Rationale for Proposed Constitutional Amendments
The United Methodist Church
Voted General Conference May 2016

I. (New ¶ 6) The Constitution contains a paragraph on racial justice but not one on gender justice. The language of this petition is parallel to the language of Article 5 on racial justice already in our Constitution. It is an affirmation that, as part of our core foundational beliefs, this church will forever stand against any actions, organizations or individuals that discriminate or dehumanize women and girls anywhere on this planet.

II. (¶ 4) Adding "gender" (meaning male and female) to the Constitution affirms and protects The United Methodist Church's commitment to gender equity throughout our worldwide connection. "Gender" is the disciplinary term for fair treatment of women and men (e.g., ¶16). The addition of the proposed final clause allows gender-specific groups like United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men.

III. (¶ 34) The provision in ¶ 13. *Article I*. 2, "Delegates shall be elected in a fair and open process by the annual conferences," is unduly vague. The addition of this one sentence to paragraph 34 of *The Book of Discipline* helps clarify that General Conference delegates shall be elected by the body of annual conference instead of simply being appointed by the bishop. Bishops appointing delegates without delegates being properly elected has been a practice in some central conferences.

IV. (¶ 46) As is the case for the jurisdictions, episcopal elections in the central conferences should be held in the regular sessions of those conferences, except when unexpected vacancies occur because of the death or early retirement of one or more bishops.

V. (¶ 50) Judicial Decision 475 ruled unconstitutional the Council of Bishops holding its individual members accountable for their work, referencing ¶ 50 of the Constitution. This legislation follows Judicial Decision 1275 requirement of a legislative resolution from General Conference so the Council of Bishops may provide oversight of its members.