

## **Virginia Annual Conference Request for a Declaratory Decision**

Motion for a Request for a Declaratory Decision – 2022 Virginia Annual Conference  
Rev. Rob Vaughn (clergy, Arlington District, Community of Faith UMC)

I move that the Virginia Annual Conference petition the Judicial Council for the following declaratory decisions:

Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the Meaning, Effect and Application of Par. 362.1(e) and Par. 2701.5 and Par. 2704.2 and Par. 2706.5, in determining if, and under what circumstances, the supervisory process can be extended beyond the 90-day limit of Par. 362.1(e), as well as what role a bishop has in facilitating a timely resolution of a complaint, as well as what role a bishop has in bringing about a just resolution after the matter has been referred to the counsel for the church as a judicial complaint, and whether the complainant and respondent and counsel for the church may reach a just resolution without the bishop's involvement.

Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the Meaning, Effect, and Application of Par. 362.1, in determining the permissibility of a bishop, having received a signed written complaint, to solicit a second complaint on the same matter from a different complainant, as well as whether the complaint may be continued even after the original complainant withdraws that complaint.

Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the Meaning, Effect and Application of Par, 362.1, in determining the proper course for remediation when the process outlined in the Book of Discipline is not followed, and whether the annual conference may have some way to intervene along the lines of Judicial Council Memorandum 1189, which states in part, "In instances where appropriate process was not observed, the annual conference should consider taking appropriate steps to resolve any deviation from disciplinary process."

**Interested Parties/Persons**  
**Request for a Declaratory Decision**  
**Virginia Annual Conference – June 17, 2022**

Rev Joshua King [Conf Secy] <joshuaking@vaumc.org>,  
Rev Dr Rob Vaughn [Moved RDD] <drrobvaughn@gmail.com>,  
Bishop Sharma D Lewis [Presiding Bishop] <bishoplewis@vaumc.org>,  
Terri Biggins [Bishop's Exec Asst] <TerriBiggins@vaumc.org>,  
Steven D Brown Esq [Chancellor] <sbrown@islerdare.com>,

**Rev. Joshua King [Virginia Conference Secretary]**

Website: vaumc.org

[joshuaking@vaumc.org](mailto:joshuaking@vaumc.org)

**Rev. Dr. Rob Vaughn [Made motion for Request for Declaratory Decision]**

13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon VA 20171-4034

[drrobvaughn@gmail.com](mailto:drrobvaughn@gmail.com)

**Bishop Sharma D. Lewis [Presiding Bishop]**

Virginia Conference – The United Methodist Church

10330 Staples Mill Road, Glen Allen VA 23060

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Ms. Terri Biggins [Bishop's Executive Assistant]

[TerriBiggins@vaumc.org](mailto:TerriBiggins@vaumc.org)

**Steven D. Brown, Esq. [Chancellor]**

Virginia Conference Chancellor

Isler Dare [Partner], 1111 East Main Street, Suite 1605, Richmond, Virginia 23219

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## Virginia Petition for Declaratory Decision

July 11, 2022

Secretary: Rev. Joshua S. King

NOTE: The motion for petition in the minutes begin on page 22, line 10 of page 48 and concludes on page 28 line 15 of page 48. In addition to these minutes, we have included the link: <https://vimeo.com/726148816/568c5297a8> which is a video recording of this session.





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  
 CONSEJO DE LA JUDICATURA DE LA IGLESIA METODISTA UNIDA



### Petition for Declaratory Decision

This form is to be used by the Secretary of the body authorized to petition the Judicial Council for a ruling in the nature of a declaratory decision as to the constitutionality, meaning, application, or effect of (please check one):

- The Book of Discipline 2016* or any portion thereof (§ 2610.1)
- any act or legislation of a General Conference (§ 2610.1)
- any proposed legislation (§ 2609.2)

Name of body authorized to make a Petition (§ 2610.2): Virginia Annual Conference  
 Date of session: June 17, 2022 (month/day/year) Location: Hampton, VA  
 Name of Secretary: Rev. Joshua S. King  
 Address: 921 W. Country Club Dr. City: Purcellville  
 State/Province: VA ZIP/Postal Code 20132 Country: USA  
 Phone: 703-727-6589 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: JoshuaKing@vaumc.org

To be reviewed (indicate paragraph number, title of legislation and/or act where applicable):

Book of Discipline: 362.1(e), 2701.5, 2704.2, 2706.5, 362.1  
 Legislation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Act of General Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:  Date: June 21, 2022  
 Secretary of the Conference/Body (month/day/year)

**The following must be attached:**

- Text of the written Petition for Declaratory Decision as originally presented
- Minutes of proceedings
- List of names and addresses of interested parties, including eu mail
- Other relevant materials (e.g. conference rules, resolutions, policies, reports)
- Send electronic copy of this form and all materials in PDF and Microsoft Word format to: **secretary@umcjudicialcouncil.org**
- Mail thirteen (13) sets of hard copies to:  
**UMC Judicial Council, c/o LaNella Smith, Assistant to the J.C. Secretary,  
 1215 Shady Lane, Durham, NC 27712**



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 Legislation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Act of General Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Joshua S. King Digitally signed by Joshua S. King  
Date: 2022.06.30 15:37:20 -04'00'  
**Secretary of the Conference/Body**

Date: June 21, 2022  
 (month/day/year)

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Request for a Declaratory Decision  
Virginia Annual Conference – June 17, 2022

Interested Parties:

Rev. Dr. Rob Vaughn  
13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon VA 20171-4034  
[drrobvaughn@gmail.com](mailto:drrobvaughn@gmail.com)

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis  
Virginia Conference – The United Methodist Church  
10330 Staples Mill Road, Glen Allen VA 23060  
[TerriBiggins@vaumc.org](mailto:TerriBiggins@vaumc.org)

Steven D. Brown, Esq.  
Virginia Conference Chancellor  
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Richmond, Virginia 23219  
[sbrown@islerdare.com](mailto:sbrown@islerdare.com)

## **DAILY PROCEEDINGS**

**240<sup>th</sup> Session**

**The Virginia Annual Conference**

**Hampton Roads Convention Center**

**Hampton, Virginia**

**June 16-18, 2022**

Prior to the opening of the Annual Conference, the Cabinet held a Question and Answer session in regards to the District Initiative in Halls B and C. The Virginia Annual Conference opened in the Hampton Roads Convention Center with the Clergy Executive Session in Ballrooms D, E, F and G and the Laity Session in Halls B and C.

**THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 2022**

### **CLERGY EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:27 AM, Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, announced that there were many clergy that still had not yet registered. And so, to keep us orderly, we will postpone the beginning of our session to 11:00 AM. Bishop Lewis called the Clergy Executive Session to order at 11:01 AM. She welcomed the members of the clergy session. Bishop Lewis announced that Rev. Jessie Colwell, Director, Center for Clergy Excellence, will not be able to be with us for family reasons and thanked Rev. Crystal Sygeel, Associate Director for Call and Candidacy, Center for Clergy Excellence, for filling in for her. Bishop Lewis encouraged, in the midst of the disaffiliation and withdrawal of members from The United Methodist Church, that the clergy continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Bishop Lewis announced that we will be having a Jurisdictional Conference this year and that we will have the opportunity to “reaffirm” Rev. Tom Berlin, Floris UMC, Arlington District, as an Episcopal Candidate in the Annual Conference session later this Saturday. Bishop Lewis

recognized those retiring, the incoming classes of ordinands and the Center for Clergy Excellence.

Opening worship was led by the chairs of Orders: Rev. Lyndsie Blakely, Chair, Order of Deacons; Rev. Gary Miller, Chair, Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors; and Rev. Darcey Johnson, Chair, Order of Elders. Music was provided by Rev. Drew Willson. Rev. Johnson shared a message from the scriptures Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 9:1-6, "Preparing to Reaffirm Our Ministry." Rev. Johnson shared a message which reflected upon the meaning of our calling that had begun with baptism. The sign language interpreters for the session were Ms. Elaine Hernandez and Ms. Virginia Bryant. Marshals were Rev. Alan Combs, Full Membership; Rev. Christian White, Provisional Membership; Rev. Brian Johnson, Licensed Local Pastors; Rev. MiKang Kim, Other Fellowship.

Bishop Lewis introduced Rev. Tammy Estep, Chair, Board of Ordained Ministry, to lead us through the Minute Questions. Rev. Estep shared that the candles would remain lit as a reminder of God's presence during our time of Holy Conferencing. She referred to the printed booklet of Minute Questions and the addendum sheet and pointed out the page for submitting corrections. She noted which clergy and lay have voice and vote in the clergy session.

Rev. Estep made the motion for the bar of the clergy session to be set as ballrooms D and E. The motion was seconded and was approved. Rev. Estep moved that staff members for the bishop and from the Center for Clergy Excellence, the sign language interpreters, diaconal ministers, Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, Mr. Michael Wagner-Diggs, professional parliamentarian, and Mr. Steven Brown, Conference Chancellor, be admitted into the clergy session with voice but without vote and to admit our safety officer without voice or vote. The motion was approved.

Rev. Estep led the members in the presentation of the Minute Questions. The entire printed booklet of Minute Questions, with additions and corrections distributed separately, was

presented in an itemized manner. Bishop Lewis asked the historic questions of those persons who were to be ordained. Candidates for commissioning, ordination, recognition of orders and transfer into the conference from other denominations were presented and approved. Persons receiving their first appointment as local pastors in all categories were invited to the platform to be recognized by the members with the following corrections: Elaine Brown was added to the list of those being licensed for the first time not listed in the Minute Questions nor the addendum. Appropriate recognition was given to all persons being received into a new relationship with the Annual Conference at the current session. All retirees were asked to stand and be recognized.

All other Minute Questions were passed with the required majorities as written in the Clergy Session booklet and addendum, with the following corrections: Minute Question 71.a add Justin Hicks; Minute Question 71.b add Carla J. Warnick PL.

Rev. Estep asked the Board of Ordained Ministry to stand and thanked the Board for their work over the past year. She thanked the staff of the Center for Clergy Excellence: Rev. Jessie Colwell, Rev. Crystal Sygeel and Ms. Sherry MacLaughlin. Bishop Lewis closed with remarks from Ecclesiastes 3 and reminded the clergy that there is a time for everything. She recognized the varied responses to the announcement of the launch of the Global Methodist Church. Bishop Lewis asked clergy to allow congregations the space to pray and discern their own futures and she plans to share the same message with the laity later this week. Bishop Lewis announced that many clergy have been recently diagnosed with COVID-19 and lifted them up in prayer.

Bishop Lewis dismissed the Clergy Executive Session at 12:40 PM.

## **THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 2022**

### **LAITY SESSION**

The Laity Session began with gathering music led by the Worship Team from Christ United Methodist Church in Fairfax Station, Alexandria District. The meeting was opened by Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader, at 10:45 AM.

Ms. Stokes welcomed the laity and recognized the District Lay Leaders. After brief announcements, Mr. Abebayo Ogungbade, Ramsey Memorial UMC, Richmond District, offered an opening prayer.

Ms. Stokes introduced the keynote speaker for the Laity Session, Ms. Kay Kotan, a well-known author, coach and consultant. Her presentation focused on the call and mobilization of laity for the future church. Ms. Kotan closed the session with these words from John Wesley and a prayer that it may be so for this current season:

“I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which each person can be unleashed through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions.”

The Christ Church Worship Team sent the laity out with a closing song.

Ms. Stokes dismissed those gathered at 12:05 PM.

The sign language interpreters for this session were Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb and Ms. Amanda Reilly.

## **THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 16, 2022**

### **PLENARY SESSION**

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, called the first plenary of the 240<sup>th</sup> Session of the Virginia Annual Conference to order at 2:05 PM.

Mr. Gerald Ricks, Prince Frederick, Maryland (National City Christian Church) and House Band (Dr. Rod Vester, Winchester, Virginia - Shenandoah University; Jerome Stephens,

Decatur, Georgia - Antioch Lithonia Baptist Church; Antonio Bush, Memphis, Tennessee; Johnny Lindsay Jr., Leesburg, Virginia - Maple Street Baptist Church; Ashley Herring, Atlanta, Georgia - Elizabeth Baptist Church; Tasheina Canty White, Statesboro, Georgia - Magnolia Baptist Church & Mt. Moriah Baptist Church; Lucan James Jr., Marietta, Georgia - Shiloh Seventh Day Adventist Church) led the members and guests in singing the Charles Wesley hymn, "And Are We Yet Alive." This hymn has been sung by persons gathering for holy conferencing since the beginning of the Wesleyan movement. Rev. James B. Godwin Sr., Retired Elder, Rappahannock River District, and Mr. Luke Batarseh, Dulin UMC, Arlington District, opened the Annual Conference in prayer. This was Rev. Godwin's 73<sup>rd</sup> year as a member of the Annual Conference and Mr. Batarseh's first Annual Conference.

Bishop Lewis then led our Conference in a time of worship. She preached a sermon titled, "It's Necessary," that was based on the scripture, John 4:24. If there was ever a time for worship, in all that is happening in our world, that time is now and it is necessary. The liturgists were: Rev. James B. Godwin Sr., Retired Elder, Rappahannock River District; Mr. Luke Batarseh, Dulin UMC, Arlington District; Rev. Donald Williams, Remington UMC, Rappahannock River District; Rev. Sung Yoo, Granbery Memorial UMC, Staunton District.

Bishop Lewis formally welcomed and thanked members of the Annual Conference Planning Committee, and its Chair, Rev. Eric Vaudt, Fox Hill Central UMC, York River District, for their preparatory work. Bishop Lewis shared words of appreciation for the York River District and Mr. Gerald Ricks and the House Band. Bishop Lewis also expressed appreciation to Mr. Neal Wise, Conference Meeting Planner, and Rev. Steven Summers, Director of Connectional Ministries; and to Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Conference Rules Committee, and Mr. Michael Wagner-Diggs, Professional Parliamentarian, for serving as parliamentarians as well as other Rules Committee

members for assisting. Bishop Lewis thanked Rev. Joshua King, Conference Secretary, and Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader.

Bishop Lewis recognized York River and Rappahannock River District Superintendent Rev. Charles Ledlum-Bates who welcomed the assembly to Hampton and the York River District. Rev. Ledlum-Bates introduced Ms. Nancy Yarborough, York River District Lay Leader. He acknowledged the retired Virginia Conference bishops and their spouses: Bishop Ray and Ms. Martha Chamberlain; Bishop C. P. Minnick; Bishop H. Hasbrouck and Ms. Mera Hughes; Bishop Tim and Ms. Melba Whitaker; and Bishop Young Jin and Rev. Kiok Cho. None of the Bishops were able to be present. After recognition, Bishop Lewis prayed for them.

Rev. Ledlum-Bates moved to establish the bar of the conference as consisting of the platform and all seats in the hall with the exception of the first three rows in the front right section and the two sections in the rear right of the hall marked with orange flags and orange tape. Be it further resolved that the technical and camera platforms be considered part of the bar. The motion was approved.

Rev. Ledlum-Bates moved that the agenda be approved as printed on pages six through eight of the *Book of Reports* with the addition of the election of our Episcopal nominee during the Saturday morning session. The motion was approved.

Bishop Lewis recognized Rev. Joshua King, Conference Secretary, who moved the election of Rev. Claire Miller, Bethesda-Patmos Cooperative Parish, Lynchburg District, and Ms. Beverly Myers, as assistant secretaries to the Annual Conference; and Ms. Madeline Pillow White as Editor of the *Journal*. The motion was approved.

Rev. King moved the election of the Annual Conference committees found on page 36, *Book of Reports* and on the Addendum sheet found in the official packet with the following corrections: Alexandria District, replace clergy teller Arum Kim with Mac McKenney;

Danville District, replace lay teller Parson Lutz with Sandra Fulcher; Richmond District, replace clergy teller Linda Ray with Dan Kim. The motion was approved.

Rev. King announced that Meeting Room 204 on the second level of the Convention Center was designated as a Prayer Room throughout the Annual Conference. Meeting Room 203 on the second level of the Convention Center was designated as a chapel where the Eucharist will be celebrated on Friday and Saturday mornings at 7:30 AM.

Rev. King further announced the deadline for requests for items to be removed from the Consent Agenda was set by the Consent Agenda Committee as 4:00 PM, Thursday, June 16. According to Conference Rules, removal of an individual item from the Consent Agenda requires 30 signatures accompanying the request. Motion forms to request removal of items from the Consent Agenda are at the front of the stage and must be returned to the “secretarial inbox” at the corner of the stage by the established deadline.

Rev. King reminded the members to bring to the secretary’s desk a written copy of all motions made from either the podium or the floor or they may be emailed to [Motion@vaumc.org](mailto:Motion@vaumc.org) after the motion has been officially made.

Rev. King also announced that those sitting in a section with yellow tape around it should please wear a mask.

Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader, presented the Laity address to the Annual Conference. Ms. Stokes focused on the word “voice” as she spoke about losing one’s voice, sometimes accidentally and other times on purpose. She quoted Psalm 137 in speaking about the losing of one’s voice to sing. Ms. Stokes reminded the conference about the need to learn a new song together, that we must learn to commit to work with one another despite our differences. Ms. Stokes then sang with the House Band, “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming.”

Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, presented the report of the Rules Committee located on page 37 with recommendations on pages 37-39, *Book of Reports*. These recommendations were debated and were adopted. Mr. Diamond asked for a moment of personal privilege to remind the Conference that Robert's Rules of Order is not the "end all, be all" of how the Church does business.

Rev. Mary Dadisman, Chair, Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW), presented a report on monitoring. Their report can be found on pages 86-87, *Book of Reports*. Rev. Dadisman encouraged the Annual Conference to be the very best we can be and as we holy conference she reminded that "some voices are heard too often, and others go unheard." To help us be aware of those voices going unheard, she shared that COSROW records the demographics of those who speak on the floor of the Annual Conference.

Rev. Denise Bates, Danville and Lynchburg District Superintendent, presented the Report of the Cabinet, pages 40-44, *Book of Reports*. She then presented for election the nominees for District Committees on Ordained Ministry (DCOM), the nominees for members of the District Boards of Church Location and Building and the file labeled Minute Questions 10, 11, and 12 in the official packet. The nominees were elected, as presented.

Rev. Bates presented the remaining sections of Minute Questions 10, 11, and 12, for approval with the following corrections:

MQ 10.A– Indian Church RVA (481597) – Richmond District

MQ 10.J - Charlottesville City Cooperative Parish – First UMC (Charlottesville) (471840), Hinton (471862), establish cooperative parish

MQ 12

Arlington District

Calvary (470504) – add part-time associate position (50%)

Danville District

Upper Franklin Cooperative Parish - Flint Hill (472855), Rehoboth (472890)-  
part-time (50%)

Burnt Chimney (470685) was part of Washington Cooperative Parish, now  
part-time (50%)

Washington Cooperative Parish - Epworth (473291), Halesford (970764) –  
now part-time (75%)

Farmville District

Farmville (474808) - discontinue associate pastor for youth position

Union-Halifax Cooperative Parish - Union (476090), Halifax (473041),  
discontinue cooperative parish

Union (476090) – move to part-time (25%)

Halifax (473041) – move to full-time

Before moving to Section E of Minute Question 10, which deals with the discontinuance or abandonment of local churches, Bishop Lewis announced there will be no disaffiliations at this Annual Conference utilizing Paragraph 2553, *Book of Discipline*. There will be a special called Annual Conference on October 29, 2022 to ratify disaffiliating churches. In addition to the discontinued churches today, there will be the closure of three churches utilizing Paragraph 2549.3, *Book of Discipline*, “Disposition of Property of a Closed Local Church.” Bishop Lewis asked clergy not to pressure congregations to leave The United Methodist Church nor for laity to encourage clergy to leave The United Methodist Church.

Rev. Sarah Calvert, Arlington District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Community United Methodist Church on the Arlington District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022, and the title to all the real and personal, tangible, intangible property of the local church shall be transferred to the Arlington District Board of Trustees and that the membership of Community United Methodist Church be transferred to Clarendon United Methodist Church except for each member who should direct his/her membership be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Denise Bates, Danville District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Meadow UMC on the Danville District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Danville District Board of Missions, a nonstock corporation, and that the membership of Meadow UMC on the Danville District be transferred to Salem United Methodist Church, Patrick Springs, except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Denise Bates, Danville District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Oyler's Chapel UMC on the Danville District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022, and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Danville District Board of Missions, a*

*nonstock corporation, and that the membership of Oylers Chapel UMC on the Danville District be transferred to Burnt Chimney UMC, except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Charles Ledlum-Bates, Rappahannock District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Salem United Methodist Church on the Rappahannock River District be discontinued effective 30 June 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church, Rappahannock River District and that the membership of Salem United Methodist Church on the Rappahannock River District be transferred to Regester Chapel United Methodist Church except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Charles Ledlum-Bates, Rappahannock District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Asbury United Methodist Church on the Rappahannock River District be discontinued effective 30 June 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church, Rappahannock River District and that the membership of Asbury United Methodist Church on the Rappahannock River District be transferred to White Stone United Methodist Church except for each*

*member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Hyo Lee, Richmond District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Brookland UMC on the Richmond District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Board of Missions of the Richmond District Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church, a nonstock corporation, and that the membership of Brookland UMC on the Richmond District be transferred to Lakeside UMC, Richmond District, except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Doug Forrester, Staunton District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Basic UMC on the Staunton District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Staunton District Trustees, and that the membership of Basic UMC on the Staunton District be transferred to Glovier Memorial UMC, except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church, be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Doug Forrester, Staunton District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that Goshen UMC on the Staunton District be discontinued effective June 30, 2022 and that all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church be transferred to the Staunton District Trustees, and that the membership of Goshen UMC on the Staunton District be transferred to St. Paul's UMC (Craigsville), except for each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church, be transferred to that church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Bates prayed over the churches being discontinued. She gave thanks to God for the ministry they had provided and extended the hope that the influence of their discipleship would be experienced in new places, among new people.

Rev. Bates then brought forth those local churches who have engaged faithfully in a process to exit the denomination and are now requesting the Annual Conference approve their departure through Paragraph 2549.3, *Book of Discipline*.

After questions were answered, Rev. Hyo Lee, Charlottesville District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that (i) Etlan United Methodist Church on the Charlottesville District be discontinued effective as of March 15, 2022, (ii) the transfer of all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church to the Virginia Annual Conference Board of Trustees, and the further disposition of such property by the Conference Trustees, be approved, (iii) the membership of Etlan United Methodist Church on the Charlottesville District be transferred to Oak Grove United Methodist Church, except as to each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church, in which case such membership be transferred to that other church, and (iv) as a result of the foregoing, the connectional relationship of the*

*church body represented by Etlan United Methodist Church be severed from The United Methodist Church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Seonyoung Kim, Eastern Shore District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that (i) Drummondtown United Methodist Church on the Eastern Shore District be discontinued effective as of May 10, 2022, (ii) the transfer of all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church to the Virginia Annual Conference Board of Trustees, and the further disposition of such property by the Conference Trustees, be approved, (iii) the membership of Drummondtown United Methodist Church on the Eastern Shore District be transferred to St. John's United Methodist Church, except as to each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church, in which case such membership be transferred to that other church, and (iv) as a result of the foregoing, the connectional relationship of the church body represented by Drummondtown United Methodist Church be severed from The United Methodist Church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Jay Carey, Farmville District Superintendent, moved the following:

*Be it resolved that (i) Lebanon United Methodist Church on the Farmville District be discontinued effective as of November 29, 2021, (ii) the transfer of all property, real and personal, tangible and intangible of the church to the Virginia Annual Conference Board of Trustees, and the further disposition of such property by the Conference Trustees, be approved, (iii) the membership of Lebanon United Methodist Church on the Farmville District be transferred to Charlotte Courthouse*

*United Methodist Church, except as to each member who directs his/her membership be transferred to another church, in which case such membership be transferred to that other church, and (iv) as a result of the foregoing, the connectional relationship of the church body represented by Lebanon United Methodist Church be severed from The United Methodist Church.*

The motion was approved.

Rev. Bates offered prayer for these congregations that they may continue to be beacons of light in ministry.

She moved the approval of Minutes Questions 10-12. The motion was approved.

Rev. Bates then introduced and presented the District Initiative Report. This initiative began with the invitation of Bishop Lewis in Fall of 2021, to develop teams within their bi-districts that would set up the frameworks for these new districts that would be more contextual to the communities they serve. Each of the new proposed districts were invited to share their name and purpose.

Rev. Sarah Calvert, Alexandria and Arlington District Superintendent, Ms. Karen McElfish, District Lay Leader, Arlington District, and Mr. John Meeuwissen, District Lay Leader, Alexandria District; shared their proposed name, "Northern Virginia District." They will be carrying out their purpose by staying calm and focusing on the mission of the church.

Rev. Hyo Lee, Charlottesville and Richmond District Superintendent, Ms. Susan Custer and Elizabeth Farrell, District Lay Leaders, Richmond District, and Ms. Dian McNaught, Mr. Bill Stead, Ms. Linda Stead, and Mr. John Glass, District Lay Leaders, Charlottesville District; shared their proposed name, "Three Notch'd District." Their name comes from a road used by Native Americans that has been located in their districts since 1742. Their purpose is to

support the existing local churches, developing new paths for discipleship, and to plant and create new congregations.

Rev. Denise Bates, Danville and Lynchburg District Superintendent, Ms. Robin Humlan, District Lay Leader, Danville District, and Ms. Susan White, District Lay Leader, Lynchburg District, shared their proposed name, "Mountain View District." Their purpose is to bring together the many gifts based on 1 Corinthians 12:4a-10b to see all the neighbors and share God's love.

Rev. Seonyoung Kim, Eastern Shore and Elizabeth River District Superintendent, Ms. Jennifer Hume, District Lay Leader, Eastern Shore District, and Ms. Jane Kernutt, District Lay Leader, Elizabeth River District, shared their proposed name, "Coastal Virginia District." Their purpose, based on Colossians 3:17, is to be able together to reach out to others more effectively and efficiently for the glory of God.

Rev. Jay Carey, James River and Farmville District Superintendent, Mr. Jerry Fuss and Mr. Keith Jordan, District Lay Leaders, James River District, and Ms. Geraldine Sanderson, District Lay Leader, Farmville District, shared their proposed name, "Living Waters District." As water flows into and out of this district, the mission of the Living Waters District is to embrace, empower, and inspire all congregations in our area to embody the love of God in Christ Jesus by offering the living water of Christ to everyone, based on John 7:37-38. We too are called to flow out the love of Jesus.

Rev. Victor Gomez, Harrisonburg and Winchester District Superintendent, Mr. Andy Harbick, District Lay Leader, Harrisonburg District, and Ms. Wilma Jennings, District Lay Leader, Winchester District, shared their proposed name, "Shenandoah River District." Their purpose is to be alive in Christ through ministries of connection, empowerment, and transformation.

Rev. Charles Ledlum-Bates, Rappahannock River and York River District Superintendent, Ms. Judy Craun, District Lay Leader, Rappahannock River District, and Mr. David Berry, District Lay Leader, York River District, shared their proposed name, "Mission Rivers District." Their purpose is to discover, develop, and employ fervent partnership opportunities among our communities, laity, and clergy. This purpose is grounded in Isaiah 43:18-19, "Behold I am doing a new thing."

Rev. Doug Forrester, Roanoke and Staunton District Superintendent, and Mr. Larry Creamer, District Lay Leader, Staunton District, shared their proposed name, "Valley Ridge District." Their purpose is to unite clergy and laity across mountains and valleys as partners in ministry to demonstrate God's transformational love to our churches, communities, region, and our world. This purpose is based on 1 Corinthians 3:9a, we are God's servants working together.

Rev. Bates moved that the number of districts for the Virginia Conference be set by the Annual Conference to eight (8), effective July 1, 2022. The motion was discussed and debated.

Rev. Andrew Ensz, Director, Arise Campus Ministry, George Mason University, Alexandria District, moved to postpone this matter until 9:15 AM on June 17, 2022. The motion was seconded and approved.

Mr. Dwayne Stinson, Associate Director of Influence, presented two new faith communities beginning on July 1, 2022. From the Alexandria District, under the leadership of Rev. Sarah Calvert, District Superintendent, and Ghana Wesley United Methodist Church, pastored by Rev. Emmanuel Nkrumah, the Hope United Methodist Church will launch. Rev. Samuel Addo-Donkod is the planter.

From the Alexandria District, under the leadership of Rev. Sarah Calvert, District Superintendent, and Syndenstricker United Methodist Church, pastored by Rev. Don Jamison, the satellite campus in Lorton will launch. Rev. Bob Riggles is the planter.

Mr. Stinson offered prayer for the new faith communities and Bishop Lewis greeted the new congregations' leadership.

Bishop Lewis presented the Consent Agenda for approval. Rev. King reported that no items had been removed from the Consent Agenda. Bishop Lewis presented the Consent Agenda, consisting of the following reports (page numbers refer to the *Book of Reports*):

page 119, Bishops' Foundation; page 118, Call to Action Workgroup; page 87, Camp Rainbow Connection; pages 72-81, Campus Ministries/Wesley Foundations; pages 58-59 Church and Society; page 59, Church Development Team; pages 59-60, Communications; pages 125-126, The United Methodist Credit Union, Inc.; page 131, Virginia United Methodist Development Company; page 84, Commission on Disabilities; pages 60-62, Board of Discipleship; pages 87-88 Embrace; page 118, Committee on Episcopacy; pages 85-86, Commission on Ethnic Minority Concerns and Advocacy; page 130 Virginia United Methodist Foundation; pages 88-89, GraceInside; page 67, Heart Havens; pages 71-72 Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries; pages 126-128, Virginia Conference Historical Society; pages 89-90, Joy House RVA; pages 81-82, Board of Laity; pages 63-67, Missional Ministries Board; page 116, Board of Ordained Ministry; pages 67-68, Pinnacle Living; addendum, Preacher's Relief Society; pages 124-125, Retired Clergy Housing Corporation; page 90, Society of St. Andrew; pages 86-87, Commission on Status and Role of Women; pages 118-119, Conference Board of Trustees; page 69, United Methodist Family Services; pages 82-84, United Methodist Men; pages 120-124, United Methodist-related schools; page 84, United Methodist Women (United Women in Faith); pages 91-92, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP); pages 69-70, Virginia

United Methodist Housing Development Corporation; pages 92-93, Wesley Community Service Center; pages 70-71, Wesley Housing.

The Consent Agenda was approved as presented.

Video reports were offered by Pinnacle Living and UMFS. Following the video reports, verbal reports were offered by Mr. Chris Henderson, President & CEO of Pinnacle Living, and Ms. Nancy Toscano, President & CEO of UMFS. Mr. Henderson thanked the Bishop and Cabinet for the time to highlight their ministry. Ms. Toscano thanked the conference and the Bishop for their time and shared about how their support has made a difference in the ministries of UMFS.

Rev. King made the following announcements:

1. Please remove all items from seats in preparation for the evening's worship service at 7:30 PM.
2. The Annual Conference mission offering will be received during the 11:00 AM worship service tomorrow. Credit card donations to the Conference Offering may be made by using the QR code or at the Missional Ministries table in the display hall.
3. The Eucharist will be celebrated on Friday and Saturday Mornings at 7:30 AM in Room 203.

The plenary session recessed for dinner at 5:49 PM.

The sign language interpreters for this session were Ms. Virginia Bryant, Ms. Elaine Hernandez, and Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb.

**THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 16, 2022**

**SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE**

A Service of Remembrance began at 7:30 PM. Worship leader for the service was Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area. Rev. Grace Han, Trinity UMC, Alexandria District, preached on the theme, "There is a Balm in Gilead," based on Jeremiah 8:18-9:1. Her message asked the question, "What does it mean to remember in a season of grief and loss?" and proclaimed, "just as God's presence was a balm for the people of Israel, God's presence is still a balm for us today."

Following the message, Bishop Lewis led the assembly in the Blessing of the Seeds for the families of the deceased. After the blessing Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band sang "There is a Balm".

Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band led the music. The liturgists were: Rev. Ileana Rosario, Benn's UMC, York River District, and Rev. Marcus Stallworth, Mathew's Chapel UMC, York River District. The Acolytes were: Ms. Lily Linthicum, York River District; Mr. Samuel McCown, York River District. Also assisting in the service was Rev. Joshua King, Annual Conference Secretary.

During the service, memorial candles on the worship table were lit and persons stood as Rev. King read the names of clergy, clergy spouses, and the lay members of the Virginia Annual Conference who died during the previous year. Following the reading of the names, a candle was lit in memory of all members of our congregations who have passed away from COVID-19 in the last year. The congregation joined in giving thanks to God for each of these faithful people.

Following the benediction, Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band led the assembly in singing "How Firm a Foundation." The evening session was adjourned at 8:41 PM.

**FRIDAY MORNING, JUNE 17, 2022**

**PLENARY SESSION**

Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band led the conference in “Singing our Faith” at 8:15 AM. Bible Study was led by Rev. Lisa Greenwood, Vice President for Leadership Ministry for the Texas Methodist Foundation, guest of the Virginia Annual Conference. Rev. Greenwood quoted Walter Brueggemann who wrote that “The church has to invite people to think about and experiment with the fact that neighborly relations are not the pursuit of commodity, they are the goal of our life.” She proclaimed the importance of inviting people to entertain an alternate mindset and culture in the church.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, called the Annual Conference to order at 9:08 AM.

Bishop Lewis spoke to the power of prayer. Rev. Kimberly Barker-Brugman, Lawrenceville UMC, Farmville District, then led the annual conference in prayer.

Following the prayer, Ms. Anna Tate, Warrenton UMC, Alexandria District, rose on behalf of the youth delegation and requested a moment of personal privilege. Those speaking were the following: Ms. Lily Linthicum, Bethany UMC – Hampton, York River District; Mr. Luke Batarseh, Dulin UMC, Arlington District; Ms. Madison Crow, Thrasher UMC, Roanoke District; Ms. Emma Megginson, Aldersgate UMC, Charlottesville District; Ms. Danielle Cloud, Fredericksburg UMC, Rappahannock River District; Mr. Jesse Burdette, Craddockville UMC, Eastern Shore District; Mr. Keith Cox, Ebenezer UMC, Roanoke District; Ms. Kayana Cloud, Fredericksburg UMC, Rappahannock River District. Their statement was information as to how long youth have been full members of the Annual Conference, the Virginia Conference’s commitment to youth as leaders, and they also presented Bishop Lewis and Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader, with a shirt and bag. Bishop Lewis then introduced Rev. Nickie Moreno Howard, Associate Director of

Learning. Bishop Lewis offered a prayer giving thanks for the presence and gifts of our youth.

Bishop Lewis then returned to the postponed cabinet motion from the afternoon session of June 16, 2022, "Rev. Bates moved that the number of districts for the Virginia Conference be set by the Annual Conference to eight (8), effective July 1, 2022." This motion was debated. The question was called by Ms. Cindy Martin, Cave Spring UMC, Roanoke District, and was approved. Rev. Bates, Dean of the Cabinet, asked Rev. Charles Ledlum-Bates, Rappahannock River and York River District Superintendent, to pray before the assembly voted on the District Initiative motion. The motion was approved.

Rev. Rob Vaughn, Community of Faith UMC, Arlington District, moved to suspend the rules to return to the Cabinet report to receive a motion. It was seconded. The motion passed by 2/3 vote.

Rev. Vaughn moved that the Virginia Annual Conference petition the Judicial Council for the following declaratory decisions:

- 1) Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the Meaning, Effect and Application of Paragraph 362.1(e) and Paragraph 2701.5 and Paragraph 2704.2 and Paragraph 2706.5, in determining if, and under what circumstances, the supervisory process can be extended beyond the 90-day limit of Paragraph 362.1(e), as well as what role a bishop has in facilitating a timely resolution of a complaint, as well as what role a bishop has in bringing about a just resolution after the matter has been referred to the counsel for the church as a judicial complaint, and whether the complainant and respondent and counsel for the church may reach a just resolution without the bishop's involvement.
- 2) Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the meaning, effect, and application of Paragraph 362.1, in determining the

permissibility of a bishop, having received a signed written complaint, to solicit a second complaint on the same matter from a different complainant, as well as whether the complaint may be continued even after the original complainant withdraws that complaint.

- 3) Request for a Declaratory Decision from the Virginia Annual Conference on the meaning, effect and application of Paragraph 362.1, in determining the proper course for remediation when the process outlined in the Book of Discipline is not followed, and whether the annual conference may have some way to intervene along the lines of Judicial Council Memorandum 1189, which states in part, “In instances where appropriate process were not observed, the annual conference should consider taking appropriate steps to resolve any deviation from disciplinary process.”

After consulting with Mr. Steve Brown, Chancellor, Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, and Mr. Michael Wagner-Diggs, Professional Parliamentarian, (Chancellor and Parliamentarians) Bishop Lewis “ruled that this motion falls outside the purview of this body and is affected by law and we will not be able to hear this motion. So, at this time, I would like to call Rev. Alan Layman, Chair, Minutes Committee.”

Rev. Andrew Ensz, Director, Arise Campus Ministry, George Mason University, Alexandria District, raised a Point of Order “appealing the decision of the chair” and was seconded.

Bishop Lewis ruled, “It is not appealable.”

Another Point of Order was raised by Rev. Ryan Ware, Wesley Chapel-Rock Springs, Danville District. “The Judicial Council [being] that only parliamentary oversight the body has is to appeal the decision of the chair, therefore we need to take a vote as that has been validly brought before the body and seconded.” Bishop Lewis responded that she has not

made a decision that is appealable. She further stated that, “it is a hierarchy issue that law trumps parliamentary procedure.”

Rev. Timothy Barth, Floral Hills-Mount Olivet Cooperative Parish, Danville District, raised a Point of Order, “According to the Book of Discipline this body does have the right to ask for a declaratory decision. There is no law on the books right now. Drew Ensz is not in a court of law. And so, this is a matter for the church to decide. And a matter for this body to discern. And to request a ruling of law, because it is not in the court system.” After consulting with the Chancellor and Parliamentarians, Bishop Lewis ruled, “This is not the business of the Annual Conference.” Bishop Lewis further ruled that she cannot discuss a pending complaint.

Rev. Ensz raised a Point of Order appealing the decision of the Chair and was seconded. In consultation with Chancellor and Parliamentarians, Bishop Lewis ruled again that this is not an appealable decision.

After hearing further requests for Points of Order called out, Bishop Lewis paused the session for a word of prayer. During the prayer, a gathering of people came forward in front of the stage in support of Rev. Vaughn’s motion.

Following the prayer, Rev. Barth called out Point of Order three times with no response from the Chair.

Bishop Lewis stated, “at this time I understand that the group before you is in support. I would like to pray for this group and then ask this group to take a seat. We need to move on.”

Rev. Barth again called out for a Point of Order with no response from the Chair.

Bishop Lewis responded with prayer.

Bishop Lewis requested the gathering in front of the stage to now disperse and requested Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band to play music to change the atmosphere.

Rev. Barth called out Point of Order with no response from the Chair. He further shouted, "You cannot ignore a point of order!"

Rev. Tom Berlin, Floris UMC, Arlington District, appealed to the Bishop to allow the decision to go to Judicial Council,

"Bishop, we're at an important moment here and here's, part of this is it's an issue of of power because it's an issue of how we understand our rules. I believe that Robert's Rules of Order allow all decisions of the chair to be appealed, and I believe a request for declaratory decision or an appeal of the decision that was shared, doesn't have anything to do with the decision of law. And so, having said that, I believe that this is all under the purview of the Annual Conference, because the complaint is in fact in the Annual Conference and Bishop, this is only our only session. So this is the only chance that these people, that Rob gets to bring a motion...(People Applaud) People please don't applaud. (Bishop Lewis: *Please don't applaud.*) Please do not applaud because friends were trying to resolve something. (Bishop Lewis: *Do not applaud.*) OK? And so, if it's not under the purview of the Annual Conference, whose purview is it under? And it's not just under the purview of the Episcopal officer, it's uh, it's of the body. And so, Bishop, the other thing I wanna say is, if this goes on to the Judicial Council, that's all that happens. Either Rob's right or he's not, and all of us trust the Judicial Council. We trust our system, Bishop. And if the Judicial Council says, 'Hey, Rob's points are correct, then we'll make a correction.' And if they say, 'no, Rob, your points are wrong.' We will then understand why, and it'll help this body to understand why. But this has been going on for years now, and this body would like to see some either, 'better understanding' or a 'resolution' and Bishop, none of us has anything to fear. And that's why I'm inviting us, I'm inviting you as the chair, to simply allow this to go to the Judicial Council. Because I think if you do, your credibility will be enhanced, our issues will feel like they've got a

proper place of resolution, and our lovely United Methodist system, which we sometimes complain about, will actually work on our behalf. And that is my request to the chair, is to please allow this to go forward because none of us has anything to fear here, and all of us wants a sense of resolution. And I think this does belong to the body and I think we are in order in a parliamentary sense and I do not understand what your Chancellor and others fear. And Bishop, one last thing, I wasn't gonna stand here. But you said, 'let's pray' and the Holy Spirit brought me to this microphone. And I, I need you as my Bishop and, and as someone I respect, and as a colleague in a ministerial profession, to understand that the Holy Spirit works in that way as well."

Bishop Lewis replied, "And I do agree. Thank you for your comment."

After consulting with the Chancellor and Parliamentarians, Bishop Lewis called for a ten minute recess for further consultation.

Rev. Alphonso Irving, Agape UMC, Winchester District, called for a Point of Order and offered a word of prayer for Bishop Lewis.

Following the prayer, the assembly recessed at 10:31 AM.

Bishop Lewis called the body back to order at 10:41 AM from recess. Bishop Lewis asked the body to be seated, and those that had gathered at the front were invited to remain if they wished. Bishop Lewis explained her position that she believes she is following the *Book of Discipline* as she vowed to uphold it.

"Annual Conference, if we can take a seat for me to share after prayer and consultation. And for you all, if you all would still like to stand right here, you, you can or you can go back to your seat. The one thing, if you can just give me a moment. Just a moment, the one thing that I want this annual conference to know. Whether we agree or disagree, I always want to do the best. And I hope y'all really, I hope

y'all really, really know that. (Clapping ensued) Please, please don't clap. I know you wanna clap, but sometimes try not to clap. I also wanna share with you. But as your Bishop, I do believe, and I took a vow, on July 16th of 2016 to follow the *Book of Discipline*. This denomination has been in a crossroad for years. I also want you to know that the reason why I follow the *Book of Discipline*, like many of you out there that are married. When you take a vow, whether things are good, bad, ugly or indifferent, you don't run from the vow. You stand up. (From the Body: *Amen*) You do. You stand up for the vow. The other thing that I want you all to know, and for the ones who are standing here. You may not believe this, but I know you are passionate, about full inclusion. (From the Body: *No, not what it's about.*) Hold on. Hold on. But what I also want you to know I'm not your enemy. As your Bishop, I'm not your enemy. First of all, I love you. And if you remember, yesterday, I asked you for forgiveness. I asked you for anything that I may have ever said or done that you disagree with, I asked you for forgiveness. So, in prayer and consultation with our parliamentarian and the Chancellor, what I wanna share with you, as your spiritual and temporal leader, I want to again, and before you say anything, just listen to me. I want again to say that I do not believe that the standing in which you have asked, I do not believe that this is properly before the business of the annual conference. But what I would like to do is that Rev. Joshua King, I would like for you to add into the records of what Rev. Vaughn has put before us. I will send Rev. Vaughn's declaratory decision to the Judicial Council, for them to decide on the standing of the three declaratory decisions. Again, what I wanna say to you, this is where we disagree, that I do not feel that this is properly before the business of the annual conference. And we will let our Judicial Council decide. I hope that you all will be in agreement with me, that we will do this. I will do this. They will take my side and look at it as we will have to prepare briefs, also they will look at Rev. Vaughn's. But what I also want to say to you again, I am not your enemy. I just

wanna make sure we do things decent and in order. Amen? And can you please go back to your seats? So that we can continue with the work of our annual conference, and I'm gonna ask Rev. Alan Layman if he will come forward and that you return to your seats.”

Bishop Lewis requested Rev. Alan Layman, Chair, Minutes Committee, to give the Minutes Committee Report. Rev. Layman began his report.

Rev. Rob Vaughn, Community of Faith UMC, Arlington District, raised a Point of Order. “So that the Judicial Council receives it appropriately...A declaratory decision takes a 50% vote for the motion to be put before the Judicial Council. I respectfully ask that we have a vote of the Annual Conference so that it may be rightly before them, then the Judicial Council can decide what is the right way to interpret the questionable sections of the discipline.”

Bishop Lewis ruled that the Point of Order was in order and called for the vote.

The motion to request declaratory decisions was approved and the gathering in front of the stage began to disperse back to their seats.

Bishop Lewis then requested again the report of the Minutes Committee.

Rev. Alan Layman, Chair, Minutes Committee, moved the acceptance of the minutes for yesterday’s Clergy Executive Session, Laity Session, the Plenary Session, and last night’s Service of Remembrance. The minutes were approved.

Mr. Neal Wise, Site Selection Committee, presented the committee’s report located on page 45, *Book of Reports*. The Site Selection Committee recommended the 2025 Annual Conference be held in Roanoke on June 12-14. The recommendation was approved.

Rev. Thomas Durrance, Chair, Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation, presented the report found on the first page of the addendum. The committee on Equitable Compensation recommended that an increase is to be made to the current Minimum

Compensation Schedule for 2023. This would set the Minimum Compensation Schedule for 2023 at \$45,000 for Full Connection Pastors, \$40,500 for Provisional and Associate Members and \$38,000 for Local Pastors. This would also set the Floor Schedule at \$30,000 for Full Connection Pastors, \$27,000 for Provisional and Associate Members, and \$25,000 for Local Pastors. Rev. Durrance moved for the recommendation's approval. Debate ensued. The recommendation was approved.

Rev. Ryan Schaeffer, Ghent UMC, Elizabeth River District, moved to suspend the rules in order to change the standing rule that we may change the number of youth delegates and young adults from two (2) to four (4) per district.

After debate Rev. Ryan Ware, Wesley Chapel-Rock Springs, Danville District, called the question.

Rev. Victor Gomez, Harrisonburg and Winchester District Superintendent, raised a point of order that there was no second nor vote to suspend the rules. Bishop Lewis ruled that there was a second and took a vote to suspend the rules.

The vote to suspend the rules was approved.

Rev. Timothy Barth, Floral Hills-Mount Olivet Cooperative Parish, Danville District, moved to amend the motion to suspend the rules in order to change the standing rule that we may change the number of youth delegates and young adults from two to four per district.

Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, asked for clarification about the ages "as the *Book of Discipline* states that only one youth may be a member from their district per the *Book of Discipline*, and one additional youth member from the conference."

Rev. Schaeffer cleared up the motion as he moved we amend standing rules I.B.3.n in order to change the standing rule that we may change the number of young adults to read "at least three (3) additional youth between the ages of 12 and 18 and at least three (3)

additional young adults between 18 and 30 from each district, to be selected by the District Council on Ministries or equivalent body.” This motion was seconded.

After debate, Rev. Mark Ogren, Retired Elder, Richmond District, called the question. The debate was closed by a vote in approval. The motion was approved.

Bishop Lewis moved us into a time of worship.

The morning session was dismissed at 11:36 AM in preparation for worship.

At 11:47 AM, Rev. Marcela Jarman, Sterling UMC, Arlington District, led us in the call to worship for the Mission Service. The total number of missional kits donated exceeded 18,650, an equivalent of over \$298,724. In addition, a total of 12,611 pounds of food was donated. Preaching were Rev. Kendra Grimes, Chair, Missional Ministries Board, and Rev. Seungsoo (RJ) Jun, Associate Director of Serving. They together shared a message, “Mission is Relational,” based on Mark 2:1-12. In comparison to those who dug through the roof to get their friend to Jesus, it was a message that we need one another in mission together.

Rev. Jim Driscoll, Chaplain, Chesapeake Regional Hospital and Special Assistant to the President of Wesley Theological Seminary, introduced Rev. David McAllister-Wilson, President, Wesley Theological Seminary, who spoke about the fund which the conference offering will be supporting. Rev. Clarence Brown, Chair, Partnerships of Hope, gave thanks to the conference for being able to make this difference through this offering. The 2022 Conference Offering was collected by the ushers and Holy Rollers, cyclists who ride to Annual Conference to raise awareness of the offering. The members of the Annual Conference gave their conference offering to benefit the following ministries: the Doctorate of Ministry Program for chaplains at Wesley Theological Seminary, whose graduates serve to nurture soldiers all over the world and Partnerships of Hope’s leadership

programs in Brazil, Mozambique, Cambodia, other countries, and Native Americans. Bishop Lewis offered a prayer over the offering.

The liturgists were Rev. David Magruder, Zion UMC, York River District; Rev. Marcela Jarman, Sterling UMC, Arlington District; Rev. Evelyn Penn, Bethel-Emmanuel UMC, Rappahannock River District; Ms. Kayana Cloud, Fredericksburg UMC, Rappahannock River District.

The worship service was concluded with a benediction by Rev. Grimes at 12:43 PM.

The plenary session recessed for lunch for one hour at 12:44 PM.

Serving as American Sign Language interpreters this session were Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb, Ms. Elaine Hernandez, and Ms. Virginia Bryant.

#### **FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 17, 2022**

##### **PLENARY SESSION**

At 1:48 PM, Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, called the afternoon plenary session to order.

Ms. Stacey Anthony, President, Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc. (VUMPI) presented the Board's report found on pages 47-55, *Book of Reports*. Ms. Anthony presented five recommendations that began on page 51, *Book of Reports*. The preceding recommendations were presented for approval. There was no discussion. The recommendations were approved.

Rev. Steven Summers, Director of Connectional Ministries, Chair, The Common Table for Church Vitality, presented the report of Common Table, pages 56-57, *Book of Reports*. Rev. Summers encouraged the reading of all the reports that fall under the umbrella of Common Table found on pages 58-93, *Book of Reports*. Rev. Summers stated that the Common Table continues to diligently align the ministry resources of the Annual

Conference with God's vision for us, "to be disciples of Jesus Christ who are lifelong learners who influence others to serve." Rev. Summers stated that though there are a lot of fruitful ministries happening, they are most excited about the 2021 Annual Conference approved full time staff position that is being created. This staff position will work in the areas of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Common Table offers their thanks for those that have participated in the listening sessions around the hiring of this position. Rev. Summers made two recommendations, found on page 57, *Book of Reports*, on behalf of Common Table. After no discussion the recommendations were approved.

Rev. Summers asked Bishop Lewis for a moment of personal privilege. It was granted. Rev. Summers recognized the conference staff retirements of Mr. Bryan Compton, Manager of Technology; Ms. Brenda Capen, Webmaster/Database Manager; and Ms. Beverly Myers, Executive Assistant to the Director of Connectional Ministries; who together have a combined 81.5 years of service to the conference. Bishop Lewis offered a prayer for these staff members retiring.

Ms. Martha Stokes and Rev. Steven Summers, Co-Chairs, Conference Nominations Team, presented their report, pages 93-97, *Book of Reports*, and in the Addendum found in the official packet. Together, they offered for election the nominations to committees, commissions, boards and agencies of the annual conference found on pages 93-97, *Book of Reports* and those listed in the Addendum, and in addition the names James Hill and Cynthia Huber to the Committee on Investigation. The motion was approved without discussion.

Bishop Lewis asked all persons serving in leadership through all conference boards and agencies to stand as they were able. She prayed over the conference leadership and consecrated them for the work before them.

Bishop Lewis introduced a video presentation on behalf of Heart Havens. The video presentation was offered by Ms. Jennifer Boyden, CEO, and Ms. Rebecca Huff, COO. Ms. Boyden shared a verbal report about the ministries of Heart Havens.

Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band led the Annual Conference in Singing Our Faith.

A service celebrating the ministry of clergy who were retiring at the 240<sup>th</sup> Session of the Virginia Annual Conference was held. They were recognized along with their spouses. Rev. Young Je Kim, Melrose UMC, Rappahannock River District, led the congregation in a call to worship to begin the service. Rev. Clarence Brown, Saint Luke's UMC, York River District, delivered a message based on Philippians chapters 2 and 4. Rev. Brown thanked the conference for allowing himself and these retirees to live life and serve alongside the many lives that have been with them and have blessed them. Rev. Brown spoke about the term "Whatever" as a sign of giving in to whatever the other wants. Rev. Brown relates this to the message the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (NRSV) Bishop Lewis greeted the retirees and spouses on stage as statements from the retirees were read.

The liturgists for the service were: Rev. Young Je Kim, Melrose UMC, Rappahannock River District; Rev. Jenny Day, Dayton UMC, Harrisonburg District; Mr. John Fuller, Executive Director, Virginia United Methodist Pensions, Inc.; Rev. Nilse Furtado-Gilliam, Clarendon UMC, Arlington District; Rev. Josh Blakely, Director of Brock Experiences, Longwood University, Farmville District.

The Passing of the Mantle was given from Rev. Sandra Stanley, Deacon Retiree Class of 2022 to Rev. Jonathan Fuller, Deacon Ordinand Class of 2022; and from Rev. B. Failes, Elder Retiree Class of 2022 to Rev. Lauren Wright, Elder Ordinand Class of 2022.

Bishop Lewis introduced Team Jeremiah and the UMC Disaffiliation Team. Bishop Lewis read from Jeremiah 29 and lifted up that God can work through any hardship. Bishop Lewis formed Team Jeremiah to meet and discuss proactive strategies and discuss the effects upon the Virginia Annual Conference in light of the 2020 postponed General Conference.

Bishop Lewis introduced the UMC Disaffiliation Team which was formed to discern and outline the process the conference will utilize from the *Book of Discipline* to assist congregations wishing to disaffiliate from the Annual Conference.

The membership of these two teams can be found in the *Book of Reports*, pages 116-117.

Bishop Lewis prayed for these teams and their work.

Rev. Kathy Gochenour, Chair, Board of Discipleship, presented the Harry Denman Evangelism Awards. The Denman Award is given to persons who are recognized by the Annual Conference for the impact their lives and personal ministry have on those around them. The Laity award recipients this year were a couple in ministry together, Mr. Earl and Ms. Geneice Kemper, Bethel UMC, Alexandria District. Their faithfulness to ministry has been made evident in how they freely share with others about the power of God. This has been most seen in their devotion to caring for a woman with many health, financial and social problems. Mr. Kemper also serves on the Board of Fauquier Community Coalition, a coalition that helps people in sub-par housing. Together they have worked on homes and have influenced others to serve with them as well. There were no nominations for the youth Denman award. The Clergy award was given to Rev. Elizabeth "Betsey" Davis, Journey UMC, Farmville District. Rev. Davis is also the Director of Journey Community Center. Through her leadership there, they have been able to offer many innovative ministries throughout this time of COVID, which included vaccine clinics, free weekly dinner, small groups, and a renovation project to a motel to create short-term housing.

Rev. Gochenour introduced Rev. Tim Hazlett, incoming Chair, Board of Discipleship. Bishop Lewis congratulated each recipient in turn and thanked Rev. Gochenour for her service.

Mr. Brian Christoffersen, Chair, Creation Justice Ministries Team, Board of Church and Society, presented the Green Church award to Ivey Memorial United Methodist Church, James River District, and their pastor, Rev. Anita Mays-Lucord. Accepting this award was Ms. Janice Ganoë. In addition to this award, the Creation Justice Ministries Team presented the first inaugural Sustaining Green Church award to Bethlehem United Methodist Church, Lynchburg District, whose pastor is Rev. David Lord. Accepting this award was Ms. Anne Marie Smith.

Rev. Ryan LaRock, Chair, Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries, presented the Francis Asbury Award. This award goes to someone who has made significant contributions to Higher Education and Campus Ministries within our Conference. Rev. LaRock first recognized last year's award winner, Rev. Justin Allen, former Vice President of Student Life at Shenandoah University, since the Board was unable to do so in-person. This year's award was presented to Rev. Deborah Lewis, Director, Wesley Foundation at The University of Virginia.

Dr. Robert Lindgren, President, Randolph-Macon College, representing United Methodist College Presidents, recognized college presidents and our relationships with them. Our Common Table along with the Board of Ministries will be looking at future ministry opportunities. Because of this, our financial team will be looking at ways over the course of the next ten years to phase out our Virginia Higher Education Fund. Dr. Lindgren shared his great appreciation for the support of the Virginia Conference, and detailed examples of the fruitfulness of this support at numerous schools' campuses.

Bishop Lewis introduced two Relationship Partners via video presentations: Mr. Larry Dickenson, President, Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation, Inc., and Rev. Seungsoo (RJ) Jun, on behalf of Wesley Housing.

Mr. Dickenson mentioned that the Virginia United Methodist Housing Development Corporation provides the needs of low-income Virginians by providing affordable housing. After 47 years since last providing a verbal report to the Annual Conference, they are now a statewide ministry providing affordable housing. They are continuously looking for sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia to develop into affordable housing.

Rev. Jun spoke on behalf of Wesley Housing and President Shelley Murphy. Wesley Housing serves more than 25,000 people in need. They can host 3,200 residents in housing. This has been done because of the work of the churches that support them.

Rev. King, Annual Conference Secretary, made the following announcements:

1. Please remove all items from seats in preparation for the evening's worship.
2. The youth delegation will be receiving an offering for the Youth Service Fund prior to Saturday morning's worship service.
3. The 5K Walk/Run will begin at 6:30 AM. The meeting place for that event will be at Matteson Trail. (320 Butler Farm Rd. Hampton, VA)
4. Morning Eucharist will be celebrated tomorrow morning at 7:30 AM in Room 203.
5. There are graduation ceremonies in the Hampton Coliseum tonight at 7:00 PM and tomorrow at 9:00 AM. Please plan accordingly and use your green parking sheet to help guide parking attendants.

Bishop Lewis recessed the conference at 4:10 PM until Saturday at 9:15 AM for business.

Serving as American Sign Language interpreters for this session were Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb, Ms. Elaine Hernandez, and Ms. Christina York.

**FRIDAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 2022**

**A SERVICE FOR THE ORDERING OF MINISTRY**

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, presided at the Service for the Ordering of Ministry, beginning at 7:35 PM. Bishop Lewis prayed over the classes of 2020 and 2021 as they were not able to have an in-person service before the full Annual Conference for the ordering of ministry in their respective years. Bishop Lewis then called the conference to remember their baptism and be thankful. She delivered the sermon, "The Called," based on Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 42, and Ephesians 4:11-13. She proclaimed a message based upon the three words: Called, Commissioned, Committed. The Class of 2022 responded, "Yes" to the question, "Are you fully committed?"

Bishop Lewis licensed, commissioned, recognized orders, and ordained the 2022 candidates as listed in the worship booklet for the service and in the Business of the Annual Conference. Following the licensing, commissioning, recognition of orders, and ordination of Elders and Deacon, Bishop Lewis invited those feeling led by the Holy Spirit to inquire into christian ministry to come forward and greet her during the special music. The service concluded at 9:41 PM with the dismissal and blessing by Bishop Lewis and Rev. Lyndsie Blakley.

Music for the service was led by Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band.

Virginia Annual Conference members assisting in the service included Ms. Martha Stokes, Conference Lay Leader; Rev. Tammy Estep, Chair, Board of Ordained Ministry; Rev. Jessie Colwell, Director, Center for Clergy Excellence; Rev. Crystal Sygeel, Associate Director for Call and Candidacy, Center for Clergy Excellence; Rev. Darcey Johnson, Chair, Order of Elders; Rev. Lyndsie Blakely, Chair, Order of Deacons; and Rev. Gary Miller, Chair, Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors. The following members of the Board of Ordained Ministry and others served as acolytes, crucifers,

marshals, banner carriers and symbol carriers: Rev. Brian Johnson, Haymarket UMC, Alexandria District; Rev. Jason Stanley, Director of Church Revitalization, Elizabeth River District; Rev. Christian White, Fairlington UMC, Alexandria District; Rev. Sarah Locke, Hickory UMC, Elizabeth River District; Rev. Michelle Kim, Centenary UMC, Lynchburg District; Rev. Clarence Brown, St. Luke's UMC, York River District; Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor, Revitalization Coordinator, Lynchburg District; Rev. Alan Combs, First United Methodist Church (Salem), Roanoke District; Rev. Beth Givens, Haygood UMC, Elizabeth River District; Rev. Janine Howard, Fairlington UMC, Alexandria District; Rev. Sarah Wastella, Crozet UMC, Charlottesville District; Rev. David Edinger, Amelon UMC, Lynchburg District; Rev. Steve Summers, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries; Rev. Jae Song, Red Valley UMC, Danville District; Rev. Esther Agbosu, Bethany UMC, York River District; Rev. Heather Wray, Leesburg UMC, Winchester District; Rev. Nancy Robinson, Christ UMC, Richmond District.

American Sign Language Interpreters were Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb, Ms. Christina York, and Ms. Virginia Bryant.

## **SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 18, 2022**

### **PLENARY SESSION**

"Singing our Faith" was led at 8:15 AM by Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band. Bible Study was led by Rev. Lisa Greenwood. Rev. Greenwood spoke about the liminal season we have found ourselves in from what has ended and what has not yet begun.

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, resident bishop of the Richmond Episcopal Area, called the morning plenary session to order at 9:17 AM.

Rev. Bob Parks, Bethany-Sardis Charge, Charlottesville District, led in prayer.

Bishop Lewis expressed appreciation to those who walked/ran today in the VAUMC 5k. Bishop Lewis recognized and gave praise to the youth cohort. She also gave thanks for Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, members of the Rules Committee, and Mr. Michael Wagner-Diggs, Professional Parliamentarian, for serving as parliamentarians for the morning's session.

Rev. Alan Layman, Chair, Minutes Committee, presented his report. The minutes of the Friday morning plenary session, Friday afternoon plenary session and service for the ordering of ministry were reviewed and corrected. The minutes were approved.

Rev. Layman announced that the Minutes Committee would meet on June 30, 2022 at 10:00 AM to complete the review and certification of the minutes and moved that the minutes be approved as certified. The motion was approved. Rev. Layman named and thanked the Minutes Committee and Rev. Joshua King, Conference Secretary, and Rev. Claire Miller, Assistant Secretary.

Bishop Lewis announced that the Q&A Session for Team Jeremiah will be held as a Zoom webinar within the next 30 days. The date and time will be announced via the Conference Communications.

Mr. David Dommissie, Conference Statistician and Treasurer, presented the report of the statistician, page 98, *Book of Reports*. Mr. Dommissie reported that in the last year there were 1,251 professions of faith, 1,087 baptisms, 43,000 small group participants, 40,000 served in missions, reaching over 1,300,000 people. Financially in this last year, we have seen a total revenue increase of 0.7% in ministry. Collective church financial strength was reported as \$150 million in cash reserves, \$180 million in investments, and \$2.2 billion in real estate.

Mr. Dommissie shared the report of the Treasurer, pages 99-105, *Book of Reports*. There were 850 churches that paid fully their priority one apportionments and a total of 480

churches satisfied their full apportionments. The percentage of the budget collected was more than anticipated with 80.66% received. The Second Mile giving, for ministries around the world, increased this past year by more than 35% as \$1,139,815 was received. The conference finished the year with \$3,451,000 in unrestricted reserves which exceeded the minimum level set by CFA by more than \$1.6 million. Approximately \$1 million of this excess was approved to fund the potential commitment to the Boy Scout Bankruptcy Case by the Annual Conference at the Special Called Annual Conference Session in January 2022. As of this date, the judge in the bankruptcy court has not yet approved the plan. Mr. Dommissie thanked the retiring conference staff, Ms. Bev Myers and Mr. Bryan Compton, "for the years we've worked together," as well as the staff from the Treasurer's office.

Mr. William "Bill" Talley, IV, Chair, Council on Finance and Administration (CFA), recognized his team and then presented the Council's report found on pages 106-115, *Book of Reports*. Mr. Talley presented section one of six found on pages 106-108, *Book of Reports*.

Rev. Joshua McCauley, Director, Wesley Foundation at ODU, Arlington District, moved that we remove \$50,000 from the legal defense fund in order to establish a children and youth fund.

Bishop Lewis ruled that this motion was out of order per Rules II.A.2.

Rev. Andrew Ware, Beech Grove UMC, Elizabeth River District, raised a Point of Order, "If this is a budget neutral request, is it then in order?"

Bishop Lewis deferred to Mr. David Dommissie who answered that this is in fact two changes to the budget and therefore still needed to be reviewed by the CFA.

Rev. Phil Woodson, Springfield UMC, Arlington District, moved that beginning in 2023, the Statistician's report, Treasurer's report, and Council on Finance and Administration Report be presented on the first day of Annual Conference.

Bishop Lewis ruled that this was not properly before the body as it needs to come during unfinished business.

Rev. McCauley moved to suspend the rules in order to move that “we remove \$50,000 from the legal defense fund in order to establish a children and youth fund.”

The motion to suspend the rules did not pass.

Ms. Lori Valentine de Segovia, Main Street UMC, Staunton District, moved that the \$50,000 proposed from the legal fund be considered by the district revisioning process for children/youth to be properly before the next year’s budget is finalized in accordance with the spirit. The motion was seconded.

During the debate, many people stood up pledging money to a youth fund.

Rev. Ware asked for pledges to be placed on the altar table and called the question for the Segovia motion to be voted on. This was approved.

Rev. Don Jamison, Sydenstricker UMC, Arlington District, raised a Point of Order that the Segovia motion is out of order as it is requesting money that breaches our rules as previously ruled.

Bishop Lewis ruled that this was a breach of the rules and ruled the motion out of order.

Mr. David Dommissie, Conference Treasurer, moved that CFA apply any unused funds from the legal expense budget for 2023 to be used for the youth fund.

Ms. Cynthia Huber, Mount Olivet UMC, Arlington District, raised a Point of Order stating that the motion from the conference treasurer was out of order as there was already a motion on the floor.

Bishop Lewis ruled that the previous motion from Ms. Segovia had already been ruled out of order.

Rev. Lisa Nordan, Kenwood UMC, Richmond District, called the question. It was seconded. It was approved by a 2/3 vote.

Rev. McCauley raised a Point of Order, the original intent was to ask for new initiatives, a new line item for conference to use as new initiatives for youth funds.

Bishop Lewis ruled that this was not a Point of Order, but it was taken and asked Rev. Summers to respond, which he did.

Bishop Lewis asked the youth to stand prior to the vote. The motion passed.

Section one of the CFA report was approved.

Mr. Talley then proceeded to report on sections two through six.

Rev. Jonathan Page, Herndon UMC, Arlington District, moved to amend CFA policy 5.K, found on page 115, *Book of Reports*, to read as follows:

“The Annual Conference shall not pay for the legal expenses for local church or district matters such as non-appointed personnel, churches seeking disaffiliation, property issues, etc., nor shall the Annual Conference pay for the legal expenses for the Annual Conference related to complaints held against clergy for performing same gender weddings.”

Bishop Lewis ruled the motion out of order. Bishop Lewis called upon Mr. Steven Brown, Chancellor, to speak as to why. Chancellor Brown stated, “The conference cannot restrict her [Bishop Lewis] ability to protect the conference from liability concerns.”

Mr. Bill Brown, St. Luke’s UMC, Richmond District, called the question to close the debate. The motion was approved by 2/3 vote.

Sections two through six were approved together.

Mr. Talley shared that CFA was asked to support the District Initiative by providing \$110,000 to each district over a three-year period. CFA agreed to do this using the federal

grant from the PPP loan forgiveness as well as a grant from the Southeastern Jurisdiction as the source for these funds.

Mr. Warren Harper, Head Lay Delegate, 2020 General Conference Delegation, nominated Rev. Tom Berlin, Floris UMC, Arlington District, for endorsement by the Annual Conference as a candidate for the episcopacy. Rev. Berlin was endorsed for the office of Bishop by an overwhelming majority vote from the delegation. Mr. Harper shared that Rev. Berlin's biography is on the conference website in the official packet. Mr. Harper introduced Rev. Berlin, who recognized the 2020 Virginia Delegation and asked them to stand. He also requested that the Annual Conference pray for this delegation for wisdom to choose a leader who will lead us in this liminal time to "Make disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

Rev. Sarah Calvert, Arlington and Alexandria District Superintendent, moved that we suspend the Rules in order to vote on the endorsement, by acclamation, of Rev. Tom Berlin as the Virginia Conference's Episcopal Nominee.

The motion to suspend the rules was approved by a 2/3 vote.

Bishop Lewis called for a show of hands to see if the body clearly met the affirmative vote of 60% or more on Rev. Berlin's nomination as the Virginia Conference's Episcopal Nominee.

The nomination was approved by acclamation.

Bishop Lewis prayed for Virginia Conference Episcopal Nominee Rev. Tom Berlin.

Bishop Lewis then opened the floor for unfinished conference business.

Ms. Christiane Roehler, Walker Chapel UMC, Arlington District, moved that the Bishop appoint an advisory group of four to eight lay persons to make recommendations on how the Annual Conference is run with a view to make it more transparent and focused on missions. The members should be nominated by the District Superintendents and be fresh

voices, i.e., who have served at district level or higher at most five years. The term should span to August 2023, and duties should include making recommendations before and a “lessons learnt” report after the 2023 Annual Conference.

Bishop Lewis ruled this motion out of order and called upon Mr. Scott Diamond, Chair, Rules Committee, to speak. Mr. Diamond shared that there are already two bodies that fulfill this requirement. Bishop Lewis called upon Rev. Summers, Chair, Common Table, to respond to the missional aspect of this motion. Rev. Summers stated that the Common Table is the appropriate body to care for this business. He shared that all are welcome to reach out to his office and also requested that everyone share their reflections of the Annual Conference with him.

Rev. Jay Carey, Farmville and James River District Superintendent, asked for a moment of personal privilege to pray for the Franklin family and all our members of the Virginia Conference who are battling COVID-19.

Rev. Rob Vaughn, Community of Faith UMC, Arlington District, presented a resolution for the Virginia Annual Conference’s support of The United Methodist Church’s Social Principle on Abortion.

Whereas, on May 2, 2022 Politico released a leaked draft opinion written by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito that, when it is likely passed, could effectively overturn the judicial precedent of Roe v. Wade (1973) and Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992), and

Whereas, the judicial precedent of Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey established a constitutional right to abortion that countless women have relied on since for safe, proper, and medically sound abortion procedures by certified medical providers, and

Whereas, the United Methodist Church's social principles provides guidance on our denomination's ethical standards regarding abortion, stating: "We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers." (Book of Discipline ¶161.K), and

Whereas, our faith compels us to approach abortion with nuance and care, recognizing that absolute prohibition against abortion is not a moral stance we can support, even if we mourn the realities that lead to abortions -- especially in late-term pregnancies where clear "conflicts of life with life" emerge and,

Whereas, we also affirm from our social principles that "a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel," and that government edict is not a sufficient guide for an incredibly personal, theological, and medical decision such as this, and,

Whereas, abortion is a vital form of healthcare for all persons who have a uterus, whether they intend to give birth or not, and

Whereas, Roe v. Wade emerged in the context of a public health crisis where abortion was so unsafe that 17 percent of all deaths due to pregnancy and childbirth were the result of illegal abortions due to lack of access to medically sound abortion procedures and,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Virginia Annual Conference re-commit to follow our Social Principles when it calls on us to "to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth" and to engage in "ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education, advocacy in regard to

contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe," and,

BE IT RESOLVED that we call upon the governor and general assembly members to preemptively oppose any universal ban on abortion in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Bishop Lewis interrupted the resolution and ruled it out of order as this conference previously had voted to no longer receive resolutions.

Bishop Lewis reminded the conference about the Youth Service Fund Offering at the doors.

Bishop Lewis recessed the conference at 11:27 AM to prepare for worship.

#### CLOSING WORSHIP

Bishop Lewis presided over the closing worship. Rev. Tizzy Von Trapp Walker, Marquis Memorial UMC, Staunton District, taught the congregation American Sign Language for the opening song, "Together We Serve", which was then sung. Rev. Katie Phillips, Vine UMC, Arlington District, led us into worship with the call to worship. The Galilee United Methodist Church liturgical dance team gave a gift of dance. Rev. HeeWon Cho, Korean UMC of Greater Washington, Arlington District, read the scripture passage, Ephesians 2:1-10. Rev. Steven Summers, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries, was introduced by Bishop Lewis. He began by thanking the planning committee, Rev. Eric Vaudt, Chair, Planning Committee, Ms. Beverly Myers, Executive Assistant to the Director of Connectional Ministries and Ms. Terri Biggins, Executive Assistant to the Bishop. He thanked our worship director Mr. Gerald Ricks and House Band, Mr. Neal Wise, Annual Conference Planner, and Bishop Lewis for picking this theme, and expressed thanks for all the conference staff and all those who are behind the scenes making this Annual Conference happen. Rev. Summers titled the message, "From

Mess to Bless.” The theme of this sermon was that the good news of Jesus Christ is always with us no matter the challenges surrounding and within us.

Rev. Summers announced that the spontaneous offering for the youth that was raised was at that time \$66,200. This is an example of moving from Mess to Bless. In addition, the Annual Conference offering is currently over \$125,000.

Rev. Summers concluded in his prayer that we do not get blessed, but rather that we are blessed. And quoted Jesus, “I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face distress, but take courage: I have conquered the world!” Amen.

The liturgists were: Rev. Katie Phillips, Rev. HeeWon Cho, Rev. Jonathan Fuller, Coordinator for Peer Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond District. The Liturgical Dance team was provided by Aysha Conley & Galilee UMC, Rappahannock River District. The sign interpreter for instruction and practice was Rev. Tizzy von Trapp Walker.

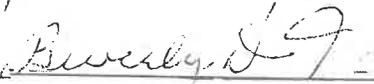
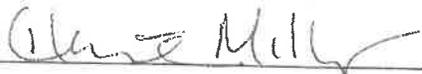
Bishop Lewis announced that the appointment listings can be found on the conference website at [www.vaumc.org/2022appointments](http://www.vaumc.org/2022appointments). Bishop Lewis invited the District Superintendents to present the appointments for their newly formed districts. Bishop Lewis presented the new Coastal Virginia District Superintendent, Rev. Cecelia Brooks. Rev. Seonyoung Kim, Eastern Shore and Elizabeth River District Superintendent, placed a stole on the shoulders of the newly-appointed superintendent Rev. Brooks. The appointments were fixed as presented on the website with the following correction: Rev. Jay Carey, James River District Superintendent, announced Monumental United Methodist Church of the James River District is now “TBS”.

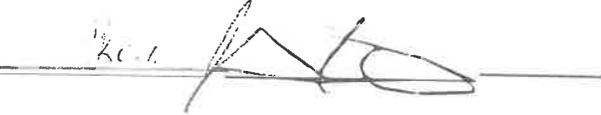
Bishop Lewis anointed with oil the District Superintendents, both new and previous. She further thanked the cabinet for their work.

With the "Sending Forth" by Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, the 240th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference was adjourned at 12:57 PM.

American Sign Language Interpreters were Ms. Lindsey Bomba-Holcomb, Ms. Christina York, and Ms. Virginia Bryant.

We, the undersigned members of the Minutes Committee and Conference Secretaries, have read, corrected, and approve these Daily Proceedings on today's date, June 30, 2022.

 _____ Leticia D. Borden	 _____ Diywon Kim
 _____ P. Alca Cayo	 _____ Sandra S. Stulcher
 _____ Beverly D. G.	 _____ Anne Miller
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	<b>Assistant Secretary</b>

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Conference Secretary