

Resolution #5 “A commitment to Grace in the Indiana Conference”

After reviewing Resolution # 5 Bishop Trimble declared that the resolution was properly before the body for consideration. “While the resolution accentuates affirmations and calls for Grace it does not make null and void any prohibition in the Book of Discipline. It doesn’t change the wording or impact of the Book of Discipline.” I have reviewed the request submitted by Rev. Chris Gadlage for a decision of Law.

I acknowledged his Point of Order and heard his claim that the resolution was more than aspirational and should be ruled out of order quoting “encouraging actions that ignore and violate, the Book of Discipline.” I have reviewed the various Disciplinary paragraphs and Judicial Council rulings listed in Rev. Gadlage request.

I ruled at the time of our Annual Conference June 11, 2022, that the resolution was properly before the body and belonged to the body for discussion and debate. I acknowledged that the Petitions and Resolutions committee was not all in agreement that this resolution was free from an interpretation that would deem it out of order. The final decision to put the resolution in the hands of the Annual Conference was the presiding, Bishop. Prior to voting clarifying questions were asked and answered that speak to the questions Rev. Gadlage has raised.

Rev. Abel asked if the application of Resolution #5 is aspirational or if it would be considered binding as it relates to anything in the Book of Discipline? Rev. Jason Rice asked, “If Resolution #5 passed, would people still be able to file charges against same sex marriage?

I clarified that the resolution as written does not change any prohibition in the Book of Discipline or strip the rights of persons who

may choose to file complaints. It also does not change in any way the conference process for handling complaints.

The author of the resolution was invited to speak to the aspirational nature in which it was written. Rev. Mary Dicken confirmed the invitational spirit in which the resolution was written. “An invitation to take a posture of grace, to allow the Holy Spirit to move in and through the Church. There is no mandate that goes against our Book of Discipline.”

It is my interpretation that this resolution allowed clergy and laity to speak openly about the mission of United Methodist in Indiana as it relates to “the mission of seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the body of Christ.”

This was done in a very respectful, vulnerable, grace filled, honest, and powerful way by three persons who spoke in favor of the resolution and three who spoke against it. The first person to speak was a 14-year-old youth, Lydia Jacobson.

It is my interpretation that the resolution does not change in any way the work of District Boards of Ordained Ministry, or the Conference Board of Ministry. It does not have power to authorize or permit those listed prohibitions, nor does it restrict the rights or obligations of those listed leaders in request for Decision of Law.

God’s call to Ministry is not under the purview of a Bishop, Annual Conference, Board of Ordained ministry. God Calls whom God Calls.

In the United Methodist Church that call is tested, witnessed, and affirmed beginning at the local Church and then and only then, licensing and ordination come through the bodies of the annual Conference.

The decision was made that the resolution was properly before the Annual Conference and with a written ballot vote was passed 380 for 332 against.

Bishop Julius C. Trimble
Indiana United Methodist Church