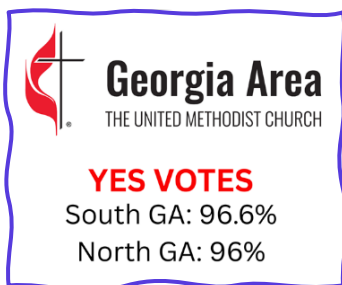


“ONE GEORGIA”

Delegates asked to form unified Georgia Annual Conference

BY DAN O'MARA | ADCA EDITOR | SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

Delegates to the 2026 Special Session of The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church will gather virtually on August 11 to vote on a proposal to consolidate the North Georgia and South Georgia Annual Conferences into a unified Georgia Annual Conference.



In historic votes earlier this summer, North Georgia and South Georgia United Methodists approved the proposed Georgia Unification Plan with near-identical percentage votes in each conference, affirming overwhelmingly a shared vision

for the future of The United Methodist Church in Georgia.

“I am excited and can’t wait for the wonderful things that are going to happen across the state,” said Bishop Robin Dease of the Georgia Episcopal Area, who has guided the conferences through their discernment processes over the past two years. “God is here, and we are going to be about transforming this state and connecting with people all across our connection – sharing the good news of what God is doing here in the state of Georgia.”

[READ MORE](#) | PAGE 2

SEJ2026 Draft Agenda

August 11, 2026

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston Presiding

7:00 p.m. OPENING WORSHIP

Led by Georgia
United Methodists

7:20 p.m. BUSINESS SESSION

Organizing Business
Secretarial Staff Election
Voting Instructions/Testing

Unification Presentation

ACTION ITEM → Vote On Unification

**Report Of The SEJ
Committee On Episcopacy**

Monitoring Report

Adjourning Prayer

Benediction

COE to share a look ahead to 2028

When they convene virtually on August 11, delegates to the 2026 Special Session will hear a report from The Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy. The COE will update delegates on the work of the Interjurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy regarding the number of bishops to be assigned in 2028, including the number allotted to the SEJ.

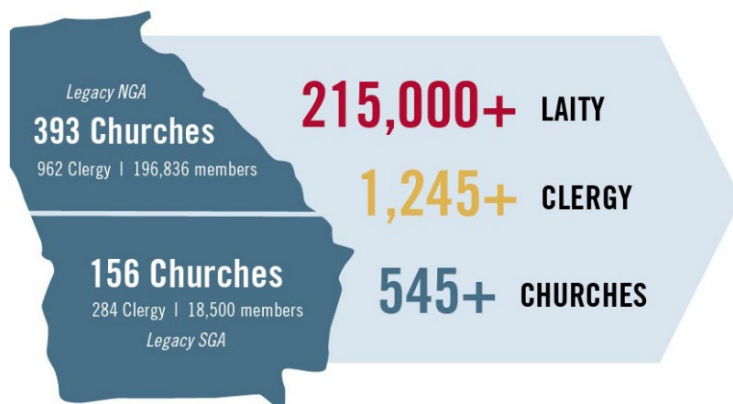
The Committee also will report on task forces preparing resources for delegations and annual conferences ahead of the 2028 episcopal nominee and election processes.

Committee members scheduled to share the report are the Rev. Kim Ingram, Director of Ministerial Services and Conference Secretary for the Western North Carolina Conference; the Rev. Alex Shanks, Assistant to the Bishop in the Florida Conference; and the Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman, superintendent of the Mission Rivers District in the Virginia Conference.

CONTINUED | FROM PAGE 1

After the two conferences made their wishes known on unification, the SEJ College of Bishops voted to call the 2026 Special Session of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, with an agenda limited to only two items:

- Vote to authorize the formation of the Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. The SEJ Conference will receive the formal petition, hear the report of the College of Bishops, and act upon the request in accordance with jurisdictional authority and disciplinary requirements. No other business will be considered.
- Hear the report from the SEJ Committee on Episcopacy (COE) as it relates to preparation for the 2028 Jurisdictional Conference.



Lay and Clergy Delegates most recently elected by their annual conferences will be the voting members of 2026 Special Session. Alternates are encouraged to be prepared to serve as needed.

Bishop Connie Shelton, President of the SEJ College of Bishops, notified delegates of the Special Session on behalf of the College in a July 6 call letter.

“This Special Session represents a significant moment in the ongoing reorganization and strengthening of our connectional life,” wrote Bishop Shelton, who serves as resident bishop of the North Carolina Conference. “The proposed formation of a unified Georgia Conference reflects two years of prayerful discernment, collaborative leadership, and

a shared commitment to mission across the state.”

In a joint letter to SEJ2026 delegates, leaders of the North Georgia Conference and South Georgia Conference “graciously requested” Jurisdictional support for their “journey of unity.”

“We believe unification is biblical, as there are multiple biblical narratives that support our intention to find strength and vision as one,” the leaders wrote. “We believe unification is the right thing to do, as it contains the overwhelming will of both conferences involved.

“We believe unification is the hope for United Methodism across the state of Georgia, as it positions the leadership of the conference to add strategic value to clergy, laity, and congregations.”

SEJ2026 delegates have a significant amount of information to help them prepare for the August 11 session.

Some are on the pages that follow, while others can be found at the links to the right.

[SEJ2026 DRAFT AGENDA](#)
[SEJ BISHOPS' CALL LETTER](#)
[JOINT LETTER TO DELEGATES](#)

[NORTH GEORGIA RESOLUTION](#)
[SOUTH GEORGIA RESOLUTION](#)
[READ FULL UNIFICATION PLAN](#)

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“One Georgia” Infographic	5	South Georgia Resolutions	12
Unification Plan Executive Summary	7	SEJ2026 Rules of Order	15



Dear Delegates of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church:

It is by God's grace alone that, on behalf of the North and South Georgia Annual Conferences, we would like to request your vote to authorize the formation of the Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

When the Southeastern Jurisdiction created the Georgia Episcopal Area in the summer of 2024 and assigned Bishop Dease as the Episcopal Leader, we didn't fully know this was where the journey was going to take us. Both conferences were coming out of pandemic and disaffiliation season, and both conferences needed to adjust to a new reality. Since 2022, the following reductions impacted both conferences:

- North Georgia's budget went down 38.5% and the church count went down 42%.
- South Georgia's budget went down 72% and the church count went down 74%.

Very quickly, we acknowledged as the leadership of the conference that just coexisting wasn't the best use of our resources, time, and energy. After eighteen intense months of praying, dreaming, discerning, and developing a unification plan, here are the documents that we would like to present to you for your consideration:

- The [Georgia Unification Plan](#) was created through the prayerful work of around 200 clergy and laity from both conferences who worked in small groups for months.
- The [Executive Summary of the Unification Plan](#) where we highlighted "the why," "the how," and "the vision" of this journey.
- The [Infographic of the Unification Plan](#) which highlights "the timeline," "the resources," and "the mission field" of the state of Georgia.
- The [Unification Video conversation](#) with Bishop Dease and Bishop McAlilly that sets the tone of what unification looks like for those who have done it before.
- The [Zoom Presentation of Unification](#) was recorded in one of the more than 20+ presentations that were made in person and virtually across the state.



As you hopefully have been able to glimpse from all the links shared above, unification has not been the goal or the end of our purpose as the North and South Georgia Annual Conferences. Our vision and purpose have been, and continue to be, to strengthen our presence as United Methodists across the state of Georgia so lives can encounter Christ and communities can be transformed.

It is then, with great joy and deep humility, that we also shared that both annual conferences have been able to see the value and believe in the vision of what unification can do across the state. These were the results of the votes on unification at our annual conferences this summer:

- The South Georgia Annual Conference voted 96.6% in favor of unification, with only 10 negative votes.
- The North Georgia Annual Conference voted 96% in favor of unification, with only 42 negative votes.

Therefore, we believe unification is biblical, as there are multiple biblical narratives that support our intention to find strength and vision as one. We believe unification is the right thing to do, as it contains the overwhelming will of both conferences involved. We believe unification is the hope for United Methodism across the state of Georgia, as it positions the leadership of the conference to add strategic value to clergy, laity, and congregations.

Considering all that has been mentioned above, we now graciously request your support on this journey of unity. If you have any questions that can help you make a more informed decision, please do not hesitate to email us at Rodrigo.cruz@georgiaumc.net.

Bendiciones,

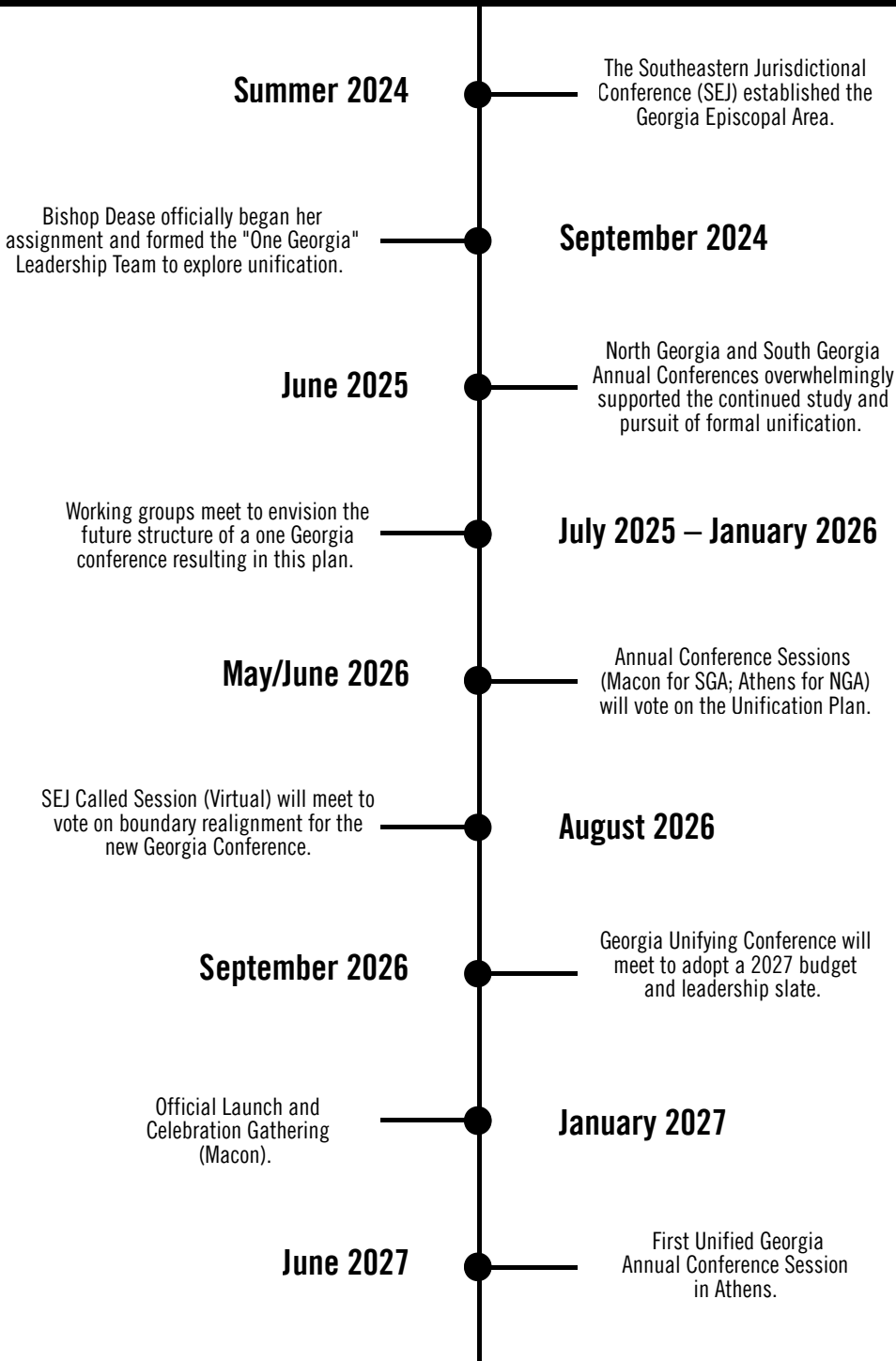
The North and the South Georgia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church



"We are called to community. There is no 'us and them.' In that spirit, we launched an effort to study and pursue the unification of these two great annual conferences."

- Bishop Robin Dease

ONE GEORGIA UNIFICATION PLAN



200+ clergy and laity in **20+** working groups met to explore unified future through three guiding values:

CULTURE

COMMUNITY

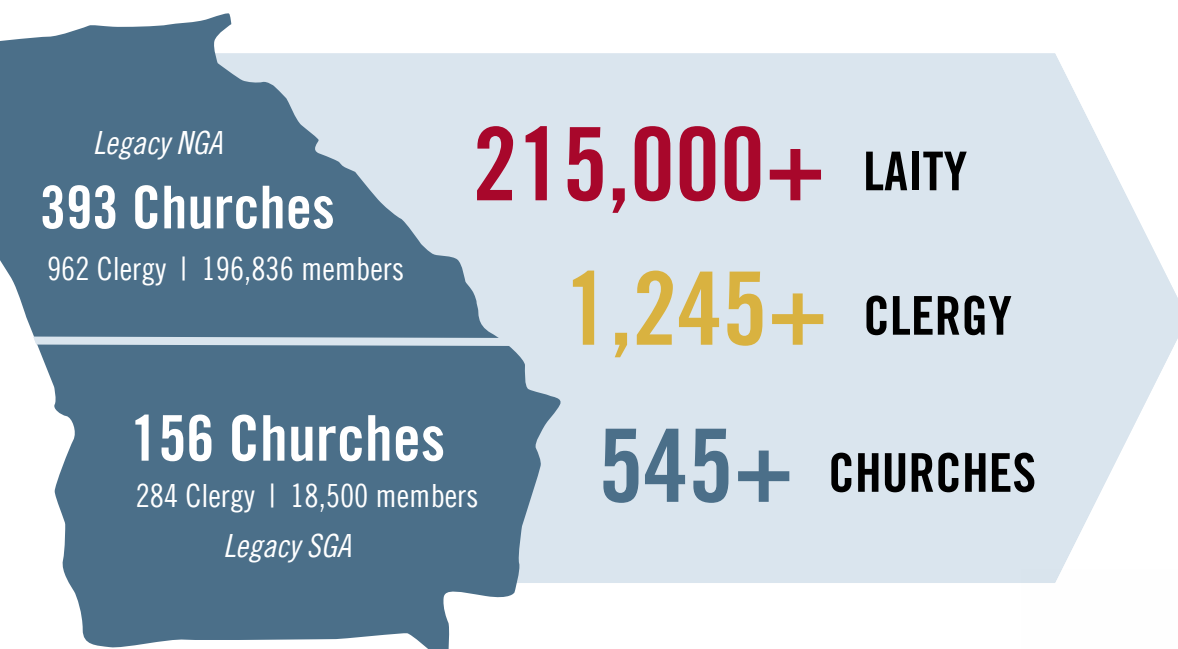
CONNECTION

WHAT THEY FOUND:

Both conferences embody a deep commitment to our Wesleyan faith, vibrant ministry, and servant leadership that positively impacts communities across Georgia and our UM connection.

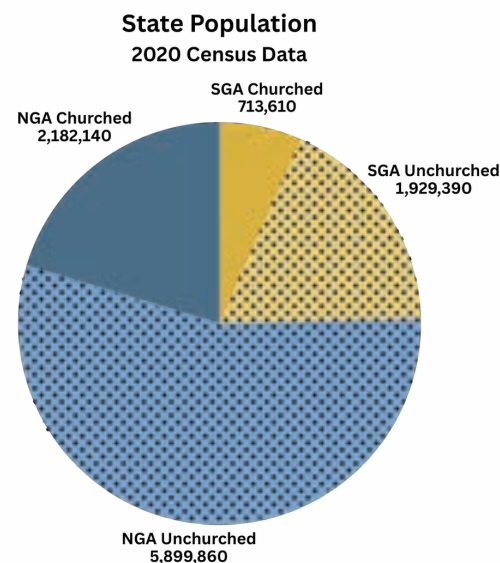
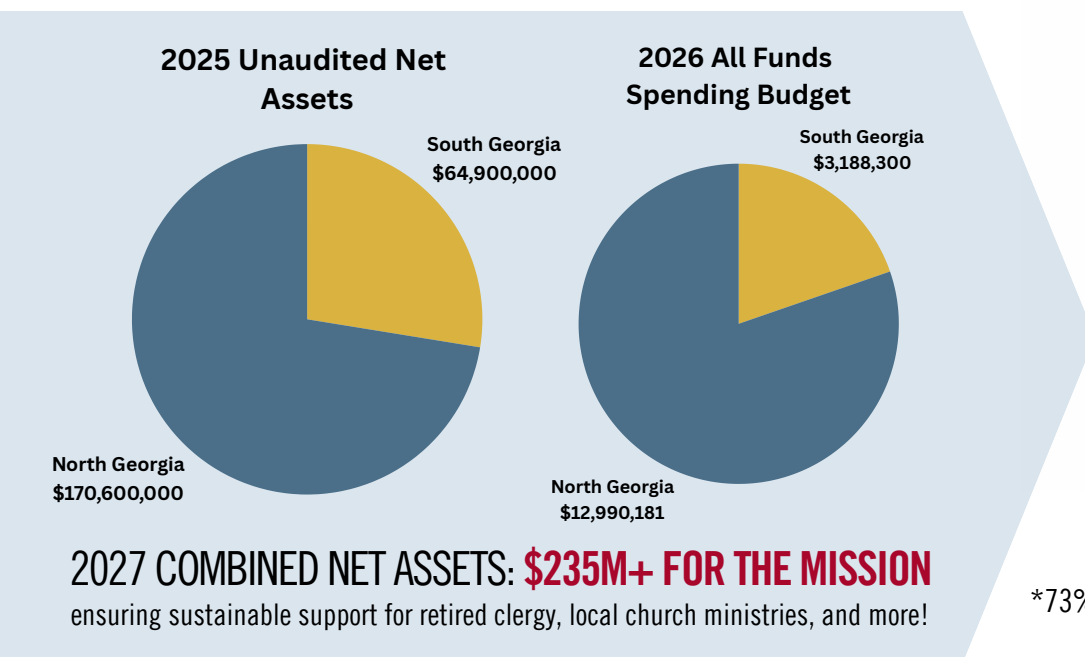
Love Boldly Serve Joyfully Lead Courageously

Our Vision: empowered by the Holy Spirit, to make disciples of Jesus Christ who **love boldly**, **serve joyfully**, and **lead courageously** in transforming local communities and individuals across the world.



WORKING TOGETHER

TO REACH
8 MILLION
GEORGIANS



MISSION FIELD

*73% of Georgians (8,221,509) are not actively involved in a church or faith community.

Let's **BE A STORY OF UNITY** in a season of division.

Learn more: georgiaumc.org



Georgia Unification Plan



The Why

The unification of the North Georgia and South Georgia Annual Conferences presents the opportunity for a new structure that allows us to respond across current conference boundaries, enabling us to engage in ministry in more practical, economical, and missional ways.

- **Practical:** for our ministry efforts to have one structure rather than two different and independent structures. This nimbleness can enable us to continue to create a legacy that can impact generations to come.
- **Economical:** for our ministry efforts to become one. Not only can we save on overhead costs, but we can maximize our number one asset (laity) and deploy them to serve incarnational ministries versus populating duplicate mandatory committees.
- **Missional:** for our ministry efforts to come along side each other to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. At the end of the day, unification presents the beautiful opportunity of a greater harvest, and we have a greater opportunity to make disciples out of the 8 million people in our state that are currently going through life without knowing Jesus.

With the blessing of the North Georgia and South Georgia Annual Conferences, working groups officially launched in July 2025, deploying more than 200 clergy and laity from both annual conferences to help explore and visualize the possibility of unification. These groups walked this journey with a spirit of grace, nimbleness, and with three guiding values: Culture, Community, and Connection.

- **Culture:** The groups explored the creation of a new culture that can empower us to expand United Methodism across the state of Georgia – rather than the self-preservation of old structures.
- **Community:** The groups emphasized the blessing of building new and strong clergy and laity relationships across the state – rather than the simple action of membership and assets compilation.
- **Connection:** They approached this journey with God's Kingdom as the vision and mission mentality – rather than a mentality driven by scarcity, survival, and isolation.

The North Georgia and South Georgia Conferences have developed over more than 200 years, beginning with the arrival of the first Methodist preachers in 1786. Shaped by growth, division, racial segregation, reunification, and denominational mergers, the two conferences took their present form with the creation of The United Methodist Church in 1968. From that point, until 1988, we were one Episcopal Area and shared a bishop. Both conferences embody a deep commitment to our Wesleyan faith, vibrant ministry, and servant leadership that impacts communities across Georgia and our United Methodist connection.

At this moment, another milestone is before us: unification.

The How

- **Summer 2024:** The Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference (SEJ) established the Georgia Episcopal Area and assigned Bishop Robin Dease to oversee both the North and South Georgia Conferences.
- **September 1, 2024:** Bishop Dease officially began her assignment, forming the "One Georgia" Leadership Team to explore the value of unification.
- **January 1, 2025:** A website, www.GeorgiaUMC.org, was launched to ensure transparency and provide a centralized data repository.

Georgia Unification Plan



- **June 2025:** The Annual Conference sessions of both North Georgia and South Georgia overwhelmingly supported the continued study and pursuit of formal unification.
- **July 2025-January 2026:** More than 200 clergy and laity were deployed into 20+ working groups to visualize the future structure, resulting in the final reports that define the Georgia Unification Plan.
- **May/June 2026:** Annual Conference Sessions (Macon for SGA; Athens for NGA) will vote on the Unification Plan.
- **August 2026:** SEJ Called Session (virtual) is expected to meet to vote on boundary realignment to establish the new Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church.
- **September 2026:** Georgia Unifying Conference is expected to meet to adopt a 2027 budget and leadership slate.
- **January 2027:** Official launch of the new Annual Conference and Celebration Gathering.
- **June 2027:** First unified Georgia Annual Conference session in Athens.

The Vision

This year we have an opportunity to expand the footprint of two Annual Conferences and demonstrate a new era of unity and healing in The United Methodist Church. We can expand the reach of the theological message of God's grace and redemption in Jesus Christ as our more than 545 churches work together. We have been called in this moment to BE a story of unity in a season of division. We have been called to dream beyond our Annual Conference lines and to work toward the growth of The United Methodist Church across our state.

Our calling is clear: to form disciples who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously** in our local communities and worldwide connections.

- **Love Boldly:** United Methodists across the state of Georgia will work together to ensure that all people have a place at the table and a voice in the meetings. We are excited to be a force in our state for love and acceptance while sharing the power of Jesus to heal and redeem.
- **Serve Joyfully:** The heart of Christ will enable us to joyfully serve a world in need. We will unite our efforts to provide for the most vulnerable among us with compassion and care, offering not only hope but an invitation to a life with Jesus. We will consider joyful service as an essential task of discipleship and will provide opportunities for local churches, laity, and clergy to serve.
- **Lead Courageously:** Following Jesus' example, we will resist and dismantle all systems of evil injustice and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

The Georgia Unification Plan reflects the work of United Methodists from across both annual conferences. It begins with sections describing the journey that has brought us to this moment and the vision guiding the work ahead. The core of the plan consists of twenty working group reports covering areas from ministry and discipleship to finance, administration, and the work of the laity. In addition, the plan contains proposed resolutions for each annual conference, a timeline for the process ahead, and the proposed standing rules, including the Plan of Organization and Rules of Order. The plan can be found at www.GeorgiaUMC.org,

"We are called to community. There is no 'us and them.' In that spirit, we launched an effort to study and pursue the unification of these two great annual conferences."

- Bishop Robin Dease

1 (2) to authorize the North and South Georgia Conferences to conduct a joint organizational
2 conference known as the Unifying Conference, prior to the formation of the new Georgia
3 Conference, consisting of the voting membership (lay and clergy) of the North and South
4 Georgia Conferences; and
5 (3) to authorize the Georgia Conference to commence operations as a fully unified conference of
6 The United Methodist Church after the completion of the joint organizational conference, in
7 accordance with the Unification Plan adopted by the North and South Georgia Conferences
8 during their respective 2026 annual conference sessions.

9 Presented by

10 COMMON TABLE in North Georgia Annual Conference

11
12

RESOLUTION #2

13 NORTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION REGARDING 14 APPOINTING JOINT DISTRIBUTING COMMITTEE

15 The North Georgia Conference (the “Conference”) hereby takes the following actions and adopts
16 the following resolutions:

17 **WHEREAS**, the North and South Georgia Conferences have a history of shared episcopal
18 supervision; and

19 **WHEREAS**, In 2025, the North and South Georgia Conferences sessions voted to endorse the
20 intent to pursue a plan to form a new conference, and

21 **WHEREAS**, In 2026, leadership from the North and South Georgia Annual Conferences sent a
22 motion to the Southeastern Jurisdictional (SEJ) Conference, for action to call a special session in
23 the summer of 2026 to approve the realignment of the boundaries of the North and South
24 Georgia Conferences to form one new conference to be known as the “Georgia Conference of
25 The United Methodist Church” with boundaries coextensive with the current North and South
26 Georgia Conferences, and

27 **WHEREAS**,

28 *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024* (BOD) ¶ 1507 provides that when two annual conferences are
29 to be merged to form a new conference, there shall be elected by each conference affected a
30 distributing committee of three members and three alternates, which shall act jointly with similar
31 committees from the other conference or conferences. The joint distributing committee thus
32 formed shall have power and authority: (a) to allocate the pension responsibility involved; (b) to
33 distribute equitably the permanent funds and all other pension assets of the conference or
34 conferences affected, taking into consideration the pension responsibility involved; and (c) to the
35 extent not otherwise previously provided for by the conference or conferences involved, to
36 apportion or distribute equitably any other assets or property and any other liabilities or
37 obligations, and

38 **WHEREAS**, It is necessary and appropriate for the North Georgia Annual Conference to appoint
39 members as prescribed by BOD ¶ 1507 for purposes of addressing the pension issues required by

1 BOD, and for the purposes of providing for apportionment or distribution of assets, property,
2 liabilities, and obligations not otherwise previously provided for by the two participating
3 conferences;

4 Now therefore, be it resolved, the North Georgia Annual Conference (NGA) affirms the creation
5 of a Joint Distributing Committee, together with the South Georgia Annual Conference (SGA),
6 to operate in a manner consistent BOD ¶ 1507.

7 Be it further resolved, that the following three persons are nominated and approved to serve as
8 members of the Joint Distributing Committee:

9 1. Board of Pension Representative-Elizabeth Schroeder
10 2. Council of Finance & Administration Representative-Cindy McDonald
11 3. Board of Trustees Representative-Susan Daniell

12 Be it further resolved, that the following three persons are nominated and approved to serve as
13 alternate members of the Joint Distributing Committee:

14 1. Conference Staff Representative-Bruce Cooper
15 2. Cabinet Representative-Rodrigo Cruz
16 3. At Large Representative-Harden Hopper

17 Be it further resolved, that such persons, together with the individuals appointed to the Joint
18 Distributing Committee by the South Georgia Annual Conference, shall perform the functions
19 outlined in BOD ¶ 1507 related to pensions; and

20 Be it further resolved, that such persons, together with the individuals appointed to the Joint
21 Distributing Committee by the North Georgia Annual Conference, shall be authorized to act
22 upon and implement plans and recommendations from the One Georgia Task Force and joint
23 working task teams of the two conferences related to health benefits, incorporation, and legal
24 structure, and any other actions related to apportionment or distribution of assets and liabilities
25 not otherwise provided for by the conferences in their Plan of Union or otherwise, pending
26 creation and commencement of the new conference entity.

27 Be it further resolved, that upon completion of its work, the committee shall be dissolved as
28 contemplated by BOD ¶ 1507.

29 Presented by
30 COMMON TABLE in North Georgia Conference
31
32

Part Five – The Resolutions

RESOLUTION #1

SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION REGARDING APPROVAL OF THE PLAN OF UNION FOR THE GEORGIA CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The South Georgia Conference (the “Conference”) hereby takes the following actions and adopts the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, the South and North Georgia Conferences have a history of shared episcopal supervision; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Episcopal Area now, once again, share episcopal supervision; and

WHEREAS, the cabinets of the South and North Georgia Conferences convened in 2025 with a shared understanding that the evolving landscape of the United Methodist connection necessitated a re-evaluation of conference boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the South and North Georgia Conferences have a shared history as a single conference as Methodism was established in and spread across Georgia; and

WHEREAS, we are committed to more than our geographical boundaries, and, in fact, we are committed to the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; and

WHEREAS, the cabinets of the South and North Georgia Conferences met in July 2025 and collectively deliberated the prospect of consolidating into a single entity, sharing unified vision, mission and key strategic missional priorities; and

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) Episcopacy Committee intends to call a special session in the summer of 2026 to approve the realignment of the boundaries of the South and North Georgia Conferences to form one new conference to be known as the “Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church” with boundaries coextensive with the current South and North Georgia Conferences; and

WHEREAS, it is both necessary and appropriate for both conferences to approve the Unification Plan that will govern the fully unified Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Unification Plan attached to this resolution (go to www.georgiaumc.org/resolution) is hereby adopted by the South Georgia Annual Conference with the intention that the Unification Plan shall govern the creation and structure of the new Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in accordance with the actions taken at the respective 2026 session of the North Georgia annual conference, that the SEJ Conference is entreated to take the following actions during the 2026 called SEJ Conference:

(1) to approve the realignment of the boundaries of the South and North Georgia Conferences to form one new conference to be known as the “Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church” with boundaries coextensive with the current South and North Georgia Conferences;

(2) to authorize the South and North Georgia Conferences to conduct a joint organizational conference known as the Unifying Conference, prior to the formation of the new Georgia Conference, consisting of the voting membership (lay and clergy) of the South and North Georgia Conferences; and

(3) to authorize the Georgia Conference to commence operations as a fully unified conference of The United Methodist Church after the completion of the joint organizational conference, in accordance with the Unification Plan adopted by the South and North Georgia Conferences during their respective 2026 annual conference sessions.

Presented by

LEADERSHIP FORUM in South Georgia Annual Conference

RESOLUTION #2

SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION REGARDING APPOINTING JOINT DISTRIBUTING COMMITTEE

The South Georgia Conference (the “Conference”) hereby takes the following actions and adopts the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, the South and North Georgia Conferences have a history of shared episcopal supervision; and

WHEREAS, In 2025, the South and North Georgia Conferences sessions voted to endorse the intent to pursue a plan to form a new conference, and

WHEREAS, In 2026, leadership from the South and North Georgia Annual Conferences sent a motion to the Southeastern Jurisdictional (SEJ) Conference, for action to call a special session in the summer of 2026 to approve the realignment of the boundaries of the South and North Georgia Conferences to form one new conference to be known as the “Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church” with boundaries coextensive with the current South and North Georgia Conferences, and

WHEREAS, *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024* (BOD) ¶ 1507, provides that when two annual conferences are to be merged to form a new conference, there shall be elected by each conference affected a distributing committee of three members and three alternates, which shall act jointly with similar committees from the other conference or conferences. The joint distributing committee thus formed shall have power and authority: (a) to allocate the pension responsibility involved; (b) to distribute equitably the permanent funds and all other pension assets of the conference or conferences affected, taking into consideration the pension responsibility involved; and (c) to the extent not otherwise previously provided for by the conference or conferences involved, to apportion or distribute equitably any other assets or property and any other liabilities or obligations, and

WHEREAS, It is necessary and appropriate for the South Georgia Annual Conference to appoint members as prescribed by the BOD ¶ 1507 for purposes of addressing the pension issues required by the BOD, and for the purposes of providing for apportionment or distribution of assets, property, liabilities, and obligations not otherwise previously provided for by the two participating conferences;

Now therefore, be it resolved, the South Georgia Annual Conference (SGA) affirms the creation of a Joint Distributing Committee, together with the North Georgia Annual Conference (NGA), to operate in a manner consistent with BOD ¶ 1507.

Be it further resolved, that the following three persons are nominated and approved to serve as members of the Joint Distributing Committee:

1. Board of Pension Representative-John Ray
2. Council of Finance & Administration Representative-Kathy Israel McLeod
3. Board of Trustees Representative-Jimmy Asbell

Be it further resolved, that the following three persons are nominated and approved to serve as alternate members of the Joint Distributing Committee:

1. Conference Staff Representative-Allison Berg
2. Cabinet Representative-Jeff Cook
3. At Large Representative-Precious Hawkins

Be it further resolved, that such persons, together with the individuals appointed to the Joint Distributing Committee by the North Georgia Annual Conference, shall perform the functions outlined in BOD ¶ 1507 related to pensions; and

Be it further resolved, that such persons, together with the individuals appointed to the Joint Distributing Committee by the South Georgia Annual Conference, shall be authorized to act upon and implement plans and recommendations from the One Georgia Task Force and joint working task teams of the two conferences related to health benefits, incorporation, and legal structure, and any other actions related to apportionment or distribution of assets and liabilities not otherwise provided for by the conferences in their Plan of Union or otherwise, pending creation and commencement of the new conference entity.

Be it further resolved, that upon completion of its work, the committee shall be dissolved as contemplated by BOD ¶ 1507.

Presented by

LEADERSHIP FORUM in South Georgia Conference

RULES OF ORDER

2026 Special Session of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church

I. AGENDA

Rule 1. Agenda.

(1) The senior effective Bishop and the Conference Secretary, in consultation with the College of Bishops and the Program/Arrangements Committee, will develop the agenda.

(2) The proposed agenda will be published in pre-conference materials and placed before the conference for adoption in the opening session.

(3) Once adopted, the Agenda Committee may propose modifications as circumstances may dictate. The conference will be notified of foreseen adjustments in as timely as fashion as possible.

Rule 2: Worship. Each quadrennial session will begin with an opening worship service. Additional worship experiences will be conducted periodically during the session.

II. PRESIDING OFFICERS

Rule 3. The Bishop presiding shall be legal chairperson of the Jurisdictional Conference. He/she shall decide points of order raised by the members as he/she deems necessary to conform to these Jurisdictional Conference Rules of Order, subject to an appeal to the conference by any member without debate; except that the chairperson and the appellant, in the order here named, shall each have three minutes for a statement in support of his/her position. A tie vote in the case of an appeal shall sustain the chair. When any member raises a point of order, he/she shall cite by number the rule he/she adjudges to have been violated. The Bishop presiding when the committee is created, unless otherwise directed by the conference, or as directed by the plan of organization, shall name the members of any special committee. (See Rule 38.)

Rule 4. When the chairperson stands in his/her place and calls the conference to order, no member shall speak, address the chair, or stand while the chairperson stands.

III. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

Rule 5. Attendance and Seating Reserves. No member, unless hindered by sickness or otherwise, from being present, shall be absent himself/herself from the sessions of the conference without permission of the conference, and all absentees shall be reported by the chairperson of the several Annual Conference delegations to the Conference Secretary. Reserve delegates will be seated as necessary. Each Delegation Head will certify daily that his/her delegation is properly seated on a form provided by the Conference Secretary (Plan of Organization, I. C. (1) c).

Rule 6. Directions for Securing the Floor. When a delegate desires to speak to the conference, he/she shall arise at his/her seat, respectfully address the presiding officer, and, after recognition, proceed to the speaker's platform or to the nearest microphone, where, before speaking, he/she shall state his/her name and the Annual Conference from which he/she comes.

Rule 7. Interrupting the Speaker. No member who has the floor may be interrupted except for a breach of order, or misrepresentation, or to direct the attention of the conference to the fact that the time has arrived for a special order, or to raise a very urgent question of high privilege.

Rule 8. Speaking More Than Once. No member shall speak a second time on the same question if any member who has not spoken desires the floor, nor more than twice on the same subject under the same motion, nor longer than three minutes unless his/her time shall be extended by the conference, except as provided in Rule 37. This three-minute limit may be reduced by a majority vote of the conference at any time, and for any period of duration. Note: Any eligible elder, who is not a nominee in the episcopal election process and who receives 10 or more votes on any ballot, will be permitted to address the conference for no more than 10 minutes.

Rule 9. Question of High Privilege. A member claiming the floor at any time for what he/she believes is a very urgent question of high privilege shall be allowed to indicate briefly the nature of the question, as if it be adjudged by the chair to be such he/she may proceed at his/her pleasure, or until the chair judges that he/she has exhausted the privilege.

Rule 10. Voting Area of Conference. Only delegates within the area of the conference when the vote is taken shall be entitled to vote. All delegates within the area at the time a question is put shall vote, except such as have been excused for special reasons by the conference.

Rule 11. Method of Voting. Voting shall be by a show of hands unless otherwise ordered by the conference. An "Aye" and "No" vote by written ballot or a count vote may be ordered on call of any member and supported by one-third of the members present and voting. Ballots and count votes will be taken by electronic voting device when available at the conference session. No other business shall be in order when a vote is being taken, or when the previous question has been called, until the process is completed, except such as relates to the vote itself, or that which can be appropriately fitted into the time while waiting for the report of the secretaries on a count vote, or an "Aye" and "No" vote (see Rule 26 (2)). When a count vote is ordered, and electronic voting devices are unavailable, the count shall be made by the chairperson of the delegation, who shall report to the secretary of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference the number of those in the delegation voting for and voting against a motion or a report.

Rule 12. Division of Question. Before a vote is taken, any delegate shall have the right to call for a division of any question, if it is subject to such division as he/she indicates. If no delegate objects, the division shall be made, but if there is an objection the chair shall put the question of division to vote, not waiting for a second.

IV. BUSINESS PROCEDURE

Rule 13. Motion for Adoption of Reports and Resolutions Unnecessary. Whenever a report of a committee, signed by the chairperson and secretary thereof, or a resolution signed by two or more members of the conference shall be presented to the conference for its action, it shall be deemed in proper order for consideration by the conference without the formality of a motion to adopt and a second thereto.

Rule 14. Required Forms for Reports, Resolutions, Motions, and Amendments. All resolutions and committee reports shall be presented in triplicate and electronically, and when requested by the secretary, motions, including amendments, shall be presented in writing.

Rule 15. Reading of Reports and Resolutions. All resolutions, committee reports, and communications of the conference may be read by the secretary, if determined by the conference, except as otherwise provided in Rule 31.

Rule 16. Alteration of Motions, Etc. When a motion is made and seconded and stated by the chair, or a resolution is introduced and seconded, or a committee report is made or is published in the Daily Christian Advocate, it shall be deemed in possession of the conference and may not be altered except by action of the conference (see Rule 31). Introductory, accompanying, or explanatory material shall not be subject to debate or amendment, nor be considered to have been acted upon by the conference upon adoption of the motion or proposal itself, unless accompanied by a specific motion that such material is included in the action of the conference.

Rule 17. Episcopal Election Process

(1) The sitting Committee on Episcopacy has oversight of the election process for that quadrennium. Specifically, the Committee on Episcopacy will determine and oversee the processes, policies, and covenants related to the declaring of nominees and the familiarization with nominees from the various conferences and groups. The Program/Arrangements Committee, in consultation with the Committee on Episcopacy and the College of Bishops, will determine the balloting process and logistics. Once balloting begins, the presiding Bishop shall certify the fairness of the balloting process. Once the balloting process (beginning with the first ballot and concluding with the election of the final bishop) has begun, neither committees nor persons who are not nominees shall be allowed to make reports or speeches designed to influence the balloting.

(2) An elder is elected a Bishop when that elder has received the votes of 60% of the delegates casting valid ballots in the jurisdictional conference.

Rule 18. Non-debatable Motions. The following motions shall be acted upon without debate:

- (1) To adjourn, when unqualified, except to adjourn the conference finally.
- (2) To suspend a rule or rules or any provisions of the Rules of Order.
- (3) To lie on the table, except as provided in Rule 35.
- (4) To take from the table.
- (5) To call for the previous question.
- (6) To reconsider a non-debatable motion.
- (7) To limit or extend the limits of debate.
- (8) To call for the orders of the day.

Rule 19. Rights of the Main Question. The main question may be opened to debate under the following motions: To adopt, to commit, to substitute, to postpone, and to reconsider. No new motion, resolution, or subject shall be entertained until the one under consideration shall have been disposed of, except as provided in Rule 11. The foregoing does not apply to secondary motions if otherwise allowable in the existing parliamentary situation.

Rule 20. Precedence of Secondary Motions. If any one or more of the following motions shall be made when one or more other motions are pending, the order of their precedence in relation to one another shall be the same as the order of their listing below:

- (1) To fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn. (This motion is subject to amendment, or it may be laid on the table.)
- (2) To adjourn.
- (3) To take recess.
- (4) To raise a question of privilege.
- (5) To call for the orders of the day.
- (6) To lie on the table.
- (7) To order the previous question.
- (8) To limit or extend the limits of debate.
- (9) To postpone to a given time.
- (10) To refer.
- (11) To amend or substitute (one amendment being allowed to an amendment).
- (12) To postpone indefinitely.

Rule 21. Tabling Related Motions. No motion, which adheres to another motion, or has another adhering to it, can be laid on the table by itself. Such motions, if laid on the table, carry with them the motions to which they respectively adhere, or which adhere to them.

Rule 22. Referring a Section of Report. It shall be in order for the conference to refer to a committee a section or part of a report or resolution which is before the conference for consideration or any amendment offered thereunto.

Rule 23. Procedure for Consideration of Substitutes. When a resolution or committee report is properly before the conference for consideration and action, even if amendments thereto are pending, a delegate may offer a substitute for the resolution or report under consideration. The substitute must be an alternative to what is before the body and not simply a negation of the main motion.

The conference will first consider the substitution/alternative before the body. Debate on the motion to substitute will be limited to the question of substitution only. No amendments to the main motion or the substitute will be considered during this period of initial consideration. Following the debate on the motion to substitute, a vote on substitution will occur. If the motion to substitute prevails by majority vote, the substitute motion becomes the main motion. If the motion to substitute fails to receive a majority vote, the original main motion remains on the floor for consideration. Debate, including the offering of amendments, moves forward on the main motion as per the rules of procedure.

The previous question may not be put on the adoption of the report or resolution, or making the proposed substitution, until two members (including the chairperson of the committee presenting the report and the member presenting the substitute) shall have spoken.

Rule 24. Previous Question (see Rules 18 (5), 23, 25, 35). When any member moves the previous question (that is, that the vote be now taken on the motion or motions pending), he/she shall indicate to what he/she intends it to apply, if any secondary motion or motions are also pending. If he/she does not so indicate, it shall be regarded as applying only to the immediately pending question.

This motion shall be taken without debate and shall require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting for its adoption, and if adopted the vote shall be taken without debate and shall require a

two-thirds vote of those present and voting for its adoption, and if adopted the vote shall be taken on the motion or motions to which it applies without further debate, except as provided in Rule 35.

Rule 25. Unlawful Motion after Speech. It shall not be in order for a member immediately after discussing a pending question, and before relinquishing the floor, to make a motion whose adoption would limit or stop debate.

Rule 26. Exceptions to Majority Vote. A majority of those voting, a quorum being present, shall decide all questions with the following exceptions:

(1) A tie vote sustains the chair, if an appeal is made from his/her decision (Rule 3).

(2) One third of those present and voting shall suffice to sustain a call for an “Aye” and “No” vote or a count vote (Rule 11).

(3) A two-thirds vote shall be required to sustain a motion to suspend or amend a rule or rules or any provision of the Rules of Order (Rules 37, 38); to sustain a motion for the previous question (Rule 24); to set aside a motion for the previous question (Rule 24); to set aside a special order; to consider a special order before the time therefore; or any motion whose adoption would limit debate.

Rule 27. Reconsideration. A motion to reconsider an action of the conference shall be in order at any time if offered by a member who voted with the prevailing side. If the motion proposed for reconsideration is non-debatable, then the motion under reconsideration may not be debated.

Rule 28. Motion to Adjourn in Order, Except. The motion to adjourn, when unqualified, shall be taken without debate, and shall always be in order, except

(1) When a delegate has the floor.

(2) When a question is actually put, or a vote is being taken, and before it is finally decided.

(3) When the previous question has been ordered and action there under is pending.

(4) When a motion to adjourn has been lost, and no business or debate has intervened.

(5) When a motion to fix the time to which the conference shall adjourn is pending. The foregoing does not apply to a motion for final adjournment of the conference.

V. COMMITTEES: DUTIES AND PREROGATIVES

Rule 29. Preparation and Presentation of Committee Reports. Every committee of the Jurisdictional Conference is hereby authorized to delegate to the chairperson and secretary of the committee the duty of preparing and presenting to the Jurisdictional Conference the action taken by the committee on any given subject, and every committee is authorized to grant to a minority of the committee the right to draft and to present to the Jurisdictional Conference a minority report without reading the same before the full committee, providing the substance of the said minority report has been stated to the committee.

Rule 30. Alterations in Restrictive Rules. Reports from committees and all other papers which propose an alteration in the restrictive rules of the church shall state that alteration proposed to be made, and the form of the motion shall be: “Will the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference recommend to the General and Annual Conferences the change indicated above?”

Rule 31. Published Reports in Possession of Conference. A report of any committee signed by the chairperson and secretary thereof shall be regarded as in possession of the conference when posted to the conference website, published in the Daily Christian Advocate, or distributed on the floor of conference. The business shall be in order for consideration at the pleasure of the conference anytime thereafter. The same rule shall apply to a report of a minority of any committee signed by one tenth of the members of the committee or by ten members thereof (see Rule 16 and Rule 23).

Rule 32. Preparation and Printing of Reports. Reports of the standing committees shall be posted to the conference website and distributed in the Daily Christian Advocate with as much advance notice as possible given the abbreviated duration of conference prior to being presented for consideration by the conference, and they shall not be read unless by its order. Reports of minorities of committees adopted by them with a view to their being offered as substitutes for committee reports shall likewise conform to this rule so far as it is applicable, indicating clearly to what committee the respective minorities belong and for what report or reports, by serial numbers, etc., they propose the respective substitutes.

Rule 33. Committee on Chairperson Not in Harmony with Report. When a chairperson of a committee is not in harmony with a report adopted by the committee, it shall be his/her duty to state the fact to the committee, which shall elect one of its members to represent the committee, and said representative shall have all the rights and privileges of the chairperson in relation to such report.

Rule 34. Presentation of Report of Minority. A member selected by the signers of a minority report of a committee to present the same shall have the same rights and privileges in relation thereto which belong to the chairperson in the presentation of the regular (majority) report of the committee.

Rule 35. Speakers For and Against. When the report of a committee is under consideration, it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to ascertain which side a speaker proposes to speak. The speaker shall not be granted the floor to speak on the same side of the pending question as the speaker immediately preceding if any member desires to speak on the other side. Except for non-debatable motions, no report shall be adopted or question relation to the same decided without opportunity having been given for a least one speech for and one against the said proposal, provided this right is claimed before the chairperson or duly authorized member representing the committee's report, of the minority report if there be such, is present to close the debate. When all have spoken who desire to do so, or when (and after) the previous question has been ordered, the chairperson and/or duly authorized member or members presenting the committee's report (and the minority report, if there be one) shall be entitled to speak before the vote is taken. This right of the chairperson and/or other member or members to close the debate shall prevail in like manner to a limit of three minutes when a vote is about to be taken on a motion to amend, to substitute, to postpone, to refer, to lay on the table, or any other motion whose adoption would vitally affect the report under consideration, provided that this five minute limit shall not apply to a motion to substitute a minority report for a regular (majority) report of a committee.

Rule 36. Legal Enactment. All actions of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church shall become effective upon the adjournment of the present session of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church, unless otherwise specified.

VI. SUSPENDING, AMENDING, AND SUPPLEMENTING

Rule 37. Suspension of Rules. The operation of any of the provisions of the Plan of Organization or the Rules of Order may be suspended at any time by a two-thirds vote of the conference (see Rule 26 (3)).

Rule 38. Amending Rules. The Plan of Organization and these Rules of Order may be amended or changed by two-thirds vote of the conference, provided the proposed change or amendment has been presented to the conference in writing and referred to the Committee on Plan of Organization and Rules of Order, which committee shall report thereon not later than the day following (see Rule 26 (3)).

Rule 39. Roberts Rules of Order, Revised: Supplemental Authority. In any parliamentary situation not clearly covered by this Plan of Organization or these Rules of Order, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference shall be governed in its actions by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.