



# Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



For Immediate Release – Friday, October 26, 2018

## **Statement from the Council of Bishops regarding the Judicial Council Decision**

In service to the delegates of the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference, the Council of Bishops asked for a declaratory decision of the Judicial Council regarding the constitutionality of the three plans contained in the report of the Commission on a Way Forward.

In a unanimous decision, the Judicial Council raised questions regarding petitions in all three plans while finding the One Church Plan, the plan supported by the Council of Bishops, to be most in compliance with the Constitution of The United Methodist Church and the Traditional Plan to have significant constitutional problems. The Judicial Council said that they did not have jurisdiction over the Connectional Conference Plan.

The work is now squarely in the hands of the delegates as they prepare for the limited three-day General Conference.

Bishop Ken Carter, president of the Council of Bishops, Bishop Cynthia Harvey, president-designate, and Bill Waddell, Counsel for the bishops presented at the oral hearing. [Click here to read Bishop Harvey and Bishop Carter's comments.](#)

The proceedings were marked by fairness, respect and civility. Rev. Tom Berlin, Mrs. Pat Miller and Rev. Tom Lambrecht presented on behalf of the Commission on a Way Forward. Archived video from the meeting is available for viewing at [UMC.org/live](http://www.UMC.org/live).

The Council of Bishops wishes to thank the Judicial Council for their work, understanding that it was complicated and complex yet sought to fulfill the mission of the church.

The Judicial Council, the highest judicial body in the church, has jurisdiction to determine the constitutionality of any proposed legislation (Par. 2609.2). [The decision can be read in its fullness by going to link here.](http://www.UMC.org/decisions/78141) [http://www.umc.org/decisions/78141]

Bishop Carter shared “We continue to be guided by two core convictions: We want to help the delegates to do their best work at the Called General Conference, and we are seeking a way forward for the church that “maximizes the presence of the United Methodist witness in as many places in the world as possible, that allows for as much contextual differentiation as possible, and with a desire for as much unity as possible.” (Mission, Vision and Scope of the Way Forward).

The Switzerland-France-North Africa Annual Conference were excellent hosts. “The time spent in Zurich proved fruitful as those representing the church from all parts of the denomination worshipped together, shared meals together and modeled what it means to be the Body of Christ,” said Harvey. The time in Zurich concluded with a communion service led by the Resident Bishop Patrick Streiff.

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