

Title: A Way Forward in Accountability for Episcopal Leadership  
*Non-Disciplinary Petition*  
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The General Conference acknowledges the constitutional authority enumerated in ¶16.5, Article IV of the Constitution to “provide for the discontinuance of a bishop because of inefficiency or unacceptability.” In this petition, we therefore provide for the discontinuance of Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto as a bishop of the church, revoking her consecration.

The General Conference acknowledges its full legislative power under ¶16 Article IV of the Constitution over all matters distinctively connectional.

With Judicial Decision 1341, we recognize the consecration of a bishop as a distinctively connectional and covenantal act *done by and for* the United Methodist Church. We recognize the service consecrating a bishop as an act of the whole church (¶415.6); the bishops who participate in the service of consecration act on behalf of the whole Church; the bishop-elect vows to be an episcopal leader to “all of God’s people.” (*The United Methodist Book of Worship*, pp702-704)

We recognize the impact of episcopal leadership on all jurisdictions and central conferences and the effect on all members of the United Methodist Church. We recognize Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto’s egregious violations of the sexuality standards set by the General Conference in our *Book of Discipline*. It is an undisputed, widely reported fact that she is an openly partnered lesbian who has been in a legal marriage relationship with another woman since before her 2016 election as bishop. Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto was elected a bishop in the Western Jurisdiction, consecrated a bishop, and continues to serve as Bishop of the United Methodist church, all without appropriate, timely review or full accountability within the California-Nevada Annual Conference and the Western Jurisdiction.

It is settled church law that the General Conference has full legislative authority to set uniform standards for the ministry, which annual conferences shall not abrogate or modify. In our polity Bishops are not a separate order of ministry, but after their consecration assume the role of general superintendent of the Church. In revoking the consecration of Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto, we discontinue her as a general superintendent of the Church. She continues as an elder in the Church, subject to the same relevant disciplinary standards, accountability, and protections as any other clergy and subject to the decisions of the Judicial Council, especially its Decision 1341.

Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto’s consecration as a bishop is hereby revoked. She is immediately discontinued for reasons of unacceptability.

Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto’s episcopal level of salary, housing and fringe compensation benefits shall continue until August 31, 2019. Also, her episcopal level of compensation may be extended up to twelve months after August 31, 2019, provided that this 2019 General Conference allows the formation of a self-governing church separate from The United Methodist Church that would permit self-avowed practicing homosexual persons to serve as clergy and bishops and, provided that there is a plan permitting transfers into that new church body and, provided that Rev. Dr. Karen Oliveto elects to transfer in accordance with such a plan. This extended compensation shall not continue after the effective date of her transfer and not beyond any other relevant limitations within such a plan.

If any of parts of this Petition are judged to be unconstitutional then the remainder of this petition shall be construed in such a way to effectuate the will of this General Conference which is, to wit, the discontinuance of Karen Oliveto as a general superintendent of The United Methodist Church. If the language of this petition could be interpreted in multiple ways, it should be interpreted to effectuate this same end.

#### 50-Word rationale

Our unity is fractured by disobedience, especially among Episcopal leaders. This discontinuance brings accountability to restore respect for our connecting *Discipline*. We seem wasted as a legislative conference if our Episcopal leaders clearly disrespect our work by intentional disobedience; anarchy will reign, and unity will fly even further away.

## Financial implications

This petition asks that a bishop be discontinued and assumes that another will be assigned temporarily in her place. It asks that the salary of the discontinued bishop be continued. Thus, there could be an increase in compensation for a temporarily assigned bishop. Usually a retired bishop is assigned and a compensation above the retirement pay is negotiated. This would be effective from March 1, 2019 till August 31, 2020 when a new bishop could be elected and assigned, eighteen months. If one assumes \$2,000 month for 18 months, the costs would be \$36,000 above present costs. If it results in a requirement for two full episcopal salaries paid simultaneously, then the costs would be higher. The higher costs seem remote because of other factors.