

## **2019 Special Session of the General Conference Day 4: The Traditional Plan Passes**

The morning started with a spirit led worship service. Mr. Fred Brewington of the New York Conference delivered a reflection message on courage and assurance. "From Jesus' viewpoint, fear is counteracted by faith, and the outcome is peace. What do we do when we are afraid? When we face danger? When we face uncertainty? Do we hide? Do we close our eyes? Do we find comfort in someone's arms? Do we dwell in "worse case scenarios"? Do we pray? Can we will ourselves to not be afraid? Probably not. But what we can do is have faith: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. And what we seek is peace, knowing that God holds us by the hand, resting in the assurance of God's presence with us," Mr. Brewington said.

Business followed shortly after. First up was the vote to approve a timeline for the Central Conferences to adopt the which was sustained. Wespeth petitions 90016-90017 were adopted with amendments. Followed by Judicial Council decision 1377 which are: Petitions 90032, 90036, 90042, 90043, 90044, 90046, 90047 are constitutional - Petitions 90033, 90034, 90038 violate p. 20 and 58 unconstitutional - Petitions 90037, 90038, 90039, 90040 violate the principles of legality and are unconstitutional - Petition 90045 second sentence is unconstitutional - Petition 90059 violates p. 33 and 41 and is unconstitutional - Petition 90066 violates p. 33 unconstitutional.

Next up came the Minority Report on the One Church Plan. Rev. Tom Berlin of Virginia presented the plan to the delegation. Very emotional arguments for and against the plan were brought to floor. Followed by a moment of powerful unifying prayer by the delegates in front of the stage. The vote to substitute the Minority Report (One Church Plan) was voted down (449 to 374).

Following the vote, the debate on the Traditional Plan was next. An emotional Shayla Jordan (age 21) of the Great Plains Conference, gathered with many young delegates on the floor to argue against the Traditional Plan. "People speaking here don't represent the church that will be for years down the road," she said. The morning ended with a no vote for an amendment to petition 90032.

The afternoon began with more debate of the Traditional Plan. Amendment after amendment were brought to the Conference floor. Presiding Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey of Louisiana was challenged on several decision and upheld on all. At one point, Carlene Fogle-Miller, Florida, who served as Legislative Committee Secretary, made a motion to refer rumors of bribery to the Committee on Ethics which was passed. After passionate arguments for and against, the Traditional Plan was brought to motion to vote. But, Bishop Harvey allowed for several calls of order that were to challenge the Traditional Plan, including a call for a report from the General Council of Finance and Administration which was denied. Then it was time for the final vote for the Traditional Plan which was passed by a vote of 438 to 384 (53.28% to 46.72%).

Following the vote, a group LGBTQ allies gathered on the delegation floor singing and showing solidarity. Protests could be heard in the background and one point a sit-in on stage. However, business continued with votes for the disaffiliation Minority Report, to send the Traditional Plan to Judicial Council, and an Omnibus motion to not support petitions 90079 and 90018-90031 were all passed. Rev. Donna Pritchard

of the Oregon-Idaho Conference was the last delegate to speak, stating that the Western Jurisdiction will continue to be “One Church” and urge everyone to go to <http://westernjurisdictionumc.org/>.

The day ended as it began with worship. Council of Bishops President Kenneth Clark then made a brief statement and the 2019 Special Session of the General Conference was adjourned.