

**IN THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

REQUEST FOR DECISION OF LAW)
SUBMITTED BY A LAY MEMBER OF THE)
CALIFORNIA-PACIFIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE)

**DECISION OF LAW OF
BISHOP DOTTIE ESCOBEDO-FRANK**

I. Digest

The written Request for Decision of Law was procedurally before the bishop under Constitution ¶¶ 52 and 57.3 and *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024* (“*Discipline*”), ¶ 2609.6. Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 satisfied the substantive, specific, and chronological elements of the Connection Test under JCD 1329 (2016) and were proper for decision on the merits. Questions 2 and 6 required threshold rulings because Question 2 rested upon an erroneous factual premise, and Question 6 rested upon a hypothetical premise not established by the record.

An *ad interim* exigent-circumstances action under *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), places the local church in *ad interim* ecclesiastical closure and immediately vests all its real and personal, tangible and intangible property in the Conference Board of Trustees (“CBOT”), pending the Annual Conference’s decision whether formally to close the church. Such action does not, solely by operation of Church law, dissolve a separately incorporated local church under civil law, and record title may temporarily remain in the corporation for civil-law implementation. The continuation of worship, pastoral leadership, the transfer of members, or mission through a successor ministry at the same location does not continue the former local church’s charter, governance, or property rights.

The CBOT was authorized under *Discipline*, ¶¶ 2512.4 and 2509.2, to initiate legal proceedings and take other necessary measures to secure, recover, and protect property vested in it. Those actions did not constitute an unlawful use of the closure procedure or invalidate the subsequent formal closure adopted by the Annual Conference through REC 26-19. The continuation of Hispanic mission and ministry through Nueva Esperanza was consistent with the closure provisions and did not establish that La Trinidad remained open under its former charter or leadership.

Question 1 was answered **No**. Question 2 was declared **moot and hypothetical**. Question 3 was answered **Yes** as to whether La Trinidad was closed and **No** as to whether continuing ministry invalidated the closure. Questions 4 and 5 were answered **No**. Question 6 was declared **moot and hypothetical**.

II. Relevant Facts and Procedural Background

1. La Trinidad United Methodist Church traces its origins to Iglesia Metodista Unida of the Latin American Mission and was organized as its successor congregation. For generations, the congregation conducted ministry among the Hispanic community of East Los Angeles.
2. In or about 2023, La Trinidad United Methodist Church entered into an arrangement to lease its real property to a real estate developer for the construction and operation of an affordable-housing development. Under the arrangement, the church was to receive ground-lease payments totaling approximately \$3.3 million.
3. Approximately \$180,000 of the anticipated ground-lease proceeds was paid in installments during 2023 and 2024. A final payment of approximately \$3.1 million was scheduled to be made in late 2025.
4. During the period between the commencement of the ground-lease arrangement in 2023 and December 2025, Sunday worship attendance at La Trinidad declined to approximately ten persons.
5. During this period, the mother of the former pastor and persons aligned with her came to exercise substantial control over the local church's leadership team.
6. Effective July 1, 2025, the bishop appointed the Reverend Ruben Esponda as pastor of La Trinidad United Methodist Church.

7. Following Rev. Esponda's appointment, the local church leadership did not initially approve his salary-and-benefits package and did not pay his compensation. The compensation package was approved in September 2025. During the intervening period, the West District provided funds for Rev. Esponda's salary and benefits.
8. Conference and district officials repeatedly requested financial records and other documentation concerning the receipt, deposit, expenditure, and disposition of the approximately \$180,000 received during 2023 and 2024.
9. The persons controlling the local leadership did not provide the requested financial documentation or otherwise cooperate with the Conference and district requests.
10. Certain duly elected members of the local church governing body were excluded from participation in church governance. This reportedly included withholding notices of board meetings from some members and making decisions concerning church bank accounts without the participation or authorization of the full governing body.
11. In December 2025, the final ground-lease payment of approximately \$3.1 million became payable. Because the requested financial records had not been provided and Conference officials had concerns regarding the financial administration of the earlier payments, Conference leadership directed the Conference Associate Director of Resourcing and Property to obtain the physical check and retain it at the Conference office while measures for safeguarding the funds were considered.
12. In early January 2026, former members of the local church board of trustees contacted the escrow company responsible for issuing the payment. The escrow company subsequently voided the check being held at the Conference office and transferred approximately \$3.1 million by wire to a credit-union account.
13. The credit-union account was an unauthorized account under the exclusive control of the former trustees. The Conference did not authorize the transfer of the funds into that account.
14. Conference leadership learned of the transfer in January 2026.
15. On January 13, 2026, the bishop, the district superintendents, and the District Board of Church Location and Building met to consider the circumstances involving La Trinidad United Methodist Church and the transfer of the approximately \$3.1 million.
16. Those officials and bodies unanimously determined that the circumstances constituted "exigent circumstances" within the meaning of *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), and that immediate

property vesting in the CBOT and closure of La Trinidad United Methodist Church was required, and signed the *Declaration, “Closure of La Trinidad United Methodist Church”* (“*Declaration*”) dated January 13, 2026. Exhibit A.

17. Following that determination, the assets of the discontinued local church were placed under the management of the CBOT.
18. The CBOT appointed new directors and officers of the local church corporation and authorized them to undertake measures intended to secure and preserve the corporation’s property and financial assets. *CBOT Resolution, “Closure of La Trinidad United Methodist Church”* (“*CBOT Resolution*”), dated January 13, 2026. Exhibit B.
19. The Conference retained outside legal counsel and initiated civil legal proceedings to recover the approximately \$3.1 million transferred to the credit-union account.
20. Through legal action and an emergency court injunction, approximately \$2.8 million was recovered.
21. Approximately \$300,000 was not recovered. The former trustees had transferred or paid that amount to a private law firm as a legal retainer.
22. On June 4, 2026, one of the former trustees requested emergency judicial relief that would have resulted in the return of the recovered approximately \$2.8 million. The court declined to grant the requested relief.
23. Following recovery of the funds, approximately \$2 million was placed in an account with the California-Pacific Foundation and designated for the long-term support of Hispanic ministries in East Los Angeles.
24. The remaining approximately \$800,000 was deposited in a credit-union account for purposes that included satisfying outstanding local church obligations, supporting pastoral leadership, and funding a new Hispanic ministry known as Nueva Esperanza, or New Hope.
25. At the time of the 2026 Annual Conference session, district leadership was considering whether outstanding amounts owed by the former congregation should be repaid over time rather than through an immediate lump-sum payment. This approach was being considered so that investment earnings from the Foundation account might provide additional support for Nueva Esperanza’s ministries.

26. The affordable senior-housing development contemplated by the ground lease remained under development. The project was expected to include sixty-six apartments for low-income senior residents and a permanent United Methodist worship space.
27. On June 19, 2026, during Plenary 6 of the Forty-Second Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference, the Cabinet presented REC 26-19, *Discontinuance of La Trinidad United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, CA* (“REC 26-19”). The Reverend Moonyoung Lee, Dean of Cabinet, presented the recommendation and summarized the congregation’s history and the circumstances leading to the proposed discontinuance. *U.M. Daily, Proceedings of the California-Pacific Annual Conference* (“*Proceedings*”), June 19, 2026, at 25. Exhibit C.
28. The Conference and district officials represented to the Annual Conference that their actions were undertaken to preserve the mission, property, financial assets, and connectional interests associated with La Trinidad United Methodist Church.
29. During debate, the Reverend Brian Parcel, a member of the CBOT, spoke in favor of the recommendation. He stated that the Board had voted on January 26, 2026, to support the exigent closure because of concerns regarding Conference assets and that recovered funds were being retained for continued ministry in East Los Angeles.
30. The Reverend Richard Bentley moved to substitute Resolution 26-09 (“RES 26-09”) for REC 26-19. The substitute resolution sought mediation rather than immediate approval of discontinuance. Members spoke both for and against substitution, raising issues including mediation, due process, lay participation, financial accountability, and the willingness of the remaining congregation to mediate. *Proceedings*, at 26.
31. Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the motion to substitute. The motion did not pass, and the Annual Conference returned to consideration of REC 26-19. *Proceedings*, at 27.
32. The Reverend Ruben Esponda, appointed pastor of La Trinidad effective July 1, 2025, spoke in favor of discontinuance. He described difficulties obtaining access to the church property, bank-account information, and financial reports and expressed concerns regarding governance and transparency. *Proceedings*, at 27-28.

33. Reverend Bentley then proposed an amendment encouraging Conference leadership to avoid freezing local church accounts, retaining large checks, and suing lay persons rather than pursuing mediation. The amendment was seconded. *Proceedings*, at 28.
34. After consulting the Assistant Chancellor for Church Law, Bishop Escobedo-Frank ruled the amendment out of order. The Assistant Chancellor advised that, under *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), and JCD 1490, the Annual Conference’s role was to vote the exigent-closure recommendation up or down and that the recommendation was not amendable. *Proceedings*, at 29.
35. Bishop Escobedo-Frank then called for a vote on REC 26-19. The *Proceedings* records that the recommendation “was supported.” *Id.* The Annual Conference therefore approved the discontinuance of La Trinidad United Methodist Church.
36. Later in the plenary session, Liz Roark, a lay member from New Beginnings United Methodist Church and a jurisdictional delegate, informed the bishop that she had submitted a request for a ruling of law concerning the La Trinidad recommendation. *Proceedings*, at 31.
37. Bishop Escobedo-Frank acknowledged receipt and stated that she would issue a ruling within thirty days. After the Assistant Chancellor advised that a request must identify the particular legal question or questions presented, Ms. Roark read aloud a document titled “La Trinidad Recommendation.” *Proceedings*, at 32. The text of the request is set forth below under “II. Request for Ruling of Law.”
38. Bishop Escobedo-Frank confirmed that the document constituted the complete request for a ruling of law and stated that her ruling would thereafter be reviewed by the Judicial Council.

III. Request for Ruling of Law

The Request for Ruling of Law submitted by Liz Roark reads in its entirety as follows:

In accordance with ¶2609.6 of the 2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*, I request Bishop Escobedo-Frank to make decision of law on the following questions regarding the discontinuance of La Trinidad United Methodist Church by the 2026 session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference:

- 1) When a church is closed under ¶2549.4b of the 2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*, does this close the church corporation as part of the church’s closure? And if so, does the assignment

of real property to an intangible corporation in the declaration of church closure on January 13, 2026 make the closure invalid, along with all the annual conference actions which followed and also mean that the church remains open under its leadership prior to the declaration of closure?

2) Is the declaration of church closure under exigent circumstances invalid because the declaration makes assignments of the church's assets to entities other than the annual conference board of trustees in violation of ¶2549.4b which states in part (emphasis added): "In such case, title to *all* the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church shall *immediately* vest in the annual conference board of trustees. . . ." And if the declaration of church closure on January 13, 2026 was invalid, are all the annual conference actions which followed invalid and the church remains open under its leadership prior to the declaration of closure?

3) Was La Trinidad United Methodist Church really closed on January 13, 2026 since it continued to have worship services through at least January 25, 2026 and the annual conference continued to appoint a pastor to the church through at least January 15, 2026? And if it was not really closed on January 13, 2026, are all the annual conference actions which followed invalid and the church remains open under its leadership prior to the declaration of closure?

4) Do the various legal actions taken by the annual conference in civil courts around the same time as the declaration church closure under exigent circumstances show that the annual conference was using ¶2549.4b in an illegal manner to remove church officers which the church conference on October 19, 2025 had voted to retain? And if so, are all the annual conference actions which followed invalid and the church remains open under its leadership prior to the declaration of closure?

5) Does the resolution of discontinuance approved by the California-Pacific annual conference on June 19, 2026 coupled with the declaration of church closure under exigent circumstances on January 13 constitute an illegal way to take control of La Trinidad's assets since the church in fact remains open because the membership of the congregation is primarily being transferred to Nueva Esperanza United Methodist Mission that is operating at the same location and with the same pastor as La Trinidad United Methodist Church? And if so, are all the

annual conference actions which followed invalid and the church remains open under its leadership prior to the declaration of closure on January 13?

6) If the closure of the church under exigent circumstances on January 13, 2026 was invalid for any reason, then is the closure of the church by the Cal-Pac annual conference session on January 19, 2026 [*sic*] also invalid since it could not be brought under ¶2549.4b and none of the other provisions for church closure in ¶2549 were followed either?

IV. Jurisdiction

Constitution ¶ 52 requires a bishop presiding over an Annual Conference to decide all questions of law arising in the regular business of the session, provided that the questions are presented in writing and the decisions are recorded in the conference journal. Constitution ¶ 57.3 authorizes the Judicial Council to pass upon decisions of law made by bishops in annual conferences.¹ *Discipline*, ¶ 2609.6 implements these constitutional provisions by requiring Judicial Council review and directing the bishop normally to rule before the session closes and, in all cases, no later than thirty days after its conclusion.

Memorandum 799 (1997) requires the bishop to rule on every submitted question, even when the ruling is that the question is moot, hypothetical, or improperly submitted. A substantive answer, however, is appropriate only when the question is submitted in writing by an Annual Conference member during the regular business of the session, is germane to that business, and states its connection to a specific action taken or to be taken, or is raised during deliberation of a matter on which the Conference acts. JCD 1113 (2009) restates these requirements and confirms the bishop's duty to answer a properly submitted question of Church law.

Judicial Council Decision 1329 (2016) applies these principles through the **Connection Test**, which considers whether the request: (1) has a **substantive connection** “to the agenda or prior discussion of the Annual Conference in addition to the procedural requisites of being raised, submitted in writing, and recorded”; (2) has a **specific connection** to an identifiable conference action, “[i]n the present circumstance, the specific action taken is the vote on the

¹ Citations to the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, as amended and ratified on November 5, 2025, conform to the paragraph numbering of the *January 2026 Addendum and Errata to the Book of Discipline* 2020/2024, posted online at: <https://www.umofficialresources.com/updates/19/book-of-discipline-addendum-and-errata-january-2026-december-2022>.

motion by the [Annual Conference]”; and (3) has a **chronological connection** by being “raised during the deliberation of a specific issue of a matter upon which the conference takes action.” Decision 1372 (2019) subsequently described and applied this as a three-prong test.

Ms. Roark was a lay member of the California-Pacific Annual Conference. During the regular business of the June 19, 2026 plenary session, she submitted a written request, identified its subject as the La Trinidad recommendation, and read the complete request aloud after being asked to state the legal questions presented. The bishop acknowledged receipt and confirmed that the document constituted the complete request for an episcopal decision of law.

Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 are germane to the Annual Conference’s consideration and adoption of REC 26-19 and state a *substantive* and *specific* connection to that completed Conference action. They concern the ecclesiastical closure of La Trinidad, the vesting and protection of its property, and the legal consequences of the Annual Conference’s vote.

Those questions also retain the required *chronological* connection. Although the request was submitted after the debate and vote, it was submitted later in the same plenary session, expressly identified REC 26-19, and directly challenged the legality of the action taken that day. Decision 1329 (2016) demonstrates that a post-vote request may remain connected when it arises from and directly concerns the Conference’s disposition of the matter. This case is distinguishable from JCD 1489 (2023), where a substitute motion had deleted the proposal identified in the request and the Conference had moved on to a materially different action.

The procedural sufficiency of the written request, however, does not make every question proper for a substantive answer. Question 2 rests on a factual premise contradicted by the *Declaration* itself: the *Declaration* vested the property in the CBOT, not in another entity. Question 6 is expressly conditional and asks for the consequences of an assumed invalidity that is neither established by the record nor supported by the applicable provisions of the *Discipline*, as explained in the rulings below. Under JCD 33 (1946), Memorandum 799 (1997), JCD 1372 (2019), and JCD 1514 (2024), those questions must be identified as moot and hypothetical and should not receive alternative substantive rulings.

Therefore, the written request is procedurally before the bishop. Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 satisfy the Connection Test and require rulings on the merits. Questions 2 and 6 trigger the

bishop's duty to rule only at the threshold: they are moot and hypothetical and are not proper for substantive adjudication. Each ruling remains subject to review by the Judicial Council under Constitution ¶ 57.3 and *Discipline*, ¶ 2609.6.

V. Analysis and Rationale

Question 1:

An action under *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), is an *ad interim* exigent-circumstances closure and ecclesiastical property-protection measure. Upon the required consent of the resident bishop, a majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building, all real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church immediately vests in the CBOT. When the Annual Conference next meets, it separately decides whether formally to close the local church.

That ecclesiastical closure does not, solely by operation of Church law, dissolve a separately incorporated local church under civil law. *Discipline*, ¶ 2506.1, makes disciplinary provisions concerning property and church corporations subject to conformity with applicable local law. The *Declaration* itself expressly preserves the corporation's continuing civil existence:

“[N]othing in this declaration of closure should be construed to affect the continuing existence and operation of the Local Church's nonprofit religious corporation, ‘PRIMERA IGLESIA METODISTA, “LA TRINIDAD,” INCORPORATED,’ nor to affect the Corporation's title to the real property.” Exhibit A.

The *Declaration* simultaneously states that beneficial and equitable ownership of the real property is vested in the CBOT, while record title may remain temporarily in the corporation pending conveyance or other action directed by the CBOT. Exhibit A. This distinction is consistent with *Discipline*, ¶¶ 2504 and 2538, under which property held in a local church's corporate name remains subject to the *Discipline* and is held in trust for the local church and The United Methodist Church.

The corporation's continuing civil existence does not preserve the prior directors' authority under Church law to control property vested in the CBOT. Under *Discipline*, ¶ 2529.1(b)-(d), an incorporated local church must operate in conformity with the *Discipline*, may

not act contrary to the purposes of the Annual Conference or denomination, and may not sever its connectional relationship without Annual Conference consent.

Judicial Council Decision 1490 (2023), interpreting the predecessor provision now codified as ¶ 2549.4(b), affirmed an *ad interim* exigent-circumstances closure, the immediate vesting of the local church's property in the annual conference board of trustees, and the Annual Conference's subsequent formal closure.

Question 1's reference to an "intangible corporation" misreads both ¶ 2549.4(b) and the *Declaration*. In ¶ 2549.4(b), "tangible and intangible" modifies "property"; it does not describe a corporation or the recipient of title. The *Declaration* did not vest La Trinidad's property in the corporation. It vested beneficial and equitable ownership in the CBOT while allowing record title to remain temporarily in the corporation for civil-law implementation. The *Declaration's* later reference to ¶ 2549.3(b) uses the predecessor numbering of the provision now codified as ¶ 2549.4(b).

The continued civil existence of the corporation therefore does not invalidate the January 13 closure, the property vesting, or the Annual Conference's later formal closure. Nor does it restore the church, its governance, or its property to the leadership serving before the *Declaration*.

Accordingly, closure of La Trinidad as an organized local United Methodist church did not automatically dissolve its civil corporation, and the *Declaration* did not make the property assignment alleged in Question 1.

Ruling on Question 1: No.

Question 2:

Question 2 assumes that the *Declaration* assigned La Trinidad's assets to entities other than the CBOT. The *Declaration* does not do so. It states that "all real and personal property of the Local Church is vested in the Conference's Board of Trustees" and that "all beneficial and equitable ownership of the real property is vested in the Conference Board of Trustees," notwithstanding that record title may remain temporarily in the corporation pending conveyance or other action directed by the CBOT. Exhibit A.

That language follows *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b). Temporary retention of record title for civil-law implementation is not an assignment of beneficial ownership to another entity. See *Discipline*, ¶ 2506.1.

The assignment on which Question 2 depends therefore did not occur. Judicial Council Decision 1113 (2009) holds that an allegation contained in a question is not self-proving and that the Judicial Council is not a fact-finding body when the record contradicts the asserted premise.

Decision 33 (1946) and Memorandum 799 (1997) establish that moot and hypothetical questions must be identified as such but should not receive substantive answers. Decision 1514 (2024) likewise holds that a question disconnected from the action actually taken is moot and hypothetical; JCD 1372 (2019) directs that, once a question is found improper, the ruling should state the rationale without an alternative disposition on the merits.

The second part of Question 2—whether all subsequent Conference actions are invalid and La Trinidad remains open under its former leadership—is contingent upon the same nonexistent assignment and presents no independent controversy.

Accordingly, Question 2 rests on an erroneous factual premise and is moot and hypothetical.

Ruling on Question 2: Moot and hypothetical; no substantive ruling is made.

Question 3:

The *Declaration* placed La Trinidad in *ad interim* closure under *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b). Under that provision, the required church authorities may declare exigent circumstances, immediately vest the local church’s property in the CBOT, and place the church in interim closure pending the Annual Conference’s subsequent decision whether formally to close it.

The object of the closure was La Trinidad’s ecclesiastical status as **a chartered, organized local United Methodist church**. Paragraph 259.5 equates a “chartered” church with an “organized” local church and provides for that status through a constituting process supervised by the district superintendent. Closure under ¶ 2549 terminates that organized status; it does not require the immediate cessation of every act of worship, pastoral care, outreach, or ministry associated with the congregation or its property.

The *Discipline* expressly distinguishes a chartered local church from a mission congregation or new-church ministry. A mission congregation may operate for an extended period without becoming chartered, particularly when it serves a strategic cultural or language population or requires continuing Conference support. The bishop may appoint a pastor to gather persons for Bible study, outreach, community building, and worship before a new church is formally constituted. *Discipline*, ¶ 259.1-3.

Even accepting the assertions that worship services continued through January 25, 2026, and that an appointment record continued through January 15, those circumstances do not establish that La Trinidad remained open as the same chartered local church. They are consistent with transitional pastoral care and the continuation of United Methodist mission and ministry under Conference supervision. Continuation of ministry is not continuation of the former charter, governance, or control of assets.

This distinction is reflected in ¶ 2549. The ordinary closure procedure requires a plan for the future use of the church property and a plan for transfer of the local church's membership. For a closed urban church, ¶ 2549.8 directs the use of sale proceeds for new or existing ministries in urban transitional communities and permits resources to continue ministry with the poor. Closure may therefore preserve and redirect a congregation's missional legacy rather than terminate ministry in the community.

Judicial Council Decision 1490 (2023), interpreting the predecessor provision now codified as ¶ 2549.4(b), affirmed the validity of both an *ad interim* exigent-circumstances closure and the Annual Conference's subsequent formal closure. It holds that the Annual Conference makes the formal ecclesiastical determination whether the local church is to be closed.

The California-Pacific Annual Conference later adopted REC 26-19 and formally closed and discontinued La Trinidad. That action completed the process contemplated by ¶ 2549.4(b). Continued worship or ministry through Nueva Esperanza does not negate either the *ad interim* or formal closure because Nueva Esperanza may operate as a distinct mission or successor ministry without continuing La Trinidad's former chartered status.

Consequently, La Trinidad was closed as an organized local United Methodist church. Continued worship, pastoral leadership, and Hispanic ministry do not invalidate the closure,

nullify the Annual Conference's subsequent actions, or restore the former local church governance.

Ruling on Question 3: Yes, La Trinidad was closed. No, the continued ministry does not invalidate the closure or subsequent Conference actions.

Question 4:

The civil legal actions taken by the California-Pacific Annual Conference and the CBOT do not establish that ¶ 2549.4(b) was used illegally to remove La Trinidad's officers. Rather, those actions were within the express disciplinary authority of the CBOT to protect Annual Conference property and rights.

Upon a valid exigent-circumstances declaration, *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), immediately vests all real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church in the CBOT. The CBOT may then hold or dispose of that property in its sole discretion, subject to the Annual Conference's standing rules.

Once the property vested, *Discipline*, ¶ 2512.4, expressly authorized the CBOT to "intervene and take all necessary legal steps to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of the annual conference" in matters involving property and property rights. Paragraph 2509.2 likewise authorizes a denominational unit empowered to hold title or enforce trusts to bring suit in its own name to protect denominational interests. Seeking an injunction, recovering transferred funds, securing accounts, or obtaining judicial recognition of the CBOT's authority falls within those powers.

Even assuming that the October 19, 2025 church conference validly voted to retain particular local officers, that action did not place those officers beyond the operation of ¶ 2549.4(b). Under *Discipline*, ¶ 2529.1(b)-(d), a local church and its corporation must operate in compliance with the *Discipline* and may not act contrary to the purposes of the Annual Conference or denomination. Once the property vested in the CBOT, former local officers could not continue exercising church-law authority over those assets merely because they had previously been elected or retained.

The legal proceedings were therefore not a substitute disciplinary process for removing local officers under ¶ 2531. They were measures to enforce the CBOT's vested property rights.

Any resulting loss of the former officers' control over bank accounts, funds, or other property was a consequence of the disciplinary vesting under ¶ 2549.4(b), not proof that the closure procedure was invoked for an unauthorized purpose.

Decision 1490 (2023) confirms that ¶ 2549.4(b)'s consent requirements are built-in safeguards against overreach and that, when those requirements are followed, the requirements of the *Discipline* are satisfied. The decision also affirmed the interim and final closure and the vesting of local church property in the annual conference board of trustees.

Judicial Council Decision 1461 (2023) further affirms that an annual conference board of trustees may dispose of the property of a closed local church, subject to the *Discipline*, applicable restrictions, and civil law. Whether any particular corporate filing or court action complied with California law is a civil-law question governed by *Discipline*, ¶ 2506.1, and is not determined merely from the fact that legal proceedings were commenced.

Therefore, the Conference's legal actions were authorized means by which the CBOT could secure, recover, and protect property vested in it. They do not invalidate the *Declaration*, the subsequent formal closure, or the related actions of the Annual Conference.

Ruling on Question 4: No.

Question 5:

The *Declaration* and the Annual Conference's June 19, 2026 action were the two successive steps contemplated by *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b): first, an *ad interim* declaration that immediately vested the local church's property in the CBOT; and second, a decision by the Annual Conference at its next session whether formally to close the church.

The *Declaration* expressly vested La Trinidad's real and personal property in the CBOT. The CBOT then appointed corporate directors and officers and authorized protective financial and legal action, including action through the West District Union when necessary. *See* Exhibit B. As explained in the ruling on Question 4, those measures were consistent with *Discipline*, ¶ 2512.4.

Judicial Council Decision 1490 (2023) confirms that the Annual Conference is the proper forum for challenging an interim exigent-circumstances closure and must decide whether to

approve or disapprove formal closure. Here, REC 26-19 was presented, debated, and adopted after the Conference heard arguments concerning both the closure and the preservation of the assets for continuing Hispanic ministry in East Los Angeles.

Question 5 conflates continuity of mission with continuity of the same chartered local church. Even assuming that most former La Trinidad members transferred to Nueva Esperanza, worshiped at the same location, and were served by the same pastor, those facts would not establish that La Trinidad remained open under its former charter and governance.

Under *Discipline*, ¶ 259.1-.3, a mission congregation may serve a strategic cultural or language population, receive continuing Conference support, and conduct Bible study, outreach, community building, and worship before becoming a chartered local church. A chartered church is separately constituted under ¶ 259.5-.9.

The closure provisions likewise contemplate continuity of ministry. Paragraph 2549.2(a) requires planning for future use of the property and transfer of membership, and ¶ 2549.8 directs proceeds from a closed urban church toward new or existing ministries in urban transitional communities. The continuation of Hispanic ministry through Nueva Esperanza is therefore consistent with, rather than contradictory to, La Trinidad's closure.

The record identifies Rev. Ruben Esponda as clergy of "Nueva Esperanza UM Mission, formerly La Trinidad" and reports that recovered funds were designated for long-term Hispanic ministry, pastoral leadership, Nueva Esperanza, affordable senior housing, and a future United Methodist worship space in East Los Angeles.

Judicial Council Decision 1461 (2023) confirms that the CBOT may administer or dispose of closed-church property subject to the *Discipline*, Annual Conference directions, applicable restrictions, and civil law. Continuing La Trinidad's missional legacy through Nueva Esperanza therefore does not demonstrate that the closure was a pretext for improperly acquiring assets.

Accordingly, neither the *Declaration* nor the June 19 formal closure was an illegal means of taking control of La Trinidad's assets. Nueva Esperanza's continuation of worship and Hispanic ministry does not preserve La Trinidad's former charter, governance, or property rights.

There is, therefore, no basis for invalidating subsequent Annual Conference actions or restoring control to the leadership serving before the *Declaration*.

Ruling on Question 5: No.

Question 6:

Question 6 is expressly conditional. It asks whether the Annual Conference's formal closure would be invalid **if** the January 13, 2026, *ad interim* exigent-circumstances closure were invalid. That predicate assumption has been rejected in the rulings on Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5. The required authorities consented under *Discipline*, ¶ 2549.4(b), La Trinidad was placed in *ad interim* closure, its property vested in the CBOT, and the Annual Conference completed the prescribed process by adopting REC 26-19.

After the Annual Conference formally approved closure, the Judicial Council treated as moot and hypothetical a conditional question concerning the asserted basis for the earlier exigent-circumstances determination. *See* JCD 1490 (2023). Decision 33 (1946), Memorandum 799 (1997), and JCD 1514 (2024) require such a question to be identified without a substantive answer.

Question 6 also misstates the date of the Annual Conference action as January 19, 2026. The formal closure occurred on June 19, 2026, when the Annual Conference adopted REC 26-19. Because the assumed invalidity did not occur and has been rejected in the preceding rulings, Question 6 presents no actual controversy.

Ruling on Question 6: Moot and hypothetical; no substantive ruling is made.

Respectfully submitted,



Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Resident Bishop

California-Pacific Conference

Date: July 15, 2026

EXHIBIT A



California-Pacific Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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P.O. Box 6006
Pasadena CA. 91102

(626)568-7300

Rev. Dr. Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Resident Bishop

January 13, 2026

Closure of La Trinidad United Methodist Church

WHEREAS, ¶2549.4b of the *2020/2024 Book of Discipline* provides that

At any time between sessions of annual conference, if the presiding bishop, the majority of the district superintendents, and the appropriate district board of church location and building all consent, they may, in their sole discretion, declare that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate protection of the local church's property, for the benefit of the denomination. In such case, title to all the real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the local church shall immediately vest in the annual conference board of trustees who may hold or dispose of such property in its sole discretion, subject to any standing rule of the annual conference;

and

WHEREAS, the undersigned are the Bishop of the California-Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (the "Conference"), the Superintendents of all five Districts within the Conference, and the Chairperson of the West District Board of Church Location and Mission; and

WHEREAS, the annual conference of the Conference is not currently in session; and

WHEREAS, all of the undersigned agree that exigent circumstances exist that require immediate protection of the property of La Trinidad United Methodist Church (the "Local Church"), including but not limited to the fact that the Local Church's congregation has dwindled to approximately twelve (12) registered members, of whom less than ten (10) regularly attend worship, resulting in an inability to safeguard, insure, maintain, or administer the property in conformity with the Trust Clause (¶ 2501 *et seq.*) and connectional fiduciary obligations, thus making the Local Church unviable;

NOW, THEREFORE, the undersigned declare that the Local Church is CLOSED, effective immediately, and pursuant to the *Discipline*, all real and personal property of the Local Church is vested in the Conference's Board of Trustees; and

ADDITIONALLY, nothing herein alters the fact that, pursuant to ¶ 2549.3(b) and ¶ 2501, all beneficial and equitable ownership of the real property is vested in the Conference Board of Trustees, notwithstanding that record title may remain in the name of the corporation pending conveyance or other action directed by the Trustees.

ADDITIONALLY, nothing in this declaration of closure should be construed to affect the continuing existence and operation of the Local Church's nonprofit religious corporation, "PRIMERA IGLESIA METODISTA, 'LA TRINIDAD', INCORPORATED" (the "Corporation"), nor to affect the Corporation's title to the real property bearing the following legal description:

PARCEL 1:

LOTS 14, 15 AND 16 IN BLOCK 25 OF H. T. HAZARD'S EAST SIDE ADDITION TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 24, PAGES 25 THROUGH 28, INCLUSIVE OF MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

EXCEPT THE EAST 31 FEET OF THE SOUTH 94 FEET OF SAID LOT 14.

APN 5232-013-018

PARCEL 2:

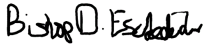
LOT 17 IN BLOCK 25 OF H. T. HAZARD'S EAST SIDE ADDITION TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 24, PAGE 25 OF MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.

APN 5232-013-019

ADDITIONALLY, nothing in this declaration of closure should be construed to affect the continuing existence and enforceability of the Ground Lease dated December 1, 2025 to which the Local Church is a party;

RATHER, the Corporation is intangible property of the Local Church which is subject to the *Discipline*, and after closure of the Local Church, the Corporation is the property of and under the control of the Conference's Board of Trustees or such person or persons whom said Trustees may appoint.

Signed by:

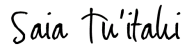


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The Rev. Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Resident Bishop
California-Pacific Annual Conference of
The United Methodist Church

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:



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The Rev. Siosaia Tu'itahi
West District Superintendent

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:

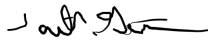


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The Rev. Dr. Tom Choi
Hawai'i District Superintendent

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:



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The Rev. Garth Gilliam
North District Superintendent

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:



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The Rev. Luis Garcia
South District Superintendent

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:



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The Rev. Moonyoung Lee
East District Superintendent

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:



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The Rev. Brad Biggerstaff
Chairperson of West District Board of Church
Location and Mission

Date: 1/13/2026

EXHIBIT B



California-Pacific Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

110 South Euclid
P.O. Box 6006
Pasadena CA. 91102

(626)568-7300

Rev. Dr. Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Resident Bishop

January 13, 2026

Closure of La Trinidad United Methodist Church

WHEREAS, La Trinidad United Methodist Church (the “Local Church”) was declared CLOSED by the Bishop of the California-Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church (the “Conference”), the Superintendents of the five Districts within the Conference, and the Chairperson of the West District Board of Church Location and Mission on January 13, 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to ¶2549 of the *Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, upon closure, title to all real and personal, tangible and intangible property of the Local Church vested in the Board of Trustees of the Conference (the “Board”); and

WHEREAS, the Local Church’s nonprofit religious corporation, “PRIMERA IGLESIA METODISTA, ‘LA TRINIDAD’, INCORPORATED” (the “Corporation”), is intangible property of the Local Church now under the control of this Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board deems it advisable to replace the directors and officers of the Corporation with individuals known to and trusted by it;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following persons are, effective immediately, the members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation, and shall serve in the capacity of officers thereof:

Rev. Melissa Rusler:
Ana-Haydee Urda:
Sandee Furuta:

President and Chief Executive Officer
Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer
Secretary

(Rev. Rusler, Ms. Urda and Ms. Furuta are hereinafter referred to as the “Officers”). These Officers are fully authorized to act on behalf of the Corporation, including but not limited to by: (1) making filings with the Secretary of State to accurately reflect the directors and/or officers of the Corporation; (2) gaining access to the Corporation’s bank accounts; and (3) conducting all financial affairs of the Corporation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, if any further action is necessary with respect to the Local Church, the Corporation, or any real or personal property owned by either, that cannot be handled by the above Officers or if the Officers so request, the Board appoints the West District Union of the California-Pacific Conference of The United Methodist Church (the “West District”) to act on behalf of the Board, including but not limited to initiating or defending against legal proceedings.

Signed by:

Melissa Rusler

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Melissa Rusler
President

Date: 1/13/2026

Signed by:

David Mark Houff

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David Mark Houff
Secretary

Date: 1/13/2026

EXHIBIT C

U.M. Daily

Friday, June 19, 2026

42nd Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Juneteenth Worship Service
8:30 a.m. (PDT)

Gathering Music

Libra by Max Roach

Juneteenth Jazz Quintet

Song

Members Don't Get Weary

Juneteenth Jazz Quintet

Welcome

Rev. Courtney Mackey

Juneteenth is the oldest, nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. June 19, 1865 marks the date when Union Soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, reached Galveston, Texas, with the announcement of the Civil War's end, the abolition of slavery in Texas, and the emancipation of enslaved African Americans throughout the Confederate South.

This news reached the enslaved two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and over two months after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at the Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution making slavery illegal in the United States would not be ratified until December 1865.

Juneteenth, also referred to as Freedom Day, Liberation Day and Emancipation Day, has long been celebrated as a day of freedom in the African American community and marks the United States' second Independence Day. In 2021, Juneteenth was commemorated as a federal holiday for the first time.

We commemorate Juneteenth in worship today, in celebration and thanksgiving to God who continues to release the captives that all might have life and have it more abundantly!

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer

Scripture

Luke 4:16-22 (NRSV)

Emonnie Ginyad

Introduction to the Speaker

Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin

Acclaimed activist-artist and speaker, Peggy Trotter Dammond Preacely is a former Freedom Rider and working member of the historic Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) that included among its founding members civil rights legend – the late Rep. John Lewis.

Due to her grassroots activism for civil and voting rights, Ms. Preacely was jailed in Maryland and Georgia. She also worked in various communities across the Deep South in the ‘50’s and ‘60’s to facilitate community empowerment and register Black voters in under-served rural communities – many registering for the first time in their lives. She was also at the ‘63 March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his legendary “I Have a Dream” speech and foregrounded the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Raised in Harlem, her family history is rooted in activism, most notably through her great-great-grandparents, William and Ellen Craft’s 1848 daring escape from slavery, which inspired the Prime Video Film, *Underground*. In 2015, the late Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr. - whom Ms. Preacely also worked with in the ‘60’s - presented her with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Rosa Parks Humanitarian Award. A tribute poet, speaker and frequent documentary feature and is a proud member of the historic Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

Message	<i>“Poem for Juneteenth”</i>	Peggy Dammond Preacely
Song	<i>“Equipoise”</i>	Juneteenth Jazz Quintet
Benediction		Rev. Courtney Mackey
Closing Song	<i>“This Little Light of Mine”</i>	Juneteenth Jazz Quintet

Worship Participation:

Liturgist: Rev. Courtney Mackey, Laguna Beach UMC

Scripture Reader: Emanee Guinyard, St. Mark’s UMC, Los Angeles

Messenger/Poet: Peggy Preacely, Holman UMC

Juneteenth Jazz Quintet:

Victor Cyrus-Franklin, III, Drums

Manuela Rodriguez, Bass

David Nnamdi, Piano

Angel Czazchkoff, Alto/Soprano Saxophone

Julian Chiu, Trumpet

Haqumai Sharpe, Soloist

Liturgy: Adapted from Juneteenth Liturgy, Episcopal Diocese of California, written by Rev. Caren Miles

42nd Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Plenary 4
9:00 a.m. (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair
Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements – Rev. Won-Seok Yuh, Assistant Conference Secretary
Rev. Won-Seok Yuh opened the day's proceedings with reminders regarding Conference procedures and participation. He reviewed microphone protocols for members wishing to address the body and encouraged participants to utilize MeetingPulse as the primary platform for accessing Conference materials and resources. Motion protocol was reviewed, and participants were reminded to silence their phones and use the Wi-Fi for Conference business only.

Consent Calendar:

- REC 26-04 – Pensions 2: Retiree Health Care (99%)
- REC 26-05 – Pensions 3: Clergy Housing Allowance (100%)
- REC 26-06 – Pensions 4: Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (92%)
- RES 26-01 – Elevation of Eco-Ministries Strategy Group (92%)

The Legislation for this Plenary is:

REC 26-10; RES 26-03; RES 26-04; RES 26-05; RES 26-06; RUL 26-02.

Astonish Talk – Rev. Ken Suhr

Rev. Ken Suhr, Director of Congregational Vitality, opened by expressing gratitude for the clergy, laity, and leaders of the California-Pacific Conference, recognizing the many visible and unseen ways they faithfully serve their congregations and communities. Drawing on the First Nations translation of the Bible, he considered the name for Jesus being translated as “Creator Sets Free,” sharing peace and grace to the body in the beautiful and more than able name of Creator Sets Free.

Referencing the Conference theme of “Astonish,” Rev. Suhr shared his appreciation for the opportunity to visit congregations throughout the Conference. He acknowledged the challenges many churches face, including concerns about attendance, volunteer engagement, finances, and aging facilities, while also celebrating the faithfulness of those who continue to serve.

Rev. Suhr then discussed insights from the book *When Church Stops Working* by Andrew Root and Blair Bertrand. He noted the authors' observation that modern society is shaped by a culture of acceleration, the belief that faster growth is the solution to life's challenges. He suggested that churches often adopt this same mindset, seeking more programs, innovation, and activity in response to decline.

While recognizing the value of planning and innovation, Rev. Suhr cautioned that constant acceleration can lead to exhaustion and anxiety. Congregations and church leaders can become consumed by the pressure to produce results, losing sight of the deeper spiritual foundations of ministry.

Turning to the Book of Acts, Rev. Suhr highlighted that before the events of Pentecost and the growth of the early Church, the disciples were instructed to wait. He emphasized that Acts 1 precedes Acts 2, reminding the Conference that prayerful dependence on God came before expansion, mission, and organizational activity.

Considering the disciples' decision not to wait, but to fill the empty place of a disciple before Pentecost, Rev. Suhr suggested that the early Church's most significant breakthroughs came not through human management, but through God's unexpected action. He pointed to the later calling of Paul as an example of God's initiative shaping the future of the Church.

One of the greatest challenges facing the contemporary church is not simply institutional decline, but the loss of confidence that God remains active in the world. Rev. Suhr encouraged Conference members to reclaim a sense of expectation and trust in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

A central theme of the presentation was the concept of "resonance." In contrast to acceleration, resonance is an experience of fullness, of being so present that we feel like we have discovered ourselves again. Resonance is a deep connection with God and with others, where it touches our souls and hearts. Resonance begins when we wait and seek an encounter with the living God, when we slow down and look at each other again, face to face.

Drawing on Methodist history, Rev. Suhr pointed to John Wesley's Aldersgate St. experience as an example of how spiritual awakening precedes movement and mission. Before the Methodist movement expanded across England, Wesley first experienced a profound encounter with God's grace, where his heart was "strangely warmed" by the love of God.

Rev. Suhr challenged Conference members to consider how churches can help people encounter the living God and form authentic relationships with one another. He encouraged leaders to focus not only on organizational effectiveness but also on creating spaces where faith can be experienced deeply and personally.

He identified several pathways for encountering God, including worship, prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, creation, and service. He also emphasized the importance of authentic Christian community, where individuals are known, heard, and loved without pretense.

Addressing the Church's relationship with its neighbors, Rev. Suhr highlighted the importance of listening, accompaniment, and relationship-building. He noted that effective justice work, advocacy, and community engagement emerge from genuine human connection rather than abstract programs or strategies.

He shared examples of congregations that intentionally slowed their pace, creating space to listen more carefully to God, one another, and their communities. In some cases, doing less activity led to deeper transformation because churches were able to focus on relationships and discernment.

Rev. Suhr connected these themes to the work of Connectional Ministries, noting that while resources, leadership development, and congregational support remain important, the larger goal is to help churches cultivate meaningful relationships and greater attentiveness to God's presence.

He invited Conference members to consider how they might cultivate greater resonance in their own lives and ministries, including through prayer, listening, and intentional encounters with others. Participants were also encouraged to utilize a designated prayer and reflection space available during the Conference session.

Concluding his address, Rev. Suhr observed that many people today are searching for authentic spiritual experiences, genuine community, and hope amid the pressures of modern life. He reminded the Conference that the Church's greatest gift is the living presence of God made known through the Holy Spirit.

He closed by affirming that the Church is "spiritual before it is strategic." While planning and administration remain important, renewal begins with surrender, waiting, listening, and responding to God's movement.

Following the presentation, Conference members were invited into table conversation and asked these questions for sharing: How may the Spirit be speaking to me or moving in me today? How can resonance with God, one another, and neighbors help my church move from anxiety and survival mode toward deeper spiritual renewal? What can I do to cultivate resonance in my church?

SAI/UMC Scholarship – Bob Arvizu

A video was shown sharing SAI's beginnings and its work. Gardena Industrial School opened in 1913. More than 2,400 young men were housed, trained, educated, and cared for in a safe, Christian environment. In the early 1970's, the school was closed due to regulatory and financial burdens. Today, SAI's Mission of serving the Hispanic youth who strive for a better life through higher education continues. A video was shown highlighting past scholarship recipients Ashley Guerrero. This year's scholarship recipients are Alicia Hortiales, Vanessa Cruz Zavala and Krystal Guevara. The scholarship recipients from Kid's City were also acknowledged.

Mr. Arvizu began by introducing Leah Switzer. Ms. Switzer shared that SAI is now partnering with Foster Care and Kid's City through providing scholarships. Anne Hawthorne, from Kid's City, was asked to stand. Churches were encouraged to send their youth to the Spanglish Camp this summer! SAI plays an important role, and we are all invited to support them through their "Adopt a Piggy" bank fundraiser.

CST - Grant Hagiya, President of Claremont School of Theology

Retired Bishop Grant Hagiya, President of Claremont School of Theology (CST), considered the significant challenges the seminary has faced over the past decade, including litigation, relocation, and difficult financial decisions. He noted that the institution's survival and renewal have required faith and trust in God's guidance through uncertain circumstances.

Despite challenges facing theological education and the broader higher education landscape, Bishop Hagiya reported that CST has experienced substantial growth. Over the past three years, enrollment has increased by 40 percent, and the most recent graduating class was significantly larger than the previous year. He attributed this growth in part to the school's renewed focus on its core values of compassion, justice, and belonging.

Bishop Hagiya emphasized CST's commitment to being a radically inclusive seminary rooted in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, particularly Christ's ministry among those on the margins. He also highlighted the school's interreligious commitment, which seeks to prepare leaders capable of engaging faithfully and respectfully across religious traditions.

As an example of that commitment, he described a new partnership with the Bayan Islamic Graduate School, through which CST will support the preparation of Muslim leaders by providing academic resources and accreditation support. He characterized the partnership as an expression of the school's willingness to embrace innovative and collaborative approaches to theological education.

Considering the institution's mission, Bishop Hagiya stated that CST seeks to form leaders who are committed to compassion, justice, and belonging, and who are prepared to address the realities of a changing Church and world. He noted that the school's renewed clarity of vision has strengthened its identity and attracted growing support.

Continuing CST's long tradition of innovation, Bishop Hagiya announced two recent academic initiatives. The first is a new Doctor of Ministry concentration in innovation, leadership, and spirituality, which Won-Seok Yuh will be the ambassador of, and which the school hopes will include a California-Pacific Conference cohort. The second is a Doctor of Spirituality degree, led by Frank Rogers and is described as the first program of its kind, designed for advanced study in spiritual formation and leadership.

Bishop Hagiya also reported growing financial support for the seminary, including gifts of \$1M each that are helping launch a bridge to the future campaign of \$20M. He described these gifts as signals that people see what is happening, that they believe in the work being done, and that the future of the institution is in front of us.

Looking ahead, he announced a series of online continuing education opportunities being offered in partnership with the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops and ecumenical partners. The courses will be available to clergy and laity, and will focus on areas such as church revitalization, leadership development, and lay ministry formation. Registration ends on June 29 and scholarships will be available to ensure broad participation.

He also highlighted the continuation of the school's coaching certification program, which provides advanced training for ministry leaders seeking professional coaching credentials.

Concluding his remarks, Bishop Hagiya considered the nature of institutional strength, which comes from clarity of purpose and faithfulness to God's call. He expressed confidence in CST's future and gratitude for its ongoing partnership with the California-Pacific Conference in preparing leaders for ministry in the years ahead.

Jurisdictional Delegate Nominations Voting – Rev. Cathie Capp

Clergy and Laity General Conference Delegates were elected yesterday, and now we have a bigger slate for our Jurisdictional Delegate Nominations. You will be able to vote for up to 10 delegates.

A list of nominees was shared, and it was observed that some names were not present for election. While this configuration issue is addressed, we will watch a Retirement Video.

Retirement Video – Media Team

Rev. Dr. Paul Youngjin Kim

Jurisdictional Delegate Nominations Voting – Rev. Cathie Capp

The issue was corrected, and the voting continued.

The first Jurisdictional Delegate ballot was taken for Laity: **Cathy Wilson, Mele Maka, Ana Goar Johnson, Rachel Rhodes-Wickett Gipson, and Jason Takagi were elected.**

The first Jurisdictional Delegate was taken for Clergy: **Won-Seok Yuh, Allison Mark, and Moonyoung Lee were elected.**

Kristen Luevanos, Huntington Beach: I am continually having trouble voting. My mom is running and I cannot vote. Are we able to take a paper ballot?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are not able to take a paper ballot due to those participating online. We will work on this technical problem.

Retirement Video – Media Team

Rev. Lily Malonzo Villamin

Jurisdictional Delegate Nominations Voting – Rev. Cathie Capp

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We are giving a five minute break.

Rev. Cathie Capp offered a prayer.

Retirement Video – Media Team

Rev. James Powell

Legislation – Jason Takagi

Here is our Consent Calendar:

For Concurrence (Recommendations)

REC 26-04 – Pensions 2: Retiree Health Care (99%)

REC 26-05 – Pensions 3: Clergy Housing Allowance (100%)

REC 26-06 – Pensions 4: Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (92%)

RES 26-01 – Elevation of Eco-Ministries Strategy Group (92%)

Rev. Rhodes invited the body that, as we are gathered around tables today, please take time to have discussions about the legislation that is coming before us.

The Legislation for this plenary:

REC 26-10

RES 26-03, RES 26-04, RES 26-05, RES 26-06

RUL 26-02

Legislation – Jason Takagi

We are moving to items not on the Consent Calendar.

Please turn your attention to RUL 26-02 (Updated)

Submitted by the Conference Hispanic Committee, this rule change amends Rule VI.D.5 to exempt members of the Conference Hispanic Committee — except it's at-large members — from the eight-year tenure limit in Rule VI.D.3.

Jason Takagi moved RUL 26-02.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Drew Patterson, Laity, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: Speaking against. I think it recognizes a real problem, which is that we have difficulty bringing new blood to our organizations. Rather than solving that problem, I think this exacerbates it. By removing the tenure rule, we remove that pressure to bring new people to our organization, something that we desperately need to maintain continuity of leadership, which is exactly what this wants to maintain. But we can't have that continuity if we're not continually bringing new people into positions of leadership. A large part of the problem our church is in is because we failed to get the younger generation to become involved in church leadership positions generally. And this leans into this problem rather than seeking to address it. I suggest instead that we might try a sort of mentorship program — something that lets somebody work alongside the people currently in these positions, grooming and preparing them to perhaps take them up themselves or something in that direction rather than adjusting the tenure rules so there's no term limit. So, I would recommend we vote no.

Rev. Sunyoung Lee, Clergy, Riviera UMC, Co-Chair of the Nominations Committee: I am speaking for. This rule change adds to the current existing tenure exemption. Several of our ethnic committees already have this exemption. This Hispanic Committee's work depends on cultural trust, language fluency, and relationships that take time to build and the pool of people that are available to serve are very limited. This rule change will allow people to continue to build relationships with one another. It does not erase the Nominations Committee's work to add people to the committee as well as the committee's own ability to accountability to see whether they should continue with the current leadership, current membership, bring about a new change. This rule change is to add the Hispanic Committee to the existing tenure exemption already in our rules. Thank you.

Ana-Haydeé Urda, Laity, Conference Hispanic Committee President: I speak in favor. I come before you as Rev. Lee spoke before me, I "ditto" everything she says. We are not asking for anything out of the ordinary. We are asking for something that already exists and we were kept away from. We are just requesting that we do the same thing as the Native American and Pacific Islanders have done. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RUL 26-02. It was supported.

RES 26-03 – Endorsing the Kairos Palestine II Document

Submitted by the Cal-Pac Palestine/Israel Task Force with no fiscal impact, this resolution asks the Annual Conference to endorse Kairos Palestine II, a November 2025 document from Palestinian Christians titled “A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide,” and urges congregations to study the document through the UMKR Congregational Study Guide.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-03.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Elaine Shin-Paull, Clergy, First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park: Speaking against.

I stand here not to silence the suffering of our Palestinian siblings. Their pain is real and as followers of Jesus, we are called to see it. But I rise because this Resolution as written tells only one side of a very complex story. I think we can do better. First, on language: the terms “genocide” and “apartheid” are politically contested. Reasonable, faithful people, including Christian scholars and Jewish scholars dispute these characterizations, when we embedded contested political language into a Conference resolution, we are not speaking prophetically. We are taking sides in a geopolitical debate, using terminology that wounds our Jewish neighbors and United Methodist members who hold a different view. I move that we remove these terms and replace them with language that describes a humanitarian crisis without judging its legal or moral characterizations. Second, an omission: this Resolution makes no mention of the October 7th attacks, the taking of hostages, or the ongoing trauma of Israeli civilians living under rocket fire. It makes no mention of Hamas. A Resolution that calls us to solidarity with one people while erasing the suffering of another does not reflect the fullness of the gospel. We believe every human being bears the image of God, Israeli and Palestinian alike. I move that we add language that explicitly acknowledging Israeli suffering and the right of the Israeli people to security and peace. Third, on Israel’s right to exist. The United Methodist Church has historically affirmed a two-state solution, and Israel’s right to exist as a nation. This Resolution is silent on that. I move that we add a clause reaffirming their right consistent with longstanding ...

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you, your time is up. I forgot to mention, so thank you for being the first one to have this happen to you. There is a timer on the screen, so please pay attention to the timer. However, I have a question for you. In your speech against – or are you asking to amend the Resolution?

Elaine Shin-Paull: Amend the Resolution.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: To Amend this Resolution, you are going to have to write down your Amendment and provide it to Jason. We will give you a minute to write it down. To help us move on, this Amendment might take us a minute, so we are going to hold this, and come back to the Amendment. When we get back to this item, the Amendment will be presented to us by Jason, and then we will vote on that.

The body agreed.

RES 26-04 – Supporting Equality for All General Conference Delegates

Submitted by Members of the Conference, this resolution addresses visa barriers facing international delegates to the 2028 General Conference in Minneapolis.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-04.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Rev. Molly Vetter, Clergy, Westwood UMC: I speak in favor of this Resolution. This Resolution Amplifies values of our Conference in terms of creating spaces of hearing all voices, and being a global denomination in this world and who can get access to the U.S. I would affirm this resolution as an opportunity for Cal-Pac to go on the record as a Conference which advocates for creating spaces for our global UMC's to gather.

Richard Bentley, Retired Clergy: A speech in favor. I have spent a lot of the last ten years building relationship with Methodists outside of the U.S. and helping get Visas to come to General Conference. It is important that we state we are in favor of it happening. Some countries are banned, some have to post fees, the majority of the General Conference delegates are from outside the U.S. in the first time in the history of this Church. So, getting everyone there is essential to the integrity of what we are doing. We need to find a resolution that gets all people heard.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-04. It was supported.

RES 26-05 – Inclusivity, Equal Protection, and Sacred Worth

Submitted by Members of the Conference, this resolution addresses gender inclusivity and the sacred worth of transgender and non-binary people.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-05.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Izzy Alvaran, Clergy, Reconciling Ministries Network: I am speaking for this Resolution. We would think that we would not need this resolution, but it was put forward by the Alliance for Trans Inclusion. I would like to speak in favor of this resolution. We need this. This Resolution has passed in one form or another in the Ohio Conference. We know that our trans siblings are now the ones being targeted by the current Administration. I have heard that the UMC is fully inclusive. That is not true. As a gay man, I cannot tell any LGBTQ that you can go to a church with a cross and flame and you are safe. Our work is not done, and this is one step to reaffirm this Conference's values LGBTQ rights.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-05. It was supported.

RES 26-06 – Encouraging the Use of Unionized Venues

Submitted by Members of the Conference, this resolution asks the Annual Conference to express a preference for unionized venues when booking future sessions.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-06.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Drew Patterson, Laity, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: I can't refer to the exact line number, but near the end ... is this the Hawaii Resolution or the Union one?

[Clarification that this Resolution is Encouraging Union Venues]

Drew Patterson: [Continued] I would just note that my sense from this, is that we are working under the assumption that Unions are inherently a force for good, but they don't have to be. They are a special interest group and advocate for their members at the expense of the other groups like employers, consumers, and the general public. They can definitely trample other people as well, so I don't know that we should always side with Unions and look at it on a case-by-case basis instead of jumping to conclusions.

Kristen Luevanos, Huntington Beach UMC: I'm going to start by saying that yes, I am biased. I am a Union Vice President and a past Union President. This is key, as I am a member of California Teachers Association. We have this sort of resolution within our laws and where we meet for hotels, it is discussed in negotiations that we will not stay at your hotel if you go to impasse. It leads the employer to actually listen to their employees. I understand the concern that it is a special interest group, but studies show that when a state has strong unions, all workers in that state get better working conditions. Unions help raise everyone within that state. If we fight for those workers, and we hold employers accountable, the employees will do better. Don't forget to tip your cleaning crew at the hotel. This is a speech for.

Frank Wulf, Clergy, Echo Park / La Plaza UMC: I invite us to read this resolution carefully. It does not require Union hotels, but asks the people who are making plans for Annual Conference to have a conversation with the Union in the same way that the hotel has conversations with the Sessions Committee. It is an effort for us to work together to make sure that workers are treated fairly as we make decisions about where we are going to meet as an AC every year. It is a recommendation to take workers' concerns seriously and that we only use places where workers are treated fairly and justly. This fits with everything the UMC stands for ever since our first Social Principles were written in 1908.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Out of respect for each other, please do not applaud.

Sandee Furuta, Laity, Conference Staff: As a member of staff, I am on the Sessions Committee and work to find our locations. We work very hard to look at union hotels. This year, this is not a union hotel, but we made sure that the staff has a living wage, they have benefits and health care, interviewed staff in every department to make sure that they are happy with jobs, without their managers present, and I also asked for tenure. So far, the shortest tenure has been 10 years. One member of the events staff has been here for 29 years. As the sessions committee, we work hard to make sure we are at a fair and safe hotel. I am voting against this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-06. It was supported.

Bishop: We will still have to come back to RES 26-03 while the Amendment is still being written.

Does anyone wish to make a motion to table this?

John Miller, Laity, Atascadero UMC: I move we table the resolution to a future session.

The motion is before you and has been seconded.

Rev. Mary Ann Pickard, Clergy, Lakewood First and Walteria UMC: The Kairos document was written by Palestinian Christians, and we have been seeing a systematic attack against them. We have seen the ravages of war. We come every year and there have been many of us speaking. This has been passed in four other conferences. This is not new. UMC have long stood with Christian Palestinians. The time is now. I think tabling it would send a concerning message to Christians in Palestine. I ask that we consider this this year.

John Miller: To clarify, this was a future session at this Conference. I will note that we are at 11:45a.m, the time to finish this session. There will be debate on this. I think it would be prudent to wait until we have sufficient time to consider this resolution.

Mary Ann Pickard: Thank you for that clarification.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on Motion to Table this until a future Plenary Session at this Annual Conference - RES 26-03 The Motion to address RES 26-03 later was supported.

Closing Prayer & Instructions – Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank
A prayer was offered by Michael Mitchell, South District Lay Leader.

**42nd Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Plenary 5
2:00 p.m. (PDT)**

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair
Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements – Rev. Won-Seok Yuh, Assistant Conference Secretary

Jurisdictional Delegate Work – Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Bob Rhodes reported that a technical issue affecting several voters during the delegate election process had been identified and corrected. To ensure the integrity of the voting system, Conference leaders conducted additional testing before proceeding with the election.

While staff continued to verify the system, Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank adjusted the agenda and invited the presentation of the Juneteenth Report.

Juneteenth Report – Deborah Bass and Rev. Royce Porter

A Juneteenth Video was shown.

Ms. Deborah Bass, lay member at Crossroads UMC in the West District and chair of the Conference Strengthening the Black Church Committee, and Rev. Royce Porter, pastor of Crenshaw United Methodist Church and chair of Black Methodists for Church Renewal in Cal-Pac, presented the Juneteenth Report to the Annual Conference.

Ms. Bass opened the report by grounding Juneteenth in its historical and theological significance. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce the freedom of more than 250,000 enslaved African Americans, more than two years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The delay, Ms. Bass noted, is itself part of the Juneteenth witness: freedom declared must become freedom realized. For Black communities across the United States, Juneteenth has become a celebration of resilience, faith, perseverance, and the continuing pursuit of justice.

Rev. Porter traced the roots of Black Methodist history, framing it as inseparable from American Methodist history itself. Long before the formal organization of American Methodism, Black believers were at the center of the movement. In 1758, John Wesley recorded the baptism of two enslaved Africans from Antigua who returned home and helped establish one of the earliest Methodist congregations in the New World. When the Christmas Conference convened in Baltimore in 1784, Black Methodists were already shaping its witness. Among them were: Harry Hoosier, a formerly enslaved man whose preaching drew crowds away from bishops; Richard Allen, a visionary leader whose influence continues to reverberate across the church and the nation; and Jarena Lee, whose bold response to God's call opened doors for generations of women in ministry.

Yet even as Black Methodists helped build the movement, they encountered a painful contradiction. The church preached grace for all while practicing exclusion. In 1787, Richard Allen and other Black worshippers were forced from their seats at St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia. They responded with dignity and not violence, walking out together in what Rev. Porter described as an act of holy resistance: "When dignity is denied, faithful people will rise."

Allen went on to found Bethel Church while others remained within Methodism to build congregations like Mother Zion. Across the nineteenth century, Black Methodists established churches that became schools, centers of education, networks of mutual aid, and training grounds for leadership. Following emancipation, they built schools, colleges, seminaries, and ministries that served communities denied access and resources. Yet freedom from slavery did not end the struggle. In 1939, more than 350,000 Black Methodists were placed in the segregated Central Jurisdiction when branches of Methodism reunited. These faithful Christians were not separated by geography but by race. Still, they kept building, preaching, organizing, and believing. When the Central Jurisdiction was abolished in 1964 and the United Methodist Church was formed four years later, Black Methodists for Church Renewal emerged to keep justice, equity, and

leadership development at the center of the church's mission. This legacy carried through the Black College Fund, the General Commission on Religion and Race, and generations of leaders who have refused to separate faith from justice.

Ms. Bass offered a celebration of the faithful clergy and laity who have sustained Black congregations across generations in the California-Pacific Conference, naming Robert Smith and Gwen Smith, Lydia Waters, Clayton Hammond, Sylvester Gillespie, Andre Aldridge, Beverly Shamana, Rev. Lawson and Ruth Conley, Andrew Robinson Gaither, Leroy Brown, and Robert Habersham. The following congregations were recognized: St. Johns in Watts, Crossroads in Compton, First Church in Compton, Lynwood, Holypark in Gardena, St. Paul in San Diego, Faith in Los Angeles, St. Mark in Los Angeles, Hamilton in Los Angeles, Crenshaw in Los Angeles, Holman in Los Angeles, Grace in Los Angeles, Scott in Pasadena, Pacoima, Altadena, and Inglewood. Specific ministries highlighted included a housing development at Inglewood United Methodist Church, Grace Fest at Grace UMC, the rebuilding of St. John's sanctuary after fire, charging stations at Crossroads, Epworth Farms (a partnership of St. Mark and Holman), a meal program at Heritage, and the community gardens at Crenshaw.

Rev. Porter shared a vision for the future. The pastors of Black congregations have begun gathering to discern a renewed path forward, committing to four priorities:

- 1) deeper partnerships and collaborations among leaders and congregations;
- 2) intentional investment in leadership development for clergy and laity;
- 3) thoughtful stewardship of human, spiritual, and property assets for long-term sustainability;
- 4) and bold investment in young people as a vital part of the church *today*.

Ms. Bass closed by inviting the full California-Pacific Conference to join in this work. The flourishing of Black churches, she said, strengthens the witness of the entire church. Juneteenth belongs not only to Black Americans, but to all who seek God's vision of justice, reconciliation, and beloved community. This is a Gospel aspiration rooted in the God who delivered Israel from bondage, the Christ who proclaimed release to the captives, and the Spirit who continues to break down dividing walls.

The presentation concluded with a responsive affirmation led by Ms. Bass and Rev. Porter:

*"For freedom Christ has set us free.
Therefore we will stand firm in faith, justice, and love.
Until all God's children flourish.
By the grace of God, we will continue the work.
Thanks be to God. Amen."*

Jurisdictional Delegate Work – Rev. Cathie Capp / Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Capp shared a reminder that there are 10 delegates for both clergy and laity Jurisdictional Delegates. The laity has already elected five, and the clergy has already elected three.

Rev. Capp led the body in prayer.

Rev. Escobedo-Frank: The first ballot for this plenary is before you.

You have elected for Clergy: Sione Finau

You have elected for Laity: Maikolo Brown

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The second ballot is before you.

You have elected for Clergy: Melissa MacKinnon

You have elected for Laity: Michael Mitchell

Rev. Capp led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The third ballot is before you. Clergy, you will have to vote again – there were already elected people were still on the ballot.

You have elected for Clergy: No election.

You have elected for Laity: No election.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The next ballot is before you.

You have elected for Clergy: Hannah Ka

~~**You have elected for Laity: Kevin Kang & Sonya Lee**~~

Rev. Capp: Laity, you have one more delegate to elect. Clergy, you have four more delegates to elect.

Rev. Capp led the body in prayer.

Scott Caprio, Laity, First UMC of San Diego: I was not able to vote in the last round. I never received the prompt to vote for the laity.

Amybeth Lake, Laity, Northridge UMC: There was a whole group of people who did not get that last ballot.

Bishop: If you did not get the last Laity ballot, please raise your hand.

Rev. Yuh: This is something that we are aware of, and we are working on it.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The last laity ballot will be invalidated.

Steve Dempster, Laity, Corona UMC: We solved the problem by getting out of the voting tab, and went back, and we were able to get back in.

Rev. Capp: The laity need to fill three delegate spots. The Clergy need to fill four delegate spots.

Rev. Yuh: Close your tabs. Everyone, please get out of the app. Many are having trouble with the app. If you know how to do so, you might want to try opening an “Incognito” tab.

Another test ballot was given.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: The system we are using is causing us problems. The system we used for legislation did not cause us problems. We are moving to that section of our plenary.

Legislation – Jason Takagi

RES 26-03 - Endorsing the Kairos Palestine II Document – Motion to Amend.

- In the 4th Whereas starting on page 1 line 32 – Replace “genocidal assault” with “devastating military conflict” and replace “ethnic cleansing” with “forced displacement” so it reads: “Whereas Palestinians in Gaza continue to struggle for survival in the midst of devastation after two years of devastating military conflict resulting in severe humanitarian crisis, while world powers either support or accept plans being developed for endless occupation, dispossession, and forced displacement in Gaza without reference to the inalienable rights and the wishes of the indigenous people of Palestine”
- In the 5th Whereas starting on page 1 line 38 – Replace “ethnic cleansing” with forced displacement so it reads: “Whereas Palestinians in the West Bank including East Jerusalem are experiencing a terrible escalation of military operations, settler attacks, expansion of illegal settlements, and forced displacement from their land, which have reached record levels in 2024-2026, with tens of thousands being displaced, entire Palestinian communities being erased, and plans for permanent annexation of occupied Palestinian territory moving forward in the Israeli government”
- In the 6th Whereas starting on page 1 line 44 – Replace “genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement” with “whereas the October 7th, 2023 attacks resulted in the deaths of approximately 1200 Israeli Civilians and taking over 200 hostages and ongoing trauma for Israeli communities” so it reads: “Whereas, Palestinian Christians, in the Kairos Palestine II document, titled “A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide” and issued in November 2025, have said to us:
 - Referring to the original Kairos Palestine document of 2009: “After prayer and reflection on the suffering of our people under occupation, we release that cry of hope in the absence of hope, affirming our faith in God and our love for our homeland, convinced that our struggle is ultimately about human life and dignity,”
 - “We live now in a time of whereas the October 7th, 2023 attacks resulted in the deaths of approximately 1200 Israeli Civilians and taking over 200 hostages and ongoing trauma for the Israeli Communities unfolding before the eyes of the world. This moment demands from us a new stand, one unlike any before it. It is both a decisive moment and a moment of truth. Today, we renew our stand for truth and our commitment to fundamental religious, theological, and moral principles. We look at our reality and take a renewed stand, responding to the voice of the Holy Spirit deep within us, listening to the call of faith, hope, and love – offering a faith-inspired vision for the time after genocide.”
- In the 8th Whereas starting on page 2 line 13 – Replace “ethnic cleansing” with “forced displacement” so it reads: “Whereas their call includes rejection of Christian Zionism and all theology that would justify the oppression and destruction of the Palestinian people, as well as rejection of the conflation of antisemitism with opposition to Israeli apartheid and forced displacement”
- In the 12th Whereas starting on page 2 line 32 – Replace “identifying and opposing Israeli apartheid” with “addressing the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian People” so it reads: “Whereas the California-Pacific Conference has adopted several resolutions in recent years supporting the

Palestinian struggle for liberation and justice, including in 2023, a resolution ‘addressing the humanitarian condition of the Palestinian People’

- Insert the following after the 12th “Whereas”:
 - “Whereas we affirm that all human beings bear the image of God – Israeli and Palestinian alike and that the suffering of one people does not diminish or negate the suffering of another.”
 - “Whereas a just and lasting peace requires acknowledgment of the humanity, grief, and security, needs, of all parties to this conflict.”
 - Whereas the United Methodist Church has historically supported a two-state solution and the right of both Israeli and Palestinian peoples to exist in peace and security within recognized borders.”
- In the 1st Therefore starting on page 2 line 36 – Replace “supports and endorses” with “while affirming the right of Israel to exist in peace and security and the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination in freedom from oppression endorses the humanitarian concerns raised in” and insert “while noting the specific characterizations within that document reflect on the perspective of its authors” so it reads: “Therefore be it resolved that the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, while affirming the right of Israel to exist in peace and security and the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination in freedom from oppression endorses the humanitarian concerns raised in the Kairos Palestine II document, while noting that specific characterizations within that document reflect the perspectives of its authors.”
- In the 2nd Therefore starting on page 2 line 39 – Replace “study and discussion of” with “prayerful, balanced, study of The Israel Palestinian conflict from multiple perspectives including, but not limited to the” and replace “with the goal of the actions and advocacy called for in Kairos Palestine II to follow” with “and resources representing Jewish, Israeli, and diverse Christian viewpoints with the goal of pursuing justice, peace, and reconciliation of all people of the Holy Land” so it reads: “Be it further resolved that the California-Pacific Annual Conference strongly urges its congregation and all United Methodist laity and clergy of the conference to engage in prayerful, balanced study of the Israeli Palestinian conflict from multiple perspectives including, but not limited to the Kairos Palestine II Congregational Study Guide, found at the website of the United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR) (kairosresponse.org), and resources representing Jewish, Israeli, and diverse Christian viewpoints with the goal of pursuing justice, peace, and reconciliation of all people of the Holy Land.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Do we have a second? We have a second. Now the maker of this motion can give us some discussion if they want to.

Elaine Shin-Paull, Clergy, First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park: I made this amendment because my small church is very diverse. We have two families who are Muslim, four who are Jewish and Christians, and due to the diversity, it made me think how we are framing our resolutions. I hope these words are more aligned with the Gospel and that we are not only taking one side, but that we are more inclusive. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank opened up discussion:

Online: Theresa Basile, Laity, Culver Palms UMC

Due to technical difficulties, Suanne Ware-Diaz read Theresa’s statement against the amendment.

Suanne Ware-Diaz: “Thank you, Bishop. I would like to speak against amending this resolution. I am speaking also as a leader in the denomination-wide UMC movement known as UM Kairos Response. We are thousands of United Methodists across the connection answering the call of Palestinian Christians to the Church. About what we’ve heard in debate, but for too long we have heard a repeated demand in our Church that we not offend those who would be uncomfortable or offended by bold statements that name clearly and honestly what it really happening to the Palestinian people. Please know that there are tens of thousands of Jewish Americans and organizations who are speaking every day about Israeli genocide and apartheid. Israel’s leading human rights organization has published a report naming that their country is absolutely committing genocide and is an apartheid state. Imagine the courage it takes for these Jewish Israeli citizens to say that. Our Conference has a history of speaking the truth about what is happening in Palestine. Just two years ago, the Cal-Pac Conference named and condemned Israel’s apartheid regime. Something that we hear very often is that this is ‘too complicated’ so we shouldn’t try to weigh in on it. But we don’t have to be experts on genocide and international law – we have experts to help us. There is a pretty strong consensus worldwide about the Israeli genocide and apartheid. We have reports on both of those from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations. The world’s leading scholars on the Holocaust and genocide published powerful--”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: You have run out of time. Thank you so much for reading that for Theresa.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have one speech against.

Allison Mark, Clergy, Faith UMC Torrance: Against this amendment. As someone who believes our faith calls us to the truth, I rise to speak my conscience alongside many others in opposition to this amendment. Our United Methodist Social Principles call us to stand up for human suffering. These principles are not fulfilled by looking away from devastating realities. We are called to honest witness and courageous compassion. The resolution before uses strong language like ‘genocide’, which some may be uncomfortable with, but the purpose of the Church is not to use language that makes us comfortable, but to bear witness to the truth. Suffering itself is uncomfortable. The amendments that we have heard completely change the resolution in its original form. The Kairos Palestine was written by Palestinian Christians who asked the global Church not to look away. There comes a time when silence itself becomes harm. Refusing to name suffering becomes participation in it. I support the resolution as it stands and against the amendments, because we must stand where Jesus stood – with the oppressed.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is another speech against. We have a question online.

Erin McPhee, Clergy, Online: Question/Clarification. In line 34, is the original text in quotations a quote from a document? If so, are we switching to a different quote? If not, then we cannot change the language of an existing resolution that was already approved in a previous session.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I’m going to take that as a speech against.

Paul Kim, La Palma UMC and Trinity UMC: We are working for the poor and oppressed. When I visited Israel, so many Palestinians and young people were struggling in poverty and poor situations. Israelis did not care about them. We are called to be Christ’s disciples. I’m supporting it. Thank you. I am rejecting this amendment.

Bishop: Do we have anyone who wishes to speak for the Amendment?

Drew Patterson, Laity, Shepherd of the Valley UMC: I'll speak for. I think it's good to temper our language. We are supporting this as a Church. It should be something everyone can get on board with. It is clear that we have a portion of our Church which is not fully on board. I think it's fair to temper the language.

Sunny Ahn, Clergy, New Beginnings UMC: I speak for the Amendment. The amendment is not against the essence of the message of the original resolution. We are serving diverse people in our local church. By doing good, we are harming another sect of our church. "Do no harm" comes before anything else.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the Amendment to RES 26-03. The Amendment did not pass.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-03.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Yoshi Kuramoto, Clergy, San Pedro UMC: If we wish to know the truth, then suffering must speak. Jesus said that the truth will set us free. These words come from the Kairos Palestine document, written by Palestinian Christians themselves, may we hear them: "Those who deny the genocide committed against the Palestinian people, despite the overwhelming evidence, testimonies, and even the statements of Zionists themselves, deny the very humanity of the Palestinian People. We have the right, therefore, to ask how one can speak of Christian fellowship or communion while denying, supporting, justifying, or remaining silent before genocide? Especially when such acts are committed in the name of God in scripture? There must be honest reflection and repentance by all believers, especially by church leaders throughout the world. Siblings, ultimately, this is about the foundational questions of faith posed by the Crucifixion, a criminalized and tortured Christ nailed to the cross: Who are the victims of the world? Where does God choose to be? What ought to be our spirit-led response?" In closing, let us not settle with the faith of the early Peter who denied Christ three times before the rooster crowed. Let us aspire to have faith like that of Mary Magdalene, who stayed by the cross and became the first witness of the Divine prison-break of resurrecting love. Amen.

J.T. Greenleaf, Clergy, St. Paul's UMC Coronado: A speech for the Resolution. There is another element to add to this that is being reported by an ABC affiliate, he wrote on the site formerly known as Twitter: "All of Lebanon must burn." That is a genocidal statement by definition. We cannot sit back with watered down language. We need to hear all the people who are suffering in the region today.

Laura Pinho, Laity, Chatsworth West UMC: I almost left the Church over this issue, and for the failure of my church at the time to say anything at all. I went through about a year of crisis and arrived at the United Methodist Church, primarily because I was able to wear my keffiyeh without being shunned. It is Juneteenth, and I'm just going to say that none of us are free until we are all free. I can think of no other people who have experienced less freedoms than Palestinians over the last 80 years, especially those currently living in Gaza, trying to survive this genocidal assault without any sustenance. They are feeling that the world has forgotten them. Standing with them at this time is crucial in living up to Christ's call.

Cole D'Agostino, Laity, St. Mark UMC San Diego: I speak in favor of this Resolution. As United Methodists, our principles declare that we must stand with those who are oppressed, marginalized, and suffering. When our siblings in Christ, specifically the Palestinian Christian community, reach out to the Global Church with a cry of attention and recognition, we have an obligation not to look away but to listen and respond. Voting on this resolution does many things, but two stand out to me. First, it shows solidarity with the Global Church, further emphasizing our commitment to the worldwide community that we live in.

Second, it tells our local congregations to study the document by reading and learning from it. Our churches will be more educated and have the knowledge to move past surface-level thoughts and headlines, and to move into more driven reflection. At the beginning of this resolution there is a Bible verse, Hebrews 13:3 and it says, “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” This is what we are doing. It does not say that we are picking a side in the conflict but instead supporting a group of people who wish for loving support all over the globe. Let us collectively stand up and send a clear message that the Cal-Pac Conference stands for justice, and that we listen to our neighbors. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was another speech for. Is there anyone who wants to speak against? We have had four in favor.

Blair Trygstad Stowe, Hollywood UMC and Claremont School of Theology: Can I make a motion that we call the question?

Bishop: Not until we make sure there are no speeches against.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-03. It was supported.

Jason Takagi: We are moving back to the Consent Calendar from this morning. Bishop, I move the Consent Calendar.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the Consent Calendar. It was supported.

Doug Dickson, Clergy, Northridge UMC: Point of personal privilege. I’d just like to take this opportunity after having passed the previous resolution that this is not the only genocide happening in the world. If you look at Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Xinjiang, China—they all have active genocides happening right now. Let’s also use this opportunity to educate our people about genocides throughout the world. Thank you.

REC 26-10 - Equitable Compensation Minimum Salary Schedules PR-88

Jason Takagi moved REC 26-10.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Frank Wulf, Clergy, La Plaza UMC & Echo Park UMC: I wish to speak in favor. I want to call attention to the fact that this is based on calculations that were set out in 2015. I urge a “yes” vote. I want us to invite the Equitable Compensations Commission to go back to that 2015 rule over the coming year and begin to ask whether it’s still appropriate for us in this day. That’s not a motion, it’s just a request attached to my hope that we will vote “yes.”

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I take that as a speech in favor.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-10. It was supported.

Nominations Committee – Rev. Sunyoung Lee and Lynn Owan

Rev. Sunyoung Lee greeted the Annual Conference and introduced Lynn Owan, her fellow co-chair of the Conference Nominations Committee. She noted that the committee's written report was included in the Preliminary Report and began by expressing gratitude to those whose service and support have strengthened the committee's work over the past year.

Special appreciation was extended to Sandra Liddell, who is completing her term on the committee; Jennifer Gaylord, who has been essential to the committee's operations; Erin Hawkins; and District Superintendent Tom Choi for their continued encouragement and assistance throughout the year.

Rev. Lee reported that the Nominations Committee has successfully expanded its leadership structure, adding several new positions to strengthen and sustain the nominations process. Simon Sansano as Secretary, Deb White-Barela as Database Manager, Kimberly Emerson as Reference Check Coordinator, and Moonyoung Han as Communications and Qualifications Coordinator were recognized for their service in these newly created roles.

Lynn Owan highlighted the committee's progress in implementing a clear nominations timeline, a consistent reference-check process, and an updated database. She noted that Recommendation 26-01 represents the committee's work during the past year.

Two updates were reported from the floor. Bishop Escobedo-Frank appointed Rev. Drew Davis to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The committee expressed gratitude for both the Bishop's discernment and Rev. Davis's willingness to accept this new responsibility. To assume this role, Rev. Davis will conclude his service on the Justice and Compassion Executive Ministry Team effective June 30, 2026.

Second, the Conference was informed that District Superintendent Garth Gilliam is no longer serving as the Cabinet Liaison to the Board of Ordained Ministry. The committee expressed appreciation for his faithful service in that capacity.

The Conference was reminded that the nominations report remains a living document and that several vacancies still exist across Conference leadership structures. Members were encouraged to recommend individuals from their local churches and districts who may be called to serve. Those interested in exploring opportunities for leadership were invited to contact the committee directly at nominations@calpacumc.org.

On behalf of the Conference Nominations Committee, Lynn Owan moved the adoption of the Nominations Report, Recommendation 26-01, as amended.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-01. It was supported.

Cabinet Report – Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Dean of Cabinet

A video titled *District Highlights: Astonishing Ministries Throughout Cal-Pac* was shown, highlighting examples of the astonishing ministry taking place across the California-Pacific Conference.

Rev. Lee invited Rev. Luis Garcia, South District Superintendent, to come forward.

Rev. Garcia brought before the body:

REC 26-16 - Closure of the Charter of Chapel of the Valley UMC, El Cajon, CA

Rev. Garcia moved REC 26-16.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Brad Stein, Laity, El Segundo UMC: You used “closure” in the title and “discontinuance” in the body. Is there a difference?

Rev. Garcia: We can use either one.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-16. It was supported.

Rev. Garcia offered a prayer for the mission and life of Chapel of the Valley UMC.

REC 26-12 - Closure of Mission Community United Methodist Church, Rosemead, CA

Rev. Lee: I present REC 26-12.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-12. It was supported.

Rev. Lee offered a prayer for the mission and life of Mission Community UMC.

Rev. Dr. Saia Tu’itahi, West District Superintendent, responded to questions he received about his clothing, explaining the significance of his traditional Tongan attire. He shared that the clothing is traditionally worn to church and other important occasions as an expression of respect, humility, gratitude, and honor toward those gathered. He also considered the impact of colonization, noting that Western dress requirements were later imposed over traditional Island clothing.

Rev. Tu’itahi then presented Recommendation 26-15, Closure of Young Hwa United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, CA

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Dione Taylor, Laity, San Diego First UMC: Why reimbursement at only half the amount?

Rev. Tu'itahi: Part of the negotiation is that they are not paying rent, and they are clearing out from now until December. It was advised by our legal team. We have received half. The other half is their rent.

Gregory Douglass, Clergy, Native American UMC: I was involved in part of this negotiation as the question had arisen: Why allow them to remain on site and why 50%? It was not only a desire for some sense of grace from this Annual Conference, but their legal team came back to us and tried to claim that we did not recognize they had quick-claimed the property under a statute of limitations. We were facing potential long-term and expensive litigation. Pastor Saia, myself, and our legal advisors met with them and came to the agreement that Pastor Saia has presented to the Conference at this time. Part of the plot within that was not only to be graceful ourselves, but to save us from the long-term litigation that was possibly ahead of us.

Sunny Ahn, Clergy, New Beginnings UMC: Question about the appointed pastor—is she going to be terminating her ordination along with the closure of the church, or do we need to vote for discontinuing her credentials?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Anything that has to do with a person's credentialing for ministry is dealt with in the clergy session. That is clergy session matters. You will get your answer probably next year in Clergy Session.

Paul Kim, Clergy, Trinity UMC: I am supporting this because the congregation did not follow the book of Discipline. I led Charge Conference four years ago and I recognized the same process they were taking, and clergy member Rev. Kang is over 72 years old, so maybe she is retiring.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: She is in retired status. Even retired clergy are still under the order of Elders. Thank you for that information. I receive that as a speech for this recommendation.

Martha Strapac, Laity, Trinity UMC: My question is a matter of—I don't want to call it semantics, but this is a legal document and it should have all the information correct, so it bothers me where it talks about, "Hyun and Song acting as officers of Young Hwa." Somebody is supposed to be a Reverend, there are no first names or titles, and I just think that should be added to this document. That's all how you refer to someone, and I don't know if that's one person or two because it says, "Acting as officers of Young Hwa." That's all.

Rev. Tu'itahi: The reason why we closed the church is because there was no communication whatsoever, and when the legal deed was filed... What the resolution contains is taken directly from the legal documents.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-15. It was supported.

Rev. Saia offered a prayer for the mission and life of Young Hwa.

Rev. Lee: We will move the following two remaining recommendations in the evening plenary.

Instructions and Closing Blessing

The closing prayer was offered by Tupou Kelemen, Hawai'i District Lay Leader, while the A Capella Tongan Choir sang.

42nd Annual Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference
Plenary 6
6:30 p.m. (PDT)

Call to Order - Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank called the plenary session to order.

Orders of the Day - Rev. Cathie Capp, Agenda Chair
Rev. Capp presented the Orders of the Day and moved the Orders of the Day.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote. It was supported.

Announcements – Rev. Won-Seok Yuh, Assistant Conference Secretary
Rev. Yuh shared that Young People’s Worship would be held that evening at 9:00 p.m. A special meeting for Building and Location Chairs was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. the following morning. District breakfasts would take place at 7:00 a.m., followed by the Service of Commissioning and Ordination in the Flores Ballroom.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank introduced Taufa Tenisi from the East District who is on the stage this plenary.

Cabinet Matters – Rev. Moonyoung Lee, Dean of Cabinet
Rev. Garth Gilliam, North District Superintendent, came forward to present REC 26-18, Closure of North Oxnard United Methodist Church, Oxnard, CA

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Melanie Branson, Laity, Ridgecrest UMC and the Cal-Pac Eco Ministries Team: I’m speaking in favor of this Recommendation, with a special attention request for the District and Conference Leadership in lines 28-29 in the Recommendation. I’m reading in part, “The hope of developing and maintaining another United Methodist ministry on this site,” and it sounds like we are moving in that direction, which I am happy for. I wanted to share my own personal experience as a member of the Ridgecrest UMC, I have personal experience with this garden, and the North Oxnard UMC. About 10 years ago, they sent a call out to the Conference inviting any and all churches to come experience an Eco Justice Workshop tailored towards children. My daughter and I went along with a few other members of our church. My mind was blown by the garden and their repurposing and recycling programs of the City were just astonishing. I have not encountered a like-program since. This is exactly the kind of passion youth and community involvement that our churches want to encourage and I hope that our leadership will seriously consider keeping open the community garden program as originally imagined. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I take that as a speech in favor. I see folks at the microphone who are not allowed to speak on the floor because they are not delegates, as we talked about yesterday. You are from the Garden and I know that Rev. Garth represented you well here, and I just want to know that we are really glad that you are here, and we hope to, as Rev. Garth said, continue in the future. In this setting, how we operate in the UMC is that the voices come from the delegates who are in the local churches. You might come up and

talk to ... you can't use the microphone until I give you permission ... you can come up and have a side conversation with Rev. Garth for a moment if you would like.

David Jamir, Clergy, Ventura First UMC and Garden Church: I wanted to let all of you know that we have done due diligence with this congregation. We worked hard to make things happen, but we are about 25 years late doing it. We have heard the cries of the people, we sat with them, we prayed with them, and this is the conclusion the Charge Conference made. Pastor Cindy and I affirmed their decision and so did the Cabinet. This comes from the congregation and I was privileged to serve, and I affirm this Resolution as well.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I take this as a speech for. Let me confer with District Superintendent Garth. We have exhausted the speeches for, so we can have a speech against. Do we have any other speeches from the delegates? Thank you for speaking with D.S. Garth.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-18. It was supported.

Rev. Gilliam led the body in prayer, celebrating the mission and life of North Oxnard United Methodist Church.

REC 26-19 - Discontinuance of La Trinidad United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, CA

Rev. Lee: On behalf of the appointed Cabinet, I present REC 26-19. Rev. Lee shared the history of La Trinidad and the steps that have led to REC 26-19.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions. Two for and two against will be received.

Dione Taylor, Laity, San Diego First UMC: This might be a matter of semantics, but given the concerns that conversations around La Trinidad had over the past several weeks, could the Conference help us understand if there is any meaningful distinction between "closure" and "discontinuance," or if the terms are interchangeable. What led to the choice of the term "discontinuance" in this particular case, as the previous eight were "closures."

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I believe this came up before, it was a good question. The two words are interchangeable, so they mean the same thing.

Brian Parcel, Clergy, First UMC Chula Vista: I rise to speak in favor of the closure. I'm a member of the Conference Board of Trustees, so you have heard a lot of the information, but I rise to speak in favor of the closure. Let me say that there has been a lot of news about this, and we wish that many things would have gone very differently about it. What I can tell you from the Board of Trustees is that on January 26, 2026, we did vote as the Board of Trustees for the exigent closure because we were concerned about the assets of the Annual Conference. That is our primary task. There has been lots of talk about the Trustees or the Conference or someone wanting to take the money of the local church, and as D.S. Moonyoung has shared, those funds have been kept in the District Union and in the Foundation for the express purpose of continuing this exact same kind of mission in place. From the Trustees, I would encourage us, as painful as it may be, and as messy as this has been, that in order to preserve the assets for the Annual Conference, we advise you to vote to approve.

Richard Bentley, Clergy, Chino UMC: I move Substitution. I move that we substitute RES 26-09 for REC 26-19. If there is a second, I would like to speak to this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I hear a second.

Richard Bentley: My father taught me once that when I was having a fight with my sisters and I wanted to tell him how awful they were, that it takes two to tango. He was more interested in what I had done than what they had done. RES 26-09 would, at the heart of it, call for a mediated settlement to this dispute. I think there are two sides to this. The Cabinet, as very effectively presented their side - we have not heard from some of the church leadership what their side would be. They can't speak, they don't have a member at the Annual Conference. There is on-going legal stuff going on, and I would note that in the case earlier today, I believe it was Young Hwa, we finally decided that mediation was a better and less expensive way. I hope that we will consider to vote for Substitution, are considering Substitution, so that we can look at both RES 26-09 and REC 26-19 and both approaches to solving this problem. I will say that having been through a number of disputes, I have learned that mediation, while longer and often painful, is often, in the end, less expense and preserves relationships better. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Hold on for a moment. There is a request for Substitution before you. Is it possible to put that on the screen?

Rev. Rhodes: Richard is Substituting RES 26-09, so on the AC 2026 website, that's where you would find that legislation. If you give me just a moment, I will put it on your "Materials" tab in MeetingPulse.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: You have had the Substitution since yesterday, so I understand you have had time to read it. I'm asking now for us to speak for or against the Substitution.

Molly Vetter, Clergy, Westwood UMC: I'd like to speak against this Motion to Amend by Substitution because I would prefer us to move forward with the matter as the Cabinet has put it before us. As I've read this Resolution, that is offered as a proposed Substitution, I've noticed things. One of them is that it titles itself as a Resolution for Just Peace, but it also makes lots of condemnations and accusations. I found it a relatively disingenuous way to pursue a kind of mediated resolution. At the same time, I'm having the Conference go on the record as being disapproving of the actions of our Conference Leadership. I've also noticed that as a straight white woman, that we have one of the most beautiful and diverse inclusive Cabinets in the connection, if not the most, and that our Superintendents and Bishop have the ability to speak in languages across cultures that I aspire to one day. The weighty responsibility we give them in handling the important and difficult work of church closures and discontinuances is not one that I envy. and I appreciate their work of moving us through this in the messy realities of church life. I'd like to give them a little grace and make sure that we are not missing the point by paying attention to the minutia of the language that exists in all of the details in our Book of Discipline and California law that we are wading through. I feel convicted that our quickness at second guessing the leadership of our diverse Cabinet is destructive to the thing that we are trying to do, which is build our capacities to do this important work together.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have a speech against.

Jason Takagi, Laity, San Luis Obispo UMC: I speak in favor of the Substitution. I wrote the Resolution because our Book of Discipline provides for fair judicial process when lay members stand accused of violating our church laws. The Cabinet has presented many allegations of wrong doing by the elected Lay

Leaders of La Trinidad. Yet, our Book of Discipline requires that our Lay members are involved in any due process against a lay member. In this incident, the Lay Members have not been provided the inclusion of lay members in the process against them. The Bishop and Cabinet have instead used exigent circumstances and Civil court to bypass our fair judicial processes provided by the Book of Discipline and provide the elected Lay Leaders their due process rights. Due process is never convenient. It's not expedient, nor is it the most efficient. Yet the use of Executive Power will always result in a faster resolution. Our church is built upon a balance between clergy and laity. Due process is necessary in any sort of democratic governance system. Overriding the decisions of elected Lay Leaders must follow due process. They must be allowed to show why they made the decisions they did, and present that to a judicial process that includes lay people. They may have followed what their church wanted. It also might be that the judicial process finds the lay leaders were incompetent or in violation of their duties. We just do not know at this time. We must give these lay leaders the benefit of the doubt that they believe they were acting in the best interests of the people that elected them.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was a speech in favor of the Substitution.

Ana-Haydeé Urda, Laity, Huntington Park UMC, Conference Hispanic Committee Chair: I speak against this Resolution. Last night, at a meeting the Hispanic Caucus had, Pastor Ruben Esponda spoke to the members of the congregation that still exist. They decided that they do not want mediation. I am speaking on behalf of the members of La Trinidad at this point in time. Not the previous members, but the ones that are now meeting at Pico Rivera.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was a speech against. We have time for one more speech, and I believe this is a speech in favor of this Resolution.

Kristen Luevanos, Laity, Community Huntington Beach UMC: And yes, I hear that some don't want mediation, but those listed, do want mediation. What I heard earlier were the concerns of the assets over the concerns of the people and that concerns me. The only reason I am supporting this is because to me, reading what La Trinidad put out, some of them, and reading what the Conference put out – it seems to me that people were talking past each other, and not to each other. That concerns me because, as we say, all voices need to be heard, and if in a year, like the writer of the Resolution said, that it comes out that they were in the wrong, then fine, let's move forward. But I feel that harm is being done in the hope of saving assets over humans and that just concerns me. Thank you.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank: We have two against and two for, so now as I understand our process, we have to vote on whether to Substitute and then on whether to accept the Substitution. This is a two-set process.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on the Substitution. It did not pass.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: And now, because it did not pass, we call for a vote on REC 26-19. We have already had one speech for, I'm calling on microphone 4 to give us our second speech for the Recommendation. There will be two more slots for any who may wish to speak against.

Ruben Esponda, Clergy, Nueva Esperanza UM Mission, formerly La Trinidad: Rev. Esponda spoke a saying in Spanish, which translated to English as, "Nobody knows the weight of the burden but the one who carries it." By this I mean that it is with great respect that I know the true situation which has been left at La Trinidad UMC. From the day I was appointed, back in July of 2025, with this, I want to highlight some

points that we, as clergy and laity, need to hear when making our decision to vote on closing La Trinidad UMC. First, let me start by sharing my personal experience. When I was first introduced as the newly appointed pastor to La Trinidad, I was not welcomed as a pastor. When I attended the first Governor's Board Meeting, a group of leaders showed anger and disrespect for the pastor. Their behavior was un-Christian. There was no respect for other leaders in the congregation. I was denied access to the church and bank account information. I was never given access to financial reports, and many other things. So, in short, we are dealing with a church with many problems like a lack of transparency and a conflict of interest. I urge you to vote in favor of closing La Trinidad.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Do we have any speeches against.

Suanne Ware-Diaz, Laity, Native American UMC: I am not going to speak in favor or against. I just want to share an observation that is bubbling over in me right now. It breaks my heart. There may be diversity, but diversity and inclusion are two different things. We can look very diverse, but that doesn't mean we have equal authority. The presentation was ... the tone bothered me. I'm going to share that with you openly. How we treat one another matters. How we come across with one another matters and I think that even in a painful time, and in a time where there may be injustices and misunderstandings on both sides, even if someone has done something severe, there are certain ways we can talk about it and deliver it, but when you are up on the stage and you have a title and you are talking here, it seems like it was already decided. I just want us to be mindful of that. That in our discussions and in our sharing, that we be respectful of one another even if someone else is in the wrong. Thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Suanne, if you would just answer my question. I'm not sure if that was a speech ... even though you said that you didn't want to speak against, it did sound like an against, or are you just making a point ...

Suanne Ware-Diaz: I'm just doing an observation in the way that the presentation was made and how the discussions are coming up. That's all.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I'm calling it a point of order. Thank you.

Richard Bentley, Clergy, Chino UMC: I would like to offer an amendment. I think it was submitted through the portal, so you can see it.

The Amendment to REC 26-19 was accessible and was also read out loud by Rev. Bentley.

REC 26-19 Amendment:

Therefore, be it further resolved, that the 42nd Session of the California-Pacific Annual Conference encourages conference leadership to refrain from: freezing local church bank accounts and respond in appropriate ways so it is not necessary to hire lawyers to unfreeze local church bank accounts; holding paper checks for large sums of money for long periods of time which causes significant loss of interest; suing lay people in civil court rather than seeking other means of mediation and reconciliation.

If there is a second, I would like to speak to it.

There was a second.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Excuse me. I need to make sure that I call on the right people at the right time. I did hear seconds on the floor, but I have a legal matter to attend to before we move on. Please give me time to lead us. [A brief pause was taken.] Thank you for giving me time to lead. We do have a Constitutional Chancellor with us, who does inform us, and I will make a decision on whether or not this Amendment will be allowed to go forward. Before I make that decision, I will rely on what it says in our Book of Discipline and Rulings which inform us. I invite Lui Tran, Assistant Chancellor for Church Law, to come to the floor and give you that information.

Rev. Lui Tran, Assistant Chancellor for Church Law: I would like to inform you and offer an opinion on this matter. I'm concerned that if we decide to Amend the motion for closure, we would be violating church law. In particular, Paragraph 2549 4b, where it says, in the last sentence, "When it next meets, the Annual Conference shall decide whether to formally close the local church." So the Annual Conference only gets to vote up or down on the motion to close. There is essentially, from a legal standpoint, no amendment to the closure motion. You vote that either you want to close or not. This particular provision of Discipline has been interpreted by the Judicial Council in Decision 1490, which says exactly the same thing. If there is a challenge to the particular motion, it has to be brought before the body of the Annual Conference, which then votes, up or down, whether or not to close the local church. There is no amendment, there is nothing that the Annual Conference can amend. You only decide whether or not you want to close La Trinidad. This is church law. This is my legal opinion to you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. I have decided that this is not in order because it does not follow our Discipline and our Rules. I am calling this Out of Order. We can take two speeches against.

Cyndi Vann, Laity, Moorpark UMC: My question is, when you ask for a second, everybody in the audience screams. Don't we have to check to see if they are eligible to make that second? It's just a question.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That's a very good question. You would do well in parliamentary law.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-19. It was supported.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I would to help us go through a spiritual moment that we have just been through. I ask our brothers and sisters in the Tongan culture to sing to us. When we sing, it causes vibrations. I think God made us all to sing for that reason. If you know the song, please sing along. I've asked them to stand up where they are. I think there is a leader who will help us sing. After the song, Dean Moonyoung will offer a prayer, and then we will move on to our next item.

The Tongan Choir sang for the Conference.

Dean Moonyoung Lee invited West District Superintendent Saia Tu'itahi to lead the body in prayer.

Dean Moonyoung: This concludes the 2026 Cabinet Report. Thanks be to God.

Jurisdictional Delegate Voting – Rev. Cathie Capp

I come to you once again to go through our Jurisdictional Delegate Elections. At this time, the Laity have elected seven members to the Jurisdictional Conference. They have three votes left. Clergy have elected 6 members to the Jurisdictional Conference and have four votes left.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the first vote of this plenary session.

Laity elected Kevin Kang and Sonya Lee.

Clergy elected none.

Rev. Capp: The laity have one more delegate to elect, while the clergy have four more to elect. Rev. Capp led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the second vote.

Laity elected Guillermo Torres.

Clergy elected Brian Parcel.

Rev. Capp: We now invite the laity to elect the reserves for the Jurisdictional Conference. You may elect four reserve delegates.

The Clergy can select up to three people.

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh offered a point of information to assist those who are having challenges with the voting app.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the third vote.

Laity elected Young Mae Kim, Dione Taylor and Sharon McCart

Clergy elected Bob Rhodes

Rev. Won-Seok Yuh offered further technical instruction.

Rev. Capp: Clergy have two more to elect and laity has one more reserve delegate to elect.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the fourth vote.

Laity did not elect a delegate.

Clergy elected Amy Aitken

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the fifth vote.

Laity elected Gaye Fisher.

Clergy did not elect a delegate.

Tia Wildermuth, Clergy, Seal Beach First UMC: I make a motion to suspend the rules that the next highest vote gets the delegate nomination, and then the next three highest will be the reserve delegates.

Rev. Rhodes: Great idea – I like where your mind is at! Unfortunately, we can't do that. The Book of Discipline requires a majority to elect, and we cannot suspend the Book of Discipline.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the sixth clergy vote.

Clergy elected Israel Alvaran

Rev. Capp: Now it is time for the clergy to elect four reserves and the rules still apply. The candidates need 50% plus 1 vote.

Rev. Capp led the body in prayer.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the seventh clergy vote.

Clergy elected Lea Booth.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the eighth clergy vote.

Clergy elected Charlene Zuill

Rev. Capp: We have two more reserve clergy to elect.

Rev. Rhodes: During one of the ballot times, someone came up to the front and handed something to me. Please come up to the front. Could that person come back up?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the ninth clergy vote.

Clergy have no elections.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the tenth clergy vote.

Clergy elected Stephanie Rice.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for the eleventh clergy vote.

Clergy elected Christy Ann Clark.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Congratulations to the body and to Rev. Cathie for leading us.

Rev. Cathie Capp led the body in prayer.

Liz Roark, Laity, New Beginnings UMC, Jurisdictional Delegate: I passed you a ruling of law, thank you.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I have received the request for a Ruling of Law and I will take up to thirty days to process this request. Please go back to the microphone and tell us what the Ruling is for.

Liz Roark: The request is for the La Trinidad Recommendation.

Rev. Lui Tran, Assistant Chancellor for Church Law: When someone makes a request for a Ruling of Law, that person can do so but has to state what the legal questions are. To say that, “I’m making a request for a Ruling of Law,” is not sufficient. I recommend that you state the question so that the body knows what the request is about.

Liz Roark: She read aloud the document titled La Trinidad Recommendation.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you Liz. That was the whole request for an Episcopal Ruling of Law. This part of our process is our checks and balances. I will make a ruling within 30 days. Also, Judicial Counsel will look at that. This is part of who we are as United Methodists, that we can check on each other. Thank you. We will now move on BeUMC Awards.

BeUMC Awards – Alyssa Fisher, Director of Communications

Dr. Fisher shared that she will present the BeUMC Awards. This is a new award developed by the United Methodist Communications Agency and given to individuals and congregations who exemplify the Spirit, Vision and Mission of the United Methodist Church. She lifted up and shared the gifts and graces of each recipient. The Recipients are:

Outstanding Lay Person of the Year: Mele Maka, Conference Lay Leader

Outstanding Clergy of the Year: Pastor John Crewe, Lahaina UMC

Outstanding Congregation of the Year – Valencia UMC, North District

Congratulations to all of our awardees!

Budget – Rev. Molly Vetter

REC 26-09 – 2027 Budget with Narrative PR-75

Rev. Vetter moved REC 26-09.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-09. It was supported.

RUL 26-01 – Tithe Apportionments PR –92

Rev. Vetter moved RUL 26-01.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Gary Schertz, Laity, Santa Clarita UMC: I have a question about this – is the expectation that the apportionment requirement for most churches will increase or decrease with this?

Rev. Vetter: It depends.

Gary Schertz: I'm asking for broadly speaking.

Rev. Vetter: On the whole, the budget is roughly the same size as last year, so it's net up and down. I don't have the exact figure difference.

Gary Schertz: I did some "back of the napkin" calculations for our church, and it would represent a substantial increase. Basically, our current apportionment requirement is approximately equal to our pledged, non-pledged and loose plate giving, which does not factor in our rental revenue. So all of that rental revenue will now be captured in our required apportionments, as I understand it. Is that correct?

Rev. Vetter: The current rule is based on expenses and membership numbers, so you can't compare as directly. It would depend on what the expenses for your church are and what your church membership is.

Gary Schertz: Right, so for the situation I just outlined, our apportionment would increase.

Rev. Vetter: It's possible, yes. Actually, the form has been on the Conference website that shows what the current 2026 apportionments are by congregation, and what the 2027 apportionments would be with this rule. You can actually see it if you want to compare. For everyone who goes down, someone goes up, because it's roughly the same size overall budget.

Gary Schertz: Okay. And what I would like for the body to understand, my particular concern is that as we looked earlier at the number of congregations in my district, the North District, who are current on their apportionments, it was a total of four. The remainder are not current on their apportionments. And we are looking at our apportionments going up, so that will just put it further out of our reach. Thank you.

Brad Biggerstaff, Clergy, Downey UMC: I am speaking against. I do want to thank you all for the transparency coming back this year, particularly noting the document you just stated that is on the website. It does provide full transparency and I do deeply appreciate that. With that, if you look at those numbers, you are correct in that it kind of depends on the situation, but there is, at times, a theme. I'm going to speak on behalf of my local congregation where our apportionments will go up by \$5,000.00, according to the document. A small membership church that's been struggling, on the upswing, \$5,000 for small membership churches does go a long way to take on some of those challenging deferred maintenance issues, hopefully to throw some money at a part-time staff person, etc. I also note that there are churches that receive great benefit – in one case, a decrease of six figures. In other cases, sometimes as much as \$20,000 or more. Oftentimes, churches in those situations would have been under the prior document, high member churches. I don't know what the perfect answer is. I am speaking on behalf of my local congregation. I do appreciate the transparency and I want to plug that Robert is awesome.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a speech against. I will also take the first speech as against, would you agree with that? We have two speeches against.

Deb White-Barela, Laity, Riviera UMC: When is this effective? Is it January 1, 2027?

Rev. Vetter: That is correct. It would be begin in 2027.

Julie Elkins, Clergy, Chapel of the Valley and Chapel of the Hills: For one of my churches, we would go down in apportionments. The one that we voted to close today would still be able to pay apportionments. It would go up, because we had a large bit of money coming in from a preschool who leases from us. We were

benefiting from that preschool lease, and yes, I understand people going, “Oh I want to spend that money,” but spending it at the Conference level is just as important. We all need to be a part of the connectional system. I believe in tithing and my church that we all voted to close, they still want to pay their apportionments although they may not have to. Even though it would make their apportionments go up, if they had them, they would still want to pay. I say we should vote for.

Terry Van Hook, Retired Clergy: Apportionments have often been interpreted as a tax because of the grade figure formula and the way that it's often been presented as a need. I'm in favor of this even though there are adjustments that may be needed to be made, and some recognition that people will see it as an aspirational goal, but the motive will change. The motive will change from being, “Oh my gosh, we now have this amount we have to come up with, to being “How has God blessed us and how can we respond out of the first fruits to those beyond our local church?” To get a bigger picture than just our particular struggles. I would hope that if there are churches who are having a hard time doing it, that that would be taken into account and perhaps they would be given some extra resources in other ways to help deepen what they are doing so that they can have that aspirational goal still in front of them. I think that by switching to this tithing understanding, we get back to a faith-based kind of giving for others, rather than seeing it as something that is placed on us that we have to meet that we may not necessarily like. I would vote for this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We have had two in favor and two against.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RUL 26-01. It was supported.

The Team who put this together were thanked.

Legislation — Jason Takagi

REC 26-07 - Quotas and Special Askings

The Council on Finance and Administration recommends approval of the 2027 Quotas — second-mile giving designations for specific conference ministries — totaling \$309,000, unchanged from 2026.

Jason Takagi moved REC 26-07.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion or questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-07. It was supported.

REC 26-08 - Salary Ranges for Cal-Pac Conference Staff Positions

The Staff Relations Committee recommends 2027 salary ranges for conference staff positions — District offices, Conference Center, and camps — increased 3% over 2026 ranges in line with COLA.

Jason Takagi moved REC 26-08.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion and questions.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on REC 26-08. It was supported.

RUL 26-03 - Removing Safe Gatherings from Background Check Policy

Submitted by the Board of Trustees via the Assistant to the Bishop, this rule change updates the conference's background check and abuse prevention policy to remove Safe Gatherings as an approved platform, standardizing on Ministry Safe — the preference of the conference's insurer.

Jason Takagi moved RUL 26-03.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion and questions.

Paige Eaves, Clergy, Assistant to the Bishop – I would like to speak to the motion. This Rules change comes through my office, the Board of Trustees, and I want to give a moment of explanation. First, I want to thank every church that is in compliance on its abuse prevention program and background checks. It takes significant work to protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults. I also want to thank our District Administrators for all the work they do. Last year, the work we did together added Safe Gatherings as an option to Ministry Safe. You had two different platforms you could use. After we did our work together, we were with the Board of Trustees negotiating our liability policies for this year, and in the context of that, our insurance carrier expressed a very strong preference that we use Ministry Safe alone. Points of Clarification: If you did your background checks through Safe Gatherings, we are a three-year renewal cycle, so when that cycle is up, switch to Ministry Safe. If you are in a church which is already compliant with Ministry Safe and you have Safe Gatherings, it would be great if you went ahead and switched over so that you are one platform. If you are a clergy person and you are changing your appointment this year and you are in Ministry Safe, you just need to call them and they'll transfer your background check and your training so you don't have to do so. If you are retired clergy and no longer active with children, youth or vulnerable adults, you don't have to stay in compliance. If you are in compliance, you will want to complete your background check. In August, the District Administrators and I are making it Abuse Prevention Month and so throughout the month, we will be offering short webinars to help you get up to date.

Deb White-Barela, Laity, Riviera UMC – I'm here to encourage you not to vote for this. My concern is that the abuse program and all that, they have requirements working its way ... the amount of extra work that both the governance councils, which is what our group for the SPRCs are, it is important for them to work with groups they are comfortable with. I'm concerned that this policy talks about ... if you read what's online, it only addresses clergy. It does not address any of the volunteer people that we have to get certified, so the information is not clear, it's not been communicated and there has not been a lot of work with the organizations. Isn't that something that you were saying was important? There may have been a lot of really nice talk and I'm glad that everyone wants to make the insurance company happy, but what are we doing to make sure our organizations understand and know how to use this?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RUL 26-03. It was supported.

RUL 26-04 - Young People's Ministry Board

Submitted by the Next Generations Ministries Task Force, this rule change consolidates the Conference Council on Youth Ministries and the Conference Council on Young Adult Ministries into a unified Young People's Ministry Board.

Jason Takagi moved RUL 26-04.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion and questions.

Honor Liebold, Laity, South District Youth Lay Delegate, First UMC of San Diego: We once again find ourselves faced with our perennial question: How do we support our youth? How do we grow them into confident leaders who will rise to take up the mantle of the church for the decades to come? I speak today in favor of this Resolution because it gives youth like me the opportunity to lead others in our districts and become active voices at all levels. This bill serves to nurture our Methodist soft-skills, like organizing, requesting funding and committee membership, but with support for our unique needs and guidance that recognizes the adults we are still becoming. It is written conscious of the constraints of our lives that limit our involvement in many church level positions. We want young people to be supported in ministry, we want their input at all levels, right? If you want to ensure that the Conference will hear young voices like mine, and like Cole's earlier, and everyone else who is here, enable young people to lead, vote yes.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a speech for. Do we have any other speeches?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RUL 26-04. It was supported.

Jason Takagi: We have time for one more item.

RES 26-02 - Disaster Response Preparations in the Local Church (UPDATED 6/18)

Submitted by the Disaster Response Task Force, this resolution renews a resolution that expired at the end of the last Conference year. It calls for congregations to adopt a disaster response plan, share it annually with its District Office and the Task Force, and name a member or committee — including a Trustee — to oversee training and communication.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-02.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion and questions.

Brad Stein, Laity, El Segundo UMC: I speak against RES 26-02. In El Segundo, we've got LAX to the north of us, Chevron Oil to the south of us, we've got the Scattergood Generating Station, the Hyperion Sewage Treatment Plant all around us. Think of us next time you flush. So, we do have a few things that could be hazardous. If we need disaster response, the City of El Segundo has put together a remarkably complete disaster preparedness plan that I think is just miles ahead of anything that Cal-Pac can offer our congregations. In addition to El Segundo's plan, there are resources to the Red Cross Los Angeles County, FEMA, lots of resources out there. I don't see the value added of this Resolution except for perhaps one very good line — I will just read that to you: "The development of a communications network within the congregation for reporting to the pastor or pastoral care team on the well being of members." I think that is

an excellent part. But the rest of this, I really wish we wouldn't have to have a lot of shallow statements to make us do a plan that is probably just going to be a lot of eye wash and then submit it every year. I urge you not to vote for this.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Thank you. That is a speech against.

Drew Davis, Clergy, Temecula UMC: I want to speak in favor of this, because this is something we are actually already doing. When we do our church conference paperwork every year, there is section that we look over our campuses in such a way that we report to the Conference how things are. We need to be aware of needs around our church and our church community so that we can provide the most help possible for those within our care. As we write down all the vendor names, as we write down in specific places the emergency numbers to call, it only equips to be better caregivers for our church. This evening as we think about this vote, and this sat in my mind when we had the Monday night meeting, this is something that we've already been encouraged to do. It is something that we are not just encouraged to do, it is something that is to the benefit of our congregations. I speak in favor.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That was a speech in favor.

Amy Wake, Clergy, Wesley UMC of Hawaii: I just have a question. When we will do the rest of the Resolutions that have not been voted on yet? In particular, RES 26-07?

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Amy, that is a good question. Can we finish this debate first and then come up next after that is over?

Frank Wulf, Clergy, Echo Park & La Plaza UMC: As a pastor of a church which is red-tagged at the moment because of water damage during the 2024 Atmospheric Rivers and as a result of four fires since that time, I could only wish that we had had an adequate disaster response plan in effect at the time these disasters hit. I am especially compelled to talk about the last, "Further be Resolved," which offers the help of the Conference Disaster Response Task Force and the Justice and Compassion Essential Ministries Team in putting together the kind of a disaster response plan that would have been particularly helpful for small churches like the ones that I serve. I urge a "yes" vote on this Resolution.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: That is a speech in favor. Two in favor and one against.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-02. It was supported.

Jason Takagi: Thank you everybody for your faithful work. Unfortunately, I have been told that we are at time. We have three other Resolutions that per our opening motions, will be referred to the relevant Committees. Thank you for doing the business of the Annual Conference.

Amy Wake, Clergy, Wesley UMC of Hawaii: Resolution 26-07 is a time sensitive issue because we need it to go to the Board of Church and Society before it goes to General Conference. I am wondering if we could suspend the rules to vote on this one Resolution.

Seconds to this Motion were received from the body.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: It sounds like the body is interested in addressing this.

There were affirmations to support voting on this Resolution.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Please go ahead and speak to this and Jason will lead us through it.

RES 26-07 - Call to Review the Legal Status of the Kingdom of Hawai'i

Submitted by the Hawai'i District Acts of Repentance Task Force, this resolution calls on the 2028 General Conference to request a UN review of the legal status of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, and asks Cal-Pac to take proactive steps to address historical wrongs against the Hawaiian people.

Jason Takagi moved RES 26-07.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for discussion and questions.

Amy Wake, Clergy, Wesley UMC of Hawaii: In 2018, the Hawaii District and the Hawaii District Acts of Repentance Task Force brought forth an apology for Native Hawaiians for our role in the overthrow in 1893. It has been a long time since then, but we are expecting this apology Resolution to go to the 2028 General Conference. The hard truth is that we have learned a lot since 2018. We Methodists were responsible for the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii. Rev. Peck and also Methodist member Henry Waterhouse, son of J.T. Waterhouse, a Methodist missionary, plus other members and supporters of First Methodist Episcopal Church of Honolulu, were involved in the overthrow and on the Committee of Safety. This small group of 13 people overthrew Queen Lili'uokalani. Then, President McKinley, also a Methodist, was also responsible for an illegal annexation that happened without any treaty of annexation or cessation. The United States was responsible for an illegal statehood vote according to the UN lead decolonization process. All of this has led to the disenfranchisement of native Hawaiians, their land, culture, language, and even the ability to stay in Hawaii. We are asking for Cal-Pac to forward this Resolution to the General Board of Church and Society and through them, to go to the General Conference in 2028, so that the United Methodist Church as a whole can ask the United Nations to review its 1955 U.S. lead plebiscite and its legality. We are also encouraging our Conference to continue working for justice for all the People of Hawaii.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on RES 26-07. It was supported.

Jason Takagi: Thank you for your work on this Legislation.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank recognized the work of Jason and the Legislation Committee whose work is extensive. Thank you.

Passing of the Baton and Blessing of the GC/JC Delegates – Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank and Rachel Rhodes-Wickett Gipson

Rachel Gipson: As we welcome in our new delegation, I wanted to take a moment to recognize our outgoing delegation whose service has finally come to an end. I had the privilege to be on this Delegation and

we were elected way back in 2019 and is customary, we were elected for a service of four years. We have served almost twice that amount. Between waiting for word on General Conference, and if it would be held, and attending not one but two Jurisdictional Conferences, we met together at least once a month for more than six years. Allison Mark and Monalisa Tu'itahi were amazing leaders for us. They led with care and love and support. We had prayer partners, we had self-care check ins, we lived our lives together for many years. We started referring to ourselves as the "Neverending Delegation." Although there were times when that literally felt true, today this delegation has finished its work. If you were ever part of this delegation, please stand so that we may recognize you and thank you for the important work you did.

On behalf of the outgoing delegation, thank you for your trust and encouragement and I thank this Delegation for being a really important part of my life for such a long time.

Rev. Rhodes: Per our Discipline, the new Delegation must meet immediately after adjournment of the session. If you were elected to the new Delegation, we will be meeting in the Fiesta ballroom immediately after the Service of Commissioning and Ordination.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I would like to ask the Delegates who were voted in this year to please stand and let us recognize them. Let us thank them for their service. Congratulations!

Sessions Committee – Rev. Bob Rhodes

Rev. Bob Rhodes: I have just a brief report from your Sessions Committee. Your Sessions team does incredible work. Erin Hawkins will read off the names of all the people so that we can say thank you. I do want you to know that part of the decisions we make, as was brought up in a Resolution ... part of what we have to do is decided where to meet.

I want you to know that one of the primary things we think about when it comes to where we will meet is the cost burden on local churches. That is our highest priority. That is why we are here. The rooms are approximately \$150 per night, the resort fee and parking are \$5.00 per night. We toured a hotel that was closer to an airport and is a union hotel, and it was \$313 per night with a \$55 per night parking fee. We try to prioritize the cost burdens on local churches.

Are we doing this imperfectly? Yes. I cannot deny that. Every part of our Annual Conference work goes on to perfection and sometimes we fall short. I hold the responsibility that some of our voting was difficult this week. I carry that with responsibility and a burden to do better. Your entire Sessions Team continues to carry that burden to do better from one year to the next.

I want to share with you that if you enjoyed your time here at La Quinta – great! We will be here next year. If you did not enjoy your time here, two years from now we'll go somewhere else!

As we continue to try to be faithful to all of you. I also want you to know that as a way toward looking forward on how we can reduce costs, we are looking at the dates of Annual Conference. The week leading up to Father's Day is, according to our conversations with a number of hotels, the most expensive week to hold a meeting session. We've looked at what it would look like to meet one week earlier, we've looked at what it would like to meet one week later. Our various young persons have complex school schedules. There are churches which are in school districts that have year round schedules. We try to keep all those things in mind.

If you would like to speak to those dates, we welcome your feedback. You will receive a survey after this Annual Conference and you can place that information there. If you would rather, you can email me at “secretary@calpacumc.org”. I welcome your voice. Thank you!

Conference Wrap Up – Erin Hawkins

Good evening everyone. I’m Erin Hawkins. I am the Executive Director of Connectional Ministries, and I am a lay person from St. Mark United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, in the West District. It is late and I know that we are ready to be done with this session of Annual Conference – but It’s never too late to say “thank you” to all of the people who make Annual Conference happen. This is a massive undertaking of over a year’s worth of planning and meetings and more meetings and even more meetings on top of that. And so, we need to say “thank you” for all of the people who do all of the things that make our time here work.

Slides were shown listing the different teams, staff, and all those who made the Annual Conference happen. Erin Hawkins read each name out loud.

To those who have been named and to those I haven’t named, please charge it to my head and not to my heart. We appreciate each and every person who makes this possible. Thank you, thank you, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I also want us to give a good round of applause to Erin, who has spent a whole lot of time on this Annual Conference. We are so grateful to you, thank you Erin. And I also want to say “thank you” to Margaret, who, behind the scenes, helps me get from place to place and makes sure I have food. To my husband who shows up even though he doesn’t have to, thanks for being here. I love you, James.

COSROW – Rev. Stephanie Rice & Ellen Evans Agee

Ellen Evans Agee: On behalf of our Cal-Pac Commission on the Status and Role of Women, we would like to thank you for this time and to give you an update on the monitoring of this Annual Conference. I am laity at Westwood United Methodist Church.

Rev. Stephanie Rice: I am Clergy, serving Glendale First United Methodist Church. We are your Cal-Pac COSROW Co-Chairs. As we talked about in our first plenary, we talked about monitoring. Monitoring is a tool to help us hold the most inclusive Annual Conference session possible, where every voice is respected and heard.

Ellen Evans Agee: Throughout this Conference, we have been keeping track of who has been speaking, whether in a planned presentation or from the floor. We gratefully appreciate you stating your names clearly, as well as other important information, such as your preferred pronouns, status as clergy or laity, and your local church. We also want to give a big, gigantic and loud “thank you!” to Jennifer Gaylord. She helps all of us, but for helping us in the monitoring, securely accessing the demographic data which allowed us to more easily and more accurately, to keep track by using your self-identifying information from your registration.

Rev. Stephanie Rice: We have some preliminary data, which breaks down our speakers by gender, race/ethnicity and total numbers – not percentages – and again, this is preliminary data which has not been interpreted. We will be writing a full report which will be distributed to the Bishop with full data and our recommendations as your Conference COSROW on how we can continue to make our Annual Conference sessions as inclusive as possible.

Here is our preliminary data, which includes all of our plenary sessions thus far, opening worship, Clergy Executive Session, Praise and Worship services, minus a couple of people from this session because we had to get the slides in. This does not include tomorrow's Commissioning and Ordination Service.

For all of the speakers at our Annual Conference sessions so far: 67 speakers identify as men, and 78 identify as women, and 0 identified as non-binary.

We did hear the feedback from last year on how we presented the data. It did leave out some categories, including our Native American siblings from the chart. This year, we have made sure that the data we present represents everyone.

Data on Self-Identified Ethnicity of our Speakers:

- 38 who identify as Asian
- 15 who identify as Black
- 19 who identify as Hispanic Latino
- 5 who identify as Native American
- 5 who identify as Pacific Islander
- 61 who identify as White

Some people get counted multiple times because they are speaking in different contexts. This is not the total number, but the total speakers in that sense. We will explain a lot of this in our full report.

We also ran data on the nominees for General and Jurisdictional Conferences:

24 of our nominees identified as women, 19 of our nominees identified as men and 0 who identified as non-binary.

Breakdown by ethnicity: 12 who identify as Asian, 5 who identify as Black, 2 who identify as Hispanic/Latino, 0 who identify as Native American, 5 who identify as Pacific Islander, and 18 who identify as White.

Ellen Evans Agee: As a reminder, this data is preliminary and we look forward to submitting our full report, along with recommendations. We will be sending aggregate, anonymous data to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, so we can get a full picture of the whole denomination as well.

Rev. Stephanie Rice: We do wish to thank you and our whole COSROW group for being a part of this and supporting this work. We look forward to continuing this work throughout the year and at our next Annual Conference Session and beyond, as we work to challenge the church to educate all of our members to promote healthy boundaries and practices, and to move the church towards systematic justice.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: We had an announcement, is she still here? Bri? Caitlyn is coming.

Caitlyn Anderson, First UMC of Escondido, Conference Staff: Bri is starting worship. Worship is going to happen right after this, so if you would like to join the young people from Santa Ana - we will also be hearing testimonies from our young people as part of the worship service. It will be in Fiesta 10.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: Before Rev. Rhodes gives us our closing motion, I want to tell you what my quote for the day is – I always write down things that I hear. Today's quote is a good one for this Conference. It's by Debra Bass, "Freedom is a Gospel aspiration."

Rev. Bob Rhodes, Conference Secretary: Bishop and members of the Conference, I move to adjourn this session of the 42nd Annual California Pacific Annual Conference at the conclusion of the Commissioning and Ordination service.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank called for a vote on this Motion. Let us do this Motion by affirmation of voice. It was supported.

Bishop Escobedo-Frank: I do wish to share that our prayers worked, and Bishop Williamston is in the house and will preach tomorrow. We are grateful for her.

Taufa Tenisi, Colton UMC, and Co-Lay Leader for the East District, offered the closing prayer.