

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MEMORANDUM 1520

IN RE: A Request from the Clergy Session of the New England Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision.

The Judicial Council cannot take jurisdiction in this matter. The question voted on in the Clergy Session was as follows: “Is an appointment to school adequate enough to move forward in the ordination process, if the applicant can show they are ‘bearing fruit’?” This question does not refer to a specific paragraph of the *2020/2024 Book of Discipline* as required by Memorandum 1118 (“The request for a declaratory decision must also make reference to a specific paragraph of the Discipline thought to have been violated.”) The two briefs submitted in this matter attempt to reframe the question in terms of the meaning, application and effect of ¶ 335 in relation to appointments under ¶¶ 416.6 and 326.3. However reasonable that reframing may be, the Judicial Council must address the question as presented and passed by the Clergy Session of the New England Annual Conference. We cannot answer a question that was not asked and cannot decide a question that was not voted on by the annual conference. Since the question asked does not refer to a disciplinary paragraph, it is improper, and we cannot take jurisdiction.

October 16, 2025