

Topical Index of Statutory and Case Law

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How to Use This Topical Index for Legal Research

This index is designed to get you from a question to an answerable rule statement—quickly and accurately—using the **Book of Discipline 2020/2024 (BOD)** and **Judicial Council** authorities.

What each entry gives you

- **Topic & scope line:** frames the legal question and common sub-issues.
- **BOD cites (¶ / Const.):** the controlling statutory text you should open first.
- **Key cases (JCD/JCM + year):** the leading holdings, often noting when a later decision clarifies or narrows an earlier one.

Fast workflow

1. Locate the topic that matches your question; read the scope line to confirm fit.
2. Open the BOD paragraphs cited and mark the operative verbs (must/may/shall) and any cross-references.
3. Read the cases in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Note any signals like “clarifies,” “modified by,” “severability,” “null and void,” or “moot/hypothetical.”
4. Synthesize a rule: (a) governing disciplinary paragraph(s) → (b) controlling holding(s) → (c) application to your facts.
5. Verify currency: check if any later JCD/JCM limits or supersedes an earlier one; watch for paragraph renumbering across Discipline editions.
6. Cite precisely in your memo/letter/opinion:
 - *BOD:* “2020/2024 BOD ¶2549.3(b)” or “Const. ¶33.”
 - *Cases:* “JCD 1512 (2024)” or “JCM 1452 (2023).”
7. Document your trail: copy the exact BOD text relied upon, the holding sentences from the cases, and any interpretive notes (e.g., “JCD 1516 narrows JCD 1503 re facility policies”).

Tips

- If a topic touches multiple areas (e.g., trustees + closures), read both entries and reconcile using the Constitution and later-in-time legislations and decisions.
- Treat memoranda (JCMs) as persuasive clarifications of existing law; decisions (JCDs) are controlling.
- When drafting rulings of law or policy guidance, quote the BOD paragraph first, then anchor with the most recent JCD that interprets it.

Reminder

This index aids ecclesial legal research and practice; always read the cited Constitutional and/or BOD text and the actual decision before finalizing advice or action.

A

Adaptation Powers — *what a central conference may adapt vs. legislate; guardrails from Constitution.*

Subtopics: regionalization, central/jurisdictional conference powers, conflicts with GC legislation.

BOD: Const. ¶¶16–20, ¶31.5, ¶33; Related: ¶¶101–105

Cases:

JCD 147 (1958) — Central conferences may “make rules and regulations for the administration of the work within their boundaries,” but they may not legislate in opposition to General Conference enactments; GC cannot delegate or transfer its essential legislative power.

JCD 313 (1969) — Matters “distinctively connectional,” including basic standards for admission to ministry, are reserved to the General Conference; a central conference (or its annual conferences) cannot add to or subtract from those GC-set obligations unless GC expressly delegates that authority.

JCD 904 (2000) — A central conference may not adapt where the General Conference has mandated connectional structures (e.g., an annual conference board of laity); GC action preempts contrary adaptation, and unconstitutional adaptations must be removed.

JCD 1272 (2014) — Reaffirms GC’s full legislative power (Const. ¶16) and explains that ¶31 authorizes GC to confer powers on central conferences; ¶101 (listing non-adaptable portions) is valid—adaptation remains subject to the Constitution and to GC’s determinations.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Articulates the “principle of legality” and separation of powers: GC legislates standards (including for ministry and marriage); annual conferences, local churches, and pastors apply them administratively with fair process. GC may not single out one subset of standards for “enhanced” enforcement; law must be applied in its entirety.

JCD 1515 (2024) — On the 2024 regionalization package: if constitutional amendments creating regional conferences and vesting adaptation authority are ratified, the related change to ¶101 has sufficient authority; remaining amendments in Petition 20956 are severable and may stand even if the Constitution is not amended, underscoring that any new regional adaptation must remain within constitutional bounds.

Annual Conference (Basic Unit) — *Authority, organization, boundaries, relation to local churches and bishops.*

Subtopics: session authority, consent calendars, standing rules.

BOD: ¶12, 16, ¶¶33–37, 601–606

Cases:

JCD 1379 (2019) — Under Const. ¶33, the annual conference (AC) as the basic body has the reserved right to make final decisions on local church disaffiliation within its boundaries; AC ratification is required.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Reiterates the Constitution’s framework: the AC is the basic body with reserved rights (Const. ¶33) and details related electoral rights under ¶¶34–36; vacancies may be filled consistent with those provisions.

JCD 1444 (2022) — An annual conference has no authority to separate from the UMC absent General Conference legislation; any such votes are unconstitutional and of no

legal force or effect. ¶572 applies only to conferences outside the U.S. (central conferences).

JCD 1421 (2022) — AC ratification is required; a conference board of trustees may not complete sale/transfer of property before the AC's vote on the disaffiliation agreement.

JCM 1433 (2022) — Clarifies and modifies JCD 1421: trustees acted contrary to ¶2529.1(b)(3) and JCD 1379 by closing before AC ratification; execution/delivery/recording of any deed cannot occur prior to ratification.

JCD 823 (1998) — Balances spheres of authority: GC has full legislative power over "distinctively connectional" matters; the AC retains reserved rights over character and conference relations and ordination.

JCD 1440 (2022) — An annual conference may not adopt or enforce standing rules, agendas, or other business (including consent calendars) before the conference is duly called to order and organized.

JCD 1432 (2022) — Reiterates that after the call to order, the organizational motion is taken up first; equalization and other organizational matters must conform to the Discipline and the conference's rules.

JCD 476 (1980) — Standing rules should reference and be read in harmony with the Discipline; they may not conflict with it.

JCD 119 (1955) — When an AC adopts a standing rule, it is bound by that rule unless suspended or rescinded; the AC is the "basic body" and may make its own rules so long as they do not conflict with church law.

JCD 1436 (2022) — ACs may adopt standing rules for district conferences (organization/governance), but such rules cannot contravene the Discipline.

JCD 1257 (2013) — A committee (e.g., Primary Task Team/leadership) cannot act between sessions to create corporations or set budgets and then rely on the AC's consent calendar reception to retroactively legitimize those actions; such interim actions require prior AC authorization.

JCM 1452 (2023) — Addresses consent-calendar removal and parliamentary handling in an AC session (North Georgia), underscoring members' rights subject to AC rules and the Discipline.

JCM 582 (1987) — CCFA must present a fully allocated conference benevolences budget to the opening session; the bishop's contrary ruling was reversed.

JCM 663 (1991) — On labeling budget line-items and preserving the AC's right to decide; reiterates CCFA's recommendation role.

JCD 539 (1984) — An AC may not delegate to a council/committee post-adoption authority to reallocate budgeted funds; CCFA recommends, the AC decides.

JCD 398 (1975) — The number of districts is set by vote of the AC; the bishop then forms districts in consultation with superintendents and appoints DSs; affirms the AC as the basic body.

JCD 831 (1998) — An AC cannot unilaterally restructure under constitutional authority reserved to the GC; must preserve connectional relationships and separation of powers; the bishop is not a voting member of the AC structure.

JCD 1271 (2014) — On the Rio Texas unification/merger process; confirms lawful conference reorganization when done through proper enabling processes and compliance with mandated structures.

JCM 1302 (2015) — District conferences are part of the AC; the AC may adopt rules for their organization and function consistent with the Discipline.

JCD 1311 (2016) — A bishop may not create a task force that reports directly to the AC outside duly established structures; authority must flow through bodies authorized by the AC/Discipline.

JCM 1448 (2022) — Memorandum reiterating JCD 1444's rule on AC separation actions being null and void without GC authorization.

JCD 1518 (2025) — AC trustees' "Mississippi Process" for church closures violated ¶2549 and lacked disciplinary authority; null and void. (Helpful for AC-local church relations & trustees' powers.)

JCD 592 (1988) — AC cannot require GC/Jurisdictional delegates to submit voting records; delegates are elected without instruction and vote conscience. (Helpful for AC-delegate relations under ¶¶33–36.)

Appeals & Judicial Process — *Appeals from church trials, scope of review, due process.*

Subtopics: standards, evidentiary issues, double jeopardy concerns.

BOD: ¶¶2701–2719

Cases:

JCD 1094 (2008) — Appellate review in judicial cases asks only two questions: (1) whether the weight of the evidence sustains the charges, and (2) whether errors of Church law vitiate the verdict and/or penalty; the right to present evidence is exhausted at trial (no new evidence on appeal).

JCD 1151 (2010) — Reaffirms the same two-question standard and that appellate review is confined to the trial record; appellants cannot alter or add to the record on appeal.

JCD 1332 (2016) — Applies the two-question test and affirms where the evidence sustains the charges and no Church-law error vitiates the outcome.

JCD 1361 (2018) — ¶¶2718.3–4 authorize interlocutory administrative appeals before any clergy-session action; a timely appeal stays the recommendation and bars clergy-session action until appeals conclude. During the appeal, the clergyperson remains in good standing/appointment for involuntary leave (¶354.5), administrative location (¶359.2), and involuntary retirement (¶357.3), but not for discontinuance from provisional membership (¶327.6). Administrative appeals pose one review question (¶2718.4(g)) versus two for judicial appeals (¶2715.7).

JCD 1366 (2018) — Holds multiple Traditional Plan provisions unconstitutional for violating bishops' constitutional fair-process rights by combining prosecutorial and adjudicative functions in the Council of Bishops/its Council Relations Committee; emphasizes that impartiality and independence are due-process hallmarks and fair process must be clearly demonstrated.

JCD 1378 (2019) — Confirms the Church's limited right to appeal only egregious errors of Church law or administration (not facts) and, where there is an investigation under ¶2702 but no trial, only egregious-error appeals lie; a committee on investigation's non-certification alone is not such an error.

Apportionments & Connectional Giving — *Obligations, enforcement, remedies, exemptions.*

Subtopics: financial controls, charge conference roles, hardship claims.

BOD: ¶¶247.14, 812–825

Cases:

JCD 30 (1944) — General Conference has constitutional authority to determine and raise funds for connectional work (World Service apportionments), even if the formula seems unfair in a particular case.

JCD 456 (1979) — When a local church is discontinued, responsibility for benevolence apportionments ends at discontinuance (pastoral salary obligations are handled separately under equitable salary provisions).

JCD 986 (2004) — A pastor's unwillingness to lead a church toward full payment of apportionments (including Episcopal Fund proportionality) is not a chargeable offense under ¶2702 (facts-only duties are shared with others).

JCD 1054 (2006) — Each annual conference may determine the plan and method to distribute assigned apportionments to districts/charges; “payment in full … is the first benevolent responsibility” (then-¶247.14; also referenced ¶620 in that era).

JCD 1121 (2009) — Reiterates ¶247.14 (cross-ref ¶812): paying apportionments in full is the local church's first benevolent responsibility; the district superintendent must notify each church of amounts apportioned.

JCD 1379 (2019) — Under ¶2553 disaffiliation terms, a local church must pay any unpaid apportionments for the prior 12 months plus an additional 12 months as a condition of disaffiliation.

JCD 1409 (2021) — GC alone approves quadrennial budgets and apportionment formulas; GCFA may not change the base percentage or use a new formula without prior GC authorization (prior GC-adopted formulas continue until changed by GC).

JCD 1431 (2022) — Rejects a hypothetical claim that JCD 1409 makes general-church apportionments voluntary; bishop's decision of law affirmed (questions of law cannot be premised on hypothetical future actions).

Appointments & Consultation — *Bishop/DS authority, mandatory consultation, SPRC role, clergy rights.*

Subtopics: constitutional role of bishops, district superintendents, separation of powers, **BOD:** ¶¶425–430, 258.2, 259.2

Cases:

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation in appointment-making is mandatory but advisory to the bishop; it must occur before the decision, and affected parties must be informed before any public announcement; “consultation means an exchange of ideas even if not in agreement.”

JCD 1174 (2010) — The SPRC's role is advisory; consultation is a continuing process that intensifies during an appointment change. The DS must inform the pastor of a proposed change and discuss reasons; consultation = exchange of ideas, not mere notification.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops must consult district superintendents in making/fixing appointments, but ¶54 does not confine consultation to DSs. General Conference may require consultation with other entities, and bishops may consult others to make the best appointments.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Security of appointment for elders/associate members upheld; 2012 legislation attempting to abolish it was unconstitutional as inconsistent with the Constitution and the historic itinerant superintendency.

JCD 1312 (2016) — Confirms General Conference’s connectional authority over the episcopacy (e.g., authority to set a uniform basis for electing bishops and to determine the number of bishops); appointment authority remains exercised within GC-defined structures.

B

Bishops (Episcopacy) — *Powers, limits, rulings of law, non-residential roles, COB actions.*

Subtopics: supervision vs. administration, retired bishops, travel/expenses.

BOD: ¶¶46-55, ¶¶401-428, 403-404, 415-418, 2609.6

Cases:

JCD 1312 (2016) — Affirms General Conference’s full legislative power to set a *uniform basis* for electing bishops and determine the number of bishops; places episcopal matters within GC’s connectional authority.

JCD 1514 (2024) — On questions about retired clergy serving in non-UMC settings: the bishop’s ruling that the “chargeability” question was *moot/hypothetical* is affirmed; clarifies limits of questions of law and preserves existing rights absent clear legislation.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops must consult district superintendents in making/fixing appointments, but the Constitution does not confine consultation only to DSs; GC may require consultation with other entities, and bishops may consult others to make the best appointments.

JCD 1499 (2024) — All bishops (active and retired) are members of and authorized to attend the Council of Bishops with expenses paid; GC legislation requiring retired bishops to self-fund travel is unconstitutional (creates two classes of bishops contrary to the Constitution).

JCD 117 (1955) — A retired bishop of a central conference is authorized to attend meetings of the Council of Bishops with expenses paid (historic affirmation later cited by the court).

Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) — *Examination, vote thresholds, recommendations, fair process.*

Subtopics: minority reports, confidentiality, psychological assessments.

BOD: ¶¶324-336, ¶¶634-635

Cases:

JCD 1419 (2021) — Confirms routing of administrative actions involving BOM to the Conference Relations Committee (CRC) and identifies the Administrative Review Committee (ARC) as the first-level appellate body under ¶¶2718.3-4. Also illustrates fair-process requirements and stays flowing from interlocutory appeals.

JCD 1415 (2021) — An annual conference may make aspirational statements but may not negate, ignore, or violate the Discipline; the court affirmed the bishop’s ruling and (in separate opinion) reiterated the aspirational-but-non-violative line for AC resolutions about BOOM.

JCD 1330 (2016) — A BOOM is not “independent” of the Discipline; bishops must answer whether BOOM must ascertain that candidates meet all qualifications (including ¶304 standards on fidelity/celibacy and the prohibitions there). Case remanded for rulings; analysis explains BOOM’s amenability to AC and duty to follow church law.

JCD 1343 (2017) — BOOM cannot ignore self-disclosed violations of church law; any decision not to recommend must rest on evidence from a full examination under ¶¶304, 310, 324, 330.

JCD 1344 (2017) — ¶635.2(h) mandates BOOM to examine all applicants and make full inquiry across the breadth of relevant paragraphs (race, gender, sexuality, integrity, indebtedness, etc.).

JCD 1366 (2018) — Reaffirms the principle of legality and fair-process norms; General Conference may require a careful and thorough BOOM examination but cannot distort due process or unfairly single out a group. (Decision cites and builds on the full-inquiry mandate.)

JCD 1404 (2021) — Clarifies limits on a bishop’s role in candidate evaluation: a bishop may not assert authority to “ascertain and discern” candidate eligibility; that constitutional authority lies with the clergy under ¶33. Reaffirms BOOM/clergy session roles.

JCD 1352 (2017) — A certified candidate is not eligible for election to provisional membership without a written ¾-majority recommendation of BOOM; BOOM is not required to present an ineligible candidate to the clergy session.

JCD 1368 (2019) — A bishop may not exclude candidates or otherwise intrude on the clergy session’s responsibilities; separation of powers protects the clergy session’s right to question BOOM and candidates.

JCM 1186 (2011) — Judicial Council lacks jurisdiction to issue advisory rulings on pending administrative-process details (e.g., burden of proof, vote percentage, evidence limits) before the AC acts; such matters must be handled first by BOOM/CRC within fair-process norms.

JCD 1419 (2021) — (Fair-process specifics) Inadequate notice under ¶361.2(b) and conflicts in CRC participation vitiate proceedings; shows how BOM/CRC processes must honor ¶¶359 & 361.

JCD 1484 (2023) — Reaffirms due- and fair-process commitments while holding ¶413.3d(ii) & (iv) constitutional; episcopal complaint-process provisions stand and must be applied consistent with fair-process rights across contexts (including BOOM-related matters).

Board of Trustees (Local/Conference) — *Duties, property control, litigation authority, trust clause enforcement.*

Subtopics: leases, licenses, sale/encumbrance approvals, insurance.

BOD: ¶¶2501–2553, 640

Cases:

JCD 1516 (2025) — A marriage ceremony is a religious service. Under ¶¶340.2(a)(3)(a) and new ¶341.3, a pastor has sole discretion to perform or not perform any marriage; local trustees may not prevent or interfere with the pastor’s use of church facilities for religious services (see ¶2533.1). Clarifies and narrows JCD 1503.

JCD 1503 (2024) — Nothing in ¶2533 prevents a local church’s board of trustees from adopting policies that prohibit worship services including same-sex marriage ceremonies (a narrow ruling later clarified by JCD 1516 regarding pastoral discretion and facility use).

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 permits only the deeding/transfer of property (not membership) to another denomination and requires an existing written comity/allocation agreement; it may be used only alongside other Discipline processes that effect fundamental changes (e.g., ¶2547; ¶¶207–209). It is not a disaffiliation pathway.

JCD 1420 (2022) — General Conference delegated broad powers to conference trustees in property matters, including authority to “intervene and take all necessary legal steps” to protect conference interests (¶2512.4). Ratification of a ¶2553 disaffiliation agreement by the annual conference is an up-or-down vote only (no amendments).

JCD 1421 (2022) — Conference trustees have exclusive authority to set terms and conditions of ¶2553 disaffiliation agreements (e.g., may include NDAs) so long as consistent with church and civil law.

JCD 1371 (2019) — A conference board of trustees lacked authority to preemptively file certain litigation on behalf of its annual conference; reaffirms limits and proper routing of authority (trustees act at the direction of the annual conference, except where the Discipline stipulates otherwise).

JCD 688 (1993) — Property of abandoned/discontinued local churches is administered and disposed of under authority of the annual conference through its board of trustees.

JCD 1512 (2024) — A local church may not disaffiliate absent General Conference authorization; ¶2549 (closure) cannot be used as an exit path or to release property to departing congregants; the trust clause remains controlling.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Reiterates that ¶2549 cannot be construed or used for disaffiliation; it applies to closure and sale of property, not “gracious exit.”

JCD 1518 (2025) — Again holds that ¶2549 is not a route for disaffiliation/separation; “closed church” standards do not fit a congregation continuing as a church outside the UMC.

Book of Discipline (Status/Authority) — *Constitutional status, conflicts, revisions, errata.*

BOD: Const. ¶¶16–22; Preface, ¶¶101–105

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — The Discipline is a *Book of Law* and the church’s only official and authoritative law book.

JCD 417 (1976) — Reaffirms General Conference’s constitutional full legislative power (Const. ¶16), including the authority to *define and fix* powers and duties of church bodies.

JCD 1366 (2018) — States the principle of legality: all persons/bodies are equally bound by Church law, which must be applied fairly and consistently—no selective or partial enforcement. Issued in response to GC/COB requests reviewing proposed legislation’s constitutionality (but not constitutional amendments).

JCD 1449 (2022) — Interprets ¶2548.2: allows only property transfers (not membership) and only where a written comity/allocation agreement already exists—approved by the

COB and ratified by GC—and cannot be used as a disaffiliation route; affirms legislation must conform to the Constitution and GC's connectional authority.

JCD 1444 (2022) — Acts taken without General Conference authorization that conflict with the constitutional/legislative order (e.g., a U.S. annual conference attempting to separate) are unconstitutional and of no legal force or effect; there is no self-executing right for a U.S. AC to withdraw.

JCD 1500 (2024) — The Judicial Council lacks jurisdiction to review the constitutionality of proposed constitutional amendments or Discipline changes contingent on their ratification (contrast with JC's authority to review proposed legislation otherwise).

JCD 1210 (2012) — “Plan UMC” declared unconstitutional in its entirety; illustrates that legislation conflicting with the Constitution is void and not salvageable by severability.

JCD 1378 (2019) — Articulates and applies a three-step severability test: (1) identify unconstitutional parts, (2) declare them null and void, (3) determine whether valid portions remain; several Traditional Plan petitions voided.

JCD 1515 (2024) — Reiterates the severability framework (quoting JCD 1378 and referencing JCD 1210) in its review of post-2020 GC legislation.

Subtopics: constitutional vs. legislative text, interpretation, canon of construction, supersession.

Building Projects — *New construction, major alterations, approvals, financing.*

Subtopics: feasibility, debt policy, district/conference consents.

BOD: ¶2544; ¶¶2540–2543

Cases:

JCD 119 (1955) — Annual conference standing rules control designated uses of sale proceeds; actions conflicting with a standing rule are void unless the rule is suspended or rescinded.

JCD 399 (1975) — A local church may not mortgage real property for current expenses (e.g., a bail-bond obligation); Discipline draws a line between capital vs current uses.

JCD 664 (1991) — ¶2542 strictly prohibits mortgaging a church/parsonage to cover current expenses (even emergency repairs) and forbids using principal sale proceeds for current expenses.

JCD 688 (1993) — For abandoned/discontinued churches, property is administered/disposed under the annual conference Board of Trustees; confirms paragraph renumbering (1988 ¶¶2542–2546 → 1992 ¶¶2543–2547).

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 may be used only when a pre-existing, COB-signed and GC-approved interdenominational agreement exists; without it, property transfers are not permitted (and attempts are of no legal force or effect).

JCD 1490 (2023) — On ¶2549.3(b) exigent closure: the Judicial Council upheld the annual conference's closure; questions tying exigency to disaffiliation were moot given the conference's subsequent formal closure.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Closure under ¶2549 is not a pathway to disaffiliate or exit with property; closure applies when a church no longer serves its UMC purpose or is no longer maintained for UMC worship.

JCD 1517 (2025) — In the Dakotas/Embrace matter, the court held that the conference’s action allowing a congregation to leave with property via “closure + release from trust” violated church law (closure/disaffiliation cannot be conflated).

C

Cabinet & Superintendency — *DS powers, supervision, appointment-making process.*

Subtopics: missional alignment, consultation records.

BOD: ¶¶401–425, 419–426

Cases:

JCD 492 (1980) — Consultation does not substitute for the bishop actually making and fixing an appointment; the record must show that an appointment was in fact made.

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation is mandatory in every annual conference; it must occur before the appointment decision and parties must be informed before any public announcement. SPRC is advisory (no veto).

JCM 701 (1993) — Reaffirms the classic definition: consultation = exchange of ideas (not necessarily agreement), and it must happen prior to the appointment decision with notification before announcement.

JCD 1174 (2010) — Again confirms the timing and nature of consultation (prior to decision; no fixed sequence/length); cites and consolidates earlier precedents.

JCM 1301 (2015) — On an “appointive cabinet” defined by conference rules: the bishop may structure the appointive cabinet to address missional needs, but such bodies cannot undercut the Discipline’s consultation requirements.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Clarifies that the bishop alone makes/fixes appointments, while General Conference may shape the required consultation process the bishop must follow; “appointive cabinet” is not a Disciplinary term (¶424 defines “cabinet”).

JCD 1226 (2012) — Security of appointment for elders/associate members is a constitutional feature of the itinerant superintendency; GC may not abolish it by ordinary legislation.

JCD 1333 (2016) — In extension-ministry settings, cites ¶428.9 and reiterates that required consultation applies in determining extension appointments.

JCD 1312 (2016) — On episcopal supervision: colleges of bishops arrange supervision, but boundaries/numbers of episcopal areas are set by GC/jurisdictional bodies; helpful boundary for superintendency scope.

JCD 440 (1978) — DS supervision explicitly included in requirements for full connection (demonstrates the historic role of DS oversight in appointments and formation).

Candidacy & Membership in Conference — *Certified candidacy, provisional/full membership, transfer.*

Subtopics: background checks, mentoring, discontinuance.

BOD: ¶¶310–327, 347

Cases:

JCD 690 (1993) — The clergy session has the right to vote on all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations; its action is not limited to recommendations of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM), but must conform to the Discipline.

JCD 1343 (2017) — BOOM cannot ignore Disciplinary standards (including ¶¶304, 310, 324, 330); a decision not to recommend must be supported by evidence from the board's full examination of the candidate.

JCD 1344 (2017) — BOOM is mandated to conduct a careful, thorough examination of all applicants (including fitness regarding fidelity in marriage/celibacy); BOOM may not recommend candidates who fail to meet qualifications.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Affirms the principle of legality and that General Conference may require BOOM to conduct a careful and thorough examination to ensure Disciplinary standards are met (while cautioning against privileging some standards over others).

JCD 1383 (2019) — Portions of the administrative process for involuntary leave (¶354), involuntary retirement (¶357.3), administrative location (¶359), and discontinuance from provisional membership (¶327.6) are unconstitutional without fair-process safeguards; persons involved earlier in a case may not vote on its disposition in the clergy session.

JCD 1482 (2023) — Withdrawing from annual conference membership does not by itself surrender clergy credentials; surrender/forfeiture occurs only through the specific processes (e.g., ¶¶327.6, 362, 2707, 2711). Conferences cannot condition a church's disaffiliation on clergy making such a surrender.

JCD 1514 (2024) — On questions about UM clergy serving in non-UMC settings: the court affirmed a ruling as moot/hypothetical; practically preserves the status quo regarding conference-relation questions for retired clergy (useful boundary when evaluating membership/relations scenarios).

JCD 72 (1951) — Early interpretation related to ¶347 requirements: confirms the annual conference's authority to prescribe timing for completing required studies for conference membership (historic but still cited on membership-requirement oversight).

Charge Conference — Powers, membership, quorum, records.

Subtopics: consent calendars, elections, reports.

BOD: ¶¶44-45, ¶¶244–254

Cases:

JCD 112 (1955) — A charge served by an approved supply pastor may not elect that pastor as its lay member of the annual conference. (Election eligibility at the charge conference.)

JCD 130 (1956) — The Quarterly Conference (predecessor to the charge conference) may adopt policies for electing trustees, but such policies must always be subject to suspension/rejection by a majority at a duly called session. (Elections authority housed in the conference.)

JCD 319 (1969) — There is only one “charge” (the pastoral charge), and the charge conference is the only body authorized to elect lay member(s) of the annual conference; it is the basic unit in the connectional system. (Membership & elections at the charge level.)

JCD 320 (1969) — The local administrative board acts by duties committed to it by the charge conference (e.g., budgets/apportionments); confirms the board's work is subject to charge-conference direction. (Powers & reporting chain.)

JCD 1443 (2022) — When a written question of law is raised in a (joint) charge conference, the district superintendent must rule, and the charge-conference secretary must include the request and ruling in the minutes and certify copies for any appeal.

Failure to keep/forward these records invalidated the bishop's subsequent ruling.
(Records & procedures.)

JCD 1507 (2024) — Legislation that bypasses the charge conference is unconstitutional; the charge conference is the connecting link between the local church and the general church and has general oversight of the church council(s). (Core powers of the charge conference.)

Church Closures & Discontinuance — *Process, property disposition, legacy ministry, records.*

Subtopics: transfer to conference trustees, civil filings.

BOD: ¶2549

Cases:

JCD 138 (1957) — When a church is discontinued, the annual conference trustees may dispose of the discontinued church's funds/assets as directed by the annual conference.

JCD 688 (1993) — Property of abandoned or discontinued churches must be administered and/or disposed of by the annual conference through its Board of Trustees; also maps paragraph renumbering across Discipline editions.

JCD 1490 (2023) — Exigent/interim closure under ¶2549.3(b) (Fifth Avenue UMC) and vesting of property in the annual conference board of trustees did not violate the Discipline; challenges to "exigent" determinations belong at the annual conference when formal closure is considered.

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 cannot be used as an exit/disaffiliation path. Closure applies to congregations that no longer serve UMC purposes; its intent (including member transfer plans within the UMC) contradicts using it to leave with property.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Dakotas/Embrace Church: scrutinizes whether purported "closure" was a pretext to allow a congregation to retain property while leaving; reinforces that closure cannot be leveraged to circumvent the trust clause and exit processes.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Mississippi Process null and void: annual conferences, trustees, and local churches cannot import expired ¶2553 terms into ¶2549 or use closure as a back-door disaffiliation mechanism; ¶2549 governs disposition of property of *closed* local churches under conference direction.

Church Membership (Local) — *Reception, removal, restoration, privacy.*

Subtopics: transfer letters, inactive lists, minors.

BOD: ¶4, ¶¶216–242

Cases:

JCD 1032 (2005) — The pastor-in-charge has discretion to determine a person's readiness to affirm the membership vows and cannot be ordered to receive someone whom the pastor deems not ready (ties to ¶¶214–217, 225).

JCM 1041 (2006) — On reconsideration of 1032: affirms pastoral discretion but clarifies it must be exercised consistently with ¶4 — ¶4 defines eligibility, not an entitlement, and the Discipline's preconditions to membership still apply.

JCD 696 (1993) — No dual membership: when a clergy person joins another denomination, UMC membership terminates upon confirmation of reception there (the Discipline then in ¶241; same rule carried forward in current transfer provisions).

JCD 1482 (2023) — Reiterates JCD 696: United Methodist clergy persons may not hold membership in two denominations simultaneously; cites the termination-upon-transfer rule. (Concurring opinion applying to present questions.)

JCD 170 (1961) — Recognizes effect of a proper certificate of transfer between local churches (used in resolving who may serve as a lay delegate), underscoring the documentary role of transfer certificates in membership status.

Church Trials (Clergy/Laity) — *Charges, counsel, trial court, penalties, appeals.*

Subtopics: fair process, discovery, supervision during process.

BOD: ¶¶2701–2719

Cases:

JCD 1201 (2011) — Upheld a clergy-session’s refusal to reinstate clergy status after criminal conviction; affirmed conference’s authority and due-process sufficiency. (¶¶2701–2719.)

JCD 1318 (2016) — Struck down mandatory-penalty petitions for just-resolution confessions; Judicial Council—not bishops—controls constitutional review. (Fair process; ¶¶2701ff.)

JCD 1366 (2018) — “Way Forward/Traditional Plan” rulings: parts unconstitutional for violating fair-process/episcopal rights. (Fair process in judicial/administrative matters.)

JCD 1151 (2010) — On appeal, affirmed conviction/penalty; emphasized complete trial record and limits of appellate review (errors of church law only). (¶¶2711, 2715.)

JCD 1315 (2016) — *Havili*: clarified charge specificity, trial-record requirements, and counsel issues; affirmed verdict. (¶¶2701–2711.)

JCD 497 (1981) — Found ex parte communication with trial court improper; ordered a new trial. (Fair process; ¶¶2701–2711.)

JCD 504 (1981) — Denied limiting the ordered “new trial” in JCD 497 to penalty only; required a full retrial. (Trial scope and penalty.)

JCD 1378 (2019) — GC2019 “Traditional Plan”: multiple holdings on constitutionality and fair-process safeguards for complaints, investigations, and trials.

JCD 1379 (2019) — Approved creating church right to appeal egregious errors of law (¶2715.10) and set parameters for disaffiliation ¶2553 (context). (Church appeals; trial-law errors.)

JCD 1494 (2024) — On questions about complaint/supervisory and judicial procedures: bishops may not give substantive rulings on petitions for declaratory decisions posed as rulings of law. (Process boundaries; ¶¶362, 2701ff.)

JCD 1484 (2023) — Clarified ¶413.3d(ii)/(iv) processes in episcopal complaints; confirmed constitutionality and interaction with fair-process guarantees; links to referral to counsel for the Church (¶2704.1).

JCD 1361 (2018) — An interlocutory administrative appeal (¶¶2718.3–.4) stays recommendations for involuntary leave, administrative location, and involuntary retirement (not discontinuance); clergy remains in good standing pending appeal; does not limit trial-court authority.

JCD 846 (1998) — When a declaratory-decision request is posed as a bishop’s ruling of law, the bishop should deem it improper/moot; also addressed counsel and investigation-stage questions. (Scope of rulings of law; fair-process context.)

JCD 116 (1955) — Early articulation of supervisory/judicial boundaries and trial-court authority that later decisions cite in fair-process context.

Connectional Entities (Agencies/Foundations) — *Authority, relation to AC/GC, fiduciary duties.*

Subtopics: UM Foundation relations, UMCOR, Wespath.

BOD: ¶¶701–2401

Cases:

JCD 672 (1992) — An annual conference may fund the salary of its UM Foundation president from conference benevolences so long as the role is not primarily administrative and includes stewardship/promotion/development duties.

JCD 720 (1994) — An annual conference is entitled to rely on the General Board of Pension & Health Benefits (Wespath) for agreements and actuarial figures; case remanded to ensure the conference neither gains nor loses due to the Board's error.

JCM 752 (1995) — Follow-up to JCD 720: directs binding arbitration and reimbursement of certain expenses; reiterates that the conference may rely on Wespath and the Board is responsible for its own mistakes.

JCD 947 (2002) — A conference budget must include all anticipated income (including apportionment estimates) and proposed expenditures; clarifies related journal-publication practices.

JCD 1054 (2006) — Strikes down a flat “tithe method” (10% of income) in lieu of apportioned amounts; such a scheme fails to ensure full payment of general-church apportionments required by the Discipline.

JCD 1146 (2010) — A conference may not reduce general-church apportionments by adopting alternative budgeting devices; approval of a reduced budget violates church law.

JCD 1172 (2010) — Upon receiving GC-set amounts, the annual conference must apportion the full amount “without reduction” to districts/charges by whatever method the conference directs.

JCD 1208 (2012) — Attempts to remove/alter the Episcopal Fund's apportionment status or create a jurisdictional apportionment are unconstitutional; GC retains exclusive authority over connectional financing.

JCD 1409 (2021) — In the pandemic postponement, GCFA cannot change the apportionment base percentage or formulas absent General Conference action; the prior GC-approved budget/formulas remain binding until replaced.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Declares the Mississippi trustees' post-¶2553 “process” for church exits null and void; annual conferences cannot modify the Discipline, and closure/¶2549 cannot be used as an alternative disaffiliation path.

Consultation (Mandatory/Advisory) — *Nature of consultation in appointments and personnel.*

Subtopics: what counts as consultation, documentation, supervisory consultation vs appointive consultation.

BOD: ¶¶425–430, 258.2

Cases:

JCD 492 (1980) — Consultation occurred, but the bishop never actually made and fixed the appointment; the member is entitled to an appointment and to compensation for any period left without one. Clarifies that consultation does not replace the bishop's duty to make a clear appointment decision.

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation is mandatory and advisory (no veto). It must occur before the appointment decision, and all parties must be informed before any public announcement; “consultation” means an exchange of ideas, not necessarily agreement; no fixed length/sequence is specified.

JCD 556 (1985) — In the cooperative-parish context, interprets appointment-making paragraphs and applies the consultation requirements to that structure—confirming that consultation norms govern specialized appointment settings, too.

JCM 701 (1993) — Memorandum reaffirming JCD 501 (and historic JCD 101): consultation is mandatory and advisory, must occur prior to the appointment decision, with notification before announcement; “consultation” = exchange of ideas.

JCD 1174 (2010) — Re-states the timing and nature of consultation: it must precede the appointment decision; there is no required duration or order (pastor vs. SPRC).

Emphasizes informing the parties before any public release.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops must consult with district superintendents, but the Constitution doesn't confine consultation only to DSs; General Conference may require consultation with other entities, and a bishop may consult others (e.g., extended cabinet) while still retaining sole authority to make and fix appointments. Also notes “appointive cabinet” is not a Disciplinary term.

D

Deacons & Elders (Orders/Offices) — *Distinct roles, sacramental authority, appointment types.*

Subtopics: extension ministries, appointments beyond the local church.

BOD: ¶¶301–314, 324–352

Cases:

JCD 877 (1999) — Held that ¶¶323 and 335.1(d) (1996 Discipline) are not in conflict; annual conferences may appoint elders to extension ministries that are primarily “Service” as well as “Word, Sacrament, and Order.” Clarified that deacons and elders are different orders addressed separately; those paragraphs’ omission of deacons is not unconstitutional.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Declaratory decision confirming the framework for extension/“appointments beyond the local church”: elders may be appointed to extension ministries (¶¶343–344); deacons (provisional and full connection) may be appointed beyond the local church to ministries connecting church and community (¶¶326, 328, 329, 331).

JCD 492 (1980) — On the right to appointment and consultation: reinforces consultation norms with SPRC and limits on arbitrary appointment actions; often cited in appointment-making sections (¶¶425–430).

JCD 713 (1994) — An annual conference cannot condition eligibility for appointment (for elders/probationary/associate members) on payment of medical

insurance premiums; protects due process and conference-membership rights in appointments. Frequently cited in itinerancy/consultation discussions.

JCD 363 (1972) — Clarifies the order prerequisite to the episcopacy: a person must first be an ordained elder in full connection to be elected and consecrated bishop; underscores order distinctions and progression.

JCD 366 (1972) — Addresses an elder on voluntary location serving as a lay pastor subject to DS assignment; illuminates appointment types/status transitions affecting elders.

Delegates & Elections (GC/JC/CC) — *Eligibility, allocation, election procedures, vacancies.*

Subtopics: laity/clergy balance, reserve delegates.

BOD: ¶¶14–16, 502–507

Cases:

JCD 1451 (2022) — Reaffirms that the annual conference has the reserved constitutional right to elect clergy and lay delegates to GC/JC/CC (Const. ¶33) and that properly conducted 2019 elections stand for the postponed 2020 GC (now GC2024). No Discipline provision annuls such elections.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Clarifies how vacancies are filled: annual conferences may hold elections to fill GC-delegation vacancies (death/resignation/etc.) up to the allocated maximum only after all reserve mechanisms are exhausted(advance JC/CC delegates “in the order of their election,” then JC/CC reserves if needed). Not a permission to re-populate the reserve pool.

JCM 1485 (2023) — On its own motion, JC modifies 1451/1472 for the unique 2020→2024 postponement: the duly elected 2020 GC delegates serve at GC2024; no new elections except the very rare case where one *order* (lay or clergy) cannot fill its seats even after exhausting reserves. Confirms next regular GC is 2028 per Const. ¶14. (Memorandum, but authoritative clarification.)

JCD 1427 (2022) — Eligibility & voting separation: only central-conference ACs may waive the 2-year membership/4-year participation requirements for under-30 lay members (Const. ¶32); U.S. ACs may not. Also reaffirms clergy vote for clergy, laity for laity in delegate processes.

JCD 352 (1976) — “Order of election” defined for reserve delegates: the order is the sequence/ballot order (and votes on the same ballot); additional JC/CC delegates become GC reserves in that order. (This is the classic “order of their election” interpretation.)

JCD 308 (1969) — Loses eligibility if not a member of the electing annual conference at the time of service: a delegate who transfers to another AC before GC/JC/CC meets cannot be seated by the electing AC.

JCD 254 (1967) — (Cited in JCD 308.) Notes the standard of eligibility: a person elected must be a member of the electing AC both at election and at the time of service at GC/JC/CC.

JCD 125 (1956) — Early constitutional construction that additional JC/CC delegates become GC reserve delegates “in the order of their election.”

Disaffiliation (Local Churches) — *Standards, process, property, liabilities, pensions.*

Subtopics: conference terms, civil law interface, readmission.

BOD: ¶¶2553 (where applicable), 2501, 2540–2553

Cases:

JCD 1379 (2019) — Upheld the constitutionality of creating ¶2553; set minimums: 2/3 church-conference vote and annual conference ratification are required to disaffiliate.

JCD 1385 (2019) — Effective date of ¶2553 is at the close of GC2019.

JCD 1386 (2019) — Related to the vote-fraud question tied to ¶2553's effective date; treated in tandem with 1385/1401.

JCD 1393 (2019) — Early application issue (“action of the annual conference” under ¶2553) noted in conference guidance lists.

JCD 1401 (2021) — Reaffirmed ¶2553 remains in effect; the Commission on General Conference lacked authority to nullify it between sessions.

JCM 1412 (2021) — New England AC policy/“discernment process” memo related to ¶2553.

JCD 1420 (2022) — Conference Board of Trustees has exclusive authority to set terms & conditions of disaffiliation agreements under ¶2553.4 (with advised officers), subject to AC ratification.

JCD 1421 (2022) — No pre-ratification property transfers: trustees acted unlawfully by closing a property sale before AC ratified the ¶2553 agreement; AC has the reserved right to make the final decision.

JCD 1422 (2022) — Affirmed a bishop's ruling (North Georgia) on the circumstances for pursuing disaffiliation; often cited for not re-litigating local “reasons of conscience” if the conference policy doesn't require it.

JCD 1424 (2022) — Arkansas AC may include additional standard terms (e.g., grant repayment) so long as they don't negate ¶2553 minimums.

JCD 1425 (2022) — New England AC's policy/steps permissible if consistent with ¶2553; conferences may develop additional standard terms that don't conflict.

JCD 1453 (2023) — Affirms bishop's ruling: trustees' exclusive authority over terms; AC ratification required; notes reliance on ¶2553 + GCFA template + JCD 1420.

JCD 1458 (2023) — ACs cannot adopt rules that negate/violate GC legislation; re-states guardrails (JCDs 823, 886, 1105) in the disaffiliation context.

JCM 1452 (2023) — A conference petition violating pension-liability requirements (e.g., a “\$1 pension liability”) contradicts ¶2553.4a & ¶1504.23; pensions authority lies with Conference Board of Pensions/CFA/Wespath under ¶1504.8a & ¶1506.6.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Pivotal: with ¶2553 expired (Dec 31, 2023) and deleted by GC2024, there is no remaining pathway for local-church disaffiliation; no body but GC may reinstate/replicate ¶2553; ¶2549 cannot be used as an exit mechanism (closure ≠ disaffiliation). Re-anchors trust clause (¶2501) and connectionalism.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applied 1512: Dakotas AC improperly used ¶2549 (closure) as a pretext to let a church exit with property; null and void.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Mississippi Process (using closures to mimic disaffiliation) struck down; reiterates ¶2549 is not an exit path; disaffiliation season is over.

Disaffiliation (Annual Conferences) — *Authority, constitutional constraints, recognition.*

Subtopics: connectionalism, global connectional implications.

BOD: Const. ¶¶16–23; ¶572

Cases:

JCD 1444 (2022) — Core rule: Annual conferences cannot disaffiliate absent enabling legislation by the General Conference; Decision 1366 does not create a self-executing right. ¶572 applies only to *conferences outside the U.S.* and is not a “minimum standard” for U.S. ACs. Actions taken unilaterally are unconstitutional, null and void.

JCD 1464 (2023) — Affirms JCD 1444 and bars ACs from calling sessions or adopting resolutions for the purpose of withdrawal, since such actions would be unconstitutional without GC-enacted terms. Emphasizes connectionalism.

JCD 1473 (2023) — Bulgaria–Romania Provisional AC: actions voting to separate were unconstitutional, null and void. For ACs in central conferences, withdrawal requires compliance with ¶572 and/or GC enabling legislation; otherwise there is no authority to separate. (Contains the bishop’s statement that ¶572 is the only legal avenue.)

JCM 1448 (2022) — Preliminary memorandum in the same matter: a central-conference AC has no authority to separate unless it complies with ¶572; the attempted actions were void.

JCD 1449 (2022) — Reiterates that the Constitution vests full legislative power in the General Conference (Const. ¶16) and that AC authority is not unlimited; ACs may not act *ultra vires* against GC legislation or constitutional order. (Background constraint repeatedly invoked in separation cases.)

JCD 1512 (2024) — While deciding local-church exit questions, the Council expressly notes it has already held that an annual conference may not disaffiliate without General Conference action (see JCD 1444)—underscoring that no AC-exit path exists absent GC legislation.

Discipline Enforcement & Compliance — *Ultra vires acts, nullity, corrective measures.*

Subtopics: rulings of law, JC review.

BOD: ¶¶56–59, ¶¶101–105, ¶2609

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — Establishes that the *Book of Discipline* is the church’s book of law binding on all bodies; actions must conform to it.

JCD 1210 (2012) — “Plan UMC” declared unconstitutional; voided in its entirety. (Good illustration of nullity and global corrective relief.)

JCD 1218 (2012) — Reaffirms JCD 96; “*all entities of the Church are bound*” by the Discipline; conference actions must be faithful to it.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Amendments to ¶337 held unconstitutional and therefore “null, void and of no effect”; original text restored.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Articulates the principle of legality (law applies equally; GC may prescribe/proscribe, but not contradict itself) and affirms sanctions for non-compliance authorized by law.

JCD 1444 (2022) — Annual conferences cannot unilaterally separate; such actions are unconstitutional, null and void, and of no legal force or effect.

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 cannot be used as a local-church disaffiliation pathway; misuse is null and void.

JCD 1460 (2023) — Clarifies limits of review: parliamentary questions are null and void as questions of law; JC lacks jurisdiction to review parliamentary rulings (cites long line of Memos/Decisions).

JCD 1490 (2023) — Affirms rulings; clarifies interaction of ¶2549.3(b) and ¶2553 (closure vs. disaffiliation); ensures proper application/corrective sequencing of law.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Attempts to engineer exits via ¶2549 (closure) or other work-arounds intrude on GC's exclusive prerogative and are unconstitutional, null, and void.

JCD 1515 (2024) — States a three-step severability method: identify unconstitutional parts, declare them null and void, then determine separability from the remainder.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Strikes a conference's extra-disciplinary "process" as without disciplinary authority; "null and void and has no force or effect." (Mississippi "process" context.)

JCD 1055 (2006) — Example of using nullity language in a personnel-process context (a purported action deemed null and void).

Discontinuance of Clergy/Cessation of Appointments — *Processes, rights, appeals.*

Subtopics: honorable location (historic), withdrawal under complaints.

BOD: ¶¶353–361, ¶¶362-364

Cases:

JCD 1226 (2012) — Upholds *security of appointment* (the 2012 GC attempt to abolish it was unconstitutional). This frames limits on "non-continuation" of elders/associate members and therefore on cessation of appointments.

JCD 1383 (2019) — Declares unconstitutional the 2016 BOD administrative processes for involuntary leave of absence (¶354), involuntary retirement (¶357.3), administrative location (¶359), and discontinuance from provisional membership (¶327.6) for violating fair/due process; key for any step that ends or interrupts appointment.

JCM 1408 (2021) — Clarifies the effect of JCD 1383 and supplies required limiting language; also bars voting in clergy session by persons previously involved in these matters (cabinet, BOM, CRC, ARC) for ¶¶354, 357.3, 359, 327.6.

JCD 1361 (2018) — On clergy-session voting and role conflicts in actions re involuntary leave (¶354), administrative location (¶359), involuntary retirement (¶357.3), and discontinuance from provisional membership (¶327.6) (differentiates when certain persons may vote).

JCD 1010 (2005) — Reverses an *administrative location* action for violating fair process; reinstates status and benefits. Helpful precedent whenever cessation/location is attempted without proper process.

JCD 982 (2004) — A local pastor does not lose the right to supervisory process/trial even if appointment is terminated, once a complaint is filed; discontinuance of appointment does not erase fair-process rights.

JCD 691 (1993) — Withdrawal under complaint is effective immediately upon receipt; disciplinary rights terminate at once. Frequently cited for effective dates.

JCD 798 (1996) — Reinforces immediate-effect holdings around withdrawal under complaint. (Cited within later decisions.)

JCD 741 (1994) & JCD 753 (1995) — If the alleged acts are time-barred (statute of limitations), a withdrawal “under complaint” is null and void (not converted to “voluntary” withdrawal). Authoritative for challenging improperly labeled withdrawals.

JCD 1055 (2006) — Synthesizes the above: immediate effect of withdrawal under complaint (JCD 691/798) and nullity when no valid complaint/statute-barred (JCD 741/753); confirms effective when received and outlines what happens if there was no valid complaint at the time.

JCD 1482 (2023) — A clergyperson who withdraws (by written request or simply by leaving appointment) has not thereby surrendered credentials unless acted upon under ¶¶327.6, 362, 2707, or 2711. Useful when conferences sought to condition local-church disaffiliations on clergy surrendering credentials.

JCD 696 (1993) — No dual membership: an ordained UMC minister cannot hold membership in another denomination simultaneously; upon joining another denomination, UMC membership terminates. Often applied to contemporary withdrawals.

E

Elections (Local Church, Conference Officers/Bboards) — *Nominations, ballots, vacancies, parity.*

Subtopics: inclusion mandates, open nominations.

BOD: ¶¶243-258, ¶¶605–657

Cases:

JCD 1328 (2016) — An AC rule may let the Committee on Nominations recommend a slate, but agencies that the Discipline empowers to elect their own officers must still do so themselves; slates cannot foreclose other nominations/elections by those bodies.

JCM 1442 (2022) — ¶635.1(a) does not prohibit floor nominations to the Board of Ordained Ministry; attempts to treat it as a bar to open nominations are improper.

JCD 1436 (2022) — ACs may adopt voting policies for district conferences that keep voting by order (clergy vote for clergy candidates; laity for lay), so long as not in conflict with the Discipline.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Vacancies in GC/Jurisdictional delegations (e.g., due to status change from lay↔clergy) must be filled first by reserves; if reserves cannot fill, the AC may elect replacements.

JCD 467 (1979) — ACs hold the GC-granted right to submit nominations to the jurisdiction for certain elections; jurisdictions cannot restrict the number/nature of those AC nominations.

JCD 1497 (2024) — Inclusion requirement: if the Commission on the General Conference lacks a youth member, GC must identify, nominate (including from the floor), and elect at least one qualified youth; the Commission must reflect gender and lay/clergy balance and the church’s diversity.

JCD 592 (1988) — ACs may not impose extra-Discipline requirements on delegates (here, mandatory published voting records); such actions are ultra vires and null and void—a recurring principle for election integrity.

Episcopal Areas & Boundaries — *Creation, realignment, assignments, vacancies.*

Subtopics: multi-conference supervision, COB authority.

BOD: ¶¶401–407, ¶404.2

Cases:

JCD 57 (1964) — Jurisdictional conferences may assign bishops to residences, but the bishops (college) fix the boundaries of episcopal areas; jurisdictional conferences can't modify the bishops' plan of supervision.

JCD 517 (1982) — Any provision purporting to let a jurisdictional conference fix episcopal-area boundaries by “final action” is unconstitutional; that power is reserved to the bishops under the Constitution.

JCD 1312 (2016) — Synthesizes constitutional roles: GC sets uniform method/funding and thus the number of bishops; jurisdictional/central conferences determine names, numbers, and boundaries of ACs and episcopal areas; colleges of bishops arrange episcopal supervision (they do not set names/numbers/boundaries). Affirms (and explains) JCDs 57/517.

JCD 416 (1976) — Interprets the eight-year limitation and effective date norms for assignments; confirms a bishop can later be assigned to a prior area if service is not consecutive.

JCD 1445 (2022) — In the pandemic/postponement context: COB is authorized to set the date of regular jurisdictional conferences for the limited purpose of ensuring continuance of the episcopacy (Const. ¶¶26, 27.2, 45).

JCD 1513 (2024) — GC 2024's reduction/allocations (U.S. bishops from 39→32) are binding; the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy may not recommend an assignment that crosses jurisdictions when it conflicts with the GC-approved allocations (e.g., one bishop simultaneously assigned to Holston [SEJ] and West Virginia [NEJ]). Cross-jurisdiction “sharing” must align with GC determinations.

Extension Ministries — *Standards, accountability, reports, sacramental permissions.*

Subtopics: annual review, missional definition.

BOD: ¶331, ¶¶343–344

Cases:

JCD 1333 (2016) — Confirms that the Board of Ordained Ministry (with the bishop) determines whether an extension ministry “serves the missional needs of the Church.” The annual report and meeting opportunity in ¶344.2a provide the clergy person's chance to be heard; a non-verification decision is not a ¶2701 fair-process/complaint matter (though consultation for the next appointment should follow promptly).

JCD 877 (1997) — Clarifies that elders may be appointed to extension ministries that include *Service* as well as *Word, Sacrament, and Order* (Discipline 1996 ¶¶323, 335.1(d) not in conflict; not unconstitutional for not including deacons in full connection at that time). This frames the missional definition breadth for extension appointments.

JCD 345 (1971) — Requires compensation disclosure and publication: every ministerial member appointed “to any other field than the pastorate or district superintendency” must annually report remuneration; those salaries must be published in the Annual Conference journal (now applied to “clergy appointed to extension ministry”). Anchors transparency/accountability practice.

JCD 465 (1979–80) — Reiterates the principle of accountability for all ministerial members in special/extension appointments, relied upon (with JCD 345) as authority for annual reporting and publication of compensation for clergy in extension ministry.

JCD 1514 (2024) — Affirms a bishop’s ruling (question found moot/hypothetical) regarding UM clergy service in non-UMC settings and chargeability; preserves existing rights absent clear legislation—useful for appointments beyond the local church questions.

F

Fair Process — *Procedural rights across complaints, candidacy, and membership.*

Subtopics: notice, counsel, confidentiality.

BOD: ¶¶324–336, 362.2, 2701, 2706.

Cases:

JCD 830 (1998) — Establishes that *fair process is a constitutional as well as disciplinary right*; it applies to administrative as well as judicial actions (but not ordinary supervision).

JCD 698 (1993) — Fair process/due process requires a clear question and a record that permits the respondent to be heard; derives from constitutional guarantees then codified in prior ¶2622.1.

JCD 689 (1993) — Executive/clergy session cannot make a “fair and informed” decision when procedures are unclear; lack of clarity violates due/fair process.

JCD 917 (2001) — Separation of functions: a district superintendent (cabinet representative/complainant side) may not deliberate or vote in BOM administrative proceedings; doing so violates fair process.

JCD 1361 (2018) — No clergy-session *vote* on an involuntary change of status while the administrative appeal is pending; both the clergy member’s right to fair process and the body’s duty to make an informed decision require waiting until issues are resolved.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Reaffirms the constitutional right to fair/due process (¶¶21, 59); strikes provisions that combined prosecutorial and adjudicative functions; articulates the “principle of legality.”

JCD 1383 (2019) — Declares parts of the administrative processes (e.g., involuntary leave/retirement) unconstitutional where complainants or referring officials also vote on the final disposition; fairness requires impartial decision-makers.

JCM 1408 (2021) — Clarifies JCD 1383: administrative processes that bypass appeal or allow conflicted voting violate fair/due process under ¶¶20 & 58.

JCM 1450 (2022) — In episcopal matters, a bishop is entitled to a fair-process hearing (referencing ¶539/¶413.3a in the 2016 Discipline) before/especially beyond suspension limits.

JCD 1484 (2023) — Upholds constitutionality of ¶413.3d(ii) & (iv) (COB panels/intervention) while the dissent underscores that all affected persons must have protections of fair/due process; good for framing current law vs. concerns.

JCM 1186 (2011) — Links ¶362.2(a)’s right “to be heard” with JCD 830 to confirm the respondent’s rights to present documents and call witnesses in BOM administrative hearings (reasonable, even-handed limits allowed).

JCD 1330 (2016) — Confirms BOM duties around eligibility and review of qualifications; while not a pure “fair-process” case, it frames the lawful scope and prevents end-runs around mandated standards and procedures.

JCD 1239 (2013, arising from 2012 NEJ) — Affirms due/fair process compliance in an episcopal resignation matter and notes confidentiality of a just-resolution agreement ended the complaint process and fair-process claims tied to it.

Finance & Administration — *Budgets, audits, signature authority, misuse.*

Subtopics: internal controls, dual signatures, bonding.

BOD: ¶¶247, 252, 258, 810–825, 2501, 2525–2553.

Cases:

JCD 1409 (2021) — GCFA may not change the Base Percentage or otherwise alter apportionment formulas for 2021 without prior General Conference authorization; the 2017–2020 budget and formulas remain binding until replaced.

JCD 1208 (2012) — Attempt to remove the Episcopal Fund from the general-church apportionment formula deemed unconstitutional; apportionments are set by General Conference and protected by Restrictive Rules.

JCD 1445 (2022) — Though focused on episcopal elections, it reaffirms the JCD 1409 principle: GC-approved formulas (e.g., number/formula for bishops) remain legally binding until replaced. Helpful when arguing continuity of budgetary/allocative rules absent GC action.

JCD 539 (1984) — Validates conference-level procedures allowing reallocation of budgeted program funds to emergent missional needs when recommended through CFA and approved by the annual conference. Useful for budget flexibility protocols.

JCD 77 (1951) — An annual conference should not approve a report that includes a required financial statement until it is audited; underscores audit-before-adoption as good order.

JCD 334 (1970) — Confirms timeliness and inclusion of the conference treasurer’s audit in the conference journal, interpreting the Discipline’s audit-timing requirements during a fiscal transition year.

JCD 190 (1961) — Affirms an annual conference’s broad authority over trustees’ investments, including instructions against commingling, and calls for audited reports; useful for investment policy/internal controls framework.

JCD 1426 (2022) — In a GNJ budget-gap case, the Judicial Council affirms CFA’s authority to bring budgets and notes that fiscal matters belong under bodies assigned by the Discipline (e.g., CFA, audit/review), not via questions of law. Also cites JCM 521: CFA is ultimately responsible to present budget recommendations.

JCD 320 (1969) — Clarifies the local church treasurer’s duty to disburse funds per the adopted budget and to remit apportionments as prescribed (then ¶¶152.5, 921), and that benevolence gifts must be used only for their designated causes.

JCD 1298 (2015) — The Judicial Council held GCFA lacked power to reduce an active bishop’s salary due to pending audit issues; ordered full restoration of salary (and, per the decision, housing/office support for specific years). Helpful precedent on limits of financial sanctions absent proper church-law authority.

Freedom of the Pulpit & Worship Discretion — *Clergy authority in worship/sacraments, limits.*

Subtopics: marriage policies, local custom vs. Discipline.

BOD: ¶¶331–340, 341, 342, 2533.1

Cases:

JCD 1516 (2025) — A marriage ceremony is a religious service; the pastor has sole discretion whether to perform any marriage (per ¶¶340.2(a)(3)(a), 341.3). Trustees may not prevent or interfere with the pastor’s use of church property for religious services; trustees also may not permit use without the pastor’s consent (¶2533.1). Context note: The Council of Bishops, in a press release, explained that JCD 1516 reaffirms pastoral discretion and the trustees’ duty not to interfere, while noting that central/annual-conference standards may still govern in those regions.

JCD 1503 (2024) — Under ¶2533, local trustees may adopt policies prohibiting worship services that include same-sex marriage ceremonies; however, this was later narrowed/clarified by JCD 1516 so that any such policy cannot override the pastor’s worship/use authority.

JCD 1032 (2005) — The Discipline invests discretion in the pastor-in-charge to determine a person’s *readiness* to affirm the vows of membership; a DS/bishop cannot order a pastor to admit someone deemed not ready (illustrates the Discipline’s assignment of pastoral discretion in core ecclesial functions).

JCD 1434 (2022) — Conference resolution questioned did not remove or negate pastoral authority to determine readiness for membership; no encouragement of Discipline violations.

G

General Conference (Powers/Limits) — *Authority to define law, constitutional amendments, judicial review.*

Subtopics: effective dates, unconstitutional legislation.

BOD: ¶¶15–17, 59, 60–61

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — Declares the Discipline is the Church’s only official and authoritative book of law—GC is the law-making body and its enactments govern.

JCD 1210 (2012) — Plan UMC (2012) restructuring was held unconstitutional; GC cannot enact a plan that violates constitutional allocations/separation of powers.

JCD 1310 (2016) — On “Plan UMC Revised”: reviewed proposed legislation for constitutionality pre-enactment (¶2609.2), testing GC’s power against constitutional limits.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Clarifies jurisdiction for pre-enactment review of proposed legislation (when requested by GC/COB) but not proposed constitutional amendments; reiterates GC’s full legislative power is bounded by the Constitution (principle of legality).

JCD 1458 (2023) — Reaffirms that GC “shall have full legislative power … including the authority to enact, amend, and repeal legislation” (Const. ¶16).

JCD 1378 (2019) — Traditional Plan: multiple provisions unconstitutional and null/void; Council applied a severability test (others stood and became law on the normal timetable).

JCD 1379 (2019) — Addressed disaffiliation legislation: identified conditions under which a petition was constitutional and thus effective; modified earlier rulings accordingly.

JCD 1449 (2022) — Clarifies GC-enacted ¶2548.2 is not a disaffiliation process; annual-conference authority under GC legislation is limited by constitutional/legislative boundaries.

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 cannot be used for local-church disaffiliation; disaffiliation requires GC authorization. Reiterates connectional/constitutional limits on bypassing GC.

JCD 1385 (2019) — Effective date of ¶2553 (disaffiliation) was immediately upon the close of the 2019 Special GC (because the petition itself specified such). Illustrates that effective dates follow what GC enacts.

JCD 1401 (2021) — Commission on the General Conference had no authority to nullify GC's enacted ¶2553 between sessions; affirms JCD 1385's effective-date ruling and separation of powers (only GC can change GC acts).

JCM 1446 (2022) — Explains setting Jan 1 as a changeover/effective date in a related context—useful for the default U.S. effective date principle when petitions don't specify otherwise.

JCD 1424 (2022) — Cites JCD 1366: GC may regulate process and set conditions for an annual conference's reserved rights (e.g., withdrawal), but those rights remain subject to GC-set processes under ¶16.3.

JCD 1444 (2022) — On proposed annual-conference separation: confirms that such actions require GC-established procedures; GC's full legislative power governs structure/withdrawal mechanics.

Global Ministries/Mission Partnerships — *Authority, property abroad, ecumenical agreements.*

Subtopics: deeds outside U.S., comity.

BOD: ¶¶207-211, ¶2548.2, ¶2551.2

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — Held that the *Book of Discipline* is the church's book of law, governing "ownership, use and disposition of church property."

JCD 127 (1956) — Affirmed General Conference's authority to authorize a jurisdictional conference to elect a missionary bishop "for a specified foreign mission field." (Global mission/episcopal authority abroad.)

JCD 1449 (2022) — Interprets ¶2548.2: may be used only to deed/transfer *property* (not members) to another denomination under a pre-existing written allocation/exchange/comity agreement that has been signed by the Council of Bishops and approved/ratified by General Conference; typically used alongside ecumenical shared ministries (¶¶207–209) or interdenominational mergers (¶2547).

JCD 1509 (2024) — In a Liberia property dispute (United Women in Faith vs. Liberia AC), the Council emphasized that civil courts determine title while church law (trust clause, etc.) governs church use; parties must notify the Council after the civil ruling.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Reaffirmed that connectionalism and the trust clause are bedrock; church property can be released from the trust clause only as authorized by Church law (e.g., not by repurposing ¶2549 to exit). (General property governance that frames any transfer, including in ecumenical contexts.)

Guardrails (Doctrine/Constitution) — *Restrictive Rules, Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, General Rules; doctrinal continuity.*

Subtopics: limits on adaptation and legislation.

BOD: ¶¶18–23, 101, 102–105

Cases:

JCD 142 (1957) — A central conference cannot adapt Discipline in a way that alters doctrinal standards; attempt to remove infant baptism language violated the First Restrictive Rule protecting the Articles of Religion.

JCD 147 (1958) — Central conferences lack authority to change GC-enacted policy; GC cannot delegate its essential legislative power beyond constitutional bounds.

JCD 313 (1972) — Adaptation power does not authorize central or annual conferences to add to or subtract from basic ministerial obligations established by GC.

JCD 904 (2000) — Struck down central-conference adaptations that eliminated required structures (e.g., board of laity; CFA functions); adaptations that contradict GC-mandated structures are unconstitutional.

JCD 1272 (2014) — ¶101 is constitutional; GC may designate which portions of the Discipline are not subject to adaptation by central conferences—consistent with Const. ¶31.5 and GC’s powers.

JCD 1515 (2024) — GC could not, by legislation alone, extend adaptation rights in ¶101 to jurisdictional/“regional” conferences; such authority requires constitutional amendment under ¶¶59–61; severed the unconstitutional part and preserved the rest.

JCD 1210 (2012) & 1378 (2019) — When GC enacts legislation that conflicts with the Constitution, the offending parts are null/void; Judicial Council applies a severability analysis to save constitutional portions. (JCD 1515 cites JCD 1210 and JCD 1378 for this severability test.)

JCD 1366 (2018) — Affirms the principle of legality and the Council’s jurisdiction for pre-enactment constitutional review of proposed legislation when properly requested; legislation must conform to constitutional limits.

H

Hearing Officers/Investigation Procedures — *Investigative, pre-trial processes, evidence, supervision.*

Subtopics: just resolution, confidentiality.

BOD: ¶¶2701–2706

Cases:

JCD 980 (2003) — Reverses a jurisdictional Committee on Appeals and remands to the COI for a new hearing; confirms that the Church may appeal COI decisions that decline to certify charges and that the COI must conduct a proper hearing on the facts.

JCD 1027 (2005) — Summarizes the Judicial Council's step-by-step procedural protections (investigation through appeal) and affirms that those procedures were meticulously followed in the case at hand. Useful as a procedural roadmap for COI matters.

JCD 1296 (2015) — Clarifies that ¶2706 governs COI procedures for clergy even after editorial changes between editions of the Discipline; confirms the COI's broad authority and the Church's right to challenge COI findings at the investigative stage.

JCD 1366 (2018) — While a pre-enactment constitutional review, it re-states controlling investigative-stage principles: (a) the COI transcript shows what occurred before a complaint became a charge, and (b) the Church has an independent right to appeal COI outcomes; an investigative appeal is not a second trial. (Cites JCD 1296; helpful for evidence in the record and standard of review at the COI stage.)

JCD 1315 (2016) — Quotes ¶2701's purpose and underscores fair-process concerns in adjudication; useful for articulating the goal of just resolution and timely disposition and for distinguishing cultural/ethnic considerations in process from hard procedural requirements.

JCD 1318 (2016) — Strikes legislative attempts to impose a mandatory penalty within just resolution language in ¶¶363.1, 2701.5, 2706.5(c)3 as unconstitutional (violates rights to trial/appeal); explains that just resolution is confidential, case-specific, and not a penalty-setting device at supervisory or investigative stages.

JCD 1378 (2019) — In its larger ruling, re-affirms the definition of Just Resolution in ¶2701.5 (focus on repairing harms, accountability, and healing), which is useful when drafting/assessing just-resolution agreements.

JCD 1494 (2024) — Addresses questions arising in the supervisory and judicial phases (including facilitated just resolution). Though primarily about what a bishop may rule as a "question of law," it confirms these are judicial-process issues that belong within JC review, informing who may initiate/deny facilitation and where such disputes are decided.

JCD 1239 (2013) — In reviewing episcopal proceedings, affirms that due/fair process was followed and notes that a confidential just-resolution-type agreement can end the complaint process, which is often cited for the effect of confidential resolution on further proceedings. (Analogous authority for confidentiality/closure principles.)

Housing/Parsonage — *Standards, allowances, occupancy, sale.*

Subtopics: clergy tax implications (note: civil law), use agreements.

BOD: ¶¶2542–2543, 338, 342

Cases:

JCD 664 (1991) — ¶2542 strictly prohibits mortgaging a church building or parsonage to cover current expenses and bars using principal sale proceeds for current expenses (including emergency repairs).

JCD 688 (1993) — Property actions around mergers/closures must follow ¶¶2542–2543 procedures; annual conference trustees administer/ dispose of property under Discipline.

JCD 1421 (2022) — In a disaffiliation context: no deed/sale may be closed before required conference ratification; trustees acted unlawfully by closing sale prior to annual-

conference approval (useful procedural guardrail for any church property sale workflow).

JCD 510 (1982) — Under the specific facts presented, a member of a clergy couple could not be deprived of a housing allowance even if the spouse had access to a parsonage; withholding was discriminatory based on marital status.

JCD 547 (1984) — Declares housing or a housing allowance is *not* part of compensation or remuneration for church-law purposes; confirms GC's authority to define this; distinguishes 510's fact-specific ruling.

JCD 562 (1986) — An annual conference may not make individual housing for each member of a clergy couple a “matter of right” contrary to the Discipline; reaffirms no discrimination by marital status.

JCM 588 (1987) — Upholds a bishop's ruling that JCDs 547 & 562 control and are binding on annual-conference housing policies (cannot contradict the Discipline/JCDs).

I

Interpretation — *Canon of statutory construction, primacy of legal text, plain meaning.*

Subtopics: supersession, errata, editorial revision of the *Discipline*.

BOD: ¶101, ¶2611.

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — The Discipline is the Church's only official and authoritative book of law; GC's enacted text governs church life.

JCD 242 (1966) — Early merger-era application of harmonization: constitutional text (Article IV) should be construed in harmony with the Plan of Union's enabling legislation during the transitional period.

JCD 424 (1977) — Applies two rules of statutory construction: (1) *Last-in-Time* rule that in case of direct conflict between two items of legislation adopted by the same body the later action prevails; and (2) *General/Specific* rule that as between general and specific legislation the latter controls.

JCD 458 (1979) — Uses the whole-text / *in pari materia* canon: related paragraphs must be read together and the *Discipline* interpreted as a whole (here, in the context of GCFA authority and church property).

JCD 1032 (2005) — Confirms the Council's limited interpretive role and applies a *text-first* approach: where the Discipline grants discretion, it “says so in clear and unmistakable terms.” Useful for the plain-meaning / expressio unius principle.

JCD 1328 (2016) — States the rule: “The starting point of legal interpretation is the text of the relevant provisions in the Discipline, particularly the words used therein and their plain meaning.” (Quoted subsequently by later cases.)

JCD 1361 (2018) — Applies negative implication / *expressio unius* and “don't add words”: because ¶¶2718.3–4 do not mention the clergy session, none may be read in; the new interlocutory administrative appeal stays specified actions without clergy-session action.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Articulates the principle of legality for interpreting and reviewing legislation: church law must be clear, consistent, and uniformly applied; GC may prescribe/proscribe conduct but cannot contradict itself; proposed legislation affecting

rights must include definite standards. Affirms and applies JCD 1328's plain-meaning rule and distinguishes "proposed legislation" from "constitutional amendments" by textual reading.

JCD 1445 — Dates mean what they say: interpreting ¶406.1, newly elected bishops begin assignments on Sept. 1; COB may call jurisdictional conferences and, if timing requires, use interim assignments until Sept. 1.

JCD 1449 (2022) — Re-states the canon verbatim (citing JCD 1328, *aff'd*, JCD 1366) and then resolves ¶2548.2 by close textual analysis (who the "duly qualified and authorized representatives" are, grammar/usage, etc.). JCD 1328 — Applies ordinary-meaning analysis in construing what it means to "nominate," holding an annual conference may not override Discipline provisions that require certain agencies to elect their own officers.

JCD 1472 — Plain-meaning canon controls: the phrase "not required" ≠ "not permitted." Thus, annual conferences may hold limited elections to fill vacancies in GC delegations under specified conditions.

Itineracy — *Open itinerancy principles, security of appointment (aka "guaranteed appointment"), leave types.*

Subtopics: missional needs vs. personal preference.

BOD: ¶¶338–348, 425–430

Cases:

JCD 492 (1980) — Right to appointment & conference liability if a member in good standing isn't appointed. Establishes the expectation that clergy in good standing receive an appointment; addresses financial responsibility for failure to appoint.

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation is mandatory and is an exchange of ideas; COB must inquire annually about implementation. Consultation precedes the bishop's decision; parties must be informed before public announcement.

JCD 556 (1985) — Cooperative parish appointments require defined, pre-appointment consultation steps. Clarifies due process and consultation when placing a pastor in a cooperative parish setting.

JCD 701 (1993) — Consultation is advisory (no veto) and must occur before the appointment decision; notify parties before any public announcement. Reaffirms JCD 101's "exchange of ideas" definition.

JCD 1174 (2010) — Restates the mandatory nature of consultation in light of then-¶431 and its non-notification character. Affirms bishop's decision where consultation met the Discipline's requirements.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops possess the constitutional authority to "make and fix" appointments after consulting DSs; *that authority isn't delegated to others.*

JCD 380 (1973) — Security of appointment is not stated as an explicit constitutional right, but it is implicit in constitutional provisions and the historic itinerant system. Early anchor for guaranteed appointment doctrine.

JCD 1226 (2012) — General Conference's 2012 attempt to abolish security of appointment was unconstitutional. Upholds long-standing security of appointment for elders and associate members as integral to itinerant superintendency and fair process. (UMNS coverage also summarizes the holding.)

JCD 1031 (2005) — Involuntary leave of absence: procedural defects required termination of the involuntary leave; *remanded to end the action “forthwith.”* Illuminates notice, voting, and process at clergy session.

JCD 1355 (2017) — Involuntary leave is prospective; requires a two-thirds clergy-session vote each year and cannot be imposed retroactively. Clarifies supermajority and timing.

Involuntary Leave/Transitional Leaves — *Medical, family, sabbatical, personal leaves, administrative location.*

Subtopics: benefits, supervision during leave.

BOD: ¶¶353–360

Cases:

JCD 1031 (2005) — Clergy session action placing an elder on involuntary leave of absence based on judicial-complaint specifications was null and void; BOOM/CRC lacked authority to convert an administrative complaint into a judicial one. Remedy: immediate reinstatement, appointment, and retroactive salary/benefits.

JCD 1032 (2005) — Companion case describing the procedural path (admin complaint → clergy session) and noting the two-thirds vote occurred; references JCD 1031 for the defects. Useful for reconstructing supervision → clergy session flow in leave cases.

JCD 1355 (2017) — Involuntary leave votes are prospective, require a two-thirds clergy-session supermajority each year, and cannot be retroactive. Compensation when an interim action is invalid looks to equitable minimum compensation. (Affirmed bishop’s ruling.)

JCD 1383 (2019) — The administrative processes in the 2016 BOD for involuntary leave (¶354), involuntary retirement (¶357.3), administrative location (¶359), and discontinuance from provisional membership (¶327.6) were unconstitutional, null and void for violating fair and unbiased process—prospective effect only. (Key for how cabinets/BOOM supervise and route cases.)

JCM 1408 (2021) — Clarifies who may vote at clergy session after JCD 1383: individuals involved earlier (cabinet, BOOM, conference relations committee, administrative review committee) may not vote on those admin matters (¶¶354, 357.3, 359, 327.6), to preserve fair process.

JCD 485 (1980) — Administrative location provisions (then ¶449.2) are constitutionally valid when read with related paragraphs; they do not deprive a minister of the right to trial. (Baseline authority for today’s ¶359.)

JCD 1273 (2014) — Notes that 2012 legislative changes creating “Transitional Leave” never took effect for these facts because JCD 1226 (2012) later voided that legislative scheme; transitional leave path relied upon was therefore invalid. (Use for historical clarity when older cases cite “transitional leave.”)

JCD 473 (1980) — Addresses whether clergy on Sabbatical Leave, Disability Leave, or Leave of Absence may participate in / be candidates for election to General/Jurisdictional Conference—used as a touchstone on rights while on leave.

J

Judicial Council (Jurisdiction/Procedure) — *What JC can/can't decide, advisory opinions, docket, reconsideration.*

Subtopics: standing, timeliness, mootness.

BOD: ¶¶56–59, 2601–2612

Cases:

JCD 301 (1968) — Judicial Council lacks jurisdiction over a declaratory request unless the matter both (1) concerns the constitutionality/meaning/application/effect of the Discipline and (2) directly affects the petitioning body or “the work therein.”

JCD 452 (1979) — A general agency lacked standing where the issue did not directly and tangibly affect its work; strict construction of JC’s limited declaratory jurisdiction.

JCD 463 (1979) — Restates the two-prong trigger for declaratory jurisdiction (above); often quoted as the canonical test.

JCD 1331 (2015) — Questions about constitutionality/meaning/application/effect of the Discipline fall exclusively to the Judicial Council under ¶2610; bishops may not give substantive rulings on such matters as “decisions of law.”

JCD 1378 (2019) — When General Conference refers a matter only on constitutionality, JC’s review is limited to that scope (not meaning/application/effect).

JCD 1454 (2023) — Reaffirms: a bishop may not issue a substantive ruling on a request that is, in essence, a petition for declaratory decision; that is JC’s lane under ¶2610.

JCD 1494 (2024) — Same rule; also cautions against bishops offering legislative “remedy” commentary in rulings of law (separation of powers).

JCM 1475 (2023)/JCD 1481 (2023) — JC lacks authority to review parliamentary matters (order/agenda/decision-making procedures). That’s a settled line (citing JCDs 898, 941, 1117, 1131, 1252, 1187, 1205, 1356, 1339, 1458, 1460, 1463, 1474).

JCD 1304 (2015) — Requests for declaratory rulings presented as questions of law are moot/hypothetical; bishops should not answer them substantively.

JCM 1407 (2021) — JC declined to issue an advance/advisory ruling on proposed legislation; such requests are premature and outside proper posture.

JCD 87 (1952) — Early statement of standing and the no-moot/hypothetical rule; only duly authorized bodies may seek declaratory rulings.

JCD 301 (1968)/JCD 452 (1979) — Standing is tied to whether the matter directly and tangibly affects the petitioner’s work (“work therein”).

JCD 1113 (2009) — A proper question of law must be in writing, raised during the session’s regular business, and germane to specific action taken or to be taken.

JCD 799 (1997) — Questions tied to completed trials are moot; any question must relate to business under consideration at the session.

JCD 1294 (2015)/Mem. 1279 — Reiterates the in-writing and germaneness requirements; otherwise the question is moot/hypothetical.

JCD 1434 (2022) — A “request” that states grounds but poses no actual question is not a question of law under ¶2609.6.

JCD 1431 (2022) — Valid requests must “state the connection to a specific action”; may not presuppose future action (anticipatory).

JCD 33 (1946) — Foundational: moot or hypothetical questions shall not be decided.

JCD 937 (2002) — Bishop need not answer moot/hypothetical questions.

JCD 1393 (2017) — No future-contingent (what-if) questions; must be tied to actual action.

JCD 1464 (2023) — Example of reversing a bishop for answering a moot/hypothetical question.

JCD 1514 (2024) — Again: question was moot/hypothetical for failing to connect to specific conference action.

Jurisdictional & Central Conferences — *Powers, boundaries, elections, committees on appeal, judicial courts.*

Subtopics: adaptation power, regional disciplines, episcopal elections.

BOD: ¶¶24–32, 513–567

Cases:

JCD 28 (1944) — Jurisdictional conferences determine annual-conference boundaries; may not delegate that power.

JCD 57 (1948) — Bishops (not the jurisdictional COE) fix episcopal-area boundaries; any requirement of COE consent is unconstitutional.

JCD 517 (1982) — Any statute purporting to let a jurisdictional conference fix episcopal-area boundaries by final action is unconstitutional; that power belongs to the bishops.

JCD 1312 (2016) — Traces the constitutional history of who fixes AC/episcopal-area boundaries and affirms the constitutional framework governing assignments/boundaries after amendments.

JCD 1451 (2022) — The 2024 session was the *postponed 2020 GC*; the *reserved right* of the annual conference to elect GC/jurisdictional/central delegates (Const. ¶33) is a cornerstone and cannot be abrogated.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Annual conferences *may* elect to fill vacancies only after reserve delegates are depleted; also addressed quadrennial scheduling implications.

JCM 1485 (2023) — Reiterates: no new delegate elections except the narrow vacancy/depletion scenario.

JCD 1479 (2023) — After AC mergers, legacy AC delegations may nominate jurisdictional COE members until replaced by delegates of the merged AC.

JCD 1445 (2022) — Council of Bishops may set dates for jurisdictional conferences to hold episcopal elections/assignments; 781 cited re: effective dates.

JCD 1341 (2017) — One jurisdiction/central conference may not challenge another's episcopal election; appeals must come from the conference where the act occurred (¶2609.3).

JCD 310 (1969) — Addresses membership/structure of the Jurisdictional Committee on Appeals (legacy Methodist/UMC jurisprudence).

JCD 17 (1944) — Early Methodist-era ruling touching costs/administration related to jurisdictional committees on appeal.

JCD 1476 (2023) — Clarifies order of appeals on questions of law (DS → bishop → JC; from a central conference directly to JC).

JCD 142 (1957) — Central conferences' adaptation power cannot alter doctrines (example: infant baptism); adaptations are subject to the Constitution.

JCD 147 (1958) — Further limits on central-conference changes that would contravene the Constitution/Discipline.

JCD 313 (1969) — Central conferences may not delegate to ACs the authority to add/subtract ministerial qualifications pre-empted by GC.

JCD 904 (2000) — Explains scope of central-conference judicial courts and that adaptation authority is limited and subject to GC.

JCD 1272 (2014) — ¶101 is valid law; reaffirms the constitutional architecture of adaptation (¶31.5) and Standing Committee roles.

JCD 1515 (2024) — GC cannot extend adaptation rights to jurisdictions by ordinary legislation; adaptation for jurisdictions requires constitutional change. (Cites 142, 147, 313, 904.)

JCD 1518 (2025) — Clarifies ¶2610.2(d): a College of Bishops may request declaratory decisions on matters “relating to the jurisdictions,” referencing Const. ¶¶28, 49–50 (jurisdictional/central conference powers & episcopacy).

L

Laity (Rights & Roles) — *Voting, leadership, lay supply.*

Subtopics: equalization of delegates, lay speakers/servants.

BOD: ¶14.1, ¶33, ¶¶126–132, ¶¶266–271, ¶318

Cases:

JCD 109 (1954) — An official/quarterly board cannot instruct lay (or reserve) members how to vote at the Annual Conference.

JCD 113 (1955) — Defines what counts as a pastoral charge for electing lay members to the Annual Conference.

JCD 305 (1968) — Addresses failure to elect/seat a lay member; confirms quadrennial basis of lay membership terms.

JCD 342 (1971) — A lay member elected on a quadrennial basis has the right to complete the four-year term.

JCD 469 (1979) — AC may not require a tithing covenant as a qualification for lay officers or GC/JC/Central Conference delegates.

JCD 883 (2000) — Only Annual Conference lay members control lay delegate elections; pre-AC nomination/endorsement slates that influence the vote are unconstitutional.

JCD 1436 (2022) — An annual conference may limit district-level endorsement votes so that only laity vote for lay candidates (mirroring the Constitution’s clergy-for-clergy / laity-for-laity rule).

JCD 553 (1985) — Invalidates “across-the-board” equalization not grounded in the Discipline/Constitution; equalization must follow constitutional parameters.

JCD 1432 (2022) — Affirms an AC’s rule that equalization of lay voters can be handled in its organizational motion and by conference rule, consistent with the Constitution.

JCD 112 (1955) — An approved supply pastor cannot be elected as a *lay* member of the Annual Conference.

JCD 136 (1956) — ACs cannot grant voting rights to supply pastors as if they were laypersons; preserves clergy/laity voting boundaries.

JCD 622 (1989) — ACs may not add extra eligibility requirements for election as lay member beyond what the Constitution/Discipline provides.

JCD 658 (1991) — Part-time local pastors and student local pastors are not eligible to be elected as *lay* members of the Annual Conference.

JCD 815 (1997) — A Conference Board of Laity (or equivalent) is mandatory in every AC; must maintain the required functions and connections (incl. Lay Speaking/Servant ministries).

JCD 924 (2001) — Declares unconstitutional a rule that mandates the conference director of Lay Speaking and district youth as members of the AC; such membership requirements must be in the Constitution.

Leave of Absence/Family/Medical — *Grants, duration, supervision.*

Subtopics: return to service, benefits.

BOD: ¶¶354–357

Cases:

JCD 689 (1993) — Clarifies roles and due process in leave matters: clergy have fair-process rights; DS/Bishop cannot unilaterally impose/continue leave; notes limits (e.g., five-year rule tolled while on leave).

JCD 777 (1996) — Strong admonition that administrative (leave) processes must strictly follow fair-process steps; lack of diligence causes irreparable harm.

JCD 782 (1996) — Involuntary LOA must be: requested in writing; approved annually; limited to three consecutive years; passed by 2/3 clergy-session vote; clergy on involuntary LOA remain entitled to certain benefits and appointment rights contexts.

JCD 806 (1997) — When an elder was illegally denied appointment/placed on leave, the remedy includes equitable salary and other benefits for the affected year.

JCD 915 (2001) — If a clergyperson seeks to end voluntary LOA and the BOM won't restore, the conference must either terminate LOA or begin involuntary processes; orders equitable compensation, insurance, housing, pension and benefits until appointment or ineligibility.

JCD 995 (2004) — Reverses involuntary LOA for fair-process defects; orders immediate appointment with retroactive salary and benefits.

JCD 1156 (2010) — On return from voluntary LOA, the BOM may not impose extra-disciplinary conditions; clergy retain appointment rights; due-process protections apply.

JCD 1216 (2012) — “Voluntary” LOA obtained under duress is invalid; bishop’s permissions can’t be tied to BOM remedial steps; restore status and benefits when coercion is found.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Transitional leave legislation mishandled at GC 2012; restores prior ¶ on transitional leave (part of LOA family).

JCD 1355 (2017) — Two distinct votes for involuntary LOA: prospective (2/3) and retroactive (simple majority) to confirm interim actions; if retroactive approval fails, back-pay uses equitable minimum compensation.

JCD 1361 (2018) — During administrative appeals on status (incl. involuntary LOA), clergy remain in good standing and entitled to appointment; clergy-session action is stayed until appeal resolved.

JCD 1383 (2019) — Declares the administrative process leading to involuntary LOA (and certain other status changes) in the 2016 BoD unconstitutional for violating fair process; those administrative provisions are null and void.

Local Church (Organization & Council) — *Required committees, minutes, reporting.*

Subtopics: single-board model, simplification.

BOD: ¶¶243–258

Cases:

JCD 1507 (2024) — A church council cannot bypass the church/charge conference to close a church; council actions remain subject to conference processes (¶2549).

JCD 706 (1994) — An Administrative Board may set/change local policy, but only within the Discipline; local policies (e.g., finance) must comply with church law.

JCD 1476 (2023) — When a written question of law is raised at a charge conference, the DS must rule; the secretary must include the written request and ruling in the minutes and send certified copies to the annual conference secretary.

JCD 1443 (2022) — Reiterates the same multi-step process: DS ruling required; charge-conference minutes must include the request & ruling; certified copies must be sent on.

JCD 1126 (2009) — A retired elder may serve as chair of the local church finance committee; any tension with council roles is resolved by the Discipline (then ¶252.5d).

JCD 109 (1954) — An Official Board/Quarterly Conference (early predecessors of today's council/charge conference) may not instruct its lay member(s) how to vote at annual conference—delegates must be free; a foundational limit on council authority.

JCD 592 (1988) — An annual conference likewise cannot require GC/JC delegates to report how they voted; cites JCD 109's principle of delegate freedom. (Useful context for how councils/charge conferences report about delegates rather than controlling them.)

JCD 320 (1969) — The treasurer disburses per the local budget and presents apportionments to the finance committee; the Administrative Board (now council) adopts the budget—key for reporting/accountability lines.

JCD 63 (1949) — A local church may not designate all benevolence receipts to one category; designated giving must be divided per the annual conference ratio—shaping council/finance practices and reports.

JCD 539 (1984) — Short-term investment of benevolence funds can be permissible, but diverting budgeted benevolence funds is not; frames what the council/finance team may report/do with such monies.

JCD 1461 (2023) — Affirms limits around using proceeds from closed church property and underscores honoring restrictions on assets; informs local trustees/finance and how they report to the council.

JCD 976 (2003) — Donor intent on designated funds must be honored; cannot be repurposed for other uses—reinforces ¶258.4.f practice for finance reports to the council/charge conference.

JCD 1516 (2025) — Clarifies the pastor's authority to determine use of church property for religious services (including weddings); neither trustees nor council can prohibit or compel such services—sets boundaries for boards/councils.

M

Mediation & Just Resolution — *Standards, confidentiality, enforceability.*

Subtopics: scope of agreements, transparency.

BOD: ¶363, ¶¶2701–2706

Cases:

JCD 972 (2003) — Confidentiality is binding in administrative/judicial matters. The Council states “all persons involved in administrative or judicial proceedings are bound by confidentiality,” and changing counsel does not waive it.

JCD 869 (1999) — Confidential handling of complaints. Affirms that complaint processes are to be handled confidentially (then-¶706; ¶2626.3(e)); also references older precedent (e.g., JCD 751).

JCD 1239 (2013) — Finality/enforceability of a Just Resolution. Once a just resolution agreement is reached, “the complaint process ended”; the respondent forfeits further fair-process rights tied to that complaint.

JCD 1315 (2016) — Breach of a Just Resolution can be a chargeable offense. The record reflects agreement that violating a Just Resolution constitutes “disobedience to the order and discipline.”

JCD 1318 (2016) — Standards & confidentiality; “not a judicial proceeding”; penalties only by trial court unless voluntary resolution. Explains that seeking a just resolution is not an administrative/judicial proceeding and carries a guarantee of confidentiality; unless the respondent voluntarily agrees to a Just Resolution, penalties may only be imposed after a trial-court finding of guilt.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Unconstitutional to include “specific or minimum penalties” or mandatory promises into the complaint/supervisory *stage*. Reaffirms that penalties belong to the trial court and strikes language (the “commitment not to repeat” sentence) as unconstitutional.

JCD 1377 (2019) — Pre-GC2019 clean-up of amended petitions. Declares certain amended petitions unconstitutional and reaffirms the 1366 principles leading into the GC2019 review.

JCD 1378 (2019) — Defines Just Resolution content & scope; trims the unconstitutional “commitment not to repeat.” Holds Petition 90045 constitutional except the second sentence (“Where the respondent acknowledges...commitment not to repeat”), while keeping requirements that (a) all parties may name/acknowledge harm; (b) complainant is a party; (c) written process agreement including confidentiality; (d) written statement of terms; (e) agreement on what may be disclosed to third parties; (f) a just resolution agreed by all parties is a final disposition.

JCD 1484 (2023) — Post-resolution oversight involving bishops. Confirms constitutionality of ¶413.3d(ii) & (iv): panels may handle episcopal complaints and the Council of Bishops may remove a complaint at any time, including after a just resolution (2/3 vote).

Membership in Conference (Readmission/Reinstatement) — *Return after withdrawal, surrender, termination.*

Subtopics: time limits, evidence of fitness.

BOD: ¶¶365–369

Cases:

JCD 691 (1993) — Withdrawal under complaint is effective immediately; trial rights terminate; also clarifies mediation standards.

JCD 696 (1993) — A person cannot belong to another denomination and remain a UMC member (cited recently re: dual affiliation).

JCD 741 (1994) — If the “withdrawal under complaint” was based on a grievance time-barred by the statute of limitations, the withdrawal is a nullity (void).

JCD 753 (1995) — Applies JCD 741: invalid withdrawal under complaint requires restoration of status and appropriate compensation.

JCD 798 (1996) — Affirms validity of a voluntary surrender/withdrawal when proper processes were followed in Minnesota case.

JCD 1055 (2006) — Reiterates: withdrawal under complaint is immediately effective; but where no valid complaint existed (e.g., time-barred), it is not converted into a voluntary withdrawal (ties together JCD 691, 741, 753, 798).

JCD 1482 (2023) — Clergy who withdraw (e.g., to serve a disaffiliating church) do not automatically surrender credentials unless disciplinary action is pending/initiated.

JCD 552 (1985) — Readmission following surrender must be to the *same* annual conference (or its legal successor) where credentials were surrendered.

JCD 515 (1982) — Annual conference cannot consider readmission without a Board of Ordained Ministry recommendation (process/evidence gatekeeping).

JCD 384 (1974) — Addresses restoration of credentials in connection with readmission for those previously (pre-1972) involuntarily located.

JCD 18 (1944) — Early authority on restoration of ministerial credentials and the limits/steps involved (evidence and certification requirements).

JCM 780 (1996) — Readmission process (then ¶457) may not be waived; proper disciplinary steps are required.

JCM 810 (1997) — On fair-process/surrender; includes the (ill-advised) claim that surrender is “the shortest way back,” highlighting that readmission has defined, non-waivable steps.

Mergers & Unions (Local Churches) — *Process, property, liabilities, name, records.*

Subtopics: discontinuance vs. merger, successor entity.

BOD: ¶¶2546–2547

Cases:

JCD 688 (1993) — Affirms that actions regarding *merger or discontinuance* must follow the specific Discipline processes; notes state-law compliance and ties to how property/records are handled when a church is discontinued/abandoned.

JCD 1449 (2022) — Clarifies ¶2548.2 is a *property-transfer* tool only and cannot move members; if an interdenominational outcome is intended, use the proper merger process in ¶2547 (or ecumenical shared ministries), then apply ¶2548.2 only for deeding property. Helpful when “union” with another denomination is being considered.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Closure under ¶2549 cannot be used as a “gracious exit” for a congregation to leave with property; closure is about churches that are no longer functioning per the Discipline, and property vests in the annual conference trustees.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Reiterates 1512 in reversing a ruling that tried to treat “closure” as a vehicle for separation while retaining property; confirms misuse of ¶2549 contradicts the Trust Clause and connectional polity.

JCD 1518 (2025) — News summary confirming again that church closures cannot be a back door for exits now that temporary disaffiliation is gone.

JCD 456 (1979) — On a discontinued church: unpaid pastoral salary obligations and records handling; details that records/legal papers are to be collected and deposited

with conference authorities; also addresses funds and proceeds under conference direction.

JCD 143 (1957) — Sale of abandoned church property must be authorized by the annual conference in session as an ecclesiastical body (not merely the incorporated conference entity). Key authority point when disposing assets post-discontinuance.

JCD 138 (1957) — Confirms annual conference trustees' authority over funds/assets of a discontinued church (e.g., societies' funds), underscoring conference control after discontinuance.

JCD 119 (1955) — Confirms standing rules of an annual conference govern proceeds from sale of abandoned church property, again anchoring conference control.

JCD 399 (1975) — Cited historically regarding restrictions on use of sale/mortgage proceeds (capital vs. current expenses); appears in the Discipline's property notes alongside 688; helpful background when apportioning proceeds.

JCD 962 (2003) — A missionary conference may discontinue a church; emphasizes the conference's authority and that confidentiality around closure deliberations is permissible while informing the local church of actions taken—useful procedural color for discontinuance.

N

Nominations & Leadership Development — *Composition, diversity, election methods.*

Subtopics: at-large members, conflict of interests.

BOD: ¶¶243-244, 247, 249, 258, 610

Cases:

JCD 130 (1956) — Local church elections: affirms the electing body's right to choose trustees and that rotation policies can't bar re-election; quotes show nominations may come "from the floor" as well as the nominating committee.

JCD 1328 (2016) — Annual conference nominating committee may not nominate chairpersons/officers of agencies that the Discipline assigns to elect their own officers (BOM, Trustees, Pensions, CFA). Clarifies scope/limits of nominating bodies.

JCD 1339 (2017) — Conflict of interest: a staff member of the conference was ineligible for nomination to the Conference Leadership Team; decisions must be made to avoid conflicts with personal/financial interests.

JCD 1427 (2022) — Composition (youth/young adults) & district at-large lay members: addresses eligibility and constitutional limits around waiving membership/participation requirements and rules about voting on district at-large lay members to annual conference.

JCD 1432 (2022) — Equalization / at-large lay members: confirms an annual conference may adopt rules to equalize lay and clergy membership (e.g., through at-large lay members) consistent with ¶32.

JCD 1436 (2022) — Election methods: an annual conference may require clergy to vote only for clergy candidates and laity only for lay candidates in district-level endorsement/election processes.

JCD 1497 (2024) — Nominations & representation at the general-church level: affirms floor nominations must be permitted for the Commission on the General Conference and

stresses gender representation; helpful precedent on openness of nomination processes and diversity aims.

New Church Starts/Church Plants — *Organization, chartering, property.*

Subtopics: mission congregations, preaching points.

BOD: ¶¶259, 2529–2533

Cases:

JCD 372 (1973) — Affiliate/associate members cannot vote in the charge/church conference. Relevant when you’re assembling who may vote at an organizing or chartering conference.

JCD 500 (1981) — Pastor is not an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees or the P/SPRC; clarifies pastoral ex-officio limits as you stand up initial governance.

JCD 143 (1957) — The annual conference (ecclesiastical session) must authorize sale of abandoned church property; sets who has authority when repurposing assets (often toward new starts).

JCD 688 (1993) — Explains how closure/discontinuance works and the required consents (bishop, majority of DSSs, and district Board of Church Location & Building) before an annual conference takes action; foundational for property processes that can fund/house new plants.

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 is only for deeding property to another denomination under a written, pre-existing comity/ allocation agreement; cannot be used to move a congregation’s membership. Clarifies the narrow path for property transfers.

JCD 1490 (2023) — Reinforces that interim closure/transfer must follow Discipline-mandated processes; highlights the role of the board of trustees and conference actions in property control.

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 (closure) cannot be used for disaffiliation; restates the purpose and guardrails of the closure/property process and the trust clause—important background for any property realignment tied to planting.

O

Orders (Elders/Deacons) & Fellowship — *Rights/obligations, accountability to BOM/AC.*

BOD: ¶¶33–36, ¶¶301–314, ¶¶328–336, ¶602

Subtopics: voice/vote rights, executive session.

Cases:

JCD 690 (1993): Clergy session may vote on all matters of ordination, character, and conference relations; not limited to BOM recommendations.

JCD 1181 (2011): Who may vote to elect clergy delegates (¶35)—deacons/elders in full connection, associate members, certain provisional members, and qualifying local pastors. (Frequently cited when AC voting categories are discussed.)

JCD 1368 (2019): A bishop cannot prevent the clergy session from exercising its responsibilities or exclude candidates; preserves clergy session’s independence.

JCD 1383 (2019): Fair-process ruling—individuals involved in referring/adjudicating/reviewing an administrative complaint (e.g.,

Cabinet/CRC/ARC/BOM participants) may not vote on its final disposition in the clergy session.

JCM 1408 (2021): Clarifies how conferences can operate pending GC fixes after JCD 1383; inserts explicit non-voting language for Cabinet/BOM/CRC/ARC in clergy-session actions on involuntary status.

JCD 1419 (2021): Confirms JCD 1383 applies prospectively; also applies JCD 1361 on timing (see below).

JCD 1436 (2022): Addresses clergy voting rights in district-level endorsement processes (Indiana AC)—relevant to broader election/voting rights for clergy.

JCD 1510 (2024): (Related to AC composition/voice & vote) Interprets constitutional voice/vote for active deaconesses/home missionaries as lay members of the AC—useful when mapping overall AC voting categories alongside ¶602.

JCD 1330 (2016): BOM is required to ascertain that candidates meet all qualifications; bishop may not refuse to rule on proper questions of law about BOM compliance.

JCD 1344 (2017): Reaffirms/expands: BOM must conduct a careful, thorough examination covering all relevant ¶¶ (e.g., ¶¶304–310) before recommending candidates.

JCD 1366 (2018): In evaluating Traditional Plan petitions, again underscores BOM’s duty to examine candidates thoroughly; rejects certain extra-certification schemes—useful for delineating BOM scope and limits.

JCD 917 (2001): Separation-of-powers protections around BOM processes when DS/bishop are involved; details limits to preserve fair process.

JCM 950 (2002): Applies JCD 917—DS/bishop may not participate with presence/voice/vote in certain BOM executive-committee hearings on involuntary statuses.

JCD 1361 (2018): Interlocutory administrative appeals: clergy session may not vote on an involuntary status recommendation while a timely appeal is pending (stays in effect), except discontinuance from provisional membership.

Ordination Standards — *Vows, examinations, theology and practice requirements.*

Subtopics: educational waivers, transfer from other denominations.

BOD: ¶¶304–330, ¶¶335–336, ¶¶346–348

Cases:

JCD 72 (1950) — Clarifies education timing/requirements (course of study vs. graduate work) for ministerial candidates.

JCD 157 (1959) — Upholds Board of the Ministry’s duty in examining candidates and the conference’s authority amid concerns about vows/conduct.

JCD 313 (1969) — General Conference sets *standards/qualifications* for admission to ministry; annual conferences apply them.

JCD 318 (1969) — Annual conferences may not *add extra obligations* to ministerial candidates beyond the Discipline.

JCD 344 (1971) — A conference may admit to *full connection* without a BOM recommendation *only* if Disciplinary requirements are met (and the conference must verify them).

JCD 444 (1978) — On recognition of orders/transfer from other denominations: outlines the conference and BOM roles (credentials examined; recognition recorded).

JCD 542 (1984) — Reaffirms: conferences decide *whether candidates meet the qualifications* for ordination.

JCD 544 (1984) — Addresses constitutionality of then-¶402.2 (historic ban language) and again notes the conference's deciding role; see also its cross-reference to 542.

JCD 696 (1993) — No dual membership in two denominations for clergy; relevant to transfers/recognition issues under ¶¶335–336, 347.

JCD 702 (1993) — Cites the same principle as 542: GC sets standards; conferences determine if they're met (context includes the then-definition issues around ¶304.3).

JCD 984 (2004) — Interprets the *meaning and application* of (then) ¶304.3 in ordination standards and related charges.

JCD 985 (2004) — In the Dammann matter: confirms limits of JC review and that a bishop may not appoint someone a trial court has found in violation of (then) ¶304.3.

JCD 1199 (2011) — On full connection and the clergy session's role in admission/examination (frequently cited alongside 157 & 344 in GBOD materials).

JCD 1330 (2016) — BOM must conduct careful, thorough, and Disciplinary-compliant examinations; may neither disregard nor add to standards.

JCD 1344 (2017) — Reaffirms BOM's duty to *examine in breadth and depth* and the clergy session's limits; restates 1330's requirements.

JCD 1366 (2018) — (Traditional Plan review) repeats that GC sets standards while conferences determine compliance; clarifies process/accountability references used by BOM and clergy sessions.

P

Parish/Charge Alignment — *Multiple-point charges, yoked parishes, cooperative parishes.*

Subtopics: ecumenical shared ministries, governance arrangements, finances.

BOD: ¶¶205–206, ¶¶207–211

Cases:

JCD 319 (1969) — Defines "charge" and confirms only the charge conference elects lay members to annual conference; helpful when a single pastoral charge includes multiple congregations.

JCD 320 (1969) — On distribution of funds by a pastoral charge treasurer; emphasizes proportional, disciplined handling of monies at the charge level.

JCD 372 (1973) — Affiliate/associate members of a local church may not vote in the administrative board, chargeconference, or church conference (governance composition across a multi-church charge).

JCD 556 (1985) — In cooperative parish ministries, the bishop/cabinet must consult the cooperative-parish coordinator/director in appointment-making; core procedural guardrail for cooperative arrangements.

JCD 688 (1993) — Clarifies handling of local church property and proceeds (merger/relocation/closure contexts) with references to ¶¶2503, 2542, 2548; relevant when restructuring or consolidating multi-point charges.

Memorandum 701 (1993) — Consultation in the appointment process: affirms consultation is mandatory and advisory to the bishop; P/SPRC has no veto; consultation

occurs before appointments are announced. Useful when structuring appointments across multi-point/cooperative settings.

JCM 1211 (2012) — Procedural deferral on guaranteed appointment changes: records GC's request for a declaratory decision and JC's deferral to the fall docket; background on appointment-system governance while you craft cooperative staffing models.

JCM 1301 (2015) — Cabinet/DS roles & conference structures: upholds a bishop's ruling that an annual conference may not adopt structures that contradict the Discipline; clarifies that the bishop facilitates/administers the appointment process and DSs assist (they don't run it). Governance anchor when designing cooperative-parish oversight.

JCM 1448 (2022) — Jurisdiction & conference actions: court lacked jurisdiction where no proper question of law/declaratory request was before it, in a case involving a conference resolution to withdraw. Reinforces that structural changes (including complex alignments/mergers) must follow Disciplinary procedures and proper legal posture.

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 is only a property-deeding mechanism and may be used with/after processes like interdenominational mergers (¶2547) or ecumenical shared ministries (¶¶207–209); not a disaffiliation path. (Ties directly to your BOD ¶¶207–211 subtopic.)

JCD 1507 (2024) — Strikes GC 2024 changes that let a church council initiate closure; reaffirms the constitutional primacy of the charge conference within a pastoral charge (governance).

JCM 1508 (2024) — Scope of JC jurisdiction at jurisdictional bodies: again finds no jurisdiction over a NEJ request about delegate eligibility to other conferences when the record didn't show the matter was germane to regular business. Helpful guardrail for governance process questions around alignment.

JCM 1511 (2024) — Which paragraph to use for exits/closures: JC lacks jurisdiction under ¶2610 to tell an annual conference which paragraph (e.g., ¶2549) it may use; points parties to Decision 1512 for the meaning/application of ¶2549 (now central to closure/asset handling, often implicated in parish realignments).

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 (closure) cannot be repurposed as a back-door disaffiliation; upon closure, assets vest in AC trustees and membership plans contemplate transfer to another UMC congregation (alignment/realignment impact).

JCD 1518 (2025) — Voids a conference's alternative exit process; reiterates that using closure to facilitate exit is null and void—important boundary when aligning/realigning congregations post-closure.

Pastor–Parish, Staff–Pastor–Parish Relations Committee (PPRC/SPRC) — *Duties, evaluation, boundaries (pastor is not a member), confidentiality.*

Subtopics: closed meetings, consultation, mediation.

BOD: ¶¶258.2, 340

Cases:

JCD 500 (1981) — Pastor is not a member of the PPRC/SPRC (limits of ex officio status).

JCD 778 (1996) — Immediate family of a pastor/staff member may not serve on SPRC (membership restrictions).

JCD 101 (1956) — Defines consultation as an exchange of ideas; authority still rests with the bishop. (Frequently cited in later SPRC decisions.)

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation is mandatory; SPRC is advisory; consultation occurs before appointments are announced.

JCM 509 (1982) — PPRC not amenable to the Administrative Board regarding recommendations on pastoral changes (governance boundary).

JCM 550 (1985) — Confirms PPRC is advisory in appointment consultation; notes evaluation as part of consultation; not answerable to the Administrative Board for that function.

JCM 701 (1993) — Reiterates that PPRC is advisory and part of the consultation process; cites JCDs 101/501 and JCM 509.

JCM 810 (1997) — Notes potential recourse if a DS fails to consult with the pastor and/or PPRC as required.

JCD 1174 (2010) — Consultation is both ongoing and intense during change; SPRC's role remains advisory; notification is not consultation.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops must consult with DSs, but may also consult with others (the Discipline and precedent allow inclusion beyond DS/pastor/SPRC); confirms the evolved consultation framework that includes SPRC.

JCD 557 (1985) — In addressing a grievance, the DS may work with the PPRC (mediation/conciliation pathway).

JCD 869 (1999) — Clarifies application of the open/closed meetings rules (scope of ¶722/723 across church bodies)—used in ¶723 footnotes.

JCD 1481 (2023) — Confirms electronic meetings may be used if open-meeting requirements are satisfied for the bodies to which ¶722/723 apply (context for interpreting closed/open rules alongside SPRC's closed status).

JCD 1228 (2012) — On clergy dating/sexual boundaries; where appropriate, requires consultation with SPRC chair (helps delineate boundary practices and confidentiality touchpoints).

Pensions & Benefits — *Clergy/lay plans, liabilities at disaffiliation/closure.*

Subtopics: funding policy, withdrawal liability (civil overlay).

BOD: ¶¶1501–1507 (Wespath-related), ¶¶353–361

Cases:

JCD 1366 (2018) — Upheld constitutionality of proposed legislation creating ¶1504.23; explicitly recognizes GBOPHB/Wespath's role to determine a conference's aggregate pension funding obligations “using market factors similar to a commercial annuity provider,” from which a local church's share is set. (Foundational for withdrawal-liability mechanics.)

JCD 1424 (2022) — Affirms that annual conferences may add procedures/standard terms for disaffiliation so long as they do not negate GC mandates; references ¶1504.23 as part of the minimum standards framework. (Process authority that coexists with Wespath funding rules.)

JCD 1425 (2022) — Parallel holding to JCD 1424 for New England; again treats ¶1504.23 as a governing minimum while allowing additional, non-conflicting conference procedures.

JCM 1452 (2023) — Strikes a petition that tried to allow a \$1 pension withdrawal liability; holds that such terms violate ¶2553.4a and ¶1504.23 and notes funding

status/obligation determinations belong with Board of Pensions/CFA/Wespath under ¶¶1504.8a, 1506.6. (Key guardrail on funding policy authority.)

JCD 1455 (2023) — West Ohio standard terms: requires any unfunded pension liability payments to be based on Wespath calculations of the conference's aggregate unfunded liability, with allocation methodology specified. (Confirms conferences may require payment and must ground it in Wespath numbers.)

JCD 1512 (2024) — Clarifies closure (¶2549) is not a backdoor to exit; with ¶2553 expired, there's no conference-created pathway to disaffiliate. (Important because some tried to shift to "closure" to avoid disaffiliation terms, including pension liability.)

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applies 1512: Dakotas AC improperly used closure to enable an exit; reiterates that ¶2549 can't function as disaffiliation legislation. (Reinforces that "closure" doesn't sidestep liabilities.)

JCD 1518 (2025) — Strikes "Mississippi Process" (another alternative-exit attempt). The decision's discussion reprises the ¶2553(d) pension-liability requirement (local church must pay its pro-rata share; GBOPHB/Wespath determines aggregate obligations). (Fresh reaffirmation of the pension-liability framework.)

JCD 955 (2002) — East Ohio health insurance funding; cites Decision 923 and addresses pre-1982 pension obligations under ¶1506.8 (then-current numbering). (Shows JC's long-standing oversight of pension/benefit funding policies.)

JCD 935 (2002) — North Georgia revised insurance program approved after JC struck prior approach; the new plan properly funds retiree medical without using active clergy benefits to cover unfunded retiree liabilities. (Benefit-funding boundaries.)

JCM 752 (1995) — North Alabama vs. GBOPHB dispute; reiterates that the General Board (Wespath) is responsible for its own errors and an annual conference may rely on the Board's actuarial figures/agreements. (Governance/accountability principle around benefits administration.)

JCM 585 (1987) — Bars annual conferences from diverting pension contributions into alternative escrow/"separate" plans; confirms the general agency's (GBOPHB/Wespath's) exclusive authority to administer UMC pension/benefit funds.

Property — Trust Clause — *Nature/extent of the UMC trust clause; enforcement; title and control.*

Subtopics: who consents to what, litigation posture, civil deeds.

BOD: ¶¶2501- 2505, ¶¶2529-2543, ¶2549

Cases:

JCD 107 (1954) — Exception to including the trust clause in a deed applies only to *governmental agencies or their subdivisions* (e.g., where a reversion clause is required); not to private real-estate subdivisions.

JCD 135 (1956) — An annual conference board of trustees (or other AC-related entity) may accept title to property even if the deed lacks the standard trust clause; such property is still subject to the Discipline's requirements.

JCD 399 (1975) — Interprets what counts as "current (budget) expense" under ¶1435.1 of the 1972 *Discipline* and re-affirms that mortgaging or sale proceeds may not be used for current expenses.

JCD 458 (1979) — Re states that the Discipline governs church property matters connection-wide; often quoted for the principle that the Discipline regulates ownership, use, and disposition of church property.

JCD 664 (1991) — Absolute bar: you may not mortgage a church building or parsonage (or use sale principal) for current expenses—even for emergency repairs; points back to JCD 399.

JCD 688 (1993) — Discontinued/abandoned church property is administered/disposed under AC authority via AC trustees; actions in mergers must follow the property paragraphs (then ¶¶2542–2546). Also discusses the donor-intent / capital-vs-current distinction.

JCD 1142 (2014) — Reaffirms that all UMC entities are bound by the Discipline and that church property is held in trust for UMC (key anchor for trust-clause application and enforcement).

JCD 1421 (2022) — Deals with quitclaim deed / release of trust clause: any instrument that effectively releases or affects the trust clause must comply with Discipline requirements and proper authority, with AC ratification where required; clarifies the role of the cabinet and that local or conference bodies cannot bypass Disciplinary limits.

JCM 1433 (2022) — Clarifies/extends JCD 1421 (post-decision memorandum), reinforcing ratification and authority prerequisites in property actions that implicate the trust clause.

JCM 636 (1990) — An annual conference may require local churches to participate in a conference-wide property & liability insurance program (speaks to AC oversight and trustees' responsibilities).

JCM 759 (1995) — Affirms JCM 636: continuing authority for AC-mandated participation in conference insurance.

JCD 1444 (2022) — U.S. annual conferences cannot unilaterally disaffiliate; only General Conference can set the process. Important backdrop for trust-clause enforcement at conference level.

JCD 1449 (2022) — ¶2548.2 may transfer property only to another denomination with a pre-existing, GC-approved comity/affiliation agreement; it does not transfer members and is not a disaffiliation pathway.

JCD 1509 (2024) — In a Liberia property dispute, the Judicial Council held civil courts decide title, but use/development must still conform to ¶2501 trust clause & relevant property ¶¶ once ownership is determined; directs parties to maintain status quo pending civil adjudication.

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 (closure) cannot be used as an exit method; on closure, all property vests immediately in AC trustees; trust clause is foundational to connectionalism.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Reiterates JCD 1512/1517: no using ¶2549 to disaffiliate; no AC “processes” that replicate expired ¶2553; all entities remain bound by ¶2501.

Property — Transactions (Sale/Lease/Mortgage) — *Required approvals, proceeds, reinvestment, reporting.*

Subtopics: appraisal, fair market value, conflicts of interest.

BOD: ¶¶2540–2543

Cases:

JCD 143 (1957) — Sale of abandoned church property must be authorized by the annual conference in ecclesiastical session; sets timing/authority expectations around property dispositions.

JCD 399 (1975) — No mortgaging or using principal sale proceeds for current (budget) expenses; confirms the bright-line restriction that still appears in today's ¶2542/¶2543 framework.

JCM 636 (1990) — An active local church cannot sell or mortgage its property without the district superintendent's consent (then-¶¶2538–2539); squarely on required approvals.

JCD 664 (1991) — Reaffirms that mortgaging/sale proceeds may not fund current expenses—even “emergency” repairs. Frequently cited when churches seek to tap principal for operations.

JCD 688 (1993) — On discontinued/abandoned churches: proceeds from any sale or lease are to be handled by annual conference trustees and reported to the annual conference—clarifies roles when transactions follow closure.

JCM 1039 (2006) — Clarifies scope: (then) ¶2539 governs sale/transfer/lease/mortgage; confirms charge conference authority to direct trustees on property matters—useful when sorting who approves what.

JCD 1113 (2009) — In a lease dispute (SMU/Bush Library context), JC declines fact-finding (e.g., FMV/appraisal) but upholds process/authority and notes trust-clause context; helpful for fair-market-value/appraisal subtopic boundaries (courts don't set price).

JCD 1421 (2022) — Trustees acted unlawfully by closing a property sale before annual conference ratification; underscores sequence and required approvals in transactions linked to disaffiliation/closure.

JCD 1490 (2023) — On exigent-circumstances closure (¶2549.3(b)): no conflict with disaffiliation rules; title properly vested in AC trustees after interim/final closure; clarifies who consents/when in a contested timeline.

JCD 1461 (2023) — After closure, use of sale proceeds is governed by the Discipline; donor/deed restrictions or urban-center rules may apply—good on proceeds/reinvestment constraints post-closure.

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 cannot be used as a back-door exit; notably states “¶2549.3(a) can only be used after ¶¶2540 or 2541 have been followed,” tying closure-related transfers back to the sale/lease/mortgage procedures.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applies JCD 1512: cannot repackage “closure” to bypass the Trust Clause; reinforces that transactional steps must align with ¶¶2540/2541 when property is moving.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Further application: ¶2549 is not a disaffiliation mechanism; reiterates connectional/Trust-Clause limits relevant to any property transfer tied to separation.

Property — Building Projects — See “*Building Projects*.”

R

Readmission of Disaffiliated Churches — *Standards, vote thresholds, property, leadership transition.*

Subtopics: conditional reunification, timelines.

BOD: ¶2553 (as amended by General Conference 2020/2024)

Cases:

JCD 1512 (2024) — Held that with ¶2553's expiration/deletion, only General Conference can authorize exits; ¶2549 (closures) cannot be repurposed as an exit path; reasserted the Trust Clause as foundational.

JCM 1511 (2024) — Declined Kentucky's broad request to identify any paragraph that could be used for exits; pointed back to 1512 (no alternative pathway).

JCD 1517 (2025) — Struck down the Dakotas Conference's "closure" of Embrace UMC used as a pretext to let the congregation leave with property; reiterated that closures cannot be used as back-door exits.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Declared the Mississippi Conference's alternative exit process null and void; reaffirmed 1512's prohibition on back-door exit schemes post-2553.

JCD 1444 (2022) — An annual conference cannot disaffiliate absent GC legislation (connectionalism + trust clause). Frequently cited in JCD 1512, 1517.

JCD 1480 (2023) — N. Carolina case: ACs may require by policy a showing of "reasons of conscience" under 2553; unlawful to ratify disaffiliation for reasons other than 2553.1.

JCD 1476 (2023) — Clarified AC discretion: conferences may or may not require churches to document "reasons of conscience;" detailed what counts as adequate notice for church conferences.

JCDs 1424 & 1425 (2022) — Confirmed ¶2553 set minimum standards and that AC trustees could adopt additional terms if not inconsistent.

JCDs 1420, 1421, 1422 (2022) — Regarding AC authority to amend/ratify agreements and the necessity of AC consent for any disaffiliation; barred property transactions before AC ratification.

Reinstatement of Clergy — *After termination/surrender; evidentiary showing; supervision.*

Subtopics: eligibility, process steps, safeguards.

BOD: ¶346, ¶364, ¶¶365–370

Cases:

JCD 18 (1944) — Restoration of surrendered credentials must strictly follow the Discipline's stated procedure (then ¶707, 1940 *Discipline*).

JCD 197 (1962) — Voluntary location: readmission requires District Committee recommendation; character remains under the annual conference's purview.

JCD 384 (1974) — Persons involuntarily located (1968 *Discipline* ¶368) may apply either for readmission (1972 *Discipline* ¶372) or restoration of credentials (1972 *Discipline* ¶1536); restoration may be separate or combined with readmission; no retroactive "trial option."

JCD 412 (1976) — After discontinuance from probationary membership, license/credentials are held in suspense; route back is readmission to probationary membership with restoration of credentials through the conference/BOM process (then ¶373).

JCD 485 (1980) — Administrative location is constitutionally valid only when read alongside trial rights; clergy retain the constitutional right to elect trial—critical due-process safeguard in status-change proceedings.

JCD 515 (1982) — Conference relations/Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) roles: the clergy session acts on recommendations; ex post attempts by other bodies to alter conference-relation outcomes are out of order. (Process integrity.)

JCD 552 (1985) — After surrender of ministerial office, readmission must be to the same annual conference (or its legal successor); outlines the readmission posture and prerequisites. (Eligibility & venue.)

JCD 741 (1995) — If “withdrawal under complaint” rested solely on a time-barred grievance, the withdrawal is void; status must be restored as of the withdrawal date (can obviate readmission pathway).

JCD 754 (1995) — (Context for JCM 780) Readmission rules of then-¶457 govern where withdrawal was not under complaint; later limited by JCM 780.

JCD 1101 (2004) — Local pastors: exit/reinstatement framework under ¶320; clarifies how local-pastor status changes are handled by DCOM/BOM and conference (eligibility & steps for reinstatement).

JCD 1482 (2023) — Withdrawal ≠ surrender of credentials. Annual conferences may not require clergy to “surrender credentials” as a condition tied to a local-church action; credentials remain unless Discipline processes (e.g., ¶¶327.6, 362, 2707, 2711) are invoked. (Eligibility boundary & safeguard.)

JCM 648 (1991) — Readmission requirement: at least one year of service as a local pastor (then ¶456); the one-year rule applies and has operative effect. (Evidentiary showing/conditioning.)

JCM 780 (1996) — The readmission process cannot be waived (then ¶457); actions that would bypass the required steps are out of order; clarifies and narrows JCD 754. (Non-waivability of process).

(Regionalization — *Regional conferences and regional disciplines; constitutional path and limits.*

Subtopics: delegated powers, guardrails, doctrine.

BOD: ¶¶31.5, ¶17, ¶¶18–23

Cases:)

To be updated after ratification of Regionalization Plan.

Records & Archives — *Retention of minutes, membership, sacramental records.*

Subtopics: records custody at closure, privacy.

BOD: ¶¶230–234, ¶247, ¶258.4

Cases:

JCM 1046 (2006). Judicial Council declined jurisdiction where the official minutes did not reflect a written question of law; underscores that minutes must record the exact question and context. (¶2609 duty of AC secretary).

JCM 1145 (2010). Again declines jurisdiction because the exact text of a request was not in the official minutes; briefs/exhibits cannot substitute for minutes.

JCM 1412 (2021). Council deferred a matter and ordered the conference secretary to submit the official record, including minutes, within 30 days—reaffirming minutes as the controlling record.

JCD 1430 (2022). Vacates a ruling because informal minutes are insufficient; the Council needs the official AC journal with the “exact statement” of the question and ruling (¶2609.6), citing a long line of cases.

JCD 1425 (2022). Ties back to JCM 1412 and reiterates the requirement that the official record (including minutes) be provided for review.

JCD 869 (1999). Clarifies the open meetings rule and limits on closed sessions (then ¶721; today reflected in ¶723)—including expectations for reporting results of closed sessions.

JCD 1481 (2023). Conferences may meet electronically if proceedings remain open and fair and Discipline requirements are met—implicating transparent minute-keeping for virtual sessions. (¶723 cross-reference.)

Retirement & Status of Retired Clergy — *Rights, participation, expenses.*

Subtopics: supply status, episcopal expectations.

BOD: ¶¶357–360, ¶¶1501–1507

Cases:

JCD 7 (1940) — Confirms General Conference’s constitutional authority to set a uniform clergy retirement age (connectional matter).

JCD 87 (1952) — A retired traveling preacher retains the right to vote as a full member of the annual conference (participation).

JCD 165 (1960) — At age-72 retirement, a ministerial member or approved supply pastor is automatically subject to annuity provisions; conference board may determine eligible service years (expenses/benefits; supply status).

JCD 181 (1960) — A retired minister appointed as a supply pastor cannot be required to pay a percentage of salary into a pension fund (expenses; supply status).

JCD 213 (1964) — Annual conference may not arbitrarily designate a set % of pastoral support as “travel & expense” for all pastors (expense categorization principle).

JCD 558 (1985) — Retired ministers: eligible for election to General/Jurisdictional Conference; may vote in clergy executive session; broad eligibility for service on boards (participation/rights). Notes earlier JCM 531 on delegate eligibility and also catalogs retired members’ continued rights and service eligibility (participation).

JCD 717 (1994) — Interprets early retirement/honorable location for benefit eligibility; addresses Board of Pensions determinations (benefits/eligibility).

JCD 1101 (2008) — Retired local pastors are not clergy members for voting when not under appointment; local pastors who are not under appointment resume lay status (participation boundary; supply status).

JCD 1355 (2017) — Back-pay/equitable compensation calculations exclude travel reimbursement (not compensation); also notes when elder not under appointment (expenses).

JCD 1427 (2022) — Retired clergy are among those eligible to vote in district conferences (participation at district level).

JCD 1514 (2024) — On clergy serving in non-UMC settings: affirmed ruling as moot/hypothetical but concurrences reiterate that retired clergy must seek

appointment/approval per ¶357.6 to serve in any church (supply status; episcopal expectations).

JCD 1126 (2009) — Retired elder serving as local church finance committee chair did not violate Discipline; also clarifies AC membership vs. local church membership privileges (participation, local governance).

JCM 531 (1983) — Holds that a retired ministerial member is eligible for election to General and Jurisdictional Conferences (participation). Cited expressly in JCD 558.

JCM 1110 (2008) — Procedural memorandum referencing a California-Nevada AC matter involving *retired clergy* and same-gender services; chiefly about record sufficiency/jurisdiction (process guidance; not doctrinal on retirement).

JCM 1295 (2015) — Dismisses a petition (from a *retired elder*) for lack of jurisdiction; illustrates limits on individual standing for declaratory requests concerning clergy session actions (process/participation boundaries).

JCM 1408 (2021) — Clarifies voice/vote issues (ensuring compliance with constitutional fair process) in administrative contexts; general participation guardrails that apply across clergy statuses, including retired (participation/process).

Rulings of Law (by Bishops/DS) — *When required, scope, JC review; effect of failure to rule.*

Subtopics: timeliness, moot and hypothetical, docketing, nullity, order of appeals.

BOD: ¶52, ¶57.2-3, ¶403, ¶419.10, ¶2609.6, ¶2719.1-2

Cases:

JCD 33 (1946) — Landmark rule: “*Moot and hypothetical questions shall not be decided.*” Foundation of the whole line on proper questions of law.

JCM 651 (1991) — Extends JCD 33 to bishops’ rulings: the question must be tied to *actual* conference action and be germane to the session’s business.

JCM 799 (1997) — Guidelines for Bishops’ Rulings on Questions of Law (direct quote now printed as Appendix A to JC *Rules of Practice & Procedures*): bishop must rule on *all* submitted questions (even if the ruling is “moot/hypothetical/improper”), questions must be in writing, germane to the business of the session, and recorded.

JCD 937 (2002) — Reaffirms written-during-session requirement and the JCD 33 moot/hypothetical bar.

JCD 1113 (2009) — Proper remedy is to seek a written decision of law *during the session*; reinforces “germane to the business” and treats speculative elements as beyond JC fact-finding.

JCD 1215 (2012) — Applies JCD 33: declines hypothetical; confirms long-standing bar on moot/hypothetical questions.

JCD 1463 (2023) — Clean, recent restatement: bishop may only rule on a written question submitted during the conference session and germane to that session’s business; submissions outside session are not proper questions of law. Cites early and mid-line precedents (e.g., JCD 33, 396, 651, 746, 747, 762, 763, 937).

JCM 942 (2002) — Bishop has no authority to make substantive rulings on judicial/administrative procedure via a question of law (see Guidelines in JCM 799).

JCD 1454 (2023) — If a “question of law” is actually a petition for declaratory decision (constitutionality/meaning/application/effect of *General Conference* acts), a bishop may not issue a substantive ruling; must say it’s improperly posed (separation of powers).

JCD 1494 (2024) — Re-affirms JCD 1454; again holds that petitions for declaratory decisions are outside episcopal ruling authority under ¶2610.

JCD 1460 (2023) — JC has no authority to review parliamentary procedure; such questions are null/void as questions of law (lists the long parliamentary non-review line: 898, 941, 1117, 1187, 1205, 1339, 1356).

JCM 1046 (2006) — JC lacks jurisdiction if the official minutes/journal do not contain the exact text of the question and the context showing it was properly submitted during regular business; record defects can render any episcopal response null/void.

JCM 1145 (2010) — For annual-conference requests for declaratory decision, the minutes must include the exact text and facts sufficient to show JC jurisdiction; otherwise no jurisdiction.

JCD 1430 (2019) — Reiterates that the precise question and the ruling must be recorded in the journal for JC review; also recites JCM 799 guidelines.

JCM 1477 (2023) — Quotes ¶2609.6: bishops normally must rule before adjournment, in no case later than 30 days after; if there's no proper episcopal ruling or authorized declaratory request, JC lacks jurisdiction. (Useful when a bishop never issues a qualifying ruling.)

JCD 1237 (2012) — When a bishop wrongly labels a proper question “moot,” JC can remand for a substantive ruling within 30 days and retain jurisdiction—i.e., JC remedies a failure/erroneous declination to rule.

JCD 1443 (2022) — District superintendents decide questions of law in the district (¶419.10) subject to appeal to the bishop; JC's jurisdiction is limited by the Book of Discipline—i.e., parties must follow the proper order of appeals. (JC will not act where the Discipline forecloses JC review.)

JCD 1476 (2023) — Re-states that JC has only the jurisdiction expressly granted; quotes the order of appeals (then ¶2718.1; now reflected under ¶¶2719.1–2 in the current BoD), and that JC cannot assume review where the Discipline directs appeal elsewhere.

S

Sacraments & Worship — *Who may preside; local variations; episcopal oversight.*

Subtopics: extended tables, lay leadership in exigent circumstances.

BOD: ¶¶332–340, ¶¶1113–1122 (resources)

Cases:

JCD 91 (1952) — Unordained/student pastor may be authorized to administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper while appointed to a charge and within its bounds, with specified prerequisites (early precursor to today's licensed local pastor authority).

JCD 714 (1994) — General Conference alone regulates the “form and mode of worship”; an annual conference may not bind worship by policy/resolution.

JCD 1109 (2008) — The 2008 Discipline's “reserved sacrament” language was null and void; extended serving of Holy Communion is permissible only as distribution following a Service of Word and Table (no pre-consecration/ reservation doctrine may be created).

JCD 142 (1957) — A central conference may not substitute child “dedication” for infant baptism; such changes contravene Articles of Religion and Restrictive Rules.

JCD 358 (1972) — Doctrinal standards have greater protection than constitutional provisions; GC and subordinate bodies may not alter doctrine by ordinary legislation (frequently cited when worship/sacramental doctrine is implicated).

JCD 468 (1979) — Reaffirms the constitutional limits on altering doctrinal standards and related provisions through ordinary legislative action.

JCD 363 (1972) — Clarifies episcopacy/elder order; frames the elder's ministry as Word, Sacrament, and Order(baseline for presidency expectations).

JCD 534 (1983) — Reiterates the elder's fourfold ministry and is often cited for the elder's responsibilities involving Word, Sacrament, Order, Service.

JCD 877 (1999) — Discusses deacons/elders and vows, again underscoring the elder's Word, Sacrament, Order role (helpful background when distinguishing presidency).

JCD 696 (1993) — Notes UMC has sanctioned service in roles requiring Word, Sacrament, and Order in other denominations (ecumenical contexts), while addressing membership duality.

JCD 811 (1997) — GC 1996 baptism/membership legislation that effectively abolished the vow requirement was unconstitutional; such a change requires constitutional amendment (effective Oct 25, 1997).

JCD 884 (2000) — During GC 2000, JC held no petitions could implement the 1996 baptismal statement until the Constitution is duly amended/announced.

JCM 642 (1990) — On ritual/language conflicts, the GC affirmed traditional Trinitarian baptismal language, illustrating limits on altering sacramental formulas.

JCM 1041 (2006) — In the JCD 1032 reconsideration context, concurring/dissenting opinions reflect the pastor's role vis-à-vis sacraments & membership while clarifying JC's review scope.

Standing Rules (Annual Conference) — *Validity, annual conference autonomy, conflicts with Discipline, amendment.*

Subtopics: parliamentary authority, precedence.

BOD: ¶¶33–37, ¶¶604–605

Cases:

JCD 398 (1975) — Annual Conferences may adopt rules for their own government, but not structures or procedures that conflict with the Constitution or the Discipline.

JCD 476 (1980) — An Annual Conference may quote/cite the Discipline in its Standing Rules; it may not approve/disapprove/modify actions of General Conference.

JCD 559 (1985) — Standing rules cannot override Disciplinary processes for appointments; cabinet/Discipline control those mechanics.

JCD 1225 (2012) — Annual Conferences must organize and operate within ¶604 and the Discipline; local variations are permissible only when not in conflict.

JCD 1328 (2016) — Confirms GC's grant of power in ¶604.1: ACs may “adopt rules and regulations not in conflict with the Discipline”; cites prior decisions (e.g., JCD 367, 876, 1198).

JCD 1440 (2022) — No business (including adopting/amending Standing Rules) may occur before the opening session as defined in ¶605.1.

JCD 1464 (2023) — ACs cannot pass resolutions that ignore or encourage violation of church law; reiterates 1444's limits and 1292's principle against actions encouraging non-compliance.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Standing rules or conference actions can't be used to create powers not provided in the Discipline (here, attempts to use conference processes for exits/closures); reinforces that AC action must track church law.

JCD 367 (1973) — Rules/agenda belong to the business of the session; a rules committee must report to the conference, which retains authority to adopt/modify within Disciplinary bounds.

JCD 1444 (2022) — Under the Constitution's connectionalism, ACs cannot unilaterally separate; only General Conference can establish any process—"stopgap policies" or conference-made rules to exit are null and void.

JCD 1473 (2023) applies JCD 1444 to Bulgaria-Romania AC.

JCD 1512 (2024) blocks using ¶2549 as an alternative exit pathway (underscoring that AC rules/policies can't contravene the Discipline).

JCD 1481 (2023) — Parliamentary issues are "business of the session," not questions of church law; bishops' rulings of law cannot be used to decide parliamentary points governed by Robert's Rules/house rules.

JCM 1474 (2023) — The Council lacked jurisdiction where a "decision of law" was essentially a parliamentary ruling made outside the session; parliamentary rulings must be made during the session so members can appeal.

JCM 1493 (2024) — Reiterates that decisions of law are not a vehicle for after-the-fact parliamentary rulings; members must have the in-session right to appeal under parliamentary rules.

JCD 1440 (2022) — Changes to Standing Rules must be acted upon after the opening under ¶605.1; pre-session balloting (without debate/amendment) is improper.

Supervision & Accountability (Clergy) — *Evaluations, corrective plans, supervision during complaints.*

Subtopics: documentation, boundaries.

BOD: ¶¶334–341, ¶¶2701–2706

Cases:

JCD 691 (1993) — Mediators must be neutral and trained; BOOM may not base recommendations on undisclosed evidence; withdrawal under complaint forfeits trial right.

JCM 763 (1995) — Confirms reconciliation is the aim of the supervisory response; references JCD 691.

JCD 798 (1996) — Clarifies what belongs to supervisory response vs. judicial process; meeting to present a written grievance is part of supervision (not a hearing).

JCD 917 (2001) — Separation-of-powers/fair-process: a DS representing the cabinet may not be present for BOOM deliberations or vote on administrative processes.

JCM 950 (2002) — Reaffirms JCD 917: bishop/DS presence, voice, or vote in BOOM administrative cases violates separation of powers and fair process.

JCD 1011 (2005) — Defines Administrative Review Committee scope; may remedy process errors but not declare Discipline provisions unconstitutional; notes review of supervision adequacy and cites fair-process precedents.

JCD 1174 (2010) — Affirms DS supervision includes a clearly understood process with evaluation and feedback functions (helpful anchor for annual clergy evaluations).

JCD 1296 (2015) — Post-2012 restructuring: Counsel for the Church is designated to commence judicial proceedings (clarifies roles during complaints).

JCD 632 (1989) — Distinguishes “involuntary leave of absence” from “suspension” and addresses constitutionality questions (foundation for corrective plans/administrative actions).

JCD 973 (2003) — A DS’s request for involuntary leave is not a “complaint;” follow fair-process rules for any subsequent proceedings.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Security of appointment preserved; fair process, trial, and appeal are “absolute” rights—sets constitutional guardrails around accountability systems.

JCD 1355 (2017) — Where the Discipline requires an affirmative clergy-session vote (e.g., involuntary statuses), inaction can nullify; equitable compensation obligations noted—practical oversight/accountability implications.

JCD 1361 (2018) — Clergy session must give final approval to involuntary statuses; underscores boundaries between cabinet/BOOM recommendations and clergy-session authority.

JCD 1383 (2019) — The 2016 administrative processes for involuntary leave, involuntary retirement, administrative location, and discontinuance from provisional membership are unconstitutional (fair/unbiased process guarantees).

JCD 1366 (2018) — No Discipline provisions may grant bishops (or any) immunity from complaints; cites separation-of-powers/fair-process doctrines (helpful analogy for clergy accountability culture).

JCD 1419 (2021) — NEJ appellate decision review; illustrates how administrative and complaint dispositions interact and the limits of appeal review—practical guardrails during ongoing supervision/complaints.

Superintendence (DS Powers/Limits) — *Appointments, charge conference oversight, property consents.*

Subtopics: written consents, emergency actions.

BOD: ¶¶419–430, ¶¶2540–2544

Cases:

JCD 101 (1954) — Defines “consultation” in the appointment process: the DS must consult the pastor and others, but the bishop retains final appointment authority.

JCD 501 (1981) — Consultation is mandatory and advisory to the bishop; SPRC input is part of the process; announcement follows consultation.

JCM 550 (1985) — Consultation is an ongoing process among pastor, SPRC, DS, and bishop (criteria-setting, evaluation, exchange of ideas).

JCM 701 (1993) — Reviews and applies consultation jurisprudence (esp. JCD 101, 501, 509) to confirm proper consultation practices.

JCD 1174 (2010) — “Consultation” is more than notification; bishop/DS must engage in genuine exchange, and pastors must be kept informed during the process.

JCD 1307 (2015) — Bishops must consult DSs before making/fixing appointments (Const. ¶54), but may also consult others the Discipline permits; appointment power remains solely with the bishop.

JCD 398 (1975) — Confirms DS authority around special sessions: a *special* church/charge conference may be called by the DS after consulting the pastor, or by the pastor with the DS's written consent. (Older ¶ numbering quoted, but principle unchanged.)

JCD 1372 (2019) — Reiterates that the DS fixes the time of charge conference meetings (then-¶246.4 referenced in the ruling on a question of law).

JCD 1518 (2025) — When a church conference is called by the DS, broad notice to all professing members is required; use all practical means (including electronic) and hold within 120 days (confirms and details ¶246.8/¶248 practice).

JCD 664 (1991) — Reaffirms that proceeds from sale/mortgage may not be used for current expenses; Discipline's restrictions on use of proceeds apply.

JCD 688 (1993) — When churches are abandoned/discontinued per the Discipline, property is administered/disposed by the annual conference board of trustees (trust clause effect).

JCD 1490 (2023) — Addresses exigent circumstances closures under ¶2549.3(b); due process concerns and ability to challenge the exigency declaration are recognized. (Includes questions implicating ¶419.4 DS conduct.)

JCD 1512 (2024) — ¶2549 is a closure paragraph, not a disaffiliation pathway; upon closure, all property vests in the annual conference board of trustees; conferences may not use ¶2549 to effect “gracious exit.”

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applies/extends JCD 1512 in a special-session closure context; confirms uniform application of ¶2549 and related trust-clause outcomes.

JCD 1461 (2022) — Clarifies that ¶2549 exigent-closure procedures cannot be repurposed for disaffiliation; underscores intended, limited scope of exigent closures.

T

Trials & Penalties — *Chargeable offenses, trial courts, permissible penalties, appeal.*
Subtopics: suspension, termination of conference membership, revocation of credentials (of licensing/ordination/consecration).

BOD: ¶¶2701–2719

Cases:

JCD 1201 (2011) — Only the trial court may set the penalty; no outside body can limit or “suggest” penalties that narrow the Discipline’s full range.

JCD 1250 (2014) — Reaffirms that trial-court penalty authority cannot be usurped or supplanted by resolutions; keeps the full penalty range available.

JCD 1318 (2016) — Just Resolutions may not pre-determine or compel penalties; penalty authority remains with the trial court after a finding of guilt.

JCD 756 (1995) — An annual conference cannot alter, negate, or defer a penalty fixed by the trial court (once ratified/executed); only the Judicial Council can change it on appeal.

JCD 716 (1994) — (Referenced in JCD 756) Trial-court penalty, once properly fixed, can be implemented; conferences may not re-vote the penalty. (Year and effect confirmed in JCD 756’s text.)

JCD 240 (1966) — Classic statement against “mixing or matching” penalties; defines “suspension” using Black’s Law. (Year confirmed by later decision.)

JCD 1332 (2016) — Affirms termination of conference membership with revocation of credentials; expressly notes no “mixing or matching” of penalties (citing JCDs 240 and 1270).

JCD 1270 (2014) — Schaefer appeal: penalties must be from the Discipline’s enumerated set; conditional/future-conduct penalties are impermissible; appellate bodies may modify within law.

JCD 534 (1983) — Defines suspension and its implications; a minister under suspension is barred from exercising office/functions and is not eligible for certain roles; notes appeals do not stay the sentence.

JCD 1361 (2018) — A pending appeal does not stay the penalty; only the trial court may delay its effective date.

JCD 1094 (2008) — Upholds trial-court penalties of termination of annual-conference membership and revocation of ordination; outlines appellate review questions under ¶2715.7.

JCD 1332 (2016) — (listed above) Confirms lawfulness of termination + revocation when within ¶2711.3’s range; no mixed penalties.

JCD 595 (1988) — The Church (as such) has no right to initiate an appeal; it may respond once an accused has appealed. Also confirms Judicial Council’s authority to decide necessary factual matters.

JCD 846 (1990) — Applies JCD 595; reiterates no church-initiated appeals and addresses moot/advisory requests.

JCM 826 (1998) — Notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days of close of trial—no deviation.

JCM 1336 (2016) — You cannot revive a forfeited appeal via a declaratory-decision request; confirms the 30-day rule and insists penalty execution is the trial court’s role (not BOOM/lay bodies).

JCD 919 (2001) — Clarifies that ¶2711.2 and ¶2711.3 address the trial court’s powers (incl. suspension during appeal) and do not govern unrelated issues; helpful for scope boundaries in judicial process.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Addresses Traditional Plan enactments; quotes the (then-proposed) mandatory minimum penalties for certain offenses under ¶2711.3.

JCD 1378 (2019) — Notes the amended text of ¶2711.3 (as adopted by GC2019) listing the trial court’s penalty powers and mandatory minimums for specified offenses; also references JCD 1201.

JCD 384 (1974) — Discusses how earlier holdings (including JCD 240 (1966)) frame “suspension” and related penalty concepts—often cited to explain terms still used in ¶2711.3 today.

Trust Clause (see Property) — *Cross-reference to Property topics.*

U

Ultra Vires/Nullity — *Actions beyond authority; effect; remedies.*

Subtopics: retroactive cures, estoppel concerns.

BOD: ¶¶18-23, ¶¶101–105, ¶2609, ¶2610

Cases:

JCD 96 (1953) — The Discipline is the church’s “book of law” that governs every phase of church life; actions must conform to it.

JCD 119 (1955) — Standing Rules bind the annual conference until properly suspended/changed; conflicting actions are void.

JCD 823 (1998) — Annual Conferences cannot take actions that negate General Conference legislation. (Quoted and applied.)

JCD 886 (2000) — Annual Conferences may not legally negate, ignore, or violate the Discipline, even on conscientious-objectio grounds.

JCD 1105 (2008) — Annual Conferences may adopt rules for their own government not in conflict with the Discipline (no conflicting rule/policy); restoration of rights after acquittal. (Shows the “no conflict with Discipline” rule.)

JCD 1340 (2014) — Resolutions may be aspirational, but not prescriptive in ways that ignore/negate Church law.

JCD 1424 (2022) & JCD 1425 (2022) — Annual Conferences may add procedures only if not inconsistent with GC-set minimum standards; may not negate/violate them.

JCD 1444 (2022) — Absent GC-enacted enabling legislation, an AC cannot vote to separate; such actions are unconstitutional, null and void, and of no legal force or effect.

JCD 1464 (Mar. 2023) — Resolution aimed at enabling unconstitutional withdrawal is void and of no effect (reaffirming JCD 1444 and JCD 1292).

JCD 1468 (2023) — If a resolution crosses from aspirational into prescriptive contrary to the Discipline, it is null and void.

JCD 1458 (2023) — Reiterates JCD 823/886/1105: ACs can’t negate GC law; can’t adopt rules conflicting with the Discipline.

JCD 1512 (Oct. 2024) — ¶2549 (closure) cannot be used as disaffiliation/“gracious exit”; misapplication is contrary to Church law (trust clause).

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applying 1512: using “closure” as a pretext for separation with property violates ¶2549/Trust Clause; bishop’s ruling reversed.

JCD 650 (1991) — Mandatory requirements for admission/ordination may not be waived; an ordination granted in violation is set aside.

JCD 721 (1994) — A board had no authority to waive a written-request requirement; action taken without fulfilling it was improper.

JCM 722 (1994) — Memorandum recognizing an AC’s request that a prior action be deemed “null and void.”(Illustrates Council’s usage of nullity language in memoranda.)

JCD 1120 (2012) — Aspirational resolutions are permissible; ACs still may not negate/ignore/violate the Discipline.(No “work-around” by rhetoric.)

JCD 404 (1975) — An AC may not retroactively grant ministerial status (no retroactive effect); prospective relief only.

JCD 691 (1993) — No retroactive creation of offenses/limitations periods in complaints and trials.

JCD 1420 (2022) — “Ratification” is a form of approval by an AC; the concept is explained and limited in use.(Helpful when asked if later AC action can “cure” defects.)

JCD 1479 (2023) — Council gave a ruling prospectively so as not to invalidate prior disaffiliation actions — clarifying when decisions operate prospectively vs. retroactively.

JCD 1366 (2018) — Explains the Judicial Council's limited role (¶¶2609–2610): it interprets constitutionality/meaning/effect; it does not legislate or create self-executing rights (a point later invoked in JCD 1444).

JCM 1448 (2022) (concurring memorandum) — Notes majority-of-bishops appeal under ¶2609.4 as a mechanism to bring unconstitutional AC actions before the Council.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Confirms JC review of bishops' decisions of law under ¶2609.6 and rejects attempts to bypass JC oversight on “closure” pretexts.

JCD 1292 (2015) — An AC may not pass a resolution that “ignores Church law and encourages a violation of Church law”; such parts are null/void.

JCD 1464 (2023) — Applying JCD 1292 and JCD 1444 to withdrawal-oriented special sessions: unconstitutional and void and of no effect.

JCD 1468 (2023) — Prescriptive language “running counter to the Discipline” renders a resolution null and void.

United Methodist Women/Men (United Women in Faith/UMM) — *Corporate changes, property, representation.*

Subtopics: legacy charters, name changes.

BOD: ¶256, ¶256.5–256.6

Cases:

JCD 1509 (2024) — Recognizes United Methodist Women, d/b/a United Women in Faith (UWF) in a property dispute in Liberia; the Council declines to reach the merits until civil ownership is resolved (useful for corporate continuity & name-change recognition). It also frames UWF corporate title claims vs. a central-conference annual conference under the trust clause backdrop; helpful precedent on how JC treats UWF property assertions pending civil adjudication.

JCM 1213 (2012) — Mentions Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries while dismissing a request for lack of jurisdiction; relevant as a touchpoint on the Women’s Division’s standing as a general-church entity (corporate identity lineage to UMW/UWF).

JCD 138 (1957) — When a local church is discontinued, funds of the Woman’s Society of Christian Service (WSCS) may be disposed of by annual conference trustees as directed by the conference (legacy unit property in a discontinued church).

JCD 349 (1972) — Explains the constitutional composition of the annual conference, expressly listing the conference president of the Women’s Society of Christian Service (predecessor to UMW/UWF) and the conference president of United Methodist Men as lay members by right (representation baseline).

JCD 561 (1986) — Holds that designated lay members, including the conference presidents of UMW and UMM, must be counted in the lay total before equalization; they cannot be excluded (representation/equalization).

JCD 622 (1989) — Clarifies that eligibility rules for lay members of an annual conference are set by the Constitution and cannot be altered by GC or AC—protecting the status of designated lay members (representation safeguards).

JCD 1427 (2022) — Addresses conflicts between ¶32 (Constitution) and ¶602.4 and, in the course of analysis, recites the officers included in AC lay membership (including conference presidents of UMW and UMM); confirms constitutional primacy in defining who is at the table.

JCD 1510 (2024) — Interprets ¶32 regarding deaconesses and home missionaries (whose appointments are handled “in accordance with policies and procedures of United Methodist Women”), and again quotes the AC lay-membership list including UMW and UMM presidents (representation link to UMW structures).

V

Vacancies (Episcopal/Clergy/Boards) — *Filling methods, ad interim coverage, special sessions.*

Subtopics: authority to call sessions, COB role.

BOD: ¶¶404–408, 604–605

Cases:

JCD 1445 (2022) — Confirms the assignment date for all bishops is Sept. 1 following the jurisdictional conference and, if elections occur after Sept. 1, the Council of Bishops may use ¶407 for interim assignments until Sept. 1 of the next year.

JCM 1446 (2022) — Clarifies the 2022 transition: sets Jan. 1, 2023 as the changeover for mandatory retirements and new U.S. bishops taking office (modifying how 1445 was applied in that cycle).

JCD 1478 (2023) — On episcopal/college roles: a College of Bishops may recommend and express viewpoints about elections, but only in an advisory (not legislative) capacity; jurisdictional conferences hold the election authority.

JCD 1513 (2024) — Addresses Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy (IJCOE) and episcopal coverage: IJCOE recommendations must accord with jurisdictional allocations; coverage/assignments must not reduce a jurisdiction below its authorized number of bishops.

JCD 1464 (2023) — A resolution calling a special session of an annual conference to consider withdrawal from the UMC violated church law; it underscores limits on special-session purposes and the bishop’s role in calling such sessions (see ¶603.5 for authority to call; organization/business governed in ¶¶604–605).

JCD 1440 (2022) — An annual conference may not conduct business before the opening session; changes to standing rules or other business must wait until the session convenes (ties to ¶605 “Business of the Annual Conference”).

JCD 689 (1993) — Clarifies that approvals by bishop/DS are required only for ad interim actions in this context; helps mark when ad interim authority applies vs. regular processes.

JCD 782 (1996) — Addresses status of a clergyperson placed ad interim on involuntary leave between conference sessions (useful for compensation/status during vacancy coverage).

JCD 919 (2001) — Example of ad interim involuntary leave with minimum compensation set while between sessions (illustrates the discipline of interim status when a clergy vacancy/suspension occurs).

JCD 1496 (2024) — For general agency boards, four-year terms begin after a regular General Conference; members first elected in 2016 could be elected to a second four-year term beginning at/after GC 2024—guidance on terms/continuity when GC is delayed (relevant to vacancies/rollovers).

JCM 1495 (2024) — On Judicial Council membership specifically, the court declined jurisdiction and pointed to the Constitution: only General Conference determines the number, qualifications, terms and the filling of vacancies for the Judicial Council.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Annual conferences may elect to fill delegation vacancies (death/resignation/etc.) once reserve delegates are exhausted, up to their allocation—useful parallel on vacancy-filling mechanics in conference bodies.

Voting (Thresholds/Eligibility) — *Majorities, supermajorities, clergy/laity categories, ballots.*

Subtopics: executive session, secret ballots, electronic methods.

BOD: ¶¶33–37, ¶370, ¶¶602–607

Cases:

JCD 1181 (2011) — Clarifies who may vote for/elect clergy delegates (adds certain provisional members and qualifying local pastors as electors; addresses eligibility to be elected).

JCD 473 (1979) — Clergy in full connection on sabbatical, disability, or leave of absence retain the right to vote for (and be elected as) GC/Jurisdictional delegates.

JCD 558 (1985) — Retired clergy remain eligible to be elected GC delegates; notes retired members may vote in *executive session* of the annual conference; references earlier JCM 531 affirming retired eligibility.

JCD 1427 (2022) — On annual-conference lay membership and age-based waivers: the Constitution’s ¶32 exception (waiver of 2-yr/4-yr requirements) applies only in central conferences; U.S. ACs may not extend it.

JCD 1472 (2023) — Restates eligibility baseline: clergy delegates “shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection,” and laity must meet membership/participation requirements; ties to ¶35/¶602.1.

JCD 1510 (2024) — Only active deaconesses/home missionaries are lay members with voice and vote at annual conference; retirees do not have vote.

JCD 244 (1966) — For a two-thirds requirement, the fraction is computed on those “present and voting”; abstentions do not count in the denominator.

JCD 1355 (2017) — Confirms required vote in clergy session for placing a clergy member on involuntary leave; distinguishes when a two-thirds vote is required.

JCD 1379 (2019) — Disaffiliation thresholds (local church 2/3 at church conference; AC simple majority to ratify) as part of the then-operative ¶2553 framework.

JCD 311 (1969) — Secret-ballot *nominations* for episcopal candidates at ACs are permissible (central-conference context); describes ballot handling.

JCD 333 (1970) — Interprets constitutional/Disciplinary provisions on qualification and election of GC delegates; confirms election “by ballot.”

JCD 558 (1985) — Explicitly notes that *retired members may vote in an executive session of the annual conference.* (Also addresses delegate eligibility.)

JCD 1440 (2022) — An annual conference may not approve standing rules or conduct business (including voting) before the opening of the session (e.g., no pre-conference up-or-down electronic balloting). Prospective effect.

W

Wesleyan Polity & Constitutional Principles — *Doctrinal standards, connectionalism, Restrictive Rules, checks and balances.*

Subtopics: theological grounding of governance.

BOD: ¶¶18-23, ¶¶101–105

Cases:

JCD 33 (1946) — Defines connectionalism at the constitutional level; the annual conference is “a unit in our connectionalism,” set within the Constitution’s allocation of powers.

JCD 86 (1952) — Early exemplar of GC/JC constitutional review of proposed legislation; illustrates checks on legislation against constitutional limits (Restrictive Rules).

JCD 96 (1953) — The *Book of Discipline* is the church’s only official and authoritative book of law; all entities are bound by it.

JCD 142 (1960) — Doctrinal standards and constitutional limitations carried into the UMC legal order after union; Restrictive Rules limit alteration.

JCD 243 (1966) — General Conference cannot disclaim or sidestep constitutional restrictions; Restrictive Rules are binding limits on legislation.

JCD 351 (1972) — Affirms the church’s heritage of protecting rights of persons; ties trial/appeal rights to constitutional guarantees (now reflected under ¶¶18, 20).

JCD 468 (1979) — Enforces constitutional/Restrictive Rule limits on attempts to change protected standards (including the General Rules reference).

JCD 522 (1983) — Reaffirms due-process rights and access to trial under constitutional guarantees; references JCD 351.

JCD 557 (1985) — Clarifies precedence and process in involuntary status/termination, grounding in constitutional trial/appeal protections.

JCD 595 (1988) — Confirms right of appeal as a constitutional guarantee (now ¶20).

JCD 833 (1998) — Reaffirms fair process in complaint/charge actions.

JCD 702 (1993) — Applies constitutional inclusiveness and connectional principles; forbids structures that undermine constitutional rights.

JCD 544 (1984) — Landmark: GC sets minimum standards for ministry (¶16); ACs administer/discern whether those standards are met (¶33). Ordination is worldwide, not local; ACs cannot negate GC mandates.

JCD 823 (1998) — ACs may not take actions that negate GC legislation; GC holds legislative power over matters “distinctively connectional.”

JCD 920 (2001) — Implements the JCD 544 framework in appointment/standards review and outlines fair-process safeguards.

JCD 984 (2004) — Declaratory ruling on ¶304.3 as a GC-set minimum standard for ordained ministry, within the JCD 544/¶16–¶33 balance.

JCD 985 (2004) — Incorporates JCD 984; reaffirms that bishops may not appoint those found by a trial court to violate GC-set minimum standards; reiterates Discipline as binding law.

JCD 1105 (2009) — No AC rule/policy may conflict with the Discipline; echoes JCD 823/544 balance.

JCD 1321 (2016) — ¶16 & ¶33 are not in conflict; GC legislates connectional standards; ACs administer and decide if candidates meet them.

JCD 1210 (2012) — Plan UMC held unconstitutional: GC's legislative powers over general agencies cannot be delegated or consolidated in ways that violate constitutional checks/balances.

JCD 1226 (2012) — Protects clergy rights within appointment/leave legislation; reiterates rights-of-persons and proper legislative channels.

JCD 1361 (2018) — Jurisdiction is strictly construed; where administrative/judicial processes are unclear, GC—not JC—must fix it (restraint doctrine).

JCD 1366 (2018) — Articulates the principle of legality and separation of powers; GC legislates standards under ¶16; ACs act administratively under ¶33; rejects unauthorized delegation.

JCD 1378 (2019) — On the Traditional Plan: enforces constitutional limits and severability, preserving what passes constitutional muster and voiding what does not.

JCD 1424 (2022) & JCD 1425 (2022) — Restate JCD 823/1105/886 lines: ACs cannot negate GC legislation; must operate within GC-set processes (e.g., disaffiliation).

JCD 1444 (2022) — ACs may not unilaterally separate from the UMC absent GC-enabling legislation; such actions are unconstitutional and void.

JCD 1458 (2023) — Again: AC actions cannot conflict with the Discipline; cites 823/886/1105.

JCD 1507 (2024) — Strikes expansion of ¶2549 that circumvented constitutional authority of the charge conference; reinforces constitutional allocation of powers.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Declares ¶2549 cannot be used as an exit path; underscores that connectionalism is a bedrock constitutional principle and the trust clause is foundational to it.

JCD 847 (1998) — Cautions against official identification with unofficial bodies; governs how connectional identity is maintained.

JCD 871 (1999) — Applies JCD 847 in a parallel context; maintains connectional clarity.

JCD 702 (1993) — Applies constitutional inclusiveness to structural decisions; ties ecclesiology to governance practice.

JCM 1200 (2011) — On identification with unofficial organizations; applies JCD 847/871 to safeguard connectional identity.

JCM 1276 (2014) — Where the Discipline lacks clarity in administrative procedures, correction belongs to GC, not JC (judicial restraint under checks & balances).

Wespath/Benefits Relations — *Interface with church law in disaffiliations, closures, withdrawals.*

Subtopics: plan documents vs. BOD, fiduciary standards.

BOD: ¶¶1501–1507

Cases:

JCD 1379 (2019) — Confirms the minimum terms under ¶2553; expressly requires a local church's withdrawal liability for pensions and specifies that the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath) determines the conference's aggregate funding obligation using market-similar factors (language now mirrored in the DCA).

JCD 1424 (2022) — Annual conferences may add procedures/standard terms for ¶2553 disaffiliations so long as they don't negate GC's minimum standards (which include the pension-withdrawal requirement in ¶1504.23).

JCD 1425 (2022) — Reiterates the “minimum standards” principle from JCD 1424, specifically referencing ¶1504.23 in the disaffiliation framework.

JCD 1451 (2022) — Combined petitions (WPA/KEA/Alaska); attachments/rulings tied to this docket hold that a “\$1” pension withdrawal liability is inconsistent with ¶2553.4(d).

JCM 1452 (2023) — Addresses a petition limiting pension liabilities; clarifies that whether pension funding is “over/fully funded” is a technical determination made by the Board of Pensions, CFA, and Wespath under ¶1504.8a & ¶1506.6; says allowing a \$1 liability violates ¶2553.4a and ¶1504.23.

JCD 1512 (2024) — Holds that ¶2549 (closure) cannot be used as a “gracious exit”; local churches may not disaffiliate absent GC enabling legislation. (Critical to preventing use of closure to avoid pension terms.)

JCD 1507 (2024) — Addresses use of ¶2549; reinforces that closure provisions can’t displace the required processes and authorities.

JCD 1517 (2025) — Applies JCD 1512 in a specific case (Dakotas), again ruling ¶2549 cannot be used for disaffiliation.

JCD 1518 (2025) — Further consolidates JCD 1512/1517; explicitly restates the pension-withdrawal liability language (local church pays its pro-rata share; Wespath determines aggregate obligations).

JCM 1129 (2009) — Virginia AC asked about meaning/effect of ¶¶639, 1504, 1506 re plan sponsorship/administration; Council declined jurisdiction, but the memo frames how these paragraphs interact when secular law assigns plan-sponsor/administrator duties.

JCD 963 (2003) — West Virginia AC; distinguishes a conference deposit account at GBOPHB (Wespath) from the pre-1982 past service funding account; says deposit account is not restricted by ¶1506.8; cites ¶1507.3 for Board of Pensions authority.

JCD 976 (2003) — East Ohio AC; builds on JCD 963 and ¶1506.8 in allocating funds among pension and health obligations and honoring donor intent.

JCD 935 (2002) — North Georgia AC health-benefits redesign (HealthFlex/FSA); held to comply with the Discipline (illustrates conference benefit-plan changes within BoD parameters).

JCM 669 (1991) — Maine AC vs. General Board of Pensions; Judicial Council accepts jurisdiction in a dispute touching the Board’s fiduciary responsibility, directs the parties to settle; early touchpoint on fiduciary accountability within church processes.