that may or may not be received by the Secretary of the General Conference and processed or not processed as determined by the Committee on Reference in consultation with the Secretary of the General Conference?”

Ruling

A petition to General Conference originating at a special session of an annual conference held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference shall be granted an exception to the time limitations as provided in ¶507.6. It’s consideration by the

General Conference is not subject to the discretion of the Committee on Reference. Such a petition shall be given the same right of consideration by the general conference as any petition originating at a regular session of an annual conference.

Subject: PETITION DUE DATE EXCEPTIONS

From: LONNIE D BROOKS <lonnieinalaska@gmail.com>

Date: 12/11/2019, 3:04 PM

To: ANDY BARTEL <revandybartel@gmail.com>, CARLO RAPANUT <carlorapanut@gmail.com>, "ELAINE J.W. STANOVSKY" <bishop@greaternw.org>, "ELAINE J.W. STANOVSKY" <elainejws@comcast.net>, EMILY RIPLEY CARROLL <egrcarroll@gmail.com>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <ggraves@gcfa.org>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <ggraves@umcgc.org>, "GARY W. GRAVES" <gwg85@earthlink.net>, STEPHANIE DECKARD HENRY <stephjdhenry@gmail.com>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 11DEC19

TO: GARY GRAVES

FM: LONNIE BROOKS

CY: ANDY BARTEL

EMILY CARROLL

STEPHANIE HENRY

CARLO RAPANUT

ELAINE STANOVSKY

SJ: Petition Due Date Exceptions

Thanks very much for agreeing to research the history of the exception clause of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline*, which says the following:

QUOTE

Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference

END QUOTE

The two most salient parts of that provision that seem relevant to the question we are raising are the use of the word "shall" and the unqualified use of the phrase, "an annual conference session." The language "shall be granted" does not give any discretionary authority to the secretary of the General Conference, to the Committee on Reference, or to the Commission on the General Conference. That language is mandatory, if the conditions to follow are met. And the only condition to be met is that it applies for "an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference."

You have suggested that the phrase "an annual conference session" might be intended to apply only to a regular session of the annual conference that is held late, and it would not, therefore, apply to a special session of an annual conference, regardless of when it is held.

For that suggestion to be true, its support has to lie somewhere other than in the plain language of the exception, which says nothing whatsoever about either a regular session or a special session. The only modifier to the word "session" in the second line of the language before us is "annual conference."

On the chance that the history of the exception language might lend some support to the possibility you have expressed, I did the research to discover how the exception has been worded through the years, and my results are shown on the attachment. While the wording has changed slightly over time, and the time window has varied from time to time, the essentials relative to the question before us have not changed. At no time did the language include a reference either to a regular session of the annual conference or to a special session of the annual conference.

You might consider it to be relevant to the issue as to whether or not a special session was an option when the language was introduced. The answer is that a special session of the annual conference has always been an option. In the 1960 *Discipline* that provision is in ¶1627, which says in relevant part, the following:

QUOTE

The Bishop, with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents, may call a special session of the Annual Conference.

END QUOTE

The current language is the following:

QUOTE

¶1603.5 A special session of the annual conference may be held at such time and in such place as shall have been determined by the annual conference after consultation with the bishop, or by the bishop with the concurrence of three-fourths of the district superintendents. A special session of the annual conference shall have only such powers as are stated in the call.

END QUOTE

With respect to a special session of an annual conference initiated by the bishop, there is no change in wording from 1960 to 2016, a period of fifty-six years, the beginning of which predates the formation of The United Methodist Church. That's remarkable stability for a law in our Church.

I believe, based on the research I've done, that if the Alaska Conference holds a special session sometime prior to 21Mar20, which is the forty-fifth day prior to when GC20 convenes, then any

petition it submits to GC20 must be received as a timely petition in accordance with the plain language of ¶507.6 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* and thus must be entered as expeditiously as possible into the process, including assignment to a legislative committee. The role, if any, of the Committee on Reference will be to determine to which LC the petition ought to be assigned, not whether or not it will be accepted, unless there are some irregularities found in its format.

Thanks for your attention to our problems.

Regards,

Lonnie

— Attachments: —

GENESIS OF PETITION EXCEPTION.pdf

50.3 KB



TO: Lay and Clergy Members of the Alaska United Methodist Conference
Secretary of the Alaska United Methodist Conference

FROM: Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky, residential bishop of the Alaska Conference

RE: Special Session of the Alaska Annual Conference

Grace and peace to you in this new year, and the season of Epiphany, when, especially in Alaska, we notice and celebrate the return of light as earth shifts again and turns toward the sun. May the light of the love of Christ shine in your hearts to lighten thick darkness of a long winter.

Call to Special Session of Alaska Annual Conference

I hereby call a special session of the Alaska Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, a missionary conference,ⁱ according to the provisions of ¶ 603.5 of *The Book of Discipline 2016 (BOD)*. This special session is being called in consultation with, and the consent of the Conference Superintendent, Rev. Carlo Rapanut, and the Leadership Team of the Conference.

Where and When?

The special session will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2020 beginning at 10:00 am Alaska Time at the Alaska Conference office, 1660 Patterson Street, Anchorage, AK. Anticipated adjournment is no later than 2:00 pm. This is the day following the Winter Rendezvous meetings, which have been rescheduled for February 20-21.

Why?

The purpose of this special session of the Alaska Conference shall be limited to receiving and acting upon two recommendations from the Leadership Team of the Alaska Conference regarding the future of the Alaska Conference:

1. To petition the 2020 General Conference to discontinue the missionary conference status of the Alaska United Methodist Conference.
2. To petition the 2020 Western Jurisdictional Conference to fulfill its responsibility to adjust conference boundaries within the Western Jurisdiction in order to provide affiliation and oversight for the ministries of the Alaska Conference.ⁱⁱ

Who?

Lay members or alternates “who were last seated in the annual conference, shall be seated in a special session of the annual conference when convened.” If the last seated lay member or alternate is unable to be present, another lay member may be elected by the charge conference.ⁱⁱⁱ If it is necessary for your church to elect a new lay member, please notify Rev. Rapanut immediately to schedule a special charge conference in time for the newly elected member to be present.

Clergy members of the special session shall include clergy members of the Alaska Conference and those in affiliated relationship with the Alaska Conference and eligible at the time of the special session (¶ 586).

Members of the annual conference must be present to vote.

How can I Prepare?

To ensure that members of Annual Conference come to the Special Session well-informed to make these important decisions, the conference office will provide background materials and schedule opportunities for face-to-face and Zoom information sessions. They will also provide registration information.

As we prepare for this important decision in the life, ministry and mission of the people called Methodists in Alaska, may we be reminded of the story of the Magi, who after experiencing the Christ Child and careful discernment of their call in the current situation, were willing to be led by God to continue their journey “by another road”.



Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky

ⁱ *The Book of Discipline, 2016, (BOD)* ¶¶ 585-588.

ⁱⁱ *BOD* ¶27.4. Note also the responsibility the jurisdictional College of Bishops in ¶48 to “arrange the plan of episcopal supervision of the annual conferences, missionary conferences, and missions within their respective territories.

ⁱⁱⁱ *BOD* ¶ 251.2, ¶ 602.5.

EXHIBIT 5

**Alaska United Methodist Conference
Special Called Session
AUMC Conference Center
1660 Patterson St., Anchorage
February 22, 2020**

...

Report of Leadership Team

Andy Bartel, Chair

Good morning, my name is Andy Bartel and I am appointed to serve St John Anchorage and I also am privileged to serve as the Leadership Team Chair of the Alaska Conference. ...

With gratitude to the Future Visions Task Force for their excellent work, the Leadership Team moves the petition #1 printed on blue paper before you, and is asking you, the Annual Conference to pass the petition.

Petition #1: AUMC Petition for Change of Status

...

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of 2020 discontinues the missionary conference status of the AUMC which discontinuance will be effective at the close of the next Western Jurisdictional Conference, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT IN THIS ACTION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE honors the authority and responsibility of the Western Jurisdiction to determine the number, names and boundaries of the annual conferences in the jurisdiction as provided in ¶¶27.4 and 40 and that the Western Jurisdiction is at liberty to respond to this action of the General Conference at the next jurisdictional conference so as to establish boundaries that include Alaska within another annual conference of the jurisdiction as the next step in continuing United Methodist mission and ministry in Alaska.

...

**Results: Yes: 49; No: 1, Abstain: 2
Petition 1 is adopted.**

...

Question of Law from Lonnie Brooks, Lay Member St. John

QUESTION OF LAW CONCERNING THE MEANING, APPLICATION, AND EFFECT OF ¶507.6

The Question of Law was presented by Lonnie Brooks to the Bishop in writing and read orally to the Conference. The Question of Law and the Bishop's Decision of Law are both submitted herewith as separate documents and included herein by reference.

EXHIBIT 6

GENESIS OF PETITION DUE DATE EXCEPTION CLAUSE

YEAR	¶	LANGUAGE
2016	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 230 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
2012	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 210 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
2008	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 210 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
2004	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 180 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
2000	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 150 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
1996	507.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 150 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
1992	608.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held within forty-five days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
1988	608.6	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held within forty-five days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
1984	608.5	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held within forty-five days prior to the opening session of the General Conference
1980	607.5	Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held within forty-five days prior to the opening session of the General Conference

- 1976 609 Any organization, minister, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a signed petition in duplicate indicating that the petitioner is a member of a local church, a member of an Annual Conference, or is a United Methodist-elected agency or organization. Petitions shall be in the hands of the secretary of the General Conference no later than forty-five days prior to the opening day of the conference session; provided that this shall not apply to any Annual Conference outside the United States nor to any Annual Conference which meets within the forty-five day period.
- 1972 609 Any organization, minister, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a signed petition addressed to the members of the General Conference stating the local church of which each signer is a member. It is recommended that each petition meet the following requirements: (1) three copies of it shall be supplied to the secretary in time to be received by him not later than thirty days before the opening day of the conference session, except that the thirty day rule shall not apply in the case of Annual Conferences outside the United States or to Annual Conferences which meet less than thirty days prior to the opening day of the conference.
- 1968 609 Any organization, minister, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a signed petition addressed to the members of the General Conference stating the local church of which each signer is a member. It is recommended that each petition meet the following requirements: (1) three copies of it shall be supplied to the secretary in time to be received by him not later than thirty days before the opening day of the conference session, except that the thirty day rule shall not apply in the case of Annual Conferences outside the United States or to Annual Conferences which meet less than thirty days prior to the opening day of the conference.
- 1964 510.1&.2 Any organization, minister, or lay member of The Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a memorial, which shall be signed and shall contain information indicating that the sender or senders are members of The Methodist Church. It is recommended that each memorial meet the following requirements: (a) Three copies of it shall be supplied to the secretary in time to be received by him not later than thirty days before the opening day of the conference session...

1960

510 Any organization, minister, or lay member of The Methodist Church may petition the General Conference by sending to the secretary a memorial, which shall be signed and shall contain information indicating that the sender or senders are members of The Methodist Church. It is recommended that each memorial meet the following requirements: (a) Three copies of it shall be supplied to the secretary in time to be received by him not later than the opening day of the conference session...