

1024-4 Use of ¶ 2549 for Making Policies for Exit or Separation of Local Churches
The Alabama-West Florida Conference requests a Judicial Council Declaratory Decision regarding the meaning, application, and effect of ¶ 2549 of the *Book of Discipline* as it relates to a policy, process, or method for United Methodist Churches to exit or separate from the denomination.



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): Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

Date of session: June 17, 2024 (month/day/year) Location: FUMC Montgomery, AL

Name of Secretary: Mary Catherine Phillips

Address: 4719 Woodmere Blvd City: Montgomery

State/Province: Alabama ZIP/Postal Code 36106 Country: USA

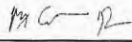
Phone: 334-590-5641 Fax: _____ E-mail: marycatherine@awfumc.org

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

Book of Discipline: Use of Paragraph 2549 for making policies for exit or separation

Legislation: _____

Act of General Conference: _____

Signature:  Digitally signed by Mary Catherine Phillips
Date: 2024.06.20 10:40:32 -05'00'

Secretary of the Conference/Body

Date: June 18, 2024

(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**

Motion: That this body request a Judicial Council Declaratory Decision regarding the meaning, application, and effect of ¶ 2549 of the Book of Discipline as it relates to a policy, process, or method for United Methodist churches to exit or separate from the denomination.

Submitted by Dr. Jeff Wilson on behalf of the Alabama-West Florida Conference cabinet

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE MINUTES
First United Methodist Church Montgomery
Montgomery, Alabama
June 16-19, 2024

Theme: Revive Us Again, *Isaiah 43: 18-19*

MORNING SESSION
Monday, June 17, 2024
Theme: Revive Us Again, *Isaiah 43: 18-19*

OPENING WORSHIP FOR MONDAY

Worship began with the opening hymn "O For A Thousand Tongues" and special music was provided by the Auburn United Methodist Church Choir. The Call to Worship was led by Cathy Givan, Lay Leader of the West Central District. The Scripture Lesson from *Mark 16:15* was proclaimed by Rev. Sharma Lewis, Resident Bishop of the Mississippi Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church. Bishop Lewis preached the sermon titled "Revive." The Closing Prayer was led by Bishop Lawson Bryan, Retired Bishop.

CONFERENCE BUSINESS SESSION

The Alabama-West Florida (AWF) Conference of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church convened its annual business session at First United Methodist Church, Montgomery, Alabama at 10:26 a.m. on June 17, 2024, with Bishop David Graves presiding. It was the 196th annual session since the organization of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, the 192nd annual session since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the 85th annual session since the unification of the three branches of The Methodist Church, the 56th annual session since the merger with the Evangelical United Brethren church to form The United Methodist Church, the 52nd annual session since the merger with the Central Alabama Conference, and the 35th annual session following the establishment of The Alabama-West Florida Episcopal Area.

The session began with gathering music and singing "And Are We Yet Alive" led by Dr. James Seay.

Rev. Jean Tippit, District Superintendent of the Panhandle District, welcomed everyone to the 2024 Annual Conference. Grace Sill, Certified Candidate and member of Cokesbury UMC, offered an opening prayer.

Bishop Graves invited Rev. Jay Cooper, lead pastor at First United Methodist Church Montgomery, who offered words of welcome to FUMC Montgomery. Bishop Graves recognized the team with him on stage helping to lead the business of the General Conference today: Rev.

David Saliba, Conference Parliamentarian; Elizabeth Smithart, Conference Chancellor; Bill Bond, Conference Assistant Chancellor; Mary Catherine Phillips, Conference Secretary; Rev. Ashley Davis, Assistant to the Bishop; and Frank Jenkins, Conference Lay Leader. Bishop Graves thanked Bishop Sharma Lewis for preaching and being with us today.

Bishop Graves called upon Mary Catherine Phillips, Conference Secretary, to explain the monitoring process from the Commission on the Status and Role of Women. She acknowledged and thanked those who are monitoring.

OPENING BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

Setting the “bar” of the conference: Bishop Graves again recognized Mrs. Mary Catherine Phillips, Conference Secretary. Mrs. Phillips set the bar of the conference, composed as those who are clergy and laity members seated on the floor of the FUMC Montgomery Fellowship Hall. Conference approved.

Mrs. Phillips made a motion to use General Conference guidelines for limiting speeches to 3 FOR, 3 AGAINST and limiting length of speeches to 3 minutes each. Motion carried.

Election of assistant secretaries: Mrs. Nicole Walker, Rev. Ashley Wilkinson Meyer, and Rev. Ralph Wooten were nominated as assistant secretaries to the conference. The conference approved.

Approval of the 2023 Conference Journal: Mrs. Phillips moved the approval of the 2023 Journal with corrections, to be adopted as the official record of the 2023 session of the Alabama-West Florida Annual conference. Motion carried.

Approval of the 2024 Attendance as the check-in procedure to compile official attendance through check-in. Motion carried.

Adoption of the 2024 Conference Working Agenda: An updated copy of the working agenda can be found on the conference website. Mrs. Phillips moved adoption of the 2024 Conference Working Agenda. Motion carried.

Presentation of the 2024 Consent Agenda: Mrs. Phillips moved adoption of the 2024 Consent Agenda on page 37 of the Book of Reports, with the exception of the Conference Board of Trustees Report. She noted that there had been a request to remove the Conference Board of Trustees report from the consent agenda. It will be placed on the agenda on Tuesday at 2pm. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS AND PETITIONS

Rev. Christina Shaver read a message from the General Conference delegation, who were the submitters of the one resolution found on page 24 of the Book of Reports. They requested to withdraw the resolution.

Rev. Shaver noted that four additional resolutions were received after the deadline of February 15, and copies of those were distributed to the body.

Rev. Shaver noted that these resolutions are available to us because they are related to post-General Conference activity, which occurred after our original deadline.

The four resolutions are from the following:

Asbury UMC

FUMC Butler Admin Council

Campground UMC Admin

Andy Winlind

POI – Tripp Gullledge - Request for items to be placed online

The Resolutions shall lie on the table overnight.

REPORT OF THE CABINET

ACTION ITEM

Rev. Jeff Wilson, District Superintendent and Dean of the Cabinet, made a motion on behalf of the Cabinet and with the support of the Board of Trustees, for a Judicial Council Declaratory Decision regarding the meaning, application and effect of Paragraph 2549 of the *Book of Discipline*. Rev. Wilson was joined by Rev. Emily Kincaid, Chair of the Board of Trustees. The motion stated, " That this body request a Judicial Council Declaratory Decision regarding the meaning, application, and effect of ¶ 2549 of the Book of Discipline as it relates to a policy, process, or method for United Methodist churches to exit or separate from the denomination." Bishop Graves reminded the body that according to our rules, this is not up for debate and that a 20% approval would be needed. He noted that we would vote by ballot.

Pages and delegates assisted in passing out paper ballots, and Bishop Graves noted that results of the ballot would be shared in the afternoon session.

POI – Ed Stewart, Highland Park UMC, requested clarity on who submitted which resolutions

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Mrs. Mary Catherine Phillips presented the Committee on Nominations conference report, found on pages 25-36 in the Book of Reports. She noted changes and new members to the Boards, Commission, and Committees of the Annual Conference.

Nomination addendums were posted on the screens.

In addition to these, Mrs. Phillips noted that the body would also vote to approve the incoming Conference Treasurer, Conference Secretary, and Conference Chancellors.

Bishop Graves called for a vote.

The Nominations report passed.

Bishop Graves also noted that the Episcopal Address will be moved to tomorrow morning.

CONFERENCE LUNCH BREAK

AFTERNOON SESSION
Monday, June 17, 2024
Theme: Revive Us Again, *Isaiah 43: 18-19*

Bishop Graves called the session back to order at 2:00pm. Dr. James Seay led with the opening hymn, "To God Be the Glory." Pat Luna, Point Washington UMC, gave the opening prayer.

Announcements from the Conference Secretary

\$20 found in the parking lot

Two additional nominees for the Jurisdictional Conference: Rev. Kitsy Dixon and Jocelyn McCutchen.

Rev. Butch Cousins is on hospice. Bishop Graves offered a prayer for Butch.

RESULTS OF VOTE ON DECLARATORY DECISION

Bishop Graves announced the results of the declaratory decision vote, and also clarified that the Annual Conference must have a majority vote, not just a 20% vote as he previously indicated.

The vote passed by 81%

392 voted

319 voted yes

73 voted no

ORDER OF THE DAY

BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Rev. Darren McClellan acknowledged the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM), the Executive Committee of the BOM, the District Committee on Ordained Ministry members, and Rev. Jenni Hendrix, Director of Ministerial Services, and Mrs. Erika Glawson, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Episcopal Office.

**Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference
Declaratory Decision Interested Parties, submitted by Jeff Wilson**

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