

DAILY PROCEEDINGS

2023 FEBRUARY SPECIAL CALLED ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The business of this session and the availability of officiating this business via online made this called session of the Virginia Annual Conference possible. The purpose of the called Annual Conference session was to address churches that are requesting to disaffiliate under ¶2553 of The 2016 Book of Discipline as amended by the 2019 General Conference. The conference session was held using telecommunications technology for distance participation.

SATURDAY MORNING PLENARY SESSION

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH, 2023 AT 9:00 AM

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE CENTER

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

At 9:00 AM, Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson, Richmond Episcopal Area, welcomed the members and guests of the Virginia Annual Conference and called to order this special session of the Virginia Annual Conference. Bishop Hauptert-Johnson recognized Ms. Martha Stokes, Virginia Conference Lay Leader, to offer an opening prayer.

Ms. Stokes thanked Bishop Hauptert-Johnson and led us in prayer.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson thanked Ms. Madeline Pillow White, Director of Communications, and Rev. Steven Summers, Director of Connectional Ministries and Assistant to the Bishop, for organizing this Special Called Annual Conference. In addition, Bishop Hauptert-Johnson thanked Rev. Brian Siegle, Mr. Chris Malak, and Mr. Hunter Bryn for providing exemplary leadership in technology for this Special Called Annual Conference.

Rev. Siegle led the Annual Conference through a training on how to use the technological platform utilized.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson then led us through some practice voting.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson shared the disciplinary understanding of how this Special Called Annual Conference came to be. She expressed the singular reason for this Annual Conference is to vote on the ratification of disaffiliation of 34 churches under ¶2553 in *The 2016 Book of Discipline* as amended by the 2019 General Conference. In addition, Bishop Hauptert-Johnson shared that any other motions outside of this specific purview will be considered out of order.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson then recognized Rev. Denise Bates, Dean of the Cabinet, for the organizing motions.

Rev. Bates moved to permit this special session of the Virginia Annual Conference to take place in the virtual format.

The motion was seconded. The motion was approved.

Rev. Bates moved that the virtual bar of the Conference be set at the specific locations of the sites of members, and members at the host site, who have been provided with the appropriate Zoom log-in credentials.

The motion was seconded. The motion was approved.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson recognized Rev. Joshua King, Conference Secretary. Rev. King moved that the minutes for this special Annual Conference Session be approved in advance.

The motion was approved.

Rev. Gerald Headley, Melrose UMC, Mission Rivers District, moved to suspend the process for disaffiliation under *The Book of Discipline* ¶2553. The Virginia Annual Conference of the UMC should revisit the disaffiliation process after the 2024 General Conference when local churches have a better understanding of the course of the denomination.

The motion was seconded and discussed.

Rev. Paul Phillips, Norview UMC, Coastal Virginia District, moved to call the question. The motion was seconded. The motion was approved.

Rev. Tom Shepherd, Stuart UMC, Mountain View District, raised a point of order believing this motion was out of the purpose of the Special Called Annual Conference. Bishop Hauptert-Johnson ruled that this is germane to the Special Called Annual Conference and continue to the vote.

The Headley motion did not pass.

Rev. Headley, Melrose UMC, Mission Rivers District, moved to extend the deadline for disaffiliation processes until December 31, 2025.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson ruled this motion to be out of order because that is the work of the General Conference.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson recognized Ms. Kathy Lutman, President, Virginia Conference Board of Trustees.

Ms. Lutman presented the churches that are seeking closure under ¶2553 of *The 2016 Book of Discipline* as amended by the 2019 General Conference in the form of a resolution.

Whereas, with respect to each of the churches listed on Attachment A as currently shown on the screen (which attachment will be referred to hereafter as "Attachment A"), namely, Bingham's United Methodist Church, Byrd Chapel United Methodist Church, Creasey's Chapel United Methodist Church, Dunns Chapel United Methodist Church, Fairview United Methodist Church – Danville, Glenmore United Methodist Church, Grace Design United Methodist Church, Hanes Chapel United Methodist Church, Harris Chapel United Methodist Church, Hopewell United Methodist Church – Chesterfield, Huddleston United Methodist Church, Laurel Hill United Methodist Church, Locust Grove United Methodist Church – Dutton, Markham United Methodist Church, Mila United Methodist Church,

Mountain View United Methodist Church – Meadows of Dan, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church – Madison, Nettle Ridge United Methodist Church, New Hope United Methodist Church – Patrick, New Town United Methodist Church, Redland United Methodist Church, Refuge United Methodist Church, Rehoboth-Northumberland United Methodist Church, Ross Harbour United Methodist Church, Stuart United Methodist Church, Timberlake United Methodist Church, Trinity United Methodist Church – Christiansburg, Union Chapel United Methodist Church, Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church – Christiansburg, White Chapel United Methodist Church, Whitmell United Methodist Church, Wicomico United Methodist Church, Wilderness United Methodist Church, Woolwine United Methodist Church.

Ms. Lutman then stated, “which churches, collectively, will be referred to hereafter as the “Subject Churches” and each, a “Subject Church.””

Ms. Lutman then presented the process through which each of these local congregations had gone to come to this vote. This process included the following:

- (i) following a meeting between the pastor and/or a group of laity of the Subject Church and the district superintendent of the district of the Virginia Annual Conference (the “Conference”) in which the Subject Church is located, the district superintendent called a congregational information meeting for the members of the Subject Church to discuss the interest of the Subject Church in disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church;
- (ii) the members of the Subject Church engaged in a process of discernment, in the manner prescribed by the cabinet of the Conference, regarding the possibility of the Subject Church’s disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church pursuant to ¶2553 of the Book of Discipline (hereafter, the

- “Discipline”), and following such discernment the members elected, by majority vote, to proceed with the disaffiliation process;
- (iii) at a church conference called by the district superintendent and conducted in accordance with ¶248 of the Discipline, with prior notice having been given in accordance with ¶246.8 of the Discipline, the members of the Subject Church elected, by a two-thirds or greater vote, to approve the disaffiliation agreement dated February 18, 2023 between the Subject Church and the Conference, which agreement contains the terms and conditions established by the Conference board of trustees with the advice of the cabinet, treasurer, benefits officer, director of connectional ministries, and chancellor of the Conference (hereafter, the “Disaffiliation Agreement”); and
 - (iv) the Subject Church has delivered to the Conference board of trustees the Disaffiliation Agreement signed by the trustees of the Subject Church and the \$5,000 deposit as required under the terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.

Ms. Lutman moved,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that (i) the recitals contained in the WHEREAS paragraphs above are incorporated into this resolution by this reference; (ii) the Disaffiliation Agreement between each of the Subject Churches listed on Attachment A and the Conference is hereby ratified; (iii) the treasurer of the Conference is authorized to execute the Disaffiliation Agreement on behalf of the Conference; (iv) the disaffiliation of the Subject Churches listed in Attachment A from the denomination under ¶2553 of the Discipline, and the transfer of certain properties pursuant to the Disaffiliation Agreement to the successor to such Subject Church (free of the trust clause as provided for under ¶2501 of the

Discipline) and the other transactions and agreements described in the Disaffiliation Agreement, shall be effective in each case as of the “Closing” (as that term is defined in the Disaffiliation Agreement), subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Disaffiliation Agreement; and (v) any members of the Subject Churches that desire to remain a member of a church within The United Methodist Church shall be invited to become a member of their predesignated churches as previously communicated by their District Superintendent.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson thanked Ms. Lutman. She then stated that the resolution to ratify these 34 churches was before the body.

Rev. Mark Ogren, Duncan Memorial UMC, Three Notch’d District, moved to remove New Town United Methodist Church from the group of churches to be disaffiliated so that we might consider that church separately.

The motion was seconded and discussed.

Rev. Gregory West, New Town UMC, Mission Rivers District, raised a point of order believing this motion to be out of order based upon a ruling upheld in the October 29, 2022, Special Called Annual Conference quoting Mr. Andrew White, Conference Trustees Attorney, “¶2553 does not include any inquiry into the value of the property, the source of the property, where the property came from.”

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson ruled this point of order to be out of order. She ruled,

According to The Book of Discipline, a local church cannot sever its connectional relationship up to the United Methodist Church without the consent of the Annual Conference. And I think that the Annual Conference can vote up or down these agreements. And if they vote it down, it may be back to the drawing boards, but it is in the purview of the Annual Conference. And so, I am going to discount that point of order.

William Jarvis, Grace United Methodist Church, Northern Virginia District, moved to call the question.

The motion to call the question was seconded and approved.

The Ogren motion was approved with a vote of 699 yes and 692 no.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson closed the debate of everything above and called for the vote.

The resolution to ratify the disaffiliation of these 33 churches was approved.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson called upon Ms. Lutman to present the motion to ratify the disaffiliation of New Town United Methodist Church.

Ms. Lutman stated,

WHEREAS:

(i) following a meeting between the pastor and/or a group of laity of New Town United Methodist Church and the district superintendent of the district of the Virginia Annual Conference (the "Conference") in which New Town United Methodist Church is located, the district superintendent called a congregational information meeting for the members of New Town United Methodist Church to discuss the interest of New Town United Methodist Church in disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church;

(ii) the members of New Town United Methodist Church engaged in a process of discernment, in the manner prescribed by the cabinet of the Conference, regarding the possibility of New Town United Methodist Church's disaffiliating from The United Methodist Church pursuant to ¶2553 of *the Book of Discipline* (hereafter, the "*Discipline*"), and following such discernment the members elected, by majority vote, to proceed with the disaffiliation process;

(iii) at a church conference called by the district superintendent and conducted in accordance with ¶248 of the *Discipline*, with prior notice having been given in

accordance with ¶246.8 of the *Discipline*, the members of New Town United Methodist Church elected, by a two-thirds or greater vote, to approve the disaffiliation agreement dated February 18, 2023 between New Town United Methodist Church and the Conference, which agreement contains the terms and conditions established by the Conference board of trustees with the advice of the cabinet, treasurer, benefits officer, director of connectional ministries, and chancellor of the Conference (hereafter, the “Disaffiliation Agreement”); and

(iv) New Town United Methodist Church has delivered to the Conference board of trustees the Disaffiliation Agreement signed by the trustees of New Town United Methodist Church and the \$5,000 deposit as required under the terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that (i) the recitals contained in the WHEREAS paragraphs above are incorporated into this resolution by this reference; (ii) the Disaffiliation Agreement between New Town United Methodist Church and the Conference is hereby ratified; (iii) the treasurer of the Conference is authorized to execute the Disaffiliation Agreement on behalf of the Conference; (iv) the disaffiliation of New Town United Methodist Church from the denomination under ¶2553 of the *Discipline*, and the transfer of certain properties pursuant to the Disaffiliation Agreement to the successor to such church (free of the trust clause as provided for under ¶2501 of the *Discipline*) and the other transactions and agreements described in the Disaffiliation Agreement, shall be effective in each case as of the “Closing” (as that term is defined in the Disaffiliation Agreement), subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Disaffiliation Agreement; and (v) any members of New Town United Methodist Church that desire to remain a member of a church within The United Methodist Church shall be invited to become a member of their predesignated churches as previously communicated by their District Superintendent.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson then stated that this resolution to ratify the disaffiliation of New Town United Methodist Church was before the body.

The motion was discussed.

Rev. Gregory West, New Town UMC, Mission Rivers District, raised a point of order because he believed this motion is out of order as the land property value is not germane to the conversation per the Conference Trustees attorney at a previous Annual Conference.

Mr. Andrew White, Conference Trustees Attorney, responded that the Conference Trustees have treated this property like all others.

Rev. Edward Varner, Thalia UMC, Coastal Virginia District, moved to call the question.

The motion to call the question was seconded and approved.

Rev. David Hindman, Williamsburg UMC, Mission Rivers District, raised a point of order. Rev. Hindman stated that Rev. Greg West made a speech against as a part of his point of order and requested in order to equalize the speeches if he could make the counter argument speech for.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson ruled this point of order out of order as there is no ruling that there is a need for equal number of speeches.

The New Town United Methodist Church ratification agreement did not pass.

Bishop Hauptert-Johnson concluded this Special Called Annual Conference speaking to the pastoral need to care for those committed to the United Methodist Church. She encouraged the conference to wish those departing well in their continued ministry. She reminded clergy and laity to not share misinformation, but to be loyal to the United Methodist Church. She thanked those who have ensured a fair process and who helped churches to discern their future. She then closed the conference at 10:37 AM with a prayer.

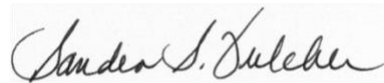
Signed: Rev. Joshua S. King, Annual Conference Secretary,

Handwritten signature of Rev. Joshua S. King, consisting of the word "Rev." followed by stylized initials "JK".

Signed: Rev. Claire B. Miller, Assistant Annual Conference Secretary

Handwritten signature of Rev. Claire B. Miller, written in cursive.

Minutes Committee certified on February 23rd, 2023 signed below:

Handwritten signature of P. Ala Layan.Handwritten signature of Alan Wan.Handwritten signature of Jiyoon Kim.Handwritten signature of Sandra S. Zulecki.Handwritten signature of Wen Su.