

ALASKA UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE

WHEREAS on February 22, 2020 the Alaska United Methodist Conference (AUMC) met in special session at the call of Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky for the purpose of considering a motion from the Leadership Team calling on the adoption of a petition to the General Conference to discontinue the missionary conference status of the AUMC, and

WHEREAS the motion, hereto attached, was adopted by the AUMC by a vote of 49 to 1, and

WHEREAS the petition, hereto attached, to the General Conference authorized by the affirming vote of the AUMC, was submitted to the Petitions Secretary of the General Conference on February 22, 2020, and

WHEREAS in Judicial Council Decision 1410 the Judicial Council quoted the Secretary of the General Conference, the Rev. Mr. Gary Graves, to have said, “In essence, the relief requested by Mr. Brooks on page 8 of his Opening Brief has already been provided. The petition submitted by the Alaska Missionary Annual Conference has been received and found to be valid according to formatting and other requirements, subject to final editing. [Reply Brief of Rev. Gary Graves, p. 3.]” indicating that the petition was received and entered into the General Conference process, and

WHEREAS having been submitted on the authority of the AUMC, the petition may only be disapproved on the authority of the AUMC, and

WHEREAS circumstances both inside and outside the State of Alaska as well as within and without The United Methodist Church have changed dramatically since February, 2020, and

WHEREAS at a joint meeting of the Leadership Team, the Mission District Task Force, and the AUMC Delegation to General Conference a proposal was adopted without opposition to request that Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth call a special session of the AUMC for the purpose of adopting a resolution for the recall of the petition to General Conference that called for the discontinuance of the missionary conference status of the AUMC,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska United Methodist Conference upon reconsideration of its request for the discontinuance of its status as a missionary conference reverses that request and urges the General Conference not to adopt the petition for discontinuance, and also urges its delegates to the 2020 General Conference to be held in 2024 to work for the withdrawal or the defeat of that petition.

Good morning, my name is Andy Bartel and I am appointed to serve St John Anchorage and I also am privileged to serve as the Leadership Team Chair of the Alaska Conference

In the 2016 session of the Alaska Annual Conference, the General Secretary for the General Board of Global Ministries, Thomas Kemper, announced to us that it was his intention to cease the designation of missionary conferences within the bounds of the United States. This year, 2020, is the final year that Alaska will receive funds from that General Board. In 2019, after the conversations and work of the Alaska Annual Conference, which is you, the Leadership Team followed your lead, the work of the people, and named the Future Visions Task Force to research and explore options for Alaska United Methodists to proceed forward into this new reality. They researched our history and how we came to be where we are. They reached out to you, through conversations in each of your local church charge conferences over the past few months. Our Task Force members, Lisa Talbott, Lonnie Brooks, Carlo Rapanut, Emily Carroll, and Joe Talbott presented their findings to the Leadership Team

The Leadership Team voted unanimously that we should hold this special session of Annual Conference so that we might petition the General Conference to release us from being a missionary conference, so that we might become a mission district, a relatively new disciplinary designation. This change would free us from many of the encumbrances placed upon us by the Book of Discipline as an annual conference and, would allow us to creatively structure ourselves to best equip us for future mission and ministry within Alaska.

Conversations across the Western Jurisdiction are ongoing about this potential change, but it is worth noting that we have the support of the College of Bishops, the Committee on Episcopacy, the Mission Cabinet, and the Leadership Team of the Western Jurisdiction.

With gratitude to the Future Visions Task Force for their excellent work, the Leadership Team moves the petition #1 printed on blue paper before you, and is asking you, the Annual Conference to pass the petition.

Total Number of Pages: 3
Suggested Title: AUMC Petition for Change of Status
Disciplinary Paragraphs: Non-Disciplinary
General Church Budget Implications: None
Global Implications: None

WHEREAS ¶587 of the 2016 *Book of Discipline* says, in relevant part, the following:

“A petition to the General Conference for change in status from a missionary conference shall set forth details of the history and status of the conference and shall be accompanied by a report and recommendation of the General Board of Global Ministries,” and

WHEREAS The Alaska United Methodist Conference (AUMC) is a missionary conference of the UMC, one of three such conferences within the jurisdictions which was created by the General Conference under its authority in ¶587. The Judicial Council acknowledged the creation of the AUMC as a missionary conference in Judicial Council Decision (JCD) 448 when it said, “The 1972 General Conference constituted the former Alaska Mission and Oklahoma Indian Mission as Missionary Conferences (DCA 583, 888),” and

WHEREAS The AUMC was originally named the Alaska Missionary Conference (AMC), but the conference name was changed to the Alaska United Methodist Conference by action of the Western Jurisdictional Conference of 2012, and

WHEREAS further details of the history of the AUMC are presented in the book *Have Gospel Tent Will Travel* by Bea Shepard and Claudia Kelsey, long serving United Methodists of Alaska, now deceased, and

WHEREAS Thomas Kemper, the General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), said in his 2016 address to the AUMC that missionary conference status was always intended by the Church to be an interim status, not permanent, and

WHEREAS GBGM has been gradually decreasing its financial support of the AUMC over several years with an announced intent of reducing it to zero for 2021, and

Whereas the AUMC as a small entity of 27 churches and three unchartered fellowships does not qualify for conversion to an annual conference, and

WHEREAS the AUMC continues to be a vital United Methodist and mainline presence in the communities it serves, and

WHEREAS the AUMC will continue to rely on United Methodist resources in personnel and funding to maintain the United Methodist presence and witness in the far north, and

WHEREAS The members of the AUMC have determined by vote in a special session of the AUMC that it is in the best interests of themselves, the Western Jurisdiction, and The United Methodist Church that they will be better served by Alaska's becoming a mission district of another annual conference in the Western Jurisdiction, as provided in ¶513, and

WHEREAS The General Board of Global Ministries has reviewed and approved this proposed action,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Conference of 2020 discontinues the missionary conference status of the AUMC which discontinuance will be effective at the close of the next Western Jurisdictional Conference, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT IN THIS ACTION THE GENERAL CONFERENCE honors the authority and responsibility of the Western Jurisdiction to determine the number, names and boundaries of the annual conferences in the jurisdiction as provided in ¶¶27.4 and 40 and that the Western Jurisdiction is at liberty to respond to this action of the General Conference at the next jurisdictional conference so as to establish boundaries that include Alaska within

another annual conference of the jurisdiction as the next step in continuing United Methodist mission and ministry in Alaska.

Date: 22Feb20

Signature of Petitioner:

Karen Martin Tichenor

Identification of the Petitioner: Secretary of Alaska Annual Conference

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