

Additional Retirement Brings Total New U.S. Bishops to Twenty-One

In the week leading up to the five jurisdictional conferences, **Bishop Alfred Johnson (New Jersey Area) entered his request for retirement.** The Northeastern Jurisdiction approved his request (along with the previous early retirement request of Bishop Susan W. Hassinger, Boston Area, who would have been required to retire in 2012), bringing the total number of retiring bishops in the United States to 21, six in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. **Johnson cited an outstanding allegation against him as part of the reason for his early retirement.** While he said that he was not trying to get around the complaint process, "I do, however, believe that it is in my best interest and that of the church to move forward. It will also allow me to more effectively continue the process of the complaint without the pressure of an imminent reassignment and to hopefully move on with my life anew."

Of the 21 bishops elected, three are African American men, four are men of Asian heritage, one is a Hispanic woman, and five are White women. With six bishops to elect, the Northeast Jurisdiction set about its task quickly. Marcus Matthews, Baltimore-Washington Conference, was elected on the first ballot, and Sudarshana Devadhar, North Central New York Conference and a native of India, was elected on the second ballot. **The Northeast was the first jurisdiction to finish its balloting,** with the election of Thomas J. Bickerton, West Virginia Conference, on the 29th ballot taken at 1:06 A.M. on July 16. All new bishops, including brief biographies, are listed below.

The Southeastern Jurisdiction also got off to a quick start, electing Hope Morgan Ward, North Carolina Conference, on the second ballot. On the third ballot, the conference delegates elected two new bishops: William Willimon, South Carolina Conference, and James Swanson, South Georgia Conference. However, after electing on the 11th ballot Richard J. Wills Jr., Florida Conference, as the fifth new bishop, the conference had some difficulty settling on the final spot. On the 12th ballot, Thomas "Andy" Langford III, Western North Carolina Conference, led the vote totals with 218 of the 539 eligible ballots. He remained in the lead through the 18th ballot but did not receive at any time more than 277 of the 333 votes needed to be elected. After the 21st ballot, Langford withdrew. Two ballots later, Jerry H. Mayo, Tennessee Conference, rose to the lead but could not receive as many as Langford had before he withdrew as well. Throughout the balloting, Arnetta Beverley, Western North Carolina Conference, received no less than 120 votes. By the 34th ballot at 10:46 P.M. on July 16, enough votes shifted in order to elect Mary Virginia Taylor, Holston Conference.

The Southeast did not have the most ballots this year. **The North Central Jurisdiction, needing to elect only three bishops as opposed to the Southeast's six, took 36 ballots** to settle on its full number. While Sally Dyck, East Ohio Conference, never received less than the 106 votes she received on the second ballot, for 20 ballots her main competition was Timothy Bias, Illinois Great Rivers. In the final minutes of July 16, not much before midnight, Bias withdrew, and Dyck was elected on the next ballot.

The Western Jurisdiction elected the first Hispanic clergywoman to the episcopacy, Minerva Carcano, Oregon-Idaho Conference. She was elected on the 26th ballot following the withdrawal of Rachel Lieder Simeon, Alaska Missionary Conference. The jurisdiction also elected a man born in Japan, Robert Hoshibata, Pacific-Northwest Conference, on the 12th ballot after running nearly even in vote totals with Grant J. Hagiya, California-Pacific Conference. **The bishops of the Western Jurisdiction decided to move the Alaska Missionary Conference from the Portland Area to the Seattle Area.** Bishop Edward W. Paup will also move from the Portland Area to the Seattle Area.

***A concise, late-deadline report compiled and edited by the staff
of The United Methodist Publishing House***

North Central Jurisdiction—Davenport, Iowa

Bishops Retiring: Sharon Zimmerman Rader (Wisconsin Area), C. Joseph Sprague (Chicago Area), and Woodie W. White (Indiana Area)

Hee-Soo Jung, 49, superintendent of the Nicolet District, Wisconsin Conference, was elected on the third ballot. Jung received a Bachelor of Theology degree from Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea, in 1979, and a Master of Arts degree from Dongguk University, Seoul, in 1982. In 1994, he received a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has served at churches in Korea, Texas, California, and Wisconsin. He was also assistant professor and chairperson of the department of religion and philosophy at Kangnam University, Seoul (1994–97). Jung served on the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (2000–04). He married Im-Hyon Jung in 1982, and they have two children.

Deborah L. Kiesey, 53, superintendent of the Waterloo District, Iowa Conference, was elected on the seventh ballot with 152 votes on the 248 valid ballots. There were 79 invalid ballots. Kiesey received a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology. She has served on the pastoral staff of Richland and Ollie UMCs (1976–80), Washington UMC (1982–88), First UMC in Mt. Pleasant (1988–97), and First UMC in Iowa City (1997–2001). Kiesey has served on the General Commission on Status and Role of Women (1992–2000). She is a director of Morningside College and has been a trustee of Iowa Wesleyan College. She married Brad Kiesey in 1975, and they have two children: Joel, 25, and Aaron, 23.

Sally Dyck, 50, pastor of Garfield Memorial UMC, Pepper Pike, Ohio, was elected on the 36th ballot after Timothy Bias, Illinois Great Rivers Conference, withdrew, having come within three votes of Dyck's lead on the 22nd ballot. Dyck received a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology in 1978 and a Doctor of Ministry degree in black church studies from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, in 1989. She served as superintendent of the Wooster District (1997–2003). She was also pastor of Faith UMC, Cleveland (1979–84), and Church of the Redeemer, Cleveland Heights (1984–97). Dyck is a director of the General Board of Global Ministries. She married Kenneth P. Ehrman in 1976.

Assignments: Sharon Brown Christopher (Illinois Area, second term), Michael J. Coyner (Indiana Area), Sally Dyck (Minnesota Area), John L. Hopkins (Ohio East Area), Hee-Soo Jung (Chicago Area), Jonathan Keaton (Michigan Area), Deborah Kiesey (Dakotas Area), Linda Lee (Wisconsin Area, leaving Michigan Area after one term), Bruce R. Ough (Ohio West Area, second term), and Gregory V. Palmer (Iowa Area, second term)

Northeastern Jurisdiction—Syracuse, N.Y.

Bishops Retiring: Susan W. Hassinger (Boston Area), Neil L. Irons (Harrisburg Area), S. Clifton Ives (West Virginia Area), Alfred Johnson (New Jersey Area), Hae-Jong Kim (Pittsburgh Area), and Felton Edwin May (Washington Area)

Marcus Matthews, 58, superintendent of the Washington West District, Baltimore-Washington Conference, was elected on the first ballot with 176 votes of the 275 eligible ballots. He received a

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Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1974 and a Doctor of Ministry degree from New York Theological Seminary in 1981. Matthews has also served as council director (1991–99) and superintendent of the Baltimore East District (1986–91). In the 1970s and 1980s, Matthews served on the pastoral staff of four churches in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Since 1974, he has been married to Barbara Walker Matthews, and they have two children: Jaime S. Matthews and Marci M. Michael.

Sudarshana Devadhar, 53, superintendent of the Ontario District, North Central New York Conference (1996–present), was elected on the second ballot. Devadhar received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from United Theological College, Bangalore, India, in 1975; a Master of Theology degree from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, in 1980; a Master of Philosophy degree from Drew University in 1984; and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Drew in 1987. Devadhar served as a deacon in the Church of South India (1975–76) and as a lecturer at Karnataka Theological College, Mangalore (1976–78). In the 1980s and 1990s, he served as pastor of several churches in New York. He was a director of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (1996–2004). His wife is Premalatha, and they have one daughter, Trina.

Jeremiah Park, 52, superintendent of the Palisades District, Greater New Jersey Conference, was elected on the sixth ballot. In 1973, he received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea; in 1979, a Master of Divinity degree from Theological School, Drew University; and in 1990, a Doctor of Ministry degree from Drew. Since 1988, he has served in various jurisdiction and conference staff positions, including council director, Northern New Jersey Conference (1996–98), and superintendent of the Hudson District, Northern New Jersey (1998–2000). In the 1970s and 1980s, Park pastored churches in New York and New Jersey. He has been married to Lisa H. Park since 1974, and they have two children.

John Schol, 48, pastor of West Chester UMC in Pennsylvania (1997–present) was elected on the 15th ballot. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology in 1981 and a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1995. Schol is an adjunct faculty member at Springfield College and United Theological Seminary (1999–present). He was urban ministry executive secretary and Communities of Shalom director for the General Board of Global Ministries (1993–97), executive director and pastor of the Frankford Group Ministry, Philadelphia (1981–93), and pastor of Center UMC, Saugus, Mass. (1979–81). Schol has been married to Beverly Anne for 26 years, and they have three children: Mark, 23; Kristin, 20; and Rebecca, 20.

Jane Allen Middleton, 63, superintendent of the Connecticut/New York District, New York Conference, was elected on the 24th ballot. She received a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1978. She has served as conference spiritual life director (1987–91) and on the pastoral staff of three churches in Connecticut: New Canaan UMC (1991–99), Naugatuck UMC (1979–87), and Simsbury UMC (1977–79). In the last quadrennium, she has served on the General Council on Ministries. Her annual conference involvement includes having chaired the board of ordained ministry and the council on ministries. She is married to Jack D. Middleton, and they have two children, Mari and Laura, and three grandchildren, Anthony, Alexis, and Ethan.

Thomas J. Bickerton, 46, superintendent of the Northern District, West Virginia Conference (1998–present), was elected on the 29th ballot following the withdrawal of Vicki L. Woods, New England Conference. Bickerton received a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University Divinity School in 1983 and a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in 1994. He has served at the six-point circuit Adrian UMC (1979–80), Perry Memorial UMC, Shady Spring, W.V. (1983–89), and Forrest Burdette Memorial UMC, Hurricane (1989–98). Since 1976, Bickerton has served on three general agencies. He is married to Sally S. Bickerton, and they have four children: Elizabeth, T.J., Ian, and Nicholas.

Assignments: Susan Morrison (Albany Area, third term), Peter Weaver (Boston Area), Jane Allen Middleton (Harrisburg Area), Sudarshana Devadhar (New Jersey Area), Jeremiah J. Park (New York Area), Violet Fisher (New York West Area, second term), Marcus Matthews (Philadelphia Area), Thomas J. Bickerton (Pittsburgh Area), John Schol (Washington Area), and Ernest Lyght (West Virginia Area)

South Central Jurisdiction—Corpus Christi, Texas

Bishops Retiring: Bruce Blake (Oklahoma Area), Albert F. Mutti (Kansas Area), Alfred L. Norris (Houston Area), and William Oden (Dallas Area)

Robert Hayes, 56, treasurer of the Texas Conference, was elected on the third ballot. He received a Master of Theology degree from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, in 1972 and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Drew University in 1997. Before becoming treasurer, Hayes served as superintendent of the Houston Southwest District (1994–2001) and as pastor of McCabe UMC, Longview (1972–75), Blueridge UMC, Houston (1975–86), and Riverside UMC, Houston (1986–94). In 2000, Hayes chaired the Faith and Order Legislative Committee at General Conference. He is married to Delilah “Dee” Bernard, and they have three children: Joya Randle-Hayes, Robert E. Hayes III, and Ryan Ethan Hayes.

Robert C. Schnase, 46, senior pastor of First UMC, McAllen, Texas (1989–present; associate, 1981–82), was elected on the seventh ballot. He received a Master of Theology degree from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. Schnase has also served as pastor of Wesley UMC, Harlingen (1984–89), and the Farnham and Alton Circuit in the British Methodist Church (1982–83). He is the chair of the Order of Elders for the Southwest Texas Conference (1997–present) and has served on the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for the past quadrennium. Schnase has been married to Esther Washington Schnase since 1980, and they have two children: Karl, 16, and Paul, 12.

Scott Jones, 50, director of the Center for Advanced Study and Practice of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, was elected on the tenth ballot. He received a Master of Theology degree from Perkins in 1981 and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in religious studies from SMU in 1992. He has also served as pastor of churches in Prosper, Howe, and Commerce, Texas. Jones serves on the board of directors of the SMU Wesley Foundation (1997–present) and was a member of the executive committee of the World Methodist Council (2001–04).

Charles N. Crutchfield, 60, pastor of Central UMC, Albuquerque, N.M., was elected on the 13th ballot. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School, Duke University, in 1968. Crutchfield has also served as superintendent of the El Paso District, New Mexico Conference (1994–97), and as pastor of six churches in New Mexico and Texas. He was a delegate to the World Methodist Council and was president of the board of trustees for the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas. He has served as chair of the conference committees on evangelism and higher education and campus ministry. Crutchfield married Karen Sue Jenkins in 1968, and they had two children: Scott Lee (deceased) and Melissa Anne, Washington, D.C.

Assignments: Charles N. Crutchfield (Arkansas Area), Janice Riggle Huie (Houston Area), Ben R. Chamness (Fort Worth Area, second term), Scott Jones (Kansas Area), William W. Hutchinson (Louisiana Area, second term), Robert C. Schnase (Missouri Area), Ann B. Sherer (Nebraska Area), Rhymes H. Moncure Jr. (Dallas Area), D. Max Whitfield (Northwest Texas-New Mexico Area, second term), Robert E. Hayes Jr. (Oklahoma Area), and Joel N. Martinez (San Antonio Area, second term)

Southeastern Jurisdiction—Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Bishops Retiring: Kenneth L. Carder (Memphis Area), Marion M. Edwards (Raleigh Area), Joe E. Pennel Jr. (Richmond Area), Ray Chamberlain (Holston Area), Robert E. Fannin (Birmingham Area), and William W. Morris (Nashville Area)

Hope Morgan Ward, superintendent of the Raleigh District, North Carolina Conference (2002–present), was elected on the second ballot. Ward received her Master of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School, Duke University, in 1978. She has formerly served as director of connectional ministries (1997–2001), pastor of Soapstone UMC (1986–97), pastor of Broadway UMC (1983–1986), minister of education at White Plains UMC (1979–83), teaching parent and chaplain at the Methodist Home for Children (1977–79), and director of Christian education and mission at Fairmont UMC (1973–78). She is married to Mike Ward, and they have two children, Jason and Brooke. Ward is the second woman ever to be elected by the jurisdiction.

William H. Willimon, 58, dean of the Duke University Chapel and a member of the South Carolina Conference, was elected on the fourth ballot with 350 of the 552 eligible ballots. Willimon received a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1971 and a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from Emory University in 1973. According to his published candidate bio, Willimon has written 50 books and serves on the editorial boards of several Christian publications, including *The Christian Century*, *The Door*, *Preaching*, and *Leadership*. In the 1970s and 1980s, he served as pastor of churches in Georgia and South Carolina. He married Patricia Parker in 1969, and they have two children, Harriet and William.

James Swanson, 54, superintendent of the Savannah District, South Georgia Conference, was elected on the fourth ballot with 349 votes on the 552 eligible ballots. Swanson received a Master of Divinity degree from C. H. Mason Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, in 1980. Raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and ordained in the Church of God, Swanson became pastor of the Statesboro Circuit in the South Georgia Conference of the UMC in 1981. He also served as pastor of St. Mary's Road UMC, Columbus (1988–2001). He was the first African American chair of the conference council on ministries. He is married to Delphine Ramsey Swanson, and they have six children.

Alfred W. Gwinn Jr., 60, lead pastor of Lexington First UMC in Kentucky, was elected on the seventh ballot with 341 votes on the 551 eligible ballots. Gwinn is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary. Gwinn has also served as pastor of Lexington Centenary UMC, as associate council director for the conference, and as superintendent of the Lexington District. He is chair of the conference board of ordained ministry (1996–present) and a member of the General Council on Ministries and Southeast Jurisdiction Administrative Council. He has been married to Joyce for 40 years, and they have two married daughters and four grandchildren: Wes, Tyler, Luke, and Ally.

Richard Wills, 61, senior pastor of Christ Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (1986–present), was elected on the 11th ballot. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, in 1967. Wills has also served as associate council director in the Florida Conference (1975–78) and at Crystal Lake UMC, Lakeland (1967–71), Mandarin UMC, Jacksonville (1971–75), and Englewood UMC, Englewood, (1978–86). He is chair of the conference Order of Elders (2000–present) and a member of the conference board of ordained ministry (1980–88, 2002–present; chair, 1984–88). He married Eileen Willis Wills in 1965, and they have four children (Richard III, Suzanne, Johanna, and Rebekah), who all live in Florida.

Mary Virginia “Dindy” Taylor, 54, superintendent of the Cleveland District, Holston Conference, was elected on the 34th ballot. Taylor received a Master of Divinity degree from Candler School of

Theology, Emory University, in 1975. She has served as pastor of six churches in eastern Tennessee along with a period as chaplain of Tennessee Wesleyan College, Athens (1975–76). Taylor now serves as a trustee of the college (1999–present). She has been a member of the General Council on Ministries (1985–92) and the General Board of Church and Society (1993–2000). She married James Russell Taylor in 1973, and they have two children, Mandy Taylor Young and Mary Tiffany Taylor.

Assignments: G. Lindsey Davis (North Georgia Area, third term), Larry M. Goodpaster (Alabama-West Florida Area, second term), Alfred Gwinn (Raleigh Area), Charlene Kammerer (Richmond Area), James R. King Jr. (Louisville Area, second term), J. Lawrence McCleskey (Charlotte Area), James Swanson (Holston Area), Mary Virginia Taylor (Columbia Area), Hope Morgan Ward (Mississippi Area), B. Michael Watson (South Georgia Area, second term), William H. Willimon (Birmingham Area), Richard J. Wills Jr. (Nashville Area), and Timothy Whitaker (Florida Area, second term)

Western Jurisdiction—San Jose, Calif.

Bishops Retiring: William W. Dew Jr. (Phoenix Area) and Elias Galvan (Seattle Area)

Robert Hoshibata, 52, superintendent of the Seattle District, Pacific Northwest Conference (1998–present), and co-superintendent of the Tacoma District (January 2004–present) was elected on the 12th ballot. Hoshibata received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Claremont School of Theology in 1977 and was senior pastor of North Gardena UMC, Gardena, Calif., and Blaine Memorial UMC, Seattle, Wash., before entering the superintendency. He was vice president of the General Council of Ministries (1996–2000) and has served on the General Board of Global Ministries (1980–84). Hoshibata married Greta in 1974, and they have three children.

Minerva G. Carcano, 50, superintendent of the Metropolitan District, Oregon-Idaho Conference (2001–present), was elected on the 26th ballot. Carcano received a Master of Theology from Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, in 1979. Before transferring to the Oregon-Idaho Conference, she served as pastor of several churches and as superintendent of the Western District, Rio Grande Conference. She is also a former staff and adjunct faculty member of Perkins School of Theology. Carcano has served on the general boards of church and society and global ministries as well as the former General Board of Education and the UM Publishing House.

Assignments: Warner Brown (Denver Area, second term), Minerva Carcano (Phoenix Area), Robert Hoshibata (Portland Area), Edward W. Paup (Seattle Area), Beverly Shamana (San Francisco Area, second term), and Mary Ann Swenson (Los Angeles Area, second term)

Short Takes

- A former deacon (probationary member) in the Detroit Conference has filed a lawsuit against Charles Boyaue, pastor of Second Grace UMC, Detroit, alleging sexual misconduct. She also names the conference, the Michigan Area, and the UMC in the suit, alleging “negligent supervision.” Joy Singer was ordained deacon in 1997. She alleges that in return for assistance in reinstating her ordination, Boyaue asked for sexual favors. At the time, Boyaue was chair of the conference relations committee of the board of ordained ministry. He is now chair of the board. Terry Euper, assistant to Bishop Linda Lee, said the results of the supervisory process were “non-conclusive and conflicting.” — *Ann Whiting*
- General Conference added to the *Discipline* a prohibition on clergy establishing a campus ministry already served by the UMC without “consent of the clergy member, pastor, or campus minister in charge, or the district superintendent.” The new disciplinary passage adds to ¶ 332.4, which currently prohibits holding a “religious service within the bounds of a pastoral charge

other than the one to which appointed" without similar consent. Violators may be subject to the complaint process and a chargeable offense.

- Immediately after General Conference approved the new Division on Ministries with Young People, conference delegates changed the language of the *Discipline* to require each annual conference have "a conference council on young adult ministry or equivalent structure." This is a slight change in the current wording of ¶ 647.1. The change of wording was approved 830–63 on May 1.
- General Conference added a new statement on the death penalty to the Social Principles, May 7. The new section expands on the single sentence stating the church's opposition to capital punishment currently found in ¶ 164A. "We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings," begins the new statement. While expressing concern for crime in the world, delegates agreed that "all human life is sacred . . . significant and valuable." The statement says all are offered reconciliation with Christ through repentance. Proposed by the General Board of Church and Society, the new section was adopted on a consent calendar without debate.

Positions Available

Director of ministries. Contact: Nancy Watters, St. Mark's UMC, 5005 Love Rd., El Paso, TX 79922; e-mail: Stmarknet@aol.com.

Personalia

Jeff Smith, 65, a former UM pastor and host of *The Frugal Gourmet*, died July 7 of heart disease. His television career ended after allegations, denied by Smith, of past sexual abuse arose in 1997. The charges were later settled out of court. . . . **J. Robert Nelson**, 83, a UM ecumenist, theologian, bio-ethicist, and former dean of Boston University School of Theology and Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, died of cancer July 6 in Houston. . . . **Lyyisa V. Harris** has been appointed the new director of the UM Development Fund, an investment fund of the General Board of Global Ministries that makes loans to build sanctuaries, parsonages, and other mission-related buildings. . . . **Bishop William W. Dew Jr.** (Phoenix Area) has been named special assistant to the president at UM-related Claremont School of Theology. **Bishop Elias Galvan** (Seattle Area) has also been named special assistant for Hispanic initiatives at the school. Both Dew and Galvan are retiring from the active episcopacy this year.

DOCKET, FALL 2004 JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING

OCTOBER 27–29, 2004

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

1. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Legality and Constitutionality of Petition 40325, as Adopted, Dealing with the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits
2. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application, and Effect of the Provisions of 705.3(j) of the *Discipline* with Respect to the Membership of the Connectional Table
3. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Constitutionality of Calendar Item 1498, as Adopted, with Respect to the Membership of the Connectional Table

4. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application, and Effect of the *Discipline* to Calendar Item 1514, as Adopted, with Respect to the Doctrinal Standards of The United Methodist Church
5. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Constitutionality of Calendar Item 1167, as Adopted, with Respect to Lay Membership on the Committee on Investigation
6. IN RE: Request from the 2004 General Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Constitutionality of Calendar Item 1017, as Adopted, with Respect to the Lay Membership of Annual Conferences
7. IN RE: Review of Bishop's Decision of Law in the North Central New York Annual Conference Concerning Approval of a Candidate for Commissioning as Probationary Member by the Clergy Session
8. IN RE: Request from the Western Michigan Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application and Effect of the *Discipline* to the Addition of Domestic Partner Benefits to the Conference Health Benefits Policy
9. IN RE: Request from the Virginia Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application and Effect of the 2000 *Discipline*, and specifically 608 thereof, to "Equipping The Church: An Organizational Plan for the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church," as Adopted
10. IN RE: Request from the Virginia Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Meaning, Application and Effect of 352.1(b) [Involuntary Leave of Absence] and 356.2 [Voluntary Retirement] of the 2000 *Discipline* Where a Clergy Member Requested Voluntary Retirement, But was Placed On Involuntary Leave of Absence by the Clergy Session
11. IN RE: Request from the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Authority of a Bishop to Overrule the Judicial Council and Deny an Individual's Request for Jury Trial
12. IN RE: Request from the Wisconsin Annual Conference for a Declaratory Decision on the Constitutionality of 346.1 of the 2000 *Discipline* Concerning Discontinuance of Local Pastors
13. IN RE: Review of Kansas West Annual Conference Equitable Compensation Plan for Women Clergy as Required by Decision 968
14. IN RE: Review of Bishop's Decision of Law in the Troy Annual Conference Concerning Propriety of a Resolution Entitled "Providing Health Care Coverage for Domestic Partners"
15. IN RE: Review of Bishop's Decision of Law in the North Georgia Annual Conference Concerning the Propriety of a Resolution Entitled "A Resolution From The South Georgia Annual Conference – Support for a Marriage Amendment to the Georgia Constitution" under the *Discipline*
16. IN RE: Review of Northern Illinois Annual Conference Revised Plan of Structure as Required by Decision 909
17. IN RE: Review of Bishop's Decision of Law in the New York Annual Conference Concerning Whether an Elder's Request for Trial Can Be Denied Where the Bishop Determines that a Complaint Will Be Handled Administratively