

PETITION TO THE 2016 GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TITLE/SUBJECT MATTER: Connectional Conferences

DISCIPLINE PARAGRAPH: New Paragraph

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Yes

PETITION TEXT Insert new paragraph between ¶8 and ¶ 9, and renumber subsequent paragraphs, as follows:

¶ 9. Article II.—There shall be connectional conferences in all areas of the globe in which The United Methodist Church operates, with such powers, duties, and privileges as are hereinafter set forth.

Insert new Section IV, subsequent to the Restrictive Rules and prior to what is currently ¶ 23, as follows:

Section IV. Connectional Conferences

¶ 23. Article I.—The connectional conferences shall be composed of the delegates from the annual conferences within its boundaries who have been elected to the Global Connectional Conference. No connectional conference shall have fewer than 100 delegates, one half of whom shall be lay and one half clergy. The same formula shall be used to determine the number of delegates of all annual conferences and missionary conferences. In cases where a connectional conference would otherwise have fewer than 100 delegates, the additional delegates shall be elected in accordance with the above process; these delegates may be the same as those elected to regional conferences. The missionary conferences shall be considered as annual conferences for the purpose of this article.

¶ 24. Article II.—All connectional conferences shall have the same status and the same

30 privileges of action within the limits fixed by the Constitution.

31 ¶ 25. Article III. –Each connectional conference shall meet within a year prior to or in
32 conjunction with the Global Connectional Conference, at such time and in such place as shall
33 be determined by the connectional College of Bishops or its delegated committee.

34 A special session of a connectional conference, possessing the authority and exercising all the
35 powers of the connectional conference, may be called by the connectional conference’s
36 college of bishops, or in such other manner as the connectional conference may from time to
37 time prescribe, to meet at such time and in such place as may be stated in the call. Such
38 special session of the connectional conference shall be composed of the delegates to the
39 preceding connectional conference or their lawful successors, except that when a particular
40 annual conference or missionary conference shall prefer to have a new election it may do so.
41 The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be
42 transacted as is in harmony with the purpose stated in such call unless the connectional
43 conference by a two-thirds vote shall determine that other business may be transacted.

44 ¶ 26. Article IV.—The connectional conferences shall have the following powers and duties
45 and such others as may be conferred by the Global Connectional Conferences:

46 1. To provide for the organization, promotion, and administration of the work of the Church
47 within their boundaries, including to promote the evangelistic, educational, missionary,
48 social-concern, and benevolent interests of the Church, subject to the powers and authority
49 of the Global Connectional Conference. Connectional Conferences are authorized to create
50 a connectional *Book of Discipline*, subject to the powers that have been vested in the Global
51 Connectional Conference as contained within the global *Book of Discipline*.

52 2. To set the tenure and method of assignment of the episcopacy within the connection, to
53 provide a uniform rule for their retirement, to provide for the discontinuance of a bishop,

54 and to fix a uniform basis upon which bishops shall be elected by the regional conferences.

55 3. To provide for a process of ordination and to set standards for conference membership
56 and conference relationship, which shall in every case be without reference to race, gender
57 or status.

58 4. To regulate all matters relating to the form and mode of worship, subject to the limitations
59 of the first and second Restrictive Rules.

60 5. To initiate and to direct all connectional enterprises of the Church within the connection
61 and to provide boards for their promotion and administration, subject to the authority and
62 powers of the Global Connectional Conference.

63 6. To determine and provide for raising and distributing funds necessary to carry on the
64 work of the connection.

65 7. To change the number and the boundaries of regional conferences upon the consent of a
66 majority of the annual conferences within the regional conferences involved.

67 8. To establish such commissions for the work of the Church within the connection as may
68 be deemed advisable.

69 9. To secure the rights and privileges of membership in all agencies, programs, and
70 institutions of The United Methodist Church within the connection regardless of race, gender
71 or status.

72 10. To allow the annual conferences to utilize structures unique to their mission, other
73 mandated structures notwithstanding.

74 11. To provide a judicial system and method of judicial procedure, subject to the powers of
75 the Global Connectional Conference and the authority of the Judicial Council, to determine
76 legal questions on the rules, regulations, and other matters of connectional disciplinary law.

77 **12. To enact such other legislation as may be necessary, subject to the limitations and**
78 **restrictions of the Constitution of the Church and powers and authority of the Global**
79 **Connectional Conference.**

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81 **RATIONALE:**
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