



PRE-CONFERENCE JOURNAL

Saturday, March 16, 2019

They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream.

Jeremiah 17:8



UNITED METHODISTS

OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

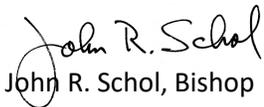
Welcome to the March 16, 2019 Special Annual Conference Session of Greater New Jersey. We are rooted in God so that we transform the world as we make disciples and grow vital congregations.

When we gather in annual conference session, in the Wesleyan tradition, it is a time for holy conferencing. Holy conferencing is a time for joyous worship, vigorous listening, mindful questing for righteousness and justice, and testifying to where we have experienced the resurrected Christ. Holy conferencing is a gift from God.

I am grateful for you and the people of GNJ. We are rooted in God's grace that has born fruit in our rich diversity and mission engagement. We have found ways to honor different experiences while remaining rooted in scripture.

Today, we have important and meaningful work to do. Thank you for coming and giving yourself to this worshipful work. I also believe God has an unexpected blessing for you today. Your blessing and our blessing together will come as we remain rooted in God - open to the Holy Spirit in our midst, honor the Creator's work in us and those around us, and to trust in Jesus. May you be blessed through this day.

Keep the faith!



John R. Schol, Bishop

United Methodists of Greater New Jersey

Table of Contents

Agenda	4
Reopen General and Jurisdictional Delegate Nomination Process	5
What Passed at General Conference Traditional Plan Legislation and Summary of Judicial Council Rulings	6
Policy Recommendations from Council on Finance and Administration	9
Shared Ministry Apportionment Formula	11
Shared Ministry Plan	11
Letter from Bishop Schol to GNJ Leaders Feb. 27, 2019	13
GNJ Way Forward Team	15
GNJ Resources for Clergy and Congregations about General Conference 2019	16
Statement from the Wesley Covenant Association of Greater New Jersey	17
Statement in Response to General Conference 2019 from GNJ Reconciling Ministries	18
A Statement from GNJ Youth and Young Adult Delegates after General Conference 2019	19
Chair of the GNJ Delegation Report.....	21
Co-Chair of the GNJ Delegation Report.....	22

Agenda

- 9:00 a.m. **Worship with Rev. John Edgar, Pastor and Executive Director of The United Methodist Church & Community Development for All People in Columbus, OH**
- 9:40 a.m. **General Conference 2019 Delegate Report – Rev. Tom Lank, Lynn Caterson and the GNJ Delegation**
- **2020 Delegation Legislation**
 - **Report from the Delegation**
- 10:15 a.m. **Council on Finance and Administration Report - Bob Dietz, Jack Scharf and Judy Colorado**
- **Policy Recommendations**
 - **2019 Budget**
- 10:50 a.m. **Congregation/Leadership 100 – Trey Wince**
- 11:00 a.m. **GNJ's Way Forward**
- **Connectional Table Legislation – Rev. Sang Won Doh**
 - **Bishop John Schol Presentation**
 - **Share with us a story**
 - **Has anything changed for you because of the General Conference decision?**
 - **If passed, what questions or matters would you like the GNJ Way Forward Team to consider?**
 - **What do you or what does your congregation need to faithfully carry out our mission to transform the world as we make disciples and grow vital congregations?**
 - **Where are you seeing or experiencing hope, resurrection?**
- 12:30 p.m. **Closing Worship with Prayer and Anointing**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

1 **Reopen General and Jurisdictional Delegate Nomination Process**

2 **Whereas** every four years the GNJ Annual Conference elects General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates to
3 represent GNJ to develop policies for the church and elect new bishops; and

4 **Whereas** we will be electing new delegates at the May 2019 Annual Conference Session for the 2020 General
5 and Jurisdictional Conferences; and

6 **Whereas** we invite nominations ahead of annual conference so that biographical materials and statements may
7 be distributed by GNJ prior to annual conference so that those voting may make informed choices; and

8 **Whereas** the Book of Discipline Paragraph 502(a) says "Annual conferences are urged to seek inclusiveness in
9 the election of delegates" and GNJ has a tradition of sending delegations that reflect the racial/ethnic, gender,
10 and age diversity of our conference; and

11 **Whereas** we did not receive sufficient nominations to elect a full delegation and there was one ethnic group
12 that did not have any nominees, another that had only one nominee, and women were under represented; and

13 **Whereas** this is the first time this has occurred in memory;

14 **Therefore be it resolved**, to suspend the rules and extend the nomination period until March 31, 2019 so that
15 we allow for additional nominations and the members of the annual conference can receive information about
16 each nominee prior to voting for our 2020 delegation.

17 Submitted by:
18 Rev. Tom Lank,
19 Chairperson of the GNJ General and Jurisdictional Delegates
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GNJ clergy and lay delegates were seated among the 864 delegates from around the world.

(photo by Todd Rossnagel, Council of Bishops)

1 **What Passed at General Conference**

2 **Traditional Plan Legislation and Summary of Judicial Council Rulings**

3 One of the key constitutional issues that the Judicial Council spoke to in its review of the Traditional Plan in
4 Judicial Council Ruling 1366 is the principle of “legality,” which requires all individuals and entities to be equally
5 bound by church law and forbids selective and partial enforcement. Much of the Traditional Plan legislation as
6 originally submitted was focused on the sections of the Discipline related to same-sex marriage and ordination
7 of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” and as a result violated the principle of legality.

8 Another key issue is depriving clergy of the right to fair and due process, which was particularly important in
9 ruling the sections dealing with the proposed “council relations committee” within the Council of Bishops
10 unconstitutional.

11 Unless otherwise noted, all approved legislation takes effect January 1, 2020. Judicial Council meets in April
12 2019 to review the actions taken by the recent General Conference. The 2020 General Conference will be held
13 May 5 - May 15. Thus there is potential for new requirements around ordination to be in place for candidates
14 coming forward in the 2020 annual conference season.

15 **Traditional Plan Petitions Approved and Ruled Constitutional**

- 16 1. **Define Self-Avowed Practicing Homosexual** - Amended footnote to paragraph 304.3 on definition of
17 “self-avowed practicing homosexual” to include anyone in a same-sex marriage or who publicly
18 states that he or she is “a practicing homosexual.” – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90032
- 19 2. **Episcopal Responsibilities** - Prohibits bishops from consecrating new bishops who are “self-avowed
20 homosexuals” (the word “practicing” is not included here) even if elected, and prohibits bishops
21 from ordaining “self-avowed homosexuals” (again not “practicing”) or candidates for whom the
22 Board of Ordained Ministry has “failed to certify” it carried out the “disciplinarily mandated
23 examination” – even if approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry and clergy session of annual
24 conference – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90036.
- 25 3. **Minimum Penalties** – mandates mandatory one-year suspension for first offense celebrating a
26 same-sex union; and a mandatory termination of conference membership/loss of orders for second
27 offense – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90042
- 28 4. **Amend Complaint Process** – requires explanation of any dismissal of complaint to be shared with
29 the complainant – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90044
- 30 5. **Revise Just Resolution Process** – requires a statement of harms to be part of the just resolution of a
31 complaint; requires commitment not to repeat the violation – CONSTITUTIONAL EXCEPT the
32 provision that requires commitments to not repeat the actions, petition 90045
- 33 6. **Make Complainant a Party to Just Resolution** – requires inclusion of complainant in the just
34 resolution process; “every effort shall be made” to achieve the complainant’s agreement with the
35 proposed resolution – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90046

36 **Traditional Plan Petitions Approved and Ruled Unconstitutional:**

- 37 7. **Involuntary Retirement For Bishops** - Would allow Council of Bishops to vote to involuntarily place a
38 bishop in retired relationship based on recommendation of the “council relations committee” –
39 UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90033
- 40 8. **Involuntary Leave For Bishops** - Would allow Council of Bishops to vote to place a bishop on
41 involuntary leave based on recommendation of the “council relations committee” –
42 UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90034
- 43 9. **Council Relations Committee** - Creates the “council relations committee” in the Council of Bishops
44 to hear complaints against bishops unwilling to certify that they will “uphold, enforce, and maintain”
45 the Discipline relative to “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” – UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition
46 90035

- 1 10. **Boom Examination Of Candidates** - Describes the process for the Board of Ordained Ministry to
 2 inquire whether any candidate for local pastor, associate member, provisional member, or full
 3 member is a “practicing homosexual,” including by looking at social media; requires BOOM to certify
 4 the result – UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90038
- 5 11. **Boom Annual Conference Certification (Paragraph 806.9)** - Requires annual conferences to certify
 6 that the bishop has only nominated members to BOOM who will “uphold, enforce, maintain”
 7 Discipline around marriage and ordination of practicing homosexuals; mandates that GCFA
 8 withholds funds & use of logo for those who do not – UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90039 (affects
 9 Paragraph 806.9, which is the language restricting general church funds from supporting “the
 10 acceptance of homosexuality”)
- 11 12. **Boom Annual Conference Certification (Paragraph 613.19)** - Requires annual conferences to certify
 12 that the bishop has only nominated members to BOOM who will “uphold, enforce, maintain”
 13 Discipline around marriage and ordination of practicing homosexuals; mandates that GCFA
 14 withholds funds & use of logo for those who do not – UNCONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90040 (affects
 15 Paragraph 613.19, which is the language restricting annual conference funds from supporting “the
 16 acceptance of homosexuality”)

17 **Status Uncertain/Will be reviewed by Judicial Council in April:**

- 18 13. **Boom Certification** - Requires any clergyperson nominated for membership on the Board of
 19 Ordained Ministry to certify that they will “uphold, enforce, and maintain” the Discipline “in its
 20 entirety, including but not limited to all qualifications for ordination” likewise requires the bishop to
 21 certify that he/she has only nominated those who will “uphold, enforce, and maintain” the
 22 Discipline – This petition was AMENDED from its original form. The ORIGINAL text was ruled
 23 UNCONSTITUTIONAL because it was limited to the parts of the Discipline related to questions
 24 around homosexuality, now will need to be reviewed with the amendment, petition 90037
- 25 14. **Approval Of Candidates** – no candidate may be approved for licensing, ordination or commissioning
 26 without first meeting all qualifications in Paragraph 304.1-3, based on “the full examination and
 27 thorough inquiry into the person’s fitness”; references Judicial Council Decisions 1343 & 1344;
 28 bishop given authority to rule “unqualified” candidates out of order – PREVIOUSLY RULED
 29 CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90043. HOWEVER, since that time, decision 1368 further delineated the
 30 responsibilities of the clergy session versus the responsibilities of bishops (separation of powers).
- 31 15. **Give Church Right To Appeal** – gives the church the ability to appeal verdict of a trial court to the
 32 committee on appeals and then the Judicial Council in cases of “egregious errors of Church law or
 33 administration” – PREVIOUSLY RULED CONSTITUTIONAL, however, double jeopardy has not been
 34 fully tested in case law by Judicial Council and may require an amendment to guarantee, per
 35 Decision 1366 (pp.51ff.) petition 90047
- 36 16. **Disaffiliation (Taylor) Petition – As Amended** – allows churches to disaffiliate from the UMC over
 37 issues of human sexuality; includes time limit of December 31, 2023; requires church conference
 38 vote with 2/3 majority; sets approvals required by the annual conference; sets standard terms of the
 39 disaffiliation agreement; limits apportionment payments to 24 months; allows church to keep
 40 property; requires pro rata payment of any unfunded pension liabilities; requires payment of other
 41 liabilities to annual conference; local churches disaffiliating may continue to sponsor employee
 42 benefit plans through GBOPHB if they choose; releases trust clause when process is completed –
 43 QUESTION OF CONSTITUTIONALITY based on Paragraph 41, which requires an annual conference to
 44 vote on the transfer of a church from one annual conference to another - though at least three
 45 members of the Judicial Council have expressed doubts that Paragraph 41 is relevant to the question
 46 (Decision 1377), petition 90066

47
 48

Return to Table of Contents

1 **Other Actions of 2019 General Conference:**

- 2 17. **Central Conference Implementation Time** – set allowance of 18 months after close of any GC for
3 implementation of decisions in central conferences where English is not the primary language; set
4 requirement that legislation passed at 2019 GC not take effect in Central Conferences until 12
5 months after close of the 2020 GC – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90015
- 6 18. **Requirement That Exiting Churches Pay Pro Rata Share Of Pension Liability** – requires local
7 churches to pay their share of unfunded pension liability when closed, abandoned or released from
8 trust clause to exit denomination, based on a calculation done by GBOPHB – CONSTITUTIONAL,
9 petition 90016
- 10 19. **Pension Treatment For Exiting Clergy** – exiting clergy are treated as fully vested but will have
11 balances invested in UMPIP – CONSTITUTIONAL, petition 90017

12
13 Prepared in collaboration with
14 Rev. Joseph Monahan,
15 Medford UMC



**Rev. Dennis Blackwell, a member of the Judicial Council,
joined in the Day of Prayer at GC 2019. (photo by Mike Dubois, UMNS)**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

1 **Policy Recommendations from Council on Finance and Administration**

2
3 *The Book of Discipline ¶ 608.4; 610.1b; 612.1; 612.5 a)(4) gives CFA the ability to issue fiscal policies to include the*
4 *following.*

5 **Bank Accounts**

6 No GNJ staff person may open a bank account for any aspect of ministry within GNJ without the approval of the
7 council on finance and administration. All GNJ ministry related bank accounts overseen, supervised, influenced
8 or managed by a GNJ staff person will be audited by a CFA approved auditor.

9 Any group of GNJ clergy together or with laity who desire to open and/or manage a bank account that is not part
10 of a congregation’s ministry shall seek the district superintendent’s approval and when a superintendent is
11 involved, the bishop’s approval. When there is a request to open a bank account, the district superintendent
12 shall notify the cabinet and the GNJ treasurer.

13 **Grants, Loans and Bequests**

14 The conference treasurer and district superintendent are to receive prompt notification from the pastor or
15 appropriate church official, within 30 days of the receipt of any external (non-conference) grants, loans and
16 bequests received by a region, district or congregation. The treasurer, superintendent and connectional
17 ministries director will be sent copies of all documents and terms of these external grants.

18 Only the Director of connectional ministries in consultation with the grants committee can amend any of the
19 terms or conditions of the local church grants. Specifically, only the director of connectional ministries can
20 authorize to change the recipient and/or manager of local church grants.

21 **Complaints and Just Resolutions**

22 Any resolution of a supervisory or misconduct matter involving a GNJ clergy person or GNJ official that has
23 financial implications shall be reviewed by the council on finance and administration and any resolutions that
24 presently or in the future may require GNJ to provide financial payments or settlement shall be approved by the
25 council on finance and administration.

26 **GNJ Emails, Documents, Files, Computers, Tablets and Phones**

27 All electronic documents, files and emails for GNJ staff including district superintendents’ computers, tablets and
28 phones are the property of the conference. As such, these electronic materials are to remain intact, never to be
29 deleted from the conference server without the approval of the Bishop, treasurer and appropriate district
30 superintendent. When a staff person or district superintendent completes employment or an appointment with
31 GNJ, computers, tablets and phones are not to be erased clean but turned in with their documents.

32 **Falsifying Information on GNJ Documents or Legal Documents**

33 No district superintendent, GNJ staff member, committee, clergy person, lay leader or local church is to falsify
34 any information on documents.

35 *The Book of Discipline ¶ 442.2 gives the Cabinet the ability to set policies to include the following.*

36 **Clergy Gifts**

37 Any GNJ clergy person or family member who receives a gift of \$1000 or more in cash, property or goods, or
38 \$2500 or more over a 10 year period of time, from a current or former member or attendee of a congregation to
39 which he or she is or has been appointed shall report the amount of the gift to the SPRC chairperson and the
40 district superintendent, who will inform the cabinet of the gifts. The cabinet will follow up as appropriate.

41 Any congregation that considers giving a cash, property, or other type of gift from their budget or reserves in the
42 amount of \$2500 or more shall report to the district superintendent their intention to determine if a special
43 charge conference should be held to treat such a gift as income based on IRS guidelines. Congregations may
44 receive an offering for a clergy person as a special gift in honor of their retirement and provide the clergy person
45 with one check in the amount that was received from individuals.

1 **Complaints and Just Resolutions**

2 The general nature of all complaints filed against clergy will be shared with the chairperson of the Board of
3 Ordained Ministry along with the disposition of the complaint, including any just resolution. The chairperson of
4 the board will inquire yearly of the bishop the progress on just resolutions until a resolution has been fulfilled.

5 The cabinet shall maintain a log of all complaints and resolutions of the complaint and the dean of the cabinet
6 shall share with a new dean of the cabinet a log of all complaints and just resolutions with the status of those
7 complaints and just resolutions. Further the dean of the cabinet will share with a new bishop a log of complaints
8 and just resolutions and status of those complaints and just resolutions.

9 Outgoing bishops are strongly urged to share with their successor each complaint handled during her/his tenure
10 and the status of those complaints and just resolutions.

11 **Cabinet Documents**

12 Superintendents are not to share cabinet documents or confidential clergy information with other clergy or laity
13 unless approved by the cabinet. Any clergy person or lay person who receives cabinet documents that are not
14 released by the cabinet or bishop or documents that contain information about another clergy person from any
15 superintendent or GNJ staff member shall notify the bishop immediately.

16 **GNJ Appointments and Assignments**

17 Any clergy person or congregation who believes they are not appropriately represented by their district
18 superintendent or asked to do things by their district superintendent that seem inappropriate, is to contact the
19 bishop immediately.

20 No district superintendent or GNJ staff member may unilaterally assign her/himself as the representative for the
21 conference to GNJ or outside entities unless assigned by The Book of Discipline, or the bishop or elected by the
22 cabinet or elected by the annual conference.



Bishop John Schol confers with colleagues over the issue of whether the legislative committee can refer items to the denomination's Judicial Council for review. (photo by Mike Dubois, UMNS)

1 **Shared Ministry Apportionment Formula**

2
3 **Whereas** the United Methodist Church continues our focus to grow Vital Congregations; and

4
5 **Whereas** in GNJ we remain focused on developing vital congregations and prayerfully do so through our
6 financial stewardship; and therefore

7
8 **Be it resolved** that the Shared Ministry percentage be set at a revised 15.6% from the original 16.1% of a
9 congregation’s Shared Ministry base for the 2019 budget and that each year the Annual Conference approve the
10 Shared Ministry percentage. The Shared Ministry base be set at a congregation’s total expenses as follows:

- 11
- 12 1. Lines 41a-47 of Table II of The Local Church Statistical Report
 - 13 41a – Pastor Wages
 - 14 41b – Associate Pastor Wages
 - 15 41c – Deacon Wages
 - 16 42 – Parsonage Expenses
 - 17 43 – Accountable Reimbursements
 - 18 44 – Other Cash Allowances
 - 19 45 – Staff Compensation
 - 20 46 – Church Program Expenses
 - 21 47 – Church Operating Expenses
- 22
- 23 2. Billed amounts for prior year Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP), Clergy Retirement Security Program
- 24 (CRSP), Health Insurance, Property Insurance and Workers Comp
- 25

26 **Rationale:** This existing formula uses the present Shared Ministry base calculation but prevents automatic
27 percentage increases and requires GNJ to set budgets that are within a fixed percentage of the Shared Ministry
28 base. In effect, this will reduce each congregation’s shared ministry percentage for 2019.

29
30 Submitted by,
31 Robert Dietz, Chair of CF&A

32 **Shared Ministry Plan**

33
34 BE IT RESOLVED that the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference approves the adoption of the amended Shared
35 Ministries Plan for 2019, the details of which are provided on the following page.

2019 REVISED SHARED MINISTRY PLAN		Approved	Recommended
<u>INCOME:</u>		<u>2019</u>	<u>2019</u>
		<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>
SM Base		67,250,000	67,250,000
Shared Ministry Percentage		16.1%	15.6%
Shared Ministry Apportioned		10,827,250	10,491,000
Expected SM Giving Rate		91.5%	91.0%
Expected Available SM		9,906,934	9,546,810
Investment		72,800	72,800
Centenary Fund		103,000	103,000
Shared Services Income		437,750	437,750
	TOTAL INCOME	10,520,484	10,160,360
<u>EXPENSE:</u>			
CLERGY SUPPORT			
A.	District Superintendents Salary, Benefits & Office Exp.	1,741,549	1,691,549
B.	Episcopal Fund	374,064	374,064
C.	Conference share of Bishop's housing	28,135	28,135
D.	Annuitants Health Insurance & Benefits	1,896,112	1,886,112
E.	Equitable Compensation	158,400	158,400
F.	Conference Board of Ordained Ministry administrative expenses	41,163	41,163
G.	Bridge Fund	67,200	35,000
	TOTAL CLERGY SUPPORT	4,306,623	4,214,423
ADMINISTRATION			
A.	Conference Council on Finance and Administration expenses	3,840	3,840
B.	Conference Staff	1,048,584	1,003,584
C.	Administrative Expenses	433,051	423,051
D.	Conf. Sessions (3 days)	231,831	201,831
E.	Annual Conference Reserve		
F.	Episcopal Area Office Supplement	141,003	138,003
G.	Bishop's Discretionary Fund	9,600	4,400
H.	Jurisdictional conference admin. apportionments & related exp.	36,480	36,480
I.	General Administration Fund	149,987	149,987
J.	Interdenominational Cooperation Fund	33,366	33,366
	TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	2,087,742	1,994,541
WORLD SERVICE AND CONFERENCE BENEVOLENCE			
A.	World Service Fund	1,263,131	1,263,131
B.	Connectional Ministry Staff	954,045	820,045
C.	Administrative Expenses	196,800	196,800
D.	Connectional Table	884,433	784,433
E.	Supplemental Strategic Salary Support	134,400	130,400
	TOTAL WORLD SERVICE/CONF.BEN.	3,432,809	3,194,809
OTHER APPORTIONED FUNDS			
A.	Black College Fund	170,177	170,177
B.	Africa University Fund	38,085	38,085
C.	Ministerial Education Fund	426,627	426,627
	TOTAL OTHER FUNDS	634,889	634,889
	Resolve a complaint resolution		110,000
	TOTAL EXPENSE	10,462,062	10,148,662
	SURPLUS/DEFICIT	58,421	11,698

Letter from Bishop Schol to GNJ Leaders Feb. 27, 2019



Put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Colossians 3:15

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Special General Conference of The United Methodist Church gathered in St. Louis, MO February 24-26, 2019 and passed the Traditional Plan for the United Methodist way forward. This plan affirms the present policies in The Book of Discipline which does not allow same gender weddings and the ordination of gays and lesbians. This plan was preferred over the One Church Plan which would have left these issues up to individual conferences, congregations and clergy.

Personally, I experienced the church more contentious and divided at this General Conference, than any of the previous seven General Conferences I have attended.

This General Conference:

- Passed the Traditional Plan. If 28 people of the more than 800 voting delegates had voted differently, the Traditional Plan would have been defeated.
- Defeated the One Church Plan. If 26 people had voted differently, it would have passed.
- Supported the Traditional Plan even though the Judicial Council ruled on two different occasions that core aspects of the plan, about 60% of it, was unconstitutional.
- Called for an investigation into an accusation that some delegates were being given money and other goods to influence their vote.
- Had a tie vote, 409 to 409 on a piece of legislation and approved another by two votes.
- Was divided culturally with an estimated 65% of US delegates approving the One Church Plan and 85% of the delegates outside the US approving the Traditional Plan.

GNJ is clearly a model for our church for how to honor difference and in the midst of difference to respect one another. GNJ is a One Church Plan conference that recognizes that we are in ministry with LGBTQ people in different ways. I came away from this General Conference appreciating even more the rich diversity and different expressions of GNJ. Thank you for your continued example of Christ-like love and grace in the midst of difference. You make me proud to be your bishop.

The legislation that was passed, was again sent to the Judicial Council, the “supreme court” of The United Methodist Church where it is anticipated that much of the Traditional Plan will be ruled unconstitutional for a third time. We most likely will not receive final rulings from the Judicial Council for several months. United Methodists will continue under our present policies concerning homosexuality.

I want to take this opportunity to speak to our gay and lesbian sisters and brothers and to the family members of gays and lesbians. You are welcomed and accepted by me and most of the people of GNJ. While our denomination wrestles, we welcome you with the arms of grace found through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are of sacred worth to God and me and I pledge to create space for you to worship, serve and engage through The United Methodist Church of GNJ.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

I call upon all of our clergy and congregations to dedicate themselves to a season of prayer and to be the welcoming congregation that I have experienced you to be.

We are a One Church Conference where churches hold different beliefs and understandings and engage in different ministries with gays and lesbians. I will lead so that each of our congregations and clergy will have different expressions and ministries and yet serve one God, one Lord Jesus Christ and one mission – to transform the world as we make disciples and grow vital congregations.

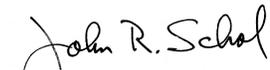
I will be a bishop of the whole church and all of our people.

On March 16, 2019 we will meet in an annual conference special session to learn more about the actions of General Conference, how we will move together in mission and what we can do to work together and move forward.

These are challenging days for the church. We are blessed to have creative, resourceful and whole leaders who will guide us through this time.

Thank you for your service and participation in The United Methodist Church. We need you.

Keep the faith!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Schol". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John R. Schol, Bishop
United Methodists of Greater New Jersey

1 **GNJ Way Forward Team**
2

3 **Whereas**, the 2019 Special General Conference of the United Methodist Church passed an amended version of
4 the Traditional Plan, and
5

6 **Whereas**, there was strong support for the One Church Plan in the United States and GNJ,
7

8 **Be it resolved**, that the GNJ Connectional Table creates a GNJ Way Forward Team to identify and propose a plan
9 to the Annual Conference Session by or before the May 2020 Annual Conference Session and that \$10,000 from
10 the strategic planning reserve is allocated for the process.

11 The proposal shall include, but not be limited to, how GNJ will:

- 12
- 13 1. support congregations in different contexts to be in ministry with the LGBTQI+ community per
 - 14 paragraph 161.G of The Book of Discipline,
 - 15 2. respect and honor one another based on our theological and cultural differences,
 - 16 3. share our hopes and concerns with our United Methodist sisters and brothers around the world.
- 17

18 **Be it further resolved**, that the GNJ Way Forward Team shall be comprised of a diverse group of clergy and
19 congregational leaders that represent the rich theological, cultural and generational diversity of GNJ. The team
20 members include GNJ leaders of the Board of Laity, Board of Global Ministries, Board of Trustees, Board of
21 Ordained Ministries, Connectional Table, Council for Finance and Administration, Local Ethnic Concerns
22 Committee, Reconciling Ministries, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, Wesleyan Covenant
23 Association and Youth Council. The team members will be as follows:
24

Rachel Callender	Rev. Kay Dubuisson
Robert Dietz	Rev. Sang Won Doh
Zach Holder	Rev. Amanda Hemenetz
Diana Pearce	Rev. Thomas Korkuch
Rosa Williams	Rev. Isabel Quezada
Michael Yang	Rev. Cliff Still
Kathleen Schulz	Rev. David Wehrle
Lewis Weil	Rev. Jessica Winderweedle

25
26 Submitted by:
27 GNJ Connectional Table

1 GNJ Resources for Clergy and Congregations about General Conference 2019

2

3 As you hold services, meet in small groups, host youth activities and carry out your ministry, you will be
4 navigating discussions, questions and concerns about the outcome of General Conference 2019. Even more, you
5 will be faced with questions and concerns from your community outside the church who have read the
6 headlines of the national news and are concerned about the deep divisions within the church.

7 GNJ has put together resources to help navigate these challenging times. Some of the resources are geared to
8 help you immediately as you consider your worship this week. Other resources are more in depth and may be
9 more appropriate in the coming weeks. We will continue to update these resources, so you are encouraged to
10 return as you need information and material.

11 We welcome your feedback if you are looking for assistance or have material that is appropriate to include on
12 these pages.

13 www.gnjumc.org/the-way-forward/

14 Communication Resources

15 Local press information, news articles, social media guidelines, graphics, logos, bulletin inserts and newsletter
16 articles

17 Worship Resources

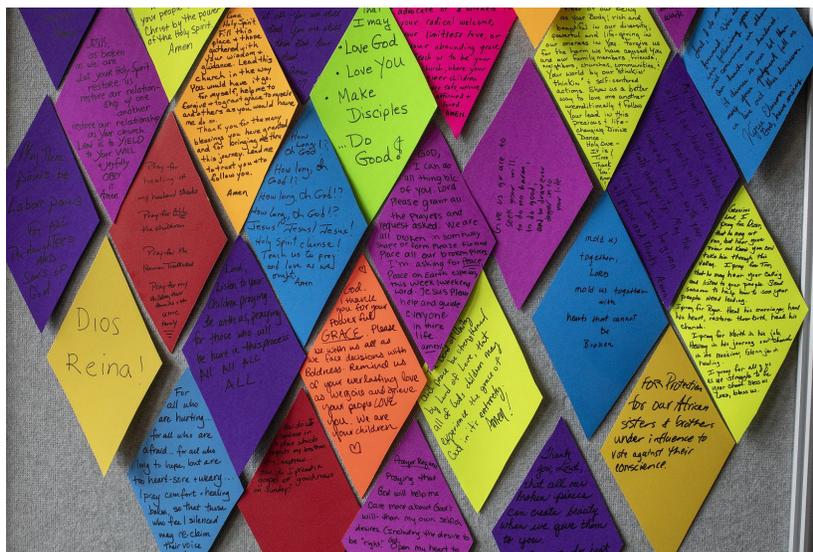
18 Call to worship, scriptures, prayers and song selections and preaching notes

19 Small Group Resources

20 Small group resource geared for our congregations, book recommendations and study guides

21 Youth Resources

22 Next Generation Ministry's statement of welcome, suggestions for talking with young people in your
23 congregation and in your community and articles about ministry with LGBT youth



Part of a prayer wall at General Conference 2019. (photo by Mike Dubois, UMNS)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

1 Statement from the Wesley Covenant Association of Greater New Jersey

2
3 Thank you Bishop Schol for your invitation to address this conference. We welcome this opportunity to mend
4 relationships within GNJ in the aftermath of General Conference. We believe the world is watching, and
5 opportunity exists to model working through strongly held disagreements respectfully. Perhaps given the many
6 divides that distress our world today, we have been called for such a time as this.

7 The WCA of GNJ is a connection of orthodox churches, clergy and laity who adhere to Wesleyan theology. We
8 prioritize Scripture's authority, Jesus Christ's Lordship, personal and social holiness and reformation in the
9 UMC that will strengthen the effectiveness of our witness. We delight in the diversity of our GNJ
10 connection that represents a microcosm of the growing global nature of our denomination. With women
11 and men representing every district, our membership reflects that although the current leadership of GNJ
12 evidences a strong progressive theological stance, many in our conference do not.

13 We are Wesleyans who strive to love all people. We acknowledge our own need for deeper reflection and
14 repentance. While our movement is not centered on the topic of human sexuality, we have a strong sense of
15 accountability for what we affirm and teach (Mark 9:42). We strive to carefully consider *all* matters related to
16 healthy expression of human sexuality. We regard entering covenant with false pretenses and breaking
17 covenants as heart-breaking and dishonoring to all. We welcome good faith conversation on all these matters.

18 Regarding General Conference:

- 19 • We encourage all to read the WCA Council statement
20 [https://wesleyancovenant.org/2019/02/28/statement-of-the-wesleyan-covenant-association-council-](https://wesleyancovenant.org/2019/02/28/statement-of-the-wesleyan-covenant-association-council-on-next-steps/)
21 [on-next-steps/](https://wesleyancovenant.org/2019/02/28/statement-of-the-wesleyan-covenant-association-council-on-next-steps/) and the blog by WCA Council member Cara Nicklas, who served as a delegate
22 <https://peopleneedjesus.net/2019/03/04/cara-nicklas-a-lay-delegate-perspective-on-gc2019/> .
- 23 • We are thankful the UMC has reaffirmed its sexual ethics, teachings on marriage and its ordination
24 standards.
- 25 • We are surprised that progressives/centrists were shocked by the defeat of the One Church Plan.
26 As UMCOM reported, the UMC's largest U.S. segment identifies as conservative/traditional.
27 Delegate representation trends reflect that we are an increasingly globally connected
28 denomination. Therefore, more universal church and thus orthodox conforming legislation should
29 be expected, now and into the future.
- 30 • We hope to work together to remedy factors that lead to the under representation of orthodox
31 evangelicals on GNJ's General Conference delegation.
- 32 • We hope GNJ leadership will provide an environment that orthodox churches and pastors can feel
33 comfortable to be themselves.
- 34 • While we acknowledge Bishop Schol's letter of February 27th was released during a highly
35 emotional time, many regard it as dishonoring to General Conference's work, counterproductive to
36 many local church ministries, and contrary to the good order and unity of the whole church. Given
37 that the One Church Plan was not adopted, we trust Bishop Schol will provide further clarification
38 of his stated intention to lead GNJ as if it did.
- 39 • We hope all will practice good ministry stewardship so that valuable time and resources will not
40 continue to be used to intensify our deep division.

1 More WCA of GNJ connectional opportunities affirming and equipping those with our beliefs and educating
2 others are forthcoming.

3 Submitted by:
4 Rev. Beth Caulfield

6 **Statement in Response to General Conference 2019 from GNJ Reconciling Ministries**

7 To say we were shocked would be an understatement. Such hurtfulness from the church we know and love--the
8 church that baptized us, raised us, confirmed us, and sent us forth to serve—was unconscionable; so we've
9 spent the last three weeks grieving The UMC and supporting each other, standing with our LGBTQ+ congregants,
10 clergy, families, and friends, providing assurance that Jesus does not agree with the decision of His church.

11 And yet we have received and witnessed SO MUCH love, support, and displays of holy resistance that our shock
12 has turned to hope and determination. We hear the Spirit saying, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation
13 21:5); and we feel this new thing coming forth, a new church, a new Methodism—one in which ALL people and
14 their gifts are welcomed and wholly celebrated.

15 We hope and pray we can work toward this new church together, that it can arise within the current UMC. We
16 implore you to join us in this goal. If, however, The UMC continues to reject God's children, we trust the Spirit
17 will lead us forth, in conjunction with other organizations and Conferences, in building a new church truly
18 abounding in grace and love. All possibilities are on the table; but one thing is certain—**We will no longer stand
19 for a church that excludes members of Christ's body in any way.**

20 And so, we are thankful—thankful for the promise of new life!

21 To those who have publicly supported us, *Thank You*. To those who have signed on to become Reconciling
22 United Methodists since General Conference, *Thank You*. To those who have continued this fight, or just begun
23 it, pledging to see it through, *Thank You*. To those who hold fast to their convictions of inclusion in spite of the
24 proclamations of the church, *Thank You*.

25 To those who are LGBTQ+, and are holding on with all you've got, *don't give up; we've got your back*.

26 And to those who think the decision of General Conference was warranted, *you're in our prayers*.

27 Here's to a future of full inclusion and love in the church; where everyone born has a place at the table, can live
28 without fear, serve without scorn, and boldly claim their belovedness in God!

29 Submitted by:
30 Rev. Amanda Hemenetz,
31 Rev. Kaleigh Corbett
32 and Rev. Jessica Brendler Naulty
33 for GNJ Reconciling Ministries
34 www.rmnetwork.org
35 on Facebook: Greater New Jersey Reconciling Community
36 <https://www.facebook.com/gnjreconcilingcommunity/>

1 **A Statement from GNJ Youth and Young Adult Delegates after General Conference 2019**

2
3 As youth and young adult delegates from one of the most diverse states and annual conferences, we recognize
4 that different theological, cultural, social, and economic perspectives make up our church family. We believe our
5 differences help to grow disciples of Jesus Christ and our beloved United Methodist Church. We are better
6 together. When we pool our ideas, our funds and our faith, we are able to move mountains. We can send
7 substantial help to Puerto Rico providing hurricane relief, clean up and rebuild homes that were damaged by
8 Hurricane Sandy, endorse legislation that moves toward ending public-school segregation, and so much more.

9 This is possible because a God of love weaves us together to be the Body of Christ. A God who created all and
10 loves all, regardless of race, gender, economic status, belief, or sexual orientation. A God who in loving all, has
11 given gifts, talents and abilities to all, making the perfect place for each one to live up to their full potential to
12 transform the world for the glory of God: from the pews and the pulpit.

13 We are devastated with the decision made at General Conference 2019. We are heartbroken that a calculated
14 political effort was made to mandate discrimination in the name of our religion. We are devastated at the
15 exorbitant monetary cost of this decision. We have had to answer to our friends and families, our classmates in
16 seminary and partners in ministry. How can we remain in a denomination that is so discriminatory? How can
17 some people be deemed incompatible?

18 We don't always have the answers and some days we aren't sure if we can stay ourselves. We do not want to
19 leave. We feel like our church has left us.

20 Through these challenges, we will lead on. If you want our beloved church to stop aging, be in ministry with us. If
21 you want to reach Millennials and Generation Z, be in ministry with us. If you want to reach all God's children,
22 even the marginalized and oppressed, be in ministry with us. You need our voices in leadership, on boards and
23 committees, at Annual Conference and at General Conference.

24 As the church of TODAY and tomorrow, we will fight for the ideals of the UMC we know and love. We will join
25 together to build the kingdom of heaven here on earth. We committed, through our baptism and confirmation
26 to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. To ensure that every single
27 person that walks through the doors of our churches feels loved and respected as a child of God. We will "do all
28 the good we can, by all the means we can, in all the ways we can, in all the places we can, at all the times we
29 can, with ALL the people we can, as long as ever we can."

30 Submitted by:

31 Youth and Young Adult Delegates to Annual Conference

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



GNJ Delegate Bethany Amey Sutton, with her son Colin, stood in support of Shayla Jordon who spoke for young adult delegates against the Traditional Plan at GC2019 in St. Louis. (photo by Mike Dubois, UMNS)



Bishop Schol embraces a colleague from Philadelphia before a key vote at GC2019. (photo by Todd Rossnagel, Council of Bishops)

1 Chair of the GNJ Delegation Report

2
3 Greater New Jersey has been “Greater” since we merged the Northern and Southern New Jersey Conferences in
4 2000. It was a difficult pairing in many ways. Two different cultures, two different traditions had to find a way to
5 live together. As one who became a Lay Member to Annual Conference in 2004, I remember people speaking
6 about regional differences for a couple of more years. Today, 19 years after the fact, very few speak in those
7 terms. We have grown together through shared life and ministry. Greater New Jersey has been living as a One
8 Church Conference for many years. It is part of the witness we offer to the denomination and the church
9 universal that you can have unity without unanimity or uniformity and still be fruitful in ministry.

10 I am proud that our General Conference delegation displayed many facets of the diversity of GNJ. We had
11 laypeople, elders, and a deacon. We had two women of Korean descent, two African-American women, a
12 Filipino-American woman, a Puerto Rican woman, and only two Anglo-Americans. We represented a variety of
13 approaches to Scripture and to the Discipline. Despite significant differences we worked as equals with mutual
14 respect under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I firmly believe we owe it to the church to continue to offer our
15 diversity because the Body of Christ is diminished without it.

16 To the LGBTQ members of GNJ churches, I am truly sorry for the harm that General Conference has caused you -
17 by denying your calls to ordained ministry, by preventing you from being married in your own church by your
18 own pastor, by limiting your ability to speak freely about your full identity, by sending a message to the children
19 in our pews that they might be safer going through the process of understanding their sexuality outside of the
20 church than inside it. For the role that I played in allowing that to continue, I beg your forgiveness.

21 I cannot tell you to stay in a denomination that continues to treat you as worthy of special punishment rather
22 than honor, just as I would not counsel someone in an abusive relationship to remain. Likewise, I would not
23 counsel someone to stay in a situation where they feel their conscience is being violated. I am concerned,
24 however, that we are succumbing to a “winner-take-all” vision of the church that is inconsistent with the life of
25 Christ.

26 I will personally commit to staying in this denomination to continue offering a holy “no” to policies that deny
27 equal treatment to some members of the church. Just as John Wesley remained in the Church of England his
28 entire life, and through principled dissent fought to make it reflect the best version of itself, so I remain
29 committed to this United Methodist Church. I will continue doing ministry in the way consistent with my
30 understanding of God’s will. If your heart is as full of God’s love as mine, regardless of your opinion, give me
31 your hand.

32 Submitted by:
33 Rev. Tom Lank

1 Co-Chair of the GNJ Delegation Report

2
3 I have heard that some folks watching the live stream of the Special General Conference said it seemed like total
4 chaos. For those of us there – I think it seemed like total chaos as well.

5 I believe that much of the chaos was created by those who did not know church law and conference rules.
6 There was a great deal to understand. The Judicial Council ruled on the constitutionality of petitions both before
7 the Conference and during it and will rule again on items which were passed at the Conference and for which a
8 Declaratory Decision was requested. The Judicial Council will meet the end of April. The Committee on
9 Reference ruled petitions not “in harmony” before the Conference and continued to rule and refer petitions
10 throughout the Conference. Then we had the overarching Book of Discipline along with the pages of specific
11 rules for the General Conference. And when no rule covered an issue, we had Roberts Rules of Order. It was
12 overwhelming!

13 Substantively, the only items which have absolutely passed at this time are the two (2) petitions submitted by
14 Wespath – the UMC pension group – which developed a plan to keep the pension system functional even if
15 some churches leave the UMC system. Those petitions were initially part of the One Church Plan, but the
16 Committee on Reference, two days before the start of General Conference, ruled that these petitions were
17 stand-alone petitions and not part of any plan. These petitions contain phrases like the withdrawal liability of a
18 leaving church must be “in an amount equal to its pro rata share of any aggregate unfunded pension
19 obligations” of the annual conference and the petitions also allowed for any terminated vested participant in the
20 Clergy Retirement Security Program to be protect “by converting such benefits to an actuarially equivalent
21 account balance”. Our conference CFA and pension group are working to figure out what these petitions will
22 mean for our conference.

23 There has been a great deal of confusion about the “passed” Traditional Plan and what has been called the
24 “disaffiliation” petitions. The initial disaffiliation petition was part of the Traditional Plan and was ruled
25 unconstitutional before General Conference. Two other disaffiliation petitions were submitted, and these also
26 were ruled to be unconstitutional. However, that did not stop the General Conference from adopting a
27 modification/combination of these two petitions, without the necessary modification to make any disaffiliation
28 petition constitutional.

29 The Traditional Plan itself was also adopted, but most of it had already been ruled unconstitutional, some of its
30 petitions were referred to the Standing Committee on the Central Conference which “pocket vetoed” them.
31 What is left of the plan is back before the Judicial Council for review as a whole. If the few petitions left are
32 found constitutional, the changes to the Discipline basically broaden the definition of practicing homosexual and
33 increase penalties for violating the homosexuality provisions.

34 This all will be back before the 2020 General Conference.

35 Submitted by:
36 Lynn Caterson



**MISSION AND RESOURCE CENTER
205 JUMPING BROOK RD., NEPTUNE, NJ 07753**

WWW.GNJUMC.ORG | 732.359.1000